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APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

January 15, 2009
Convened 8:30 am
Adjourned 4:30 pm

Projects Reviewed

SR 519 Phase II Grade Separation
Rapid Ride Passenger Facilities
Conner Homes West Seattle Junction
Madison Valley Stormwater Improvements
Swale on Yale
Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement

Commissioners Present

Mary Johnston, Chair
Andrew Barash
Graham Black
Brendan Connolly
John Hoffman
Julie Parrett
Nathan Polanski
Dennis Ryan
Norie Sato

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Valerie Kinast
Tom Iurino
Shannon Glass

Celebrating 40 Years 1968-2008



January 15, 2009 **Project:** **Madison Valley Stormwater Improvements**

Phase: Design Development

Last Reviewed: September 18, 2008; November 6, 2008

Presenters: Brent Middleswart, SPU
Peter Nelson, Karen Kiest Landscape Architects

Attendees: Nate French, RISD
Celia Kennedy, SPU
Ruri Yampolski, Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs

Time: .75 hour

(169/RS0607)

ACTION

The Commission thanks the design team for their presentation of the Madison Valley Stormwater Improvements project, and unanimously approves the design development phase with the following comments:

- Although the Commission appreciates the clear presentation, there is information that would have been helpful as well as expected at this stage of design development, such as specifics on the lighting, and plant material type (and a plant list), and how they are depicted (shape, leafiness—dense or lacy, for example) and height. This will be useful for public meetings and help clarify the design for the public as well as for us.
- Commissioners applaud the simple and easy to understand elements. The metaphor of the dry creek is clearly used.
- The Commission appreciates the idea of not installing traditional play equipment and instead providing possibilities for informal children’s play, such as the boulders placed in sand.
- Please consider placing the boulders only on the southeast side of the path to strengthen the order of the design.
- Commissioners appreciate the move to make the open lawn area larger, and wrapping it around so that it receives more sun exposure. We appreciate how the lawn could be used in different ways, including as amphitheater seating, rolling down the hill, sledding, which this openness allows.
- The Commission asks the design team to make refinements to how the stream bed terminates at the cage end.
- There is some reserve among Commissioners regarding the squarish shape of the gabion overlook element and how the path and the overlook meets the gabions.
- Consider limiting the number of surface types used for the paths, while retaining opportunities for surprises or special moments that artists might contribute towards. We appreciate simplifying the stone to a single type, whether as boulders, cut or as gabions.
- Consider maintenance when selecting the plant materials.

Project Presentation

Project Update

The larger project is planned in two phases: the expansion of the 30th Avenue and East John Street detention facility, which will undergo construction next summer; and the pipe conveyance to the Washington Park Arboretum. This is a critical area for flooding and sewage backups. There will be three meetings with the Design Commission this spring and summer for the pipe conveyance phase.

Design Update

The southwest corner of the site has been retained as an entry. A ramp leads to a walk that transverses the entire site as the main form of circulation. A secondary circulation follows the creek walk. The walk has been lowered to thirty inches in order to retain views. It is constructed of gabions and decking. The gabions allow water to flow through in a storm event. The central plaza is comprised of concrete with a special finish. The marsh will have plantings which signify a stream.

Granite is being considered as a common material throughout the site, in gravel, concrete, and boulders. The stone garden is an area that will allow for children's play, comprised of sand and boulders. The hillside features granite risers, possibly recycled granite curbs from SDOT. The plaza is comprised of concrete with a special finish, with seating provided by boulders. It is considered as the central gathering spot during good weather, with cut granite benches.

There are boulders along the dry streambed. The secondary walk has been widened to eight feet. It overlooks the lawn, and terminates in an overlook space.

The planting palette is mostly native trees, vine maples, and hemlocks along the edge to buffer the edge of the park from the neighbors. One continuous horizontal board cedar fence is envisioned for the edge.

One way to reveal the function of the site is thinking of the rolling lawn as "steps" of contours. One potential idea for the artist is to reveal that function. So far, the educational aspect of the design is not explicit, though there are signs explaining the function of the site.

Public Comments

Ruri Yampolski, Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs

A call for an artist has been issued, with a goal of selecting one by March 2009. The budget for the art is \$170,000.

Commissioners' Comments and Questions

Can you clarify the surface materials?

Granite, concrete with oyster shell finishes, quarter inch gravel on the path along the creek, and gravel for the maintenance access.

Are there existing street trees?

The purple leaf plums are gone.

What tree species are being considered? For further reference, it is helpful to include a plant list.

Oregon ash, black birch, *Amelanchier alnifolia*, red maples, ornamental pears.

It seems that Amelanchiers may create a barrier in the low areas; a low-growing plant may be preferable to preserve a sense of openness.

The rectangle of the central overlook seems out of place, rather than tied into the forms of the rest of the project. It seems like an abrupt change from the gabion decking.

It is intended as a central counterpoint from the naturalized forms.

The gabion decking is very elegant, and the geometric form slams into it.

Encourage more, rather than less, continuity. Reserve special paving treatments for nodes.

The simplicity of the design is great, and its response to our comments.

Is the rockery on the east side a standard rockery, or gabions?

It is a low, standard rockery or granite curbing.

Will the benches be nice spots for sitting and lingering, rather than a narrow perch?

Like the change from the amorphous overlooks to the different form.

The intersection between the walkway and the form of the node needs some resolution.

Have there been any more public meetings?

No, but there is one scheduled January 28, 2009.

Consider lighting and CPTED concerns. Will maintenance be done by SPU?

Yes.

Complement incorporating the boulders instead of playground equipment. Might be good to place them on the southeast side. Question the shape of the open area on the south side; perhaps the ying-yang shape needs to change.

Might look at how the path emerges from that point, so that the shape makes sense in relation to both of the paths.

The dry creek bed starts abruptly on one end, and seems to die. Perhaps the planting could carry through that area, or the dry creek bed stone could be carried through the plaza.

Appreciate the open, rolling lawn, which could be used as an impromptu amphitheater.

The elements are there, in the right relationship to each other; our comments have to do with the relationships between materials, and how the paths meet the nodes.

Will be great to see what the artist might do; the simplicity of the design will allow those elements to come together.