

# Waterfront – Main Corridor North of Union St

**Osama Quotah**, Chair

**Shannon Loew**, Vice Chair

**Bernie Alonzo**

**Brodie Bain**

**Lee Copeland**

**Thaddeus Egging**

**Megan Groth**

**Martin Regge**

**Ellen Sollod**

**Ross Tilghman**

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## Commissioners Present

Osama Quotah, Chair  
Shannon Loew, Vice Chair  
Bernie Alonzo  
Lee Copeland  
Megan Groth  
Ellen Sollod

## Commissioners Excused

Thaddeus Egging  
Martin Regge  
Ross Tilghman

## Project Description

The Main Corridor North of Union St encompasses the area between the Seawall and 1st Ave from Union St to Battery St. It includes three broad zones. The “lowland” areas include the waterfront promenade, Union St Pier/Waterfront Park, and Aquarium Plaza; these have also been reviewed as part of the Central Public Open Spaces. The “bluff” zone begins where Elliott Way passes the Overlook Walk and rises to Lenora and Blanchard Streets in Belltown. This meets the “upland” area, where the future intersection of Elliott Way and Western Ave would create an open development site.

The Main Corridor would include general purpose lanes, loading and bus drop-off zones, separate cycle tracks, and sidewalks. The bike facilities would begin further south along the waterfront and at Pine St extend both uphill to Belltown and north along Alaskan Way, where they would tie into the existing bike lanes on the east side of the street.

## Meeting Summary

The Design Commission reviewed and unanimously approved the schematic design of the Main Corridor of the Waterfront North of Union Street. This is a core project of the overall Waterfront Seattle project. The Design Commission approved the concept design for this project on January 23, 2014. The Commission has since reviewed other core projects at the concept design level, including the Central Public Open Space and Overlook Walk. The Commission has also reviewed and approved the Main Corridor South of Union Street at schematic design.

## Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

**September 18, 2014****2:30 – 5:00 pm****Type**CIP Project  
Waterfront Core Project**Phase**

Schematic Design

**Previous Reviews**[January 23, 2014](#)**Project Team****Andrew Barash**  
CH2M Hill**Ethan Bernau**  
Shields Obletz Johnson**Angela Brady**  
Office of the Waterfront**Tatiana Chouluka**  
James Corner Field Operations**James Corner**  
James Corner Field Operations**Marshall Foster**  
Office of the Waterfront**Mike Johnson**  
Office of the Waterfront**Guy Michaelson**  
Berger Partnership**Andrew tenBrink**  
James Corner Field Operations**James Tenyenhuis**  
James Corner Field Operations**Attendees****Laura Becker**  
SDOT**Shane DeWald**  
SDOT**Duane Kelly**  
Friends of the Waterfront**Martha Lester**  
City Council Central Staff**Cary Moon**  
Design Oversight Subcommittee**Summary of Presentation**

Tatiana Chouluka introduced the project area with photographs of existing conditions. She showed the previous site plan from January 2014 summarized the Commission's feedback on the concept design. The presentation is dated September 18, 2014, and available [available on the Commission website](#).

Several diagrams illustrated how topography and existing structures have guided much of the design. Ms. Chouluka explained that the overall strategy for materials and planting has evolved since concept design. She then detailed the specific changes to each zone of the project, beginning in the south with adjustments to the Union St intersection. In each instance, the drawings presented showed a higher level of design detail than the Commission saw at concept design.

Throughout these slides, Ms. Chouluka identified proposed green stormwater infrastructure (GSI). She also showed the proposed design for the promenade railing, which would reuse salvaged ekki wood from the Seawall replacement.

**Agency Comments**

none

**Public Comments**

none

**Summary of Discussion**

Overall, the Commission responded positively to the proposed design and appreciated the level of detail in the presentation. The Commissioners saw several important positive changes in the design in response to their feedback from January 2014.

The Commission was interested in additional detail on a few elements, such as 1) how the project transitions materially and functionally at its north edge to Alaskan Way and 2) the placement and function of the proposed GSI components. Though part of the Central Public Open Spaces project, Aquarium Plaza was another point of interest; the Commissioners found this area crowded with objects and suggested giving each more space and/or "blurring" them into one another. A minority of Commissioners found the fish sculpture derivative of other artworks and questioned its placement in the plaza; overall the Commission desired a greater understanding of the form and function of the sculpture. There was also interest in seeing more detail for the stair connecting the Pike Street Hillclimb landing with Overlook Walk.

Commissioners were particularly supportive of the use of salvaged wood for the promenade railings and the potential reuse of the sign bridge over the Alaskan Way Viaduct. They suggested keeping the existing signs on it. They appreciated edge treatments along Elliott Way like the proposed planter boxes but cautioned that, if not given adequate attention and care, they could end up marginalized and liable to collect trash.

The Commission also saw a lot of improvement at the intersection of Elliott and Western in Belltown and the aligned pedestrian connection to the Blanchard Street Overlook. Given the planned open spaces to the north at the portal site and south along the waterfront, the opportunity site between Elliott Ave and Western Ave seemed like a good candidate for surplussing for other community needs.

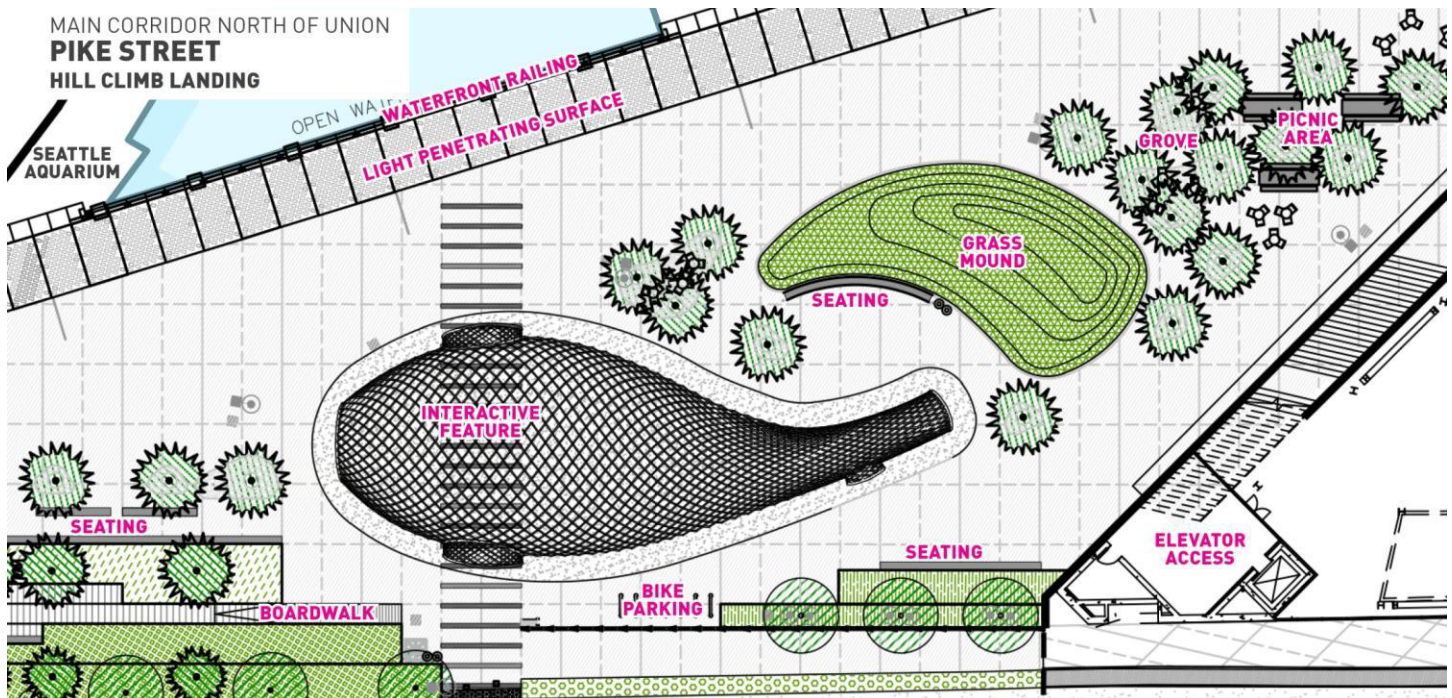
**Action**

The Design Commission thanked the waterfront team for the presentation of the Main Corridor North of Union Street. The Commission was encouraged to see the design progress from concept and appreciated the team's thorough presentation and discussion.



With a **vote of 7 to 0**, the Design Commission approved the schematic design for the Main Corridor North of Union Street with the follow comments and recommendations:

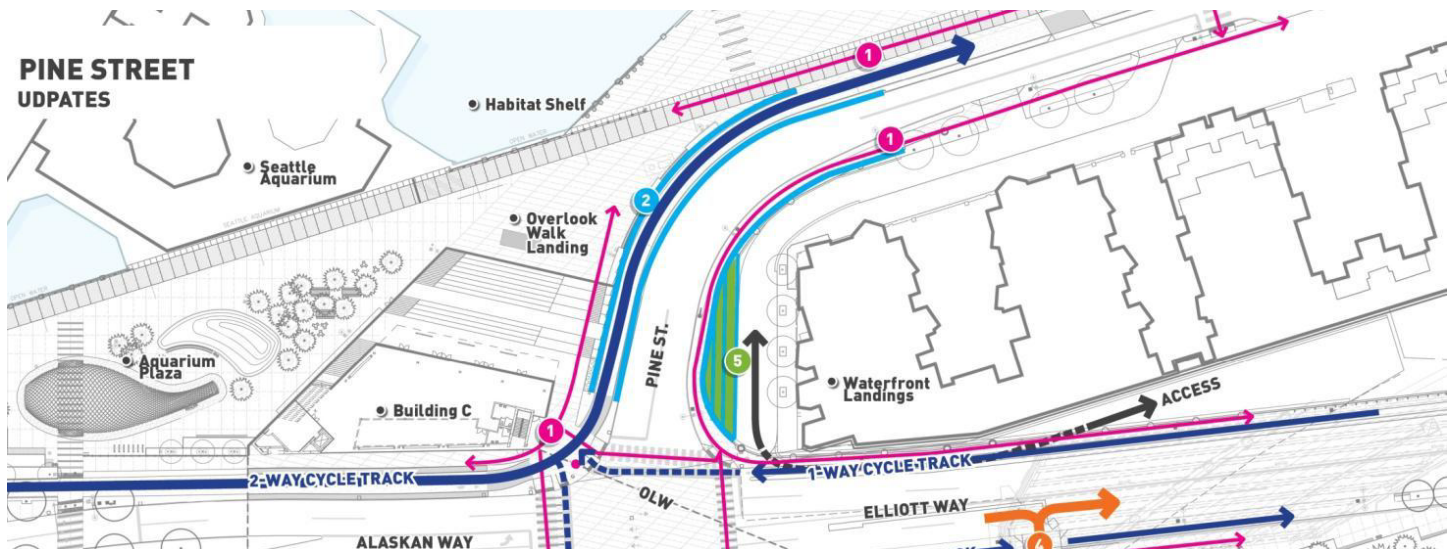
1. At Union St, integrating art into the playground design will be essential to its success. The Commission supports the location of the playground and sees relocating the kiosk north of right-of-way centerline as a positive change. Consider together how the pedestrian crossing at Union St relates to Union St Pier.
2. Leverage the existing landscape at the Fix/Madore Plaza. We recognize the circulation challenges in this area and appreciate efforts to improve the pedestrian experience, particularly by relocating the access to the Pike Place Market Garage under the Overlook Walk stair to remove vehicles from the landing of the Pike Street Hillclimb. Look closely at the details and experience of using that stair.
3. Explore additional opportunities to integrate salvaged material into the design as you have with the promenade handrails.
4. Study the number and placement of objects in Aquarium Plaza (below). Give more space around them rather than crowding this zone. Consider transitioning these objects into one another as you have successfully with paving treatments.



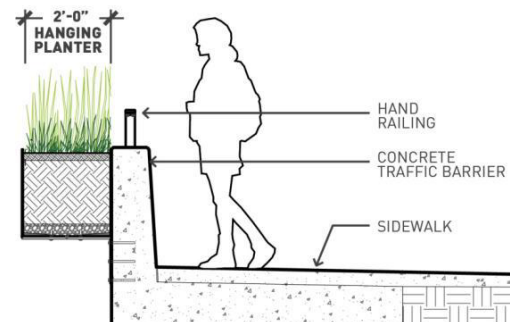
5. There is some uncertainty among the Commission about the fish sculpture (right) and a desire to understand its form and design in more detail. Do not let the fish sculpture preclude the opportunity for art to be fully integrated into the design for Pier 62/63 and the Central Public Open Space.
6. Ensure the design and programming for Building C at the plaza level will successfully activate this space. Provide more information about the Seattle Aquarium's role in the activation of the plaza, recognizing that their role is evolving.
7. Provide greater clarity about how the project is intended to transition to Alaskan Way at the north edge of the project boundary, in both the short- and long-term.
8. On Pine St, show more detail about how the cycle track and retaining walls transition at Alaskan Way near the light penetrating surface functionally, materially, and formally (below). The separation of cars and bicycles on Pine St feels strong and improved in section and elevation. The Commission appreciates that the project team has considered Waterfront Landings in the proposed design.







9. The one-way cycle tracks on Elliott Way are an improvement over the previous configuration. Take care when detailing important elements like the planter boxes along the edge of Elliott Way (below right) so they do not become marginalized or prone to collecting trash.
10. Be diligent in choosing, evaluating, and prototyping materials and coatings for durability and effect.
11. While the Commission recognizes the uncertainty about the future of the Lenora Street Bridge, the existing plantings are valuable given their scale and should be retained if at all possible.
12. Continue to develop direct, usable connections at Blanchard St, which has improved significantly from concept design (below). The potential development parcel could be an opportunity to serve latent community needs and might be less valuable as open space given the nearby portal site at Battery St.



The Commission will continue to review the schematic design for core projects of the waterfront redevelopment and anticipates reviewing the Main Corridor North of Union Street again at design development.

