Seattle Design Commission

APPROVED
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
August 7, 2008

Convener: 8:30am
Adjourned: 4:30pm

Projects Reviewed
Blume Yale Campus Woonerf & Swale
Downtown Stormwater Demand Management
Woodland Park Zoo West Entry
King County Metro RapidRide

Commissioners Present
Karen Kiest, Chair
Tasha Atchison
John Hoffman
Juanita LaFond
Norie Sato
Darrell Vange
Darby Watson

Staff Present
Guillermo Romano
Valerie Kinast
Tom Iurino
The Commission unanimously approves design development for Blume Yale Campus Woonerf and Swale and offers the following comments:

- Encouraged to see the response of the project with strong solutions for previous SDOT ROW issues.
- Encouraged by consolidation of vehicular entry on the North Campus.
- Concern that Yale along the South Campus may be too constrained for that street section and slope.
- Appreciate alternative material for cross walk at North Campus.
- Continue to resolve pedestrian movements and slope.
- Appreciate central courtyard and tipped to public.
- Additional attention should be given to end of Yale – recommends editing, simplifying design.
- Appreciate difficulty of the design at the end of the woonerf.
- Encourage continued design of the transition point of stormwater from off the building at the sidewalk edge.
- Review number of benches and spacing – there may be too many.
- Encourage room or opportunity for artwork in public spaces.
- Environmental graphical elements are great, evaluate size and spacing. Need not be so reverent of the salvaged beams.
- Make sure that signage is pedestrian scaled not vehicular – subservient to the woonerf and swale. Is it interpretive or vehicular? Need clear intention for each sign. Coordinate with other projects and any conflicts with SDOT.
- Consider bikes in your ROW discussion on Republican
- Thrilled to see cycle infrastructure within the project.
- Support the channelization of Republican.
- Support the paving materials.
• Appreciates the superb presentation with excellent graphics.

**Project Presentation**

**Project Background**

The key elements of this project are the woonerf, Yale Ave swale and Pontius swale. Other linking elements include the lighting fixtures for the project, which match others in the Cascade neighborhood, and the riveted four foot girders, which will be salvaged from the existing building and reused as environmental signage and as a tool to teach about sustainability.

**Swales**

On Yale, there is a 60 ft ROW, 26 ft for travel and parking. On Republican, the building is set back three feet, allowing for a seven foot sidewalk. That will enable the continuing of the neighborhood feel. It is now a full arterial. Curb bulbs have been removed to accommodate high traffic volumes. On Pontius, half street improvements will be provided. On Mercer, the team is tying into the Mercer redevelopment by extending the traffic calming devices, curb bulbs, and planting strip.

Sidewalk dimensions on Yale are now 10 feet. There is a continuation of the feel of the swale and walking corridor, as it now relates to new projects across the street. The opening to the plaza feels public because there are no gates, though it is private. It is a walk through, much like Alley 24, and it enables access to the four buildings. The plaza is recessed by four steps.

On Pontius the swale has been continued to blend in with the neighborhood. The building has been opened up more on the end to give more public space. The paving treatment matches the plaza side. There is a new canopy element on the Pontius elevation. This façade is also accommodating retail to make it more active.

Each building has a green roof that flows into an overflow pipe down to the swale and stormwater planters. Seating and lighting elements will tie the two projects together, leading people down to the overlook.

![Yale Avenue North](image1.png)

**Woonerf**

Previously there were three curb cuts into the building on Yale Ave. The DRB argued the number was too high for the end of the woonerf. The loading dock and parking has been revised so they have shared entrances. The woonerf begins at the north side of Yale where it crosses Mercer. The swale is on the west side with trees to bring people into the plaza and woonerf area. The typical ROW gradient has been modified to accommodate ADA compliant areas as well as enable the flow of vehicles and pedestrians. Improvements are being made to the WSDOT and SDOT ROW along the east at the end of the woonerf. There is a green paving on the east side of the woonerf. There will be glass aggregate mixed paving in the café area, as well as aggregate paving in the street, so the areas relate to one another. There is also more traditional SDOT paving. The paving finish has been alternated to lead the public to the end of the
woonerf. It is intended to feel special. There is a 20 ft wide area in the woonerf for vehicles, but you will have more of a feeling of walking through a plaza. The woonerf is sloping downward toward the north but will be revised to slope upward at the end to elevate the overlook.

Public Comments
Michael Dorcy, DPD

- DRB conditioned that the space along Pontius enable retail in the future and that more attention be paid to that streetscape as it is along Yale. Also required that the Pontius side be opened. On the north campus, the big concern was the three curb cuts. Now there is one entry.

Commissioners’ Comments

- Isn’t 26 feet tight on Yale?
  - SDOT says it works well for a pedestrian neighborhood.
- Excited to see the stormwater management and the removal of the curb bulbs on Republican for two travel lanes.
- Concern is on Yale, south campus, trying to do a lot in a little space. Crest in the street is no longer in the center. As a driver and a parker, that will make it feel constrained.
  - The width is similar to what exists on Capitol Hill. We want a residential walking street. SDOT has looked at these plans. They don’t see the north-south movement as an arterial. Also, the slope is there to take up the whole street. Also the sloping difference is not that great.
- Are maps in public ROW or private?
  - Public.
- Is there an alley vacation?
  - No.
- Green roofs take all the rainfall. What is the overflow mechanism?
  - Primary storm flows are all contained in the swale. Backflow would go into the street, then north on Yale, to Pontius to S. Lake Union. Also have drainage in plaza area.
- Will SDOT let you use the materials in the cross walk?
  - They’re looking at it.
• Outbound traffic per the diagram has 90% of traffic – heading down on Pontius and Republican. Pedestrians and autos will use the same intersection. Is there enough queuing space for people to wait to cross at that corner?
  o Can move planter strips in the future as need be.
• Should show contours on future drawings. Pedestrians don’t go up hills. Movement will be north south here, because it is flat. May affect retail.
• Central courtyard is resolving quite well.
• Encourage team to still focus on the north end of the woonerf. Without grades it’s hard to know what’s going on.
• The north edge of the project looks like a steep crazy man’s walk along the freeway. I think this area needs more development. There is too much going on in it.
• Need to know there is an overlook when you walk into the woonerf. It looks like a street end rather than an overlook. Needs more clarity and opening. Maybe remove the trees. Art? Drama? Deck? Simplify the materials. Show it related to the building to the west. Want to strengthen the invitation of the public into this area.
  o Wanted to get a better zone for the plaza. Constrained by garage entries to south. It is really noisy, and it only has a peek-a-boo view of Lake Union. We do have steel beam artwork. We’re still studying it. There is a view, an interesting urban view.
• Leery of the stormwater planter at the building face. Can’t imagine it’s doing a ton of work. I’d refine it. Not entirely clear that it is an amenity.
  o Maybe we make it a more visible color.
• You have a lot of benches, perhaps more than needed.
  o We’ll study that.
• Look at the spacing of vertical elements and benches. There is an overall corporate character, maybe adding some artwork would make it look more quirky. Environmental signage seems big and chunky. Maybe there is some way to give the beams some character, cut up, or something. There is room for art work somewhere in the project. Maybe you need to turn the signage so it is more visible.
  o Part of the beauty of the beams is their heft. The owner is not going to buy a large piece of public art. The size of the beams is needed for the scale.
• Where is the environmental signage in the overlook? Agree with the others that the public should be drawn to it. It needs to be refined. Don’t have the problem with the number of benches.
• Don’t need to be reverent to the girders. Could be fun to modify them.
• With regard to the end of street, I’d be spending my money at the other end – at the intersection. End the street appropriately, not trying to attract people.
  o Yes, the intersection is going to be the active end of the space. The paving pattern is intended to create a feeling that this is not private. We are not working really hard to make the end the most active place.
• The goal is that the street end should not feel private, and that it feels safe.
• Include bikes in your drawings. Lots of biking across Capitol Hill through this area. There are a few places along Republican where there could be conflict. Bike racks and other amenities?
  o Racks and showers in private spaces. Will add some racks to public spaces.
7 August 2008  Project:  Commission Business

Time: 2.0 hours

Action Items
A. Submit Timesheets
B. Minutes of July 17, 2008
   • Approved

Discussion Items
C. 40th Anniversary Celebration Planning
D. New member appointments update
D. New intern recruitment
SUMMARY

The Commission made the following comments on the Downtown Stormwater Demand Management briefing:

- Appreciates SPU briefing to the DC.
- Intrigued and encouraged by the wide variety of green stormwater techniques and opportunities.
- Concern over the balancing of tree canopy requirements, GSI integration and pedestrian adequacy within the limited sidewalk area.
- Looking forward to seeing more long term costs & benefits as the program moves forward.
- Appreciate how these techniques can be applied throughout the different city initiatives.

Project Presentation

Project Background
Tracy works with the low impact development program. She promotes alternatives to stormwater infrastructure when SPU is faced with making capital improvements. These green stormwater surface techniques have a design element that the people will see, so the Design Commission will have an interest in seeing them. SPU is revising the stormwater code, which promotes the use of green infrastructure, and is collaborating with the green factor measures by using a similar spreadsheet to help applicants use green stormwater techniques.

SPU manages city stormwater facilities and the 52 basins. The city is looking at different options for storm water management in the center city. The location of possible improvements and their benefits to the system during peak hours are being measured. The plan proposes not only the functional benefits of capacity and outflow, but also aesthetics, and environmental and cultural aspects.

Several concepts have been explored for downtown:
- Surface bio-retention – curb bulbs at the end (one third) of the block, has an overflow on a bad day, but picks it up most of the time
- Subsurface – terraced bio-retention cells
- Bio-retention cells – functional landscapes where you can fit them in
- Bio-retention tree wells – under grating
- Green streets
- Green roofs
- Green bio-filtration swale on the waterfront
Commissioners’ Comments

• There are many constraints for space in the ROW. Cost of sidewalk real estate is high.
• In terms of system costs, what are the relative values of the links in the chain?
  o Downtown vaults are a huge cost. Bio-retention is the cheapest and very effective.
    Permeable pavement facilities are next. Green roofs are the most expensive. A lot of the
decisions are based on what is feasible.
• Why even show green roofs if they are expensive and least effective?
  o It’s just an idea. If the city wants to be greener downtown, this is one way to make that
  happen.
• The idea of aesthetics is a big appeal. Look at Buster Simpson’s cistern on Vine.
• Operating considerations don’t always get factored in. I worry about the operating
  implications. We need to figure out the true costs.
• Like the checklist for small developers. Don’t have to do modeling. It’s something they can
  easily do.
• Appreciate being tied into the other city initiatives.
7 August 2008  
Project: Woodland Park Zoo West Entry  
Phase: Design Development  
Presenters: Monica Lake, Woodland Park Zoo  
Robert Shrosbree, Site Workshop  
Ed Weinstein, Weinstein AU  
Rob Kiker, Weinstein AU  
Attendees: Paul Andrews, Save Our Zoo  
Bill Bernstein, Site Workshop  
Christie Chacko, USC  
Craig Flamme, DPD  
David Schaefer, Woodland Park Zoo  

Time: 1.0 hours  

(RS169 /RS0612)  

**ACTION**

The Commission unanimously approves design development for Woodland Park Zoo West Entry and offers the following comments:

- Appreciates the relationship of the pergola element to the zoo store canopy but concerned about its relation to ticketing structure.
- Concern about lack of green within the plaza, recommends trees at gathering areas or to reflect the initial concept and value of a central tree.
- Concern that plant palette has not been developed far enough and is not described in the plan.
- Appreciate pursuit of west entry without the parking garage, recognizing people will also arrive by transit, not only cars.
- Appreciate the drain channel axis and encourage that the infiltration provides a strong statement and exploited as a stronger design element.
- Appreciate the gesture of the white wall on zoo store building that creates a sense of space and encourage to keep it free of signage, banners etc.
- Concern about pinch point at north entry.

**Project Presentation**

*Project Background*

The new West Entry is part of the WPZ long range plan and is the future consolidated entrance for the zoo’s existing north and west entries. The new entry provides connections to parking at north, parking at west and transit along Phinney Ave. Construction is planned to start in spring 2009 and completion is planned for spring 2010.

*Landscape*

Circulation from the southwest bus stop has been simplified. The path from the north parking into the entry plaza includes signage and upgraded paving to demarcate the entrance. A winding path connects Phinney Ave with the new entry plaza. It is ADA compliant and includes three respite spots that include boulders where people can sit. Eddies along the sides of the entry plaza that follow allow places to gather, get oriented or rest. There is a depth of existing vegetation along Phinney Ave that runs along the edge of the new west entry. The team plans to retain trees and vegetation where possible.
The sightlines from the entry plaza to the interior hub have been opened up. The entry plaza has been refined by simplifying the paving and integrating it with the buildings. The design articulates the paving in and around the buildings. Architectural concrete with modular scoring and toning is located in the central area and connects well to the asphalt. Seating walls along the edges are built into the landscape. The interior hub is strategically located at the entry plaza for entering and departing and uses sandstone flagstone. The potential for bronze animal art is located off to the edge of the plaza. Kiosks are no longer part of design, making the area where they were located more open. Buildings at south create an edge. At the center is a drainage element running east-west that acts as an organizing element.

A variety of paving textures are under consideration such as scored paving, concrete paving with contrasting color, and sandstone paving. Several types of drainage strip products under consideration – concrete, metal – which can be customized. Seat walls and boulders for seating are proposed along the winding paths.

The team is working with the zoo horticulturalist on plant selection that will offer seasonal color as well as favor native species. Work is also underway to integrate the stormwater infiltration drainage design with site design.

![Diagram of the plaza and surrounding area]

**Architecture**

The intent is to create simple buildings that form a backdrop for the landscape and don’t compete with the exhibits, specifically the penguin exhibit. Materials for the buildings include exposed architectural concrete, wood slats, black steel, and aluminum.

There have been several minor changes to the buildings since the last presentation. The zoo store has a uniform clerestory for daylighting as well as modification to the roof. It has a primary entrance from inside the zoo and the potential for a secondary entrance from the public plaza. The team has eliminated the north façade roof where it switched from sloping to flat. The ticketing membership pavilion includes restrooms for those in the public plaza. The ticketing booths have bi-fold screens that can close off booths when not in use. The roof of the zoo store interlocks with the permeable roof of the pergola at varying heights. The pergola has been disengaged from the zoo store roof to give it a greater presence to be a visual gateway. The pergola houses the entry gates which have wood panels to close off turnstiles that aren’t in use. The visitor’s assistance pavilion includes stroller rental area and first aid room.
Public Comments

- Why not just sidewalks and less paving. Concern about zoo store entry from public side. Questionable zoning wise and wonders if this is being raised to City Council?

Commissioners’ Comments

- What is the soffit material?
  - Exterior drywall.
- Where is the signage for visitor assistance?
- Consider the connection to Phinney and the condition of sidewalk along that parking lot. Stroller and ADA ramps would be helpful.
- Plaza is not as large as it appears at the scale drawings are shown. Still, on a day when there are not a lot of people the plaza could be aided by more vegetation. Trees shown are not as large as they will eventually be. Previously there was a large scale tree, encourage designers to look at that again. Consider breaking up pavement. Materials are straight forward – paved concrete plaza.
- Concern that in the flow of visitors from north parking lot to ticketing the seat bench is right in the middle of the desired line of flow. Worried there could be congestion with people flowing from west.
- Trench drain is a good connector between outside and inside, it’s a strong element using steel, this might be lost if formed from concrete. Look at how it meets the pergola. Pergola relation to ticketing building may be too disconnected.
- Not much clarity with plants at this point. Commission would like to see something more definite than just photos in the future projects that the zoo brings for review.
  - Design team will be working with zoo horticulture staff who ultimately select, purchase and install all planting at the zoo.
- Seem to be committed to a lot of hardscape so there needs to be attention to the quality of it. The drain should also have just as much attention because of this.
- Seating along the edge is all aligned, and people in the eddies may prefer to sit down in groups for conversation.
The Design Commission made the following comments on the RapidRide briefing:

- Appreciates King County Metro briefing to the DC.
- Strongly encourage providing trash receptacles and benches at all stops.
- Would like more design consideration to shelter prototypes, especially when looking at the longevity of the project.
- Consider orienting RapidRide signs perpendicular to the sidewalk.
- Encourage the project team to return to the Commission for support in the shelter design and corridor wide design.
- Excited about RapidRide potential in the City of Seattle.
- Explore the viability of newspaper kiosks before actually pursuing the idea.

Project Presentation

Project Background

The goal of RapidRide is to provide more effective transit service that is timely, convenient and more flexible. Funding for the project is being provided through Bridging the Gap and Transit Now, among other sources.

There are five RapidRide Corridors.

- A-Line from Tukwila link station to Federal Way transit center
- B-Line from Bellevue transit center to Redmond transit center
- C-Line from Westwood Village in West Seattle to downtown Seattle
- D-Line from Ballard from NW. 85th St. to downtown Seattle
- E-Line from Aurora Village Transit Center at N 200th St. to downtown Seattle (along Aurora Ave N.)

In total there will be 53 miles of lines, which will be a major arterial corridor type bus service. Exact alignments will be approved by King County Council after community processes are completed. The corridor improvements will also include 100 new buses. They will be hybrid and designed to move people in, out and around the bus quickly. There will be three doors, and more space for standing with 47 seats and 24 standing spaces. Features like bike racks, wifi and security cameras will also be included. Metro is
currently negotiating with cities for signalization and fiber optic use. Metro is looking at using a Coordinator in the control center that focuses on RapidRide service and who manages bus spacing.

A new fare payment system will be tested on the A-Line. Passengers can pay at the station before boarding and only riders that are paying cash need to go through the front doors. Metro police will periodically check for fare payment.

Bus service will be frequent, running at 10 minute intervals during peak and 15 minutes during off-peak hours. There is a reliability issue because RapidRide will operate on arterials. However, roadway improvements, signal priority, and BAT lanes are all measures to ensure the timeliness of the buses. The RapidRide plan proposes half-mile spacing between stops, eliminating about half of the stops currently in the same corridors. Three types of passenger stops are proposed. A set of amenities that use readily available parts have been chosen and can be used depending on the type and location of the stop. In total 65 stations and 75 other stops are proposed. All stations have a standard passenger activated signal beacon to signal the bus driver that someone is waiting.

Station has the highest number of amenities, which include a shelter, tech pylon with fare station, real time sign, and newspaper kiosk. Shelter elements can be added as needed depending on use. Shelter design allows people to wait both under the roof and outside and the waiting area will be between 8-12 feet deep. The structure will be silver and gray tubes with red glazing frames. Uplighting within the structure and lighting of shelter blade sign will be provided. The technology pylon contains real time sign, map case, and ticket processor. Overall design is still in development.

Enhanced Stop includes a smaller shelter, lighting, vertical sign, but not a pay station. Shelters could be added and grouped together as ridership increases. An example of a location for an Enhanced Stop would be on a curb bulb.

Standard Stop would consist of a stand alone blade sign, a bus stop flag & post but no shelter and no tech pylon.

Service and facilities in the three RapidRide lines in Seattle (C, D, and E) are scheduled to be implemented between 2011 and 2013. Route recommendations for these lines will be submitted to King County Council for approval after the route structures are determined.

The C-Line ia a 12 mile long route that runs from Westwood Village to downtown via Faunterley, Alaska Junction and the Viaduct. Metro has partnered with the City of Seattle and is currently in the design process the street improvements to include bus bulbs, shelter footings, fiber installation and signal upgrades. Around 20 stations would be installed as well as approximately 15 will get the enhanced or standard level of amenities. Implementation would take place in 2011.

The D-Line is a 7.5 mile on alignment that will run between NW 85th in Ballard through uptown, lower Queen Anne to downtown. Routing north of the Ballard Bridge is still undetermined; alternatives include 15th NW and 24th NW. The route structure is still undetermined; the possibility of connecting it to the C-Line for a continuous route is being explored. Around 20 stations would be installed as well as approximately 30 will get the enhanced or standard level of amenities. Implementation would take place in 2012.
Metro has partnered with the City of Seattle for the street improvements to include bus bulbs, shelter footings, fiber installation and signal upgrades. Under the Bridging the Gap Program, Metro partnered with the City for improvements along 15th Avenue where bus street panels were recently installed.

The E-Line, a 12.5 mile long route will run from the southern end of downtown to Aurora Village Transit Center in Shoreline, where it will connect to Swift service to Everett, Community Transit’s BRT service, scheduled for implementation at the end of 2009. It will virtually replicate the current 358 Metro bus route. Around 30 stations would be installed as well as approximately 25 will get the enhanced or standard level of amenities. Implementation would take place in 2013.

All lines will converge at 3rd Avenue downtown. Bus stop pattern options will be exclusive stops or shared bus stops and will be within a few blocks of both streetcar and light rail stations. Metro and SDOT will conduct a traffic study to examine street operations and capacity. A recommendation by the end of this year--on the RapidRide stop pattern will be coordinated with Viaduct replacement planning which will determine the role transit will play in mitigating construction impacts.

The relationship of RapidRide to downtown planning is important. Metro will work with City Design to achieve the shared objective of providing head coverage for transit customers that blends into the streetscape- wherever possible. Neither Real Time Information Signs nor Ticket vending machines are planned for downtown stops.

There is a program to replace all Metro stop signage; the program includes RapidRide. The new signs are meant to be easier to see and use, and will create compatibility with Metro’s brand color palette. New sign family has been developed for the entire Metro system, including signs of different sizes for downtown, urban centers and neighborhood bus stops. The example shown on the slide would replace existing kiosks in downtown. New signs would include destination information for routes and connecting information for other modes of transportation, both of which are not presently available on signs today. Prototype review by stakeholders and SDOT have been carried out. Metro will be reviewing structural specs for permitting and begin fabrication this fall an 18 month implementation to begin in 2009.

Public Comments
SDOT
- Involved in C-Line and intend to be involved in each of other lines to partner on project. Working closely on roadway and sidewalk improvements that City can carry out to help move the RapidRide project along.

Commissioners’ Comments
- What makes this more train-like and differentiates this from other bus service?
  - Metro currently has existing BRT elements, like the bus tunnel and queue jump at Montlake Bridge, but RapidRide will employ BRT elements in a coordinated fashion along the whole corridor. The design of the bus itself as well as reliability because of frequency, signal priority, special lanes, and payment system.
- Will other lines be eliminated and replaced by this?
  - Yes, where it would be redundant to have both. Fewer deviations, more straight and easy to understand.
- Additional standing room is great. Is the bus able to kneel?
  - Yes, there will be kneeling and a ramp at the front entrance. The design of the front area will be wider and easier to maneuver through.
- Why are we waiting until 2011 if no new tracks or roadways are needed?
  - Transit plan funding is over a ten year period. Also, started with A and B lines while determining the details of what to do in downtown Seattle.
• Simple stop with info pylon, bench etc. may be problematic because it doesn’t have a trash receptacle.
• The shelter design is not inspiring. Overlake shelter has zip. Tubular steel is bland. Considering this is a prototype it leaves much to be desired. The stop in front of Union Station a bit more interesting.
• Why is RapidRide signage along street side fascia? Who can see it there? Wouldn’t it be more meaningful perpendicular to sidewalk?
• Shelters look remarkably similar to today’s, except higher windscreens. The shelter will be opportunity for brand. After work with Sound Transit this design appears stodgy. Opportunities with tubular steel include going up such as artwork or angles.
  o Will take comments back to Hewitt. Higher roof, metal not transparent roof, overhags and vertical elements and uplighting will create much better place for pedestrians. Also considering budget for the whole project. What shops can accomplish is also a constraint.
• Problem not with circulation and function but how to make it match the sophistication required in this area. Materials are an issue.
• In West Seattle are you coordinating with wayfinding system there?
  o The information between the West Seattle group and Metro is being exchanged. Not much overlap.
• Is lighting typically Metro?
  o Options are based on location. If community can take over maintenance there is the option of other lighting.
• Illumination of station will have a good effect.
• Facility improvements to make this a more reliable corridor are a lot of work. If you need a community resource the Commission looks at projects, such as the Aurora corridor, and facilitates coordination.
• How does this mesh with light rail system?
  o Coordination of signage information.
• When will shelter design be finalized?
  o At concept design stage. Physical design of shelter just starting.