

APPROVED
MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Mike McGinn
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Marshall Foster
Planning Director, DPD

Tom Nelson, Chair

Osama Quotah, Vice Chair

Bernie Alonzo

Brodie Bain

Megan Groth

Laurel Kunkler

Shannon Loew

Martin Regge

Ellen Sollod

Michael Jenkins
Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Joan Nieman
Administrative staff

November 21, 2013

Convened 8:30 am

Adjourned 5:00 pm

Projects Reviewed

North Transfer Station

Waterfront – Main Corridor South of Union Street

Commissioners Present

Osama Quotah, Vice Chair

Brodie Bain

Megan Groth

Shannon Loew (arrived 10:30 am, excused 1:00 – 2:15 pm)

Laurel Kunkler (arrived 9:00 am)

Martin Regge

Ellen Sollod

Commissioners Excused

Tom Nelson, Chair

Bernie Alonzo

Staff Present

Michael Jenkins (excused 11:30 am)

Valerie Kinast

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November 21, 2013
1:30 – 5:00 pm

Project: Waterfront – Main Corridor South of Union Street
Phase: Concept Design
Previous Reviews: None

Presenters: Tatiana Choulika James Corner Field Operations
Steve Pearce SDOT
Andrew Barash CH2M Hill

Attendees: Jeff Benesi Mithun
Angela Brady SDOT
Lee Copeland Mithun
Brook Jacksha Magnusson Klemencic
Mike Johnson SDOT
Mark Mariano Schemata Workshop
Matt Martenson Berger Partnership
Kate Martin Park My Viaduct
Hannah McIntosh SDOT
Genna Nashem DON

Recusals and Disclosures

Andrew Barash, a member of the Waterfront project team, disclosed that he was a member of the Design Commission from 2008 to 2011.

Purpose of Review

The purpose of this meeting was to review the Concept Design for the Main Corridor of the Waterfront South of Union Street consisting of the promenade, bike track, and Alaskan Way. This is a core project of the overall Waterfront Seattle project. The Design Commission, along with the Planning Commission, provided input on the overall concept design completed in 2012. The Design Commission has previously reviewed smaller components of the overall plan, including Railroad Way and Union St itself, as well as the Seawall, which is closely linked to the design of the waterfront promenade. Other core projects, such as the Main Corridor north of Union, the PC-1 site at Pike Place Market, and the Central Public Space area that contains the Overlook Walk, Aquarium Plaza, and Pier 62/63 will come to the Commission later this year and in 2014.

Summary of Proposal

The Main Corridor South of Union St encompasses the area between the Alaskan Way Seawall and 1st Ave from S King St to Union St. The proposed project includes a redesign for Alaskan Way, improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure along the waterfront, and numerous intersections with east–west downtown streets. The proposed Alaskan Way varies in scale and design across three segments: S King St to Yesler Way (8 lanes), Yesler Way to Spring St (4 lanes + loading), and Spring St to Union St (4 lanes + parking). The proposal incorporates ferry queuing and loading requirements at Colman Dock among other needed functions. The proposed cycle track connects with the broader bicycle network in the downtown area. Several kiosks, shelters, and seating elements are proposed to punctuate the promenade. A beach is proposed at S Washington St, and a transit hub would integrate the ferry and bus systems at Colman Dock.

Summary of Presentation

Steve Pearce introduced the project and explained that this is one of the first projects that will come to the Commission at 30% design. The Main Corridor North of Union St will come in January. He went over the functions the street must serve.

Andrew Barash and Tatiana Choulika explained the engineering of the roadway, bicycle paths, and walkways and reviewed the presentation dated November 21, 2013, and available on the [Design Commission website](#).

The design team offered several case studies for the Alaskan Way redesign from boulevards around the world: Park Avenue, New York City; the Champs-Élysées, Paris; Paseo de la Reform, Mexico City; Avenida Paulista, São Paulo; Passeig de Gracia, Barcelona; Michigan Avenue, Chicago; and Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C. These precedents demonstrate four design elements that inform the proposed design: relatively wide sidewalks, adequate buffer between pedestrians and traffic, pedestrian-oriented intersections, and designed medians.

The team then showed a design motif inspired by the intersecting tidelines, pier lines, and slip lines present along the waterfront. Materials have been inspired by the textures and structures of a working waterfront.

Summary of Discussion

The Commission was pleased to see the concept design for such a large segment of the central waterfront. There was a discussion of several public space issues. Commissioners considered how the road alignment creates space to the east and west and discussed the idea of guidelines or incentives for activating those edges. Related to the case studies, it was brought up and discussed that the waterfront is at the edge, not in the middle of a built area, and thus fundamentally different. There was consensus about the need for places to rest or stop along the promenade and a desire for any program or kiosk elements to look elegant rather than shuttered when they are closed.

The proposed motif of intersecting tidelines, slip lines, and pier lines was praised, and the Commission encouraged the team to be bolder and have more fun in the design. There was discussion about the distinction between natural and manicured plantings; some Commissioners favored the former, though both were part of the concept design adopted by Council with Design Commission input in 2012. The Commission wanted further information about the team's approach to creating a public space enjoyed by all and in this vein referred to Occidental Park and Victor Steinbrueck Park.

Agency Comments

none

Public Comments

Kate Martin, Park My Viaduct, suggested that the upper deck of the Alaskan Way Viaduct be preserved from Pike Place Market. She asked the team to simplify and scale back the design. She noted that, despite Alaskan Way being a truck route, trucks were not shown.

Lee Copeland, a community member, explained that there are alleys in the block to the east of the street, so fewer access points are needed on that side of street. He believes the idea of lines is unique to Seattle and appropriate. A concern of his since the beginning is whether the kiosks should be in the centerline of east-west streets or if siting at the edge of the ROW line would be better.

Action

The Design Commission thanked the Waterfront Seattle project team for the presentation of the Main Corridor South of Union.

With a **vote of 7 to 0**, the Design Commission approved the 30% design of the Waterfront Main Corridor South of Union with the following recommendations:

Street

1. Consider developing design guidelines for the east side of the corridor that anticipate activities and incentivize preservation of the character of existing historic buildings along this edge. When the next phase is reviewed, show the guidelines and how the project design responds to what is being anticipated on that side of the road.
2. Ensure that planting beds have adequate depth to prevent trees from uprooting in the cycle track.
3. As you further resolve service access, be mindful of retaining sightlines through plantings for the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.
4. Continue defining and evaluating sustainability issues above and beyond stormwater systems. Present additional opportunities at 60% design.

Promenade

1. Refine the architectural expression to be more reflective of the character of the Seattle Waterfront.
2. Further explore the relationship of the kiosks to the overall architectural character of the waterfront. The idea that they are a part of a family is strong, but ensure they are siblings of each other, not clones. Reexamine their location at the intersections. Think of how they will look when they're closed.
3. Consider views looking west from higher points in the city and from across Alaskan Way, and allow it to influence the design and placement of structures within the intersections.
4. Explore ways to extend the richness of the paving patterns and materiality of the ground plane into the above-grade elements such as shelters and kiosks.
5. Think further about the unique juncture of salt- and freshwater at the Waterfront and how this might be reflected within the urban landscape and surface water management systems.