Projects Reviewed
Downtown Wayfinding Project
South Lake Union Streetscape
Get Engaged Program
Sand Point/ Magnuson Park
  North Shore Recreation Project
  Sand Point Tennis Center
  Community Center Building #47
  Drainage, Wetland/ Habitat Complex
  and Sports Field and Courts

Commissioners Present
Donald Royse, Chair
Jack Mackie, Vice Chair
Ralph Cipriani
Cary Moon
Iain M. Robertson
David Spiker
Sharon E. Sutton
Tory Laughlin Taylor

Staff Present
John Rahaim
Layne Cubell
Brad Gassman
Sally MacGregor
16 May 2002  Project: Downtown Wayfinding Project, Phase II  
Phase: Pre-Design  
Presenter: Barbara Gray, CityDesign/ Strategic Planning Office  
Attendee: John Eskelin, Department of Neighborhoods

Time: 1 hour  
(SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00005)

Action: The Commission appreciates the opportunity to review this important public/private partnership project that will expand upon and improve wayfinding in the downtown area. The Commission would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- The Commission recommends that the project is developed with clarity and simplicity, recognizing that function is the primary requirement of the wayfinding signage;
- encourages the team to maintain historical neighborhood designations rather than introduce new neighborhood identities or brand new city districts;
- supports the creation of a management program, and recommends that maintenance is conducted at a public level, rather than relying on private efforts;
- supports the inclusion of universal language and symbols to meet the needs of different users;
- encourages the team to think of wayfinding as recognizable icons or objects in the right-of-way, rather than simply signage;
- hopes that the wayfinding icons are developed to be visible from afar; and
- with this second phase of the project, hopes that a framework of guidelines and priorities are put in place for future wayfinding opportunities.

CityDesign is partnering with Seattle Transportation to implement Phase II of the downtown Seattle wayfinding project; a consultant, Sea Reach, Ltd., has been selected. Sea Reach Ltd., is an environmental, graphic, and urban design firm that also specializes in fabrication and installation. The scope of Phase II does include signage as well as other wayfinding elements and tools on the street. The consultants will develop the location plan for the wayfinding signage, a map for the internet, and will also coordinate with the Visitors Bureau.

Program Goals for Phase II of the Downtown Wayfinding Project:

- Develop overall framework and design standards for a wayfinding system for Center City (Downtown) neighborhoods that can also be the basis for wayfinding in all Seattle neighborhoods.
- For specific locations, develop schematic design and specifications for sign graphics and text.
- Build upon the work completed in the 1998 pilot.
- Develop an implementation and maintenance plan that addresses both Phase I and Phase II signs and other wayfinding elements.
- Work within the Center City study area bounded by S. Lander Street, the waterfront, Broadway...
Avenue, and West Galer Street.

- This project will also be coordinated with other projects, such as new METRO bus shelters.

**Workplan Outline:**

- **Task I** Survey and Analysis (including review of Pilot program design, data collection and GIS mapping, and analysis of existing signage policies)
- **Task II** Planning and Design (including location plan, wayfinding signage design and graphic standards, specs and maintenance guidelines for an overall system, and communications materials)
- **Task III** Implementation Strategy (including maintenance plan and coordination matrix)
- **Task IV** Stakeholder Outreach (support City with graphic materials)
- **Task V** Final Workbook (including Design Guideline Material, specs and implementation plan)

**Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Recognizes that there are often concerns that the signage would be biased, whether they are publicly focused or privately focused. Recognizes that the signage could not only direct people to public destinations. Would like to know how the signage would balance these interests.
  - Proponent stated that some private institutions have paid for some wayfinding signage, such as hospitals. Further stated that the signage would not direct people to specific stores, but could direct people to the “retail core.”
- Recognizes that the private institutions could be asked to fund or maintain the signage, and feels that the wayfinding program should be able to offer some leverage or opportunity to encourage their involvement.
- Would like to know if the project team and consultants have examined other cities with exceptional signage. Would like to know if the signage will be in English.
  - Proponent stated that extensive research was completed in Phase I of the Wayfinding Project. Further stated that Philadelphia has an exceptional pedestrian wayfinding system, with iconographic signage, and signage locations at every couple of blocks. Further stated that signage is often located at lower levels for ADA accessibility, but these tend to blend in with traditional streetscape furniture. Recognized that universal design and international systems should be used in the design of the signage. Agreed that the signage should be iconographic. Suggested that, while every sign would not have place names or specific types of information in every language, smaller maps or other types of printed material could explain this wayfinding information in different languages.
- Recognizes that the wayfinding signage in Philadelphia is also coordinated with banners of the Arts District. Suggests that the wayfinding in Seattle could also be incorporated with district and neighborhood banners.
  - Proponent stated that a logo for wayfinding information must also be developed, not merely signage, so that people can clearly identify the wayfinding information at first sight, whether it is on a website, a map, or on the street.
- Would like to know the types of international symbols the wayfinding signage would incorporate.
- Proponent stated that the consultants have done international work. The consultants have also completed work in New York, national park, and national campus planning.

- Recognizes that, at the selection panel, the consultants proposed ideas that contained one-tenth of the information in the Phase I signage, but were much clearer. Recognizes that the consultants also presented fifty reasons why the existing signage would not work. Recognizing that there will never be enough money to complete the whole system, encourages the team to identify priorities and remove the signage clutter.

- Proponent agreed and stated that there would be three cycles of funding. There would be $100,000 each time, and these funds must be matched.

- Feels that the consultants should be able to retrofit the existing signs, in order to create a full and complete system.

- Proponent agreed and stated that it needs to be a center city system. However, the project team does not want to remove all of the existing signs and replace them all with new signs. The existing signage would be replaced after the lifecycle is complete. Further stated that porcelain enamel, which is an expensive, twenty-five year material. The team has questioned whether or not it makes sense to construct a twenty-five year sign, when, realistically, the design only lasts ten years. Because of the costs of the signage, there are no “you are here” identification markers; in Phase I, the signs were not unique.

- Recognizing that the project would be phased, would like to know if there is an opportunity to integrate existing work developed in this sector with this project. Would like to know if the icons would be developed to coordinate with some of the private efforts taking place now.

- Proponent stated that as funding is available, project components would be implemented. Further stated that there would be need to be a balance between this project and other projects, and these projects would need to be tied together.

- Believes that the wayfinding project should reinforce the notion that I-5 is not a barrier.

- Believes that “you are here” must be a part of the unique panels.

- Proponent stated that timing concerns created constraints for the pilot program, and the signage had to be completed in six months.

- Does not believe that the wayfinding signage should be used to identify or promote new names for neighborhoods.

- Proponent agreed and stated that these new names, such as the West Edge, are not official, but are actually marketing tools. Further recognized that Denny Triangle wasn’t named Denny Triangle ten years ago. Further stated that SODO includes the industrial area, Pioneer Square, and the International District, and it is hard for these areas to consider themselves a single neighborhood.

- Proponent stated that, through the community process, the project team would meet with different groups at their individual neighborhood meetings, and there would not be a single, large, public meeting.

- Is concerned about the disconnect between installation and maintenance of these signs. Would like to know if the team has examined models in other cities. Would like to know if the consultants would coordinate with City Hall and their wayfinding efforts.

- Proponent stated that the consultants have some very strong ideas about maintenance needs. Further stated that the consultants have struggled with the desire to develop a quality project and have recognized that there is a realistic shelf life for the wayfinding signage. The project team does not want to spend so much money on the project, if the
signage would not even be technically relevant as long as the materials would last. Further stated that Seattle Transportation does not have a sign shop, and Seattle Transportation does not want to be liable for a project if they have not installed the project. There is a continuing internal City discussion regarding objects in the right-of-way. Seattle Transportation feels that those who install the signage should be held responsible. Further stated that there are some private partners with whom maintenance could be coordinated.

- Proponent stated that the consultants would coordinate with the Civic Center and Library wayfinding.

- Recognizes that an Arts Commission mural on the signage was a component of the Phase I project. Would like to know if an Arts Commission mural would be a component of Phase II.
  - Proponent stated that this type of mural would not be a component of Phase II.

- Would like to know if the wayfinding would be coordinated with other street furniture items or other elements in the right-of-way.
  - Proponent stated that it would not be coordinated with street furniture, but would be coordinated with other signage.

- Feels that the Phase I project has been overly criticized. Believes that, in general, the public thinks the signage is great.

- Feels that the signage should be a unique object, and should be distinct and visible from afar. Believes that there could be two tiers of signage, with an icon at the top of a pole, and the map and signage information at eye level.

- Suggests the clarity is most important, and a system of icons would contribute to this clarity. Agrees that the wayfinding should reinforce the distinctive qualities and characteristics of an area.

- Agrees that typically, in this country, there is often incredible fragmentation for these types of projects. Believes that there should be comprehensive standards and simplicity. Believes that some of the existing signs are illegible. Believes that European models are so rational.
South Lake Union Streetscape

Briefing

4 April 2002

Lyle Bicknell, CityDesign
John Rahaim, CityDesign

Marty Curry, Seattle Planning Commission
Beth Dodrill, student, University of Washington
S.L. Ferreira, student, University of Washington
Vanessa Murdock, PRR

1 hour

SDC Ref. # 222 | DC00225

The Commission appreciates the briefing on this inventory, mapping, and urban design analysis work, and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- The Commission supports the approach of having the City, in general, and CityDesign, in particular, take a lead role in this streetscape work in South Lake Union;
- commends the team for the comprehensive map showing the different development projects and improvement opportunities in the area;
- encourages the team to include a hierarchy of regional and local streets in the area, noting bus and freight routes as well as pedestrian routes;
- encourages the team to incorporate landmarks and other features of the past and present that convey neighborhood character;
- encourages the team to include the proposed Potlatch Trail in the plan;
- recognizes the need for a concrete plan against which developers can measure their proposals, but suggests that a two-tiered plan is more appropriate to 1) set required guidelines a development must follow, and 2) identify opportunities within a larger framework a development might elect to explore;
- suggests that the plan delineate both known changes and larger uncertainties such as the Viaduct;
- recommends that diagrams be prepared to show a five, ten, and fifteen year phasing for improvements;
- recognizing that this work presents an opportunity to make enliven the eastern edge of South Lake Union, encourages the team to examine opportunities to make strong connections across I-5; and
- recommends widespread distribution of the plan in a pamphlet after seeking formal approval by City Council.

Following the workshop co-sponsored by the Seattle Design Commission, Seattle Planning Commission, and the Seattle Arts Commission, CityDesign began map consolidation and comprehensive streetscape analysis for the South Lake Union area. The completed map would not be a master plan for the South Lake Union area, but would provide streetscape design direction for some of the major corridors in the area, including Mercer Street, Terry Avenue North, Valley Street, and the couplet of Westlake and Ninth Avenues North. The map also includes significant elements of the Open Space Strategy, opportunities created by some of the Alaskan Way Viaduct alternatives, South Lake Union Park, and the Mercer Street.
I-5 on-ramp. CityDesign incorporated all of the different development proposals for street design in South Lake Union on a single map. Vulcan Inc. has hired three different landscape architecture teams to propose ideas and principles for the different corridors.

Through an analysis of these conditions, CityDesign identified gaps and opportunities in the South Lake Union area, including pedestrian corridors and more significant transportation corridors. The Mercer and Valley Streets couplet would also be completely re-designed to direct the I-5 traffic straight, rather than making an S-curve onto Valley Street. Through these changes, Mercer Street would become a two-way, eight-lane boulevard, and a transition between the interstate and the city street. This couplet is currently a barrier between South Lake Union and South Lake Union Park, and these changes would improve the pedestrian character of this crossing.

Timing is an important concern for these efforts, as developers would like design direction for future projects in the area. While resolution of the immediate issues is a primary concern, a long-term vision is also needed. PRR is working to coordinate these efforts with those of Vulcan Inc. and the South Lake Union community. Through the next steps of this work, CityDesign would determine how all of these different projects would relate to each other. Westlake Avenue and Mercer Street are regional streets, and their character should reflect this, but the remaining streets are really neighborhood streets. The character of these local streets would reflect the character of South Lake Union.

**Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Urges the proponents to remember that Terry Avenue is an important axis in this neighborhood, because of the view south to downtown, and the terminus of the street at South Lake Union Park. Previous designs for South Lake Union Park indicated a vertical marker in South Lake Union Park, at the Terry Avenue street end.

- Recognizes that some of the streets within the plan are regional streets. Believes that the hierarchy should be clear on the plan.

- Would like to know what would happen if all of the projects and improvements were implemented piecemeal through private developers.
  - Proponents stated that many developers in the area would like to implement streetscape improvements beyond the required improvements. However, to do this, the developers must spend a substantial amount of time in meetings with Seattle Transportation. These types of improvements are typically completed block by block.

- Recognizes that implementing changes and improvements such as these through piecemeal efforts represents a barrier. Encourages the team to develop a plan with incremental ideas, recognizing that the transitions themselves would be more important than the final product. Recognizes that these incremental changes and improvements, such as a planting scheme, take place through the construction of a single building. Recognizes that the diversity of the individual buildings is one of the primary qualities of the neighborhood that should be maintained.
  - Proponents agreed, and stated that this scenario is similar to the development of Green Streets in Belltown. Initially, there was consensus regarding the curb lines of Cedar Street and Blanchard Street. However, the plan would allow for certain special design events to occur. Further agreed that the plan should be flexible, in order to allow different types of proposals at individual project sites.

- Agrees that design discussions about an individual site should address the design of the improvements, rather than a discussion about the battles and struggles required to implement these
improvements.

- Agrees that there should be an overall plan for a developer or neighborhood to use as a reference point. Feels that the plan should not merely state, “develop a Green Street,” but it should provide some definition of the expected improvements.
  - Proponents agreed and stated that the plan needs to be flexible, but there should also be some assurance that the overall integrity of the design is not lost.
- Believes that there should be some standard by which developers can measure their project against.
- Recognizes that every street cannot be of a unique character.
- Agrees that this should be a two-tiered plan. Believes that the plan should set the public realm improvement parameters for all of the projects, and then add another level of detail by which the individual projects could propose a level of creativity. Through a two-tier process for street improvements, the developers would not spend all of their money for negotiations with Seattle Transportation; the money could be spent on the actual improvements themselves.
- Would like the plan to include truck routes and bus routes. Recognizes that the changing uses in the area will change these larger paths and routes.
  - Proponents stated that there is little bus service in the area, which will need to change in the future. Further stated that north-south trolley and an east-west trolley have been proposed for the South Lake Union area. The east-west trolley would connect to the Sound Transit station.
- Believes that the mapping of the various projects is very fascinating, as it documents and analyzes separate agendas comprehensively. However, is concerned that if this plan is presented, people will assume that all of the items in the plan are definite. Recognizes that, if the Alaskan Way Viaduct is underground, the east-west connections would become flat, and these would become very important in this South Lake Union Plan. Would like to know if the team is considering other uncertainties in the area.
  - Proponents agreed and stated that the future Potlatch Trail should be a diagonal organizing element to connect South Lake Union with Puget Sound. Further stated that the CityDesign team does not want to miss any opportunities.
- Recognizes that there are so many uncertainties west of Ninth Avenue North. Recognizes that these uncertainties are contingent on planning, financial, and construction issues. Encourages the team to bifurcate the presentation in order to show the different opportunities and phasing implications. Recognizes that some of the stakeholders, such as the Maritime Heritage Museum, cannot wait beyond five or six years for concrete opportunities to be identified.
- Agrees that multiple alternatives should be examined, recognizing the implications of the Alaskan Way Viaduct, but believes that the City should take a strong position for all of the alternatives.
- Recognizes that public transportation between the Denny Triangle and Lake Union is very important.
- Believes that the City should a strong position on this plan, or no improvements will be made. Is concerned that, if fifteen alternatives are debated for many years, nothing would happen.
- Would like to know if the Mercer Street improvements could be completed without the Alaskan Way Viaduct changes.
  - Proponents stated that vehicles need access across Aurora Avenue, which is now provided by Mercer Street; this is the only option currently provided for vehicles exiting I-5. Further stated that the grid would have to be restored in order to disperse the traffic
coming from the east.

- Throughout the mapping and proposal of future changes, encourages the team to look to the past and respect the historical aspects and design of the South Lake Union. Hopes that these characteristics are not lost.
  - Proponents stated that the plan would recognize existing historical landmarks.
- Recognizes that there are existing public art pieces throughout South Lake Union and the Cascade neighborhood. Believes that these should be reflected on the plan.
- Agrees that the plan should be phased, but hopes that the team will also recognize that a final image is also powerful. Recognizes that people often get lost through an incremental approach.
- Encourages the team to develop a four-page pamphlet as a handout, so that everyone would continue to remember the larger issues and plan. Hopes that this would encourage people to constantly remember the plan.
- Recognizes that the map is a wonderful inventory of possibilities. Believes that CityDesign needs to take the next steps and the lead, in order to promote CityDesign’s proposed plan.
- Agrees that CityDesign, through this project, should do some great design work, in addition to this inventory of proposals and possibilities. Recognizes that developers and other stakeholders would want to know when the process would end, and would like to know what the final product would be. Believes that the plan should provide some incentives, in order to show people why they should participate. Believes that there needs to be a tangible, visible focus.
- Recognizes that this work presents an opportunity to make a bold move at the eastern edge of South Lake Union. Encourages the team to examine opportunities to make strong connections across I-5.

**Key Visitor Comments and Concerns**

- Would like to know if the trees drawn on the map would be new trees.
  - Proponents stated that this reflects some of the specific proposals from developers, including Vulcan, In., and the proposed street improvements. Further stated that there are street trees along Westlake Avenue, but not many of the other streets. Further stated that this plan would also be coordinated with the Alaskan Way Viaduct urban design plan, developed by ROMA.
- A representative from the Seattle Planning Commission stated that the South Lake Union plan should propose a phased approach. Believes that the plan should present a five, ten, and fifteen year view, to show an evolution of the South Lake Union area, with an indication of the final product. The phased plans should all coordinate with a set of organizing principles.
  - Proponents agreed, and stated that the planning should incorporate a series of diagrams.
- A student from the University of Washington stated that the visual street character of South Lake Union is very unique. Hopes that this character could be maintained without becoming treated as a museum.
16 May 2002  Commission Business

ACTION ITEMS
A. TIMESHEETS
B. MINUTES FROM 18 APRIL 2002- APPROVED

DISCUSSION ITEMS
C. OUTSIDE COMMITMENT UPDATES- CUBELL
D. VIADUCT AND MONORAIL UPDATES- RAHAIM/ CUBELL
E. UPDATE ON RE-ORG AND DIRECTOR SEARCH- RAHAIM

ANNOUNCEMENTS
F. COMMISSION SITE TOUR- MAY 31- CUBELL
16 May 2002  Lunch Discussion with City Councilmember Judy Nicastro

Attendees: Jill Berkey, Legislative Assistant, City Councilmember Judy Nicastro  
Alex Field, City Boards and Commissions Administrator  
Judy Nicastro, Seattle City Council

Time: .75 hour

The Design Commission met with Councilmember Judy Nicastro to discuss many Commission-related items, including the Commission’s value to the City, major transportation projects affecting the City of Seattle, and the Commission’s role in helping to shape a strong urban design vision for the City.

Councilmember Nicastro offered to meet with the Commission again in another 6 months, and encouraged the Commission to make their needs known to Council.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Supports CityDesign’s work, and feels that CityDesign is an important tool for the Commission to be effective. CityDesign helps the Commission to review projects within a larger framework.

- Feels that CityDesign is key to efficiency in the City’s process for development and construction, recognizing that there are so many interdepartmental issues relating to planning and transportation projects.

- Supports CityDesign’s work in South Lake Union. Believes that the City needs to take the lead on the design guidelines for the urban design of the South Lake Union area. Hopes that CityDesign will develop the guidelines to give to developers. Believes that the City should also take the lead on the connections to the waterfront.
  - Councilmember Nicastro questions whether these design guidelines would be regulatory.

- Hopefully, the City would adopt the plan for South Lake Union. Feels that this needs to be an official diagram for the public realm issues in the area. Believes that, if it is regulatory, it would only add another layer of difficulty. Feels that developers in the area need a framework, and the plan’s existence would be important, in guiding developers in their efforts.

- Agrees that CityDesign should take the lead, through the development of this framework. The plan would not have to be prescriptive or regulatory, but would establish performance guidelines.
  - Councilmember Nicastro stated that this should be on the City Council agenda when it is ready.

- Recognizes that there are many opportunities in the South Lake Union area, and some of these opportunities would be linked to the changes to the Alaskan Way Viaduct. The street grid in the area needs to be pieced back together. Feels that the street hierarchy in the South Lake Union area needs to be established.

- Recognizes that a recent street vacation in South Lake Union faced many Commission concerns, and believes that a plan for South Lake Union would help the Commission identify appropriate public benefits for the area. The Commission needs to review these individual projects in the framework of a larger context.
Seattle Design Commission and CityDesign have been involved since the early stages of the Viaduct, in order to ensure that surface improvement opportunities are not ignored amidst the transportation needs. Believes that the Alaskan Way Viaduct needs to be buried to the north of Roy Street. Feels that funding is greatly needed for surface design and improvements. Does not believe that these surface improvements should be designed fast-track, as they will be an important future design element for the city. Recognizes that the condition of the seawall should be addressed by the preferred alternative, and the City of Seattle has a direct interest in the larger Viaduct project because of the seawall. Does not believe that transportation alone should define the design direction of the Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement.

- Councilmember Nicastro supports an underground solution for the Alaskan Way Viaduct.
- Councilmember Nicastro agreed that the Design Commission needs to be integral to the City’s discussion, and they should be a part of a future City Council briefing.

The Commission reviewed the proposed improvements for 520, and how these improvements would affect the Montlake neighborhood. Recognizes that there are funding concerns. Believes that user-based fees should be proposed for larger projects. Does not believe that the most efficient transportation solution is necessarily the best solution over the long term. Recognizes that there are not resources to make all desired transportation improvements. Believes that user based fees would be appropriate, and recognizes that funds are needed to mitigate the effects of these projects for the adjacent neighborhoods and residents.

- Recognizes that the Commission struggles with street vacations, and would like to do more to refine the process. Would like to re-examine the phasing of the reviews. The Commission examines a project early on and tries to assess whether or not the vacation is appropriate in the larger urban design framework of the area, and then weighs in on the nature of an appropriate public benefit. Feels that once the vacation has been proposed, the Commission finds it difficult to say no to a vacation.
- Councilmember Nicastro encourages the Commission to work with Councilmember Conlin on this issue, as he is interested in this concern.

- Recognizes that there are many large Washington State Department of Transportation projects. The Commission continues to try to develop a design review relationship with WSDOT. The Commission is also working with many other agencies that are not bound to the City’s process. Recognizes that Sound Transit funded a project review position within the CityDesign office, and feels that a CityDesign position would be appropriate for other large projects, such as the monorail and the Alaskan Way Viaduct. Believes that these larger agencies should recognize that project budgets should include funding for these types of positions. Recognizes that Sound Transit has considered this involvement beneficial for all parties.

- Recognizes that the Commission does not have a legal right to review any King County or WSDOT project, but is concerned that many opportunities may be lost if there isn’t some design review. Recognizes the Seahawks stadium as an example.
- Councilmember Nicastro encourages the Commission to make a request, in letter, to these agencies asking that the Design Commission be involved in design review for big projects.

- Recognizes the importance of democracy, and believes that the experience of the public realm helps to foster this democracy. Believes that civic spaces should embrace strangers, through design. Believes that open space programming is connected to the design of public spaces. Recognizes many
other cities as good examples; Philadelphia closes streets for certain events. Would like to see more public celebration, recognizing that public involvement should not be confined to meetings.

- Councilmember Nicastro agreed and also cited some examples in other cities, including public outdoor movies in Bryant Park in New York City and free dancing lessons or events in public. Agreed that more public and free events are needed in Seattle.
- Recognizes CityDesign’s work on the Open Space Strategy. Feels that this open system will provide a place for these types of events.
- Recognizes that recent City of Seattle levies have provided many opportunities for civic projects, such as libraries, community centers, and parks. Recognizes that each project should be developed with its own neighborhood character, but these civic spaces should also have a larger civic identity.
- Recognizes that the Commission supports the City of Seattle’s efforts to build upon the city’s affordable housing. The Design Commission is sensitive to these long-term visions. Hopes that urban design is used to provide greater opportunities for the community, especially in the downtown core. Feels that so many neighborhoods in the city are homogeneous in character.
  - Councilmember Nicastro encouraged the Commission to let City Council know what needs to be done, and offered to meeting with the Commission again in the future.
16 May 2002  Project:  Get Engaged Program
Phase:  Discussion
Previous Reviews:  4 April 2002
Presenter:  Alex Field, Boards and Commissions Administrator, Mayor’s Office

Time:  1 hour

Discussion Summary:  The Commission appreciates the opportunity for this continued discussion from an earlier meeting.

- The Commission enthusiastically supports this as a pilot program that nurtures young people’s involvement;
- urges the City to intentionally fine-tune this program through the coming year so that this important idea of youth recruitment can be institutionalized for all boards and commissions;
- hopes that the inclusion of young people on boards will not lead to tokenism, but rather inspire non-traditional dialogue and inclusion of a young person’s perspective on the city;
- expresses concern about the one-year commitment asked of participants, and feels that it would take more time for a candidate to wholly understand the design process, and to fully participate on the Design Commission;
- expresses concern about the potential isolation of a single person within this unique position;
- supports the documentation of successful participation, in order to provide models for future long-term inclusion of young people; and
- proposes that, for the Design Commission, this position be an at-large position, and that the selection criteria should include: vision for the city, good communication skills, courage and confidence, and a willingness to be an advocate for young people in the city.

The City Boards and Commissions Administrator returned to the Commission for a follow-up discussion regarding the criteria and process by which the Commission would participate in YMCA’s “Get Engaged” program this coming year. This program supports young adult participation on boards and commissions.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Supports the program’s ideals, but wonders whether or not there should be a separate position for this Commission member. Is not sure whether or not it is appropriate for age to be part of the selection criteria for a Design Commissioner.
  - Proponent stated that the purpose of the program is to bring civic government to the attention of those who are not typically involved or represented. Further stated that this program would emphasize the fact that young adults should be involved. Hopefully, this program would encourage board and commissions to continue to recruit from broad groups. Further stated that the recruitment is age specific, but agreed that a young adult position as a separate position should not be a permanent scenario.
- Agrees that the outreach component of this program should be preserved, if possible.
• Proponent agreed and stated that the YMCA would provide training for the new young adult board members and commissioners, which is a critical service. Further stated that before the City’s budget constraints, there were plans to host quarterly training sessions.

• Would like to know the criteria and mechanics for the participants serving on the boards and commissions.
  • Proponent stated that each board and commission would determine an appropriate mentoring process. Through this program, the proponents would like to see what works best. At the Seattle Center Advisory Commission, the chair was very involved in the YMCA’s training sessions.

• Supports the long-term mission of this program. Hopes that the outreach component to young adults becomes an integral part of the boards and commissions recruitment process.

• Would like to know the future of those who are not selected to participate on a board or commission.
  • Proponent stated that some applicants applied to multiple commissions. Further stated that the YMCA representative for this program also invited the applicants to participate in other civic opportunities. The participants could also be nominated for the Design Review Boards.

• Hopes that the participants would be considered a full member of the Commission. Hopes that the participation criterion ensures that the participants are taken seriously. Would like to know how the integrity of other boards and commissions has been retained throughout this process. Questions whether or not the participants would need to be professionals.
  • Proponent stated that the age group ranges from 18 to 29, and selection criteria would be established for the participants. Further stated that the interview process would also include some design questions, and the Design Commission would have the final word regarding the selection of the participant.

• Recognizes that some selection criterion is important to ensure competence and a certain level of education, but believes it should be considered a lay position on the Design Commission. Believes that the participant should have energy for envisioning the city, strong communication skills, confidence, and strong political activism.

• Is concerned that the entire Design Commission is not entirely comfortable with this program. Recognizes that many young adults would like to improve the quality of life within the city. Questions whether or not this program would actually diminish the prestige of the Design Commission. Does not believe that encouraging young adult involvement is enough, but hopes that the young adult commissioner would be encouraged to participate, and that this participation is taken seriously.

• Has always considered civic involvement an important responsibility. Is not comfortable with the narrow structure of the program. Feels that young adults should be involved in a broad way. Is concerned that specific programs such as this weaken the aim of the program, if the standards for the commissioners are changed.
  • Proponent agreed and stated that it would not be token participation. However, this program and the outreach need to begin gradually, in order to encourage the needed awareness.

• Believes that the criteria should be similar to that of the Design Review Board, as the same qualities
are needed for both.

- Proponent agreed and stated that the Design Commission is very rigorous.

- Is not sure that one year of participation would be sufficient. Recognizes that it took four years to fully understand the workings of the Seattle Arts Commission. Feels that a second at-large position should be created, because this cannot be considered a token position.

- Feels that the questions should be framed differently, such as “Without this person’s perspective, what are we missing?” Believes that, qualitatively, young adults experiences cities differently than the existing members of the Commission. Feels that the voices at the table must be broadened, and a young adult perspective of the city should be represented at the table.

- Strongly supports this program, but understands the concerns of other Commissioners. Believes that many young adults have many great ideas. Does not believe that the standards of the Commission would be reduced. Believes that young adults are excellent, and would offer a different viewpoint. Is amazed that an external program is required to incorporate this participation.

- Would like to know if this is a pilot program. Realizes that the ultimate objective is to encourage young adults to apply to boards and commissions. Recognizes that this program aims to change perceptions, but believes that the merits of this program will need to be maintained and promoted later as well.
  - Proponent stated that it is a pilot program, and will be used to determine an appropriate permanent outreach program for young adults.

- Believes that a one-year program is a good idea. Believes that the fundamental recruitment process of the Commission should change.
  - Proponent agreed and stated that the primary criteria would question whether or not the participant would fit into a team dynamic. The potential participants would be asked to describe what type of voice they would bring to the group.
Action: The Commission appreciates the presentation and believes that this is an exciting project. The Commission would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- The Commission commends the team for the re-use of the flagpoles;
- commends the team for the landscape design and selection of vegetation materials;
- supports the team’s efforts to work with Seattle Transportation on pedestrian improvements along the west edge of the project and Sand Point Way Northeast;
- encourages the team to develop more visible connections between this site, the Burke-Gilman Trail, and Sand Point Way Northeast and suggests that tall vertical gateway elements and a lower fence would be appropriate;
- suggests that the trees near the center of the plan might be more appropriate at the eastern edge; and
- approves design development.

Sand Point/ Magnuson Park (SPMP) is a 320-acre park that partially utilizes existing buildings to create a campus of multiple uses; many projects are proceeding. The SPMP team came to update the Commission on four key Capital Improvement Projects under development.

The North Shore Recreation Area master plan was completed last year with strong community support; the design process included significant public involvement. The North Shore Recreation Area will be a center for small, non-motorized boats. The team has been working with local, state, and federal permitting agencies, to respond to required shoreline conditions. The existing buildings, Building 27, Building 11, Building 31, and Building 275 will remain, as will the existing pier. The pier will be resurfaced and a handrail will be added to this pier. The paved areas throughout the site will remain. This original concrete used to be the runway for the original airfield; this will be cleaned.

There will be three zones, or large outdoor rooms, within the North Shore Recreation area. There will be a large green space, with a hillside, for picnicking to the west edge of the site. The central area of the site will be the main area for the boating facility. To the east of Building 27, at the eastern edge of the site, there will be a multi-use area associated with the interior uses in Building 27. There will be a main, central vehicular entrance to access the parking areas throughout the site. There will be a pedestrian connection between the waterfront to Sand Point Way and the Burke-Gilman Trail, and a shoreline promenade along the waterfront. The view corridor to the waterfront will be fairly open, and framed with
trees.
The open green area is a reforestation area with native vegetation. The trees would be grouped to allow open views to the waterfront. One new picnic shelter will be built, nestled into the hillside. The land within this area will be re-graded, to incorporate an ADA accessible path through this green space. An ecology lawn will be used, to minimize water use. The shoreline will be re-graded for habitat restoration, and sand and gravel will be added to create a beach. The end of Building 31 will be removed to restore the migratory corridor.

There will be a strong connection between the facility and the shoreline. The slope of the connection between the facilities and the shore will be steeper than it is today. There will be a drop-off area for day-use, while other boats would be stored at this facility. The boating access at the shoreline will include three ramps, with docks, for boat launches. Two docks will be associated with larger boats, associated with the boat storage area. The boat storage area is very large, and enclosed by a fence. The design team has worked to develop this fence as a design element. It will not be a chain-link fence, but will be of a higher-grade wire mesh. The paddle and sail boat theme has been incorporated in the design of the fence. Flagpoles from SPMP will be recycled and retrofitted as ‘masts’ and a gateway element along the main pedestrian spine.

**Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Would like to know if all types of boat would be used at the boat launch, and if the design works with these types of boats.
  - Proponents stated that many types of boat users are satisfied with the design of the boat launch. These boats would be sailboats, hobi-cats, outrigger canoes, and dragon boats. Further stated that these boat launches would be accessible for all types of boat users. Further stated that the float design is appropriate for kayakers, as well as boaters with disabilities. Further stated that some boaters prefer docks, while others prefer the beach; the North Shore Recreation Area would provide both.

- Recognizes that the design team has proposed to put gravel in front of the seawall. Is concerned that this material would wash away.
  - Proponents stated that there are many precedents, whereby beaches have been created or restored, such as Seacrest Park. Further stated that the material and the slope would be stable over time.

- Recognizing the slope at the west edge of the site, would like to know if there is a handrail. Would like to know where the sidewalk ends.
  - Proponents stated that there are handrails along the steep segments of the pedestrian path, along the lengths of the retaining wall.
  - Proponents stated that SPMP is working to develop a relationship with Seattle Transportation to examine the full corridor along Sand Point Way. Further stated that, currently, at this edge, there is a tall fence, topped with barbed wire. The team has proposed to replace this with a black, vinyl-coated chain-link fence. Further stated that, currently, there is no sidewalk, only a gravel shoulder.
  - Would like to know whether or not a simple auto barrier would be sufficient. Believes that a fence would impede the visual connections.
    - Proponents stated that there are also considering a simple guard rail.
- Encourages the design team to retain strong visual connections between the Burke-Gilman trail and the sidewalk along the west edge of this area. Encourages the team to use planting or strong vertical elements to mark this connection.

- Believes that the design team may have proposed too many trees. Feels that the shore’s edge should remain open.
  - Proponents stated that these corridors are paved with trees to define the pedestrian paths and promenade amidst the extensive paving on the site.

- Agrees that trees are not necessary through the middle of the site. Commends the team for the wonderful scheme, which takes advantage and works well with the existing conditions.
16 May 2002  Project: Sand Point/ Magnuson Park Tennis Center
Phase: Concept Design
Presenters: Kevin Bergsrud, Seattle Parks and Recreation
Eric Friedli, Seattle Parks and Recreation
Gregory Hill, Streeter and Associates Architects
Youn Lee, Streeter and Associates Architects
Attendees: see attached
Time: .5 hour   (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00274)

Action: The Commission appreciates the presentation and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- The Commission commends the team for a design that takes stock of its historic context, with good use of architectural references and choice of materials;
- urges the team to engage an artist as soon as possible to ensure meaningful art opportunities;
- encourages the team to explore opportunities for providing natural light in the central spine of the building, recognizing inherent conflicts between natural lighting and tennis;
- notes that the faux fenestration of the west wall could be used more liberally as a design element, to mitigate the bulk of the building; and
- urges the design team to ensure that the balcony and the art piece at the west end of the central spine do not lead people away from the main entrance.

The design team for the Sand Point/ Magnuson Park Tennis Center presented the concept design for this facility, which is a public, private partnership.

This facility will include six indoor tennis courts and eight outdoor courts. Four of the outdoor courts will be covered by an air-supported structure. The support facilities for the tennis courts will be along the central spine of the building, and will include a lobby/reception area at the entrance of the building, a lounge, an upper level viewing and social space, and a meeting room. An exterior porch will be adjacent to the meeting room.

The main parking lot for the building is to the east. The entrance will be at the east end of the building, and the entry path will be between the eight outdoor courts; this path will be elevated, to improve viewing opportunities of the outdoor courts. The secondary entrance will be at the west end of the building.

The building site is within the historic district of SPMP. Six courts along a central spine is the most efficient building design, as it allows one access point to the building. The building would be two pavilions with gabled roofs and a central spine, which is very similar to the barracks/dining hall building near the project site. The size and the shape of the building are dictated by the interior uses. The central, recessed spine design draws from historic buildings and examples found throughout SPMP.

The building is set into the slope of the landscape, and the main floor will be five feet below grade at the west edge of the site. The exterior patio will provide an ADA accessible entrance to the building.

An artist is not part of the design team yet, but a large art element, relating to the former use of SPMP...
may be incorporated at the west end of the building.

The outdoor courts will be free, while patrons will be charged to use the indoor courts.

**Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Would like to know if the design team has worked with an artist to develop an art plan for this project.
  - Proponents stated that there are some initial concepts regarding the art for this site, but the design team has not been working with a specific project artist.
- Recognizes that an artist and art plan is typically a part of the design process before or during concept design to maximize the opportunities.
  - Proponents stated that additional fundraising would be required to include an art plan.
- Would like to know if the entire building façade would be brick. Would like to know if there are design constraints, as this site is within an historic district.
  - Proponents stated that the west façade would be brick, and the other three sides would be metal. Further stated that there are design guidelines for work in an historic district, and these guidelines suggest consistency of materials and building details. Further stated that is a separate review process for this project, as it is in an historic district.
- Appreciates the design team’s concern for the roof form and building material selection. Is concerned about the lack of natural light. Feels that there should be some skylights or other natural light opportunities in the roof.
  - Proponents stated that natural light is inappropriate for tennis facilities, due to glare problems and other technical considerations. Further stated that the design team examined many unsuccessful examples.
- Commends the team for the wonderful design, and believes that the design is not slavish to precedent. Is concerned about the size of the windows, and believes that they are out of scale with the bulk of the building.
  - Proponents stated that these are not actually windows. Further stated that the existing gymnasium near the project site has similar, three-panel windows.
- Appreciates the desire to create a formal exterior porch, but is concerned that this may be perceived as an entrance because of its scale.
- Encourages the design team to develop the faux windows as vertical elements that would moderate the low massing of the building.
- Encourages the design team to break up the mass of the building adjacent to the pedestrian path, between the trees and the building.
16 May 2002  

Project:  Sand Point/ Magnuson Park  
Community Center, Building #47  

Phase:  Construction Documents  

Previous Reviews:  1 November 2001 (Briefing), 7 December 2000 (Schematic Design), 20 July 2000 (Briefing), 9 September 1999 (Master Plan Briefing)  

Presenters:  Diane Hilmo, Seattle Parks and Recreation  
Gary Oppenheimer, Arai Jackson Architects and Planners  

Attendees:  see attached  

Time: .5 hour  

(SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00205)  

Action:  The Commission approves the final project design, recognizing that the existing budget constraints do not allow for full building rehabilitation, but afford only seismic and functional improvements.

Building #47, the old Navy recreation center, contains a 750-seat theater, a gym, a five-lane pool, recreational facilities, and other meeting rooms. Using Community Center Levy funds, the Parks Department will make structural seismic improvements, mechanical and electrical improvements, and ADA accessibility improvements. Due to budget constraints, the improvements to the pool and locker room, and other improvements in the south wing will not be completed.

ADA accessibility improvements include two new lifts, as this building is a series of stepped levels. There is not a single location to provide access to all of the levels.

The seismic improvements include a cast in-place shear wall behind an existing wall. Steel reinforcements will also be incorporated at some of the buildings columns. The facility will also be re-roofed, and structural diaphragms used to support the new roof. The existing pool area is concrete, and does not need seismic improvements.

The wall separating the gymnasium and the existing pool area will be upgraded to be a four-hour wall. A new boiler room will be constructed, and the restrooms will also be upgraded.

The basic construction budget, without all of the desired improvements, would be approximately 4.6 million dollars. The construction budget for all of the desired improvements would be approximately 8 million dollars.

The building’s exterior will be painted, and all of the improvements will comply with the historic guidelines.

**Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Thanks the Seattle Parks and Recreation Department for their efforts to improve this building as an important community facility.
16 May 2002  Project:  **Sand Point/ Magnuson Park**

**Drainage, Wetland/ Habitat Complex and Sports Field/ Courts**

**Phase:** Schematic Design

Previous Reviews: 1 November 2001 (Briefing), 9 September 1999 (Master Plan Briefing)

Presenters: C. David Hughbanks, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Guy Michaelsen, The Berger Partnership

Attendees: see attached

Time: .5 hour

**Action:** The Commission appreciates the presentation and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- The Commission commends the team for this exemplary and elegant landscape design project;
- commends the team for the intriguing wetland design and its powerful messages of reclamation and interdependence of uses;
- strongly supports the team’s successful balance and integration of diverse functions and uses on this site;
- applauds the resolution of competing geometries, and the integration of human-made and natural features;
- hopes that safety concerns do not compromise the design, especially the open expanse of wetland and its ponds;
- encourages the team to revisit the lakeshore access road design, and hopes that the terminus of this path is significant;
- recommends that the trail’s curves through the park be developed more strategically and creatively;
- encourages the team to retain some of the existing non-native plant materials, especially the row of poplars along the road to NOAA;
- hopes that the design team continues to think of this project as a celebration of artifice and an on-going experiment that explains its existence as a human-made eco-system;
- is excited by the educational opportunities in this project, given the above integration of a variety of uses, and especially given that the site design will evolve over time;
- strongly reaffirms the type and location of program uses on the site;
- commends the oversight of the Seattle Parks and Recreation Sand Point/ Magnuson Park team, and recognizes this project as a successful model for other large parks in Seattle and other cities; and
- approves schematic design.

The Drainage, Wetland/ Habitat Complex and Sports Field/ Courts have become an integral project of SPMP. At the last presentation to the Commission, the design had included significant public involvement. The design team has refined the design since the last presentation, but the main principles and design strategies have not changed. The project site is near the center of SPMP, and relates to so many of the entire park’s components.

74th Street is a primary vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle entrance, 70th Street is a pedestrian and bicycle entrance, and 65th Street is an under-utilized entrance to the park. Through this design, the 65th Street entrance will be emphasized. While the 74th Street entrance will not be improved, the pedestrian
connection between this entrance and the historic district will be improved. New parking will be provided to support the new uses.

The design principles guiding the site design relate to the two uses on the site, the high activity fields and the wetlands. Typically, these would not be compatible, but in this instance, both of the uses on the site are inter-dependant. The fill from the wetlands would be used to construct the fields, and the runoff from the fields would serve the wetlands. The design celebrates this inter-dependence. The design, of this natural wetland habitat complex, will not be artificially or aesthetically natural. The built environment will be merged and blurred into the natural environment. Fingers of the wetland habitat would continue into the sports fields, while the historic urban grid will be reflected in the earth forms of the wetland complex. The urban grid will be represented by the grid of the wetland ponds. These ponds will be approximately six to eighteen inches deep, and will be approximately forty square feet. At the western edge of the wetlands, their arrangement will be very orthogonal, becoming more organic in placement, to the east. Historically, this site was used as an air strip, and this history will also be reflected in the design as the air strip will be visible by the growth pattern of the vegetation, due to the compacted soil.

There will be large wetland habitat complex, with a number of different wetland systems, including an open-water pond fed by groundwater, which will be open year-round. The surface water wetland will be to the east of the site. Finally, the marsh meadow complex wetland will be a seasonal feature.

The athletic fields are on the western portion of the site, to take advantage of the existing topography. This is a very flat site, as it used to be an air-strip. The topography will be modified to ensure adequate drainage.

The beach drive is an exciting component of this project, and an opportunity to integrate the wetlands with Lake Washington. Because of the many non-native species coming to the site via Lake Washington, leaky berms will be used to move the water under the road into the lagoon. Ongoing maintenance efforts will be required at this site.

Vegetation, upland forest planting, will be used to blur the transition between the built and the natural environment.

A primary concern throughout the design process has focused on wetlands areas allowable for human activity. Some elements and features are inaccessible.

Education will be a valuable priority on this site, and the design team has been working to identify how this site can be used to teach people of all ages, from small children through college-age students. People should be able to learn about the site by experiencing it. A well-managed turf-field does not produce a significant amount of waste, but phosphates are produced. Three channels of water will be used for different systems, a bio-filtration swale, a chemical treatment system, and a mechanical treatment system. The runoff form the fields can be monitored and the different treatment systems could be compared.

Three buildings will be on the site, a restroom, a concession stand, and an educational pavilion. A cost-effective, prototypical building will be used.

**Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Would like to know how visitors would know that different areas of this site are off limits.
  - Proponents stated that vegetation could be used, but realistically, it would not provide a significant barrier. Suggested that there could be hidden fences, but there cannot be significant barriers throughout the site.
- Recognizes that the wetland ponds could be a safety concern.
- Proponents stated that they are aware of this, but people are not meant to walk in the ponds or sensitive wetland areas. Further stated that there would be an interpretive trail and paths that weave through the ponds. Further stated that all of the ponds would not be a hazard. The appropriate approach to the ponds for humans would be apparent.
- Proponents stated that the run runoff from the parking lot would also be treated. This is an educational opportunity that the design team is plans to take advantage of. The treatment system and a bio-swale system will run alongside the trail.
- Would like the design team to explain the lighting scheme for the athletic fields.
- Proponents stated that this is a controversial aspect of the project. The synthetic fields would be lighted with a shoebox feature, which is mounted horizontally. This ensures against upward glare. For each of these fields, there will be two lights at the infield, with four lights at the outfield. There will only be four lights on the little league fields. A soccer field typically as six lights. The athletic field lights will be used only when the fields are being used. All the parking lots will be lit, as well at the road entrances to the park. Security lighting will also be used, to light the pedestrian paths.
- Proponents stated that residents in View Ridge are concerned about the lights and their impact. Further stated that they are also concerned about the increased activity that would be allowed through the use of these lights, even though the book and plant sales held during the year actually generate more activity than a soccer game would. Further stated that there would not be any grandstands at the athletic fields.
- Commends the team for the brilliant exploration and integration of human culture and use, and the natural world. Agrees that the viewing platforms and paths should be strategic, to support the educational component of the project. Is also concerned about safety, but feels that fences would impede these opportunities. Believes that these concerns should be balanced. Recognizes that there are many dangerous opportunities in national parks.
- Proponents agreed and stated that there are access points to the waterfront at Carkeek Park, while there are four to five inch ADA barriers.
- Hopes that there is an opportunity to document and identify all of the different states of this park. Believes that the co-existence of uses and the many of the different scenarios and states of the environment would be exciting. Believes that this type of documentation could be educational as a public outreach tool. Believes that this complex meets so many different demands.
- Proponents agreed that this is a great point, and these misconceptions should be addressed.
- Applauds the deign team for the use of specific geometries. Recognizes that the natural expressions do not have to be arranged in an organic formation. Believes that this project is more man-made than an airfield. Believes that expressing the man-made qualities of this “natural” project in the design is exciting and appropriate. Hopes that it is very apparent that these wetlands were constructed.
- Believes that the balance between the natural and built elements is very elegant. Appreciates that the athletic fields and the constructed wetlands have not be distinctly separated.
**16 May 2002**  Project: Sand Point/ Magnuson Park, Several Projects  
Attendees:  
Kevin Bergsrud, Seattle Parks and Recreation  
George Deleau, Seattle Sports Advisory Council  
Eric Friedli, Seattle Parks and Recreation  
Marilynne Gardner, Seattle Finance Department  
Gregory Hill, Streeter and Associates, Architects  
Diane Hilmo, Seattle Parks and Recreation  
C. David Hughbanks, Seattle Parks and Recreation  
Peter Hummel, Anchor Environmental  
Youn Lee, Streeter and Associates, Architects  
Guy Michaelsen, The Berger Partnership  
Skip Norton, Seattle Sports Advisory Council  
Gary Oppenheimer, Arai Jackson Architects and Planners  
Mel Streeter, Streeter and Associates, Architects  
Mike Usen, Edaw, Inc., Historic Preservation Coordinator