

Overlook Walk & Seattle Aquarium

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Commissioners Present

Ross Tilghman, Chair
John Savo, Vice Chair
Evan Fowler
Rachel Gleeson
Laura Haddad
Mark Johnson
Rick Krochalis
Ross Tilghman

Commissioners Excused

Ben de Rubertis
Brianna Holan

Project Description

The Overlook Walk is a signature element of the City's Office of the Waterfront proposal for the redesign of the waterfront following the removal of the Alaskan Way Viaduct. The walk is a series of walkways, stairs, plazas, and overlooks that provide a key connection between the waterfront and Pike Place Market. The stairs orient towards Pier 62/63 and the waterfront promenade landing, both of which are elements of the proposed Main Corridor project. The Overlook Walk also includes two buildings, one of which is already constructed, that will be used for a variety of tenant spaces and arts and cultural facilities. The Overlook Walk will also provide a seamless connection to the Seattle Aquarium Ocean Pavilion's rooftop, which will include a series of public spaces, amphitheater, vegetation, and public stair and elevator.

The Seattle Aquarium Ocean Pavilion is an extension of the Seattle Aquarium and will provide additional exhibit and educational space. The Aquarium facility will integrate with the south stair and adjacent spaces that are a part of the Overlook Walk. The 3-story facility will also include public spaces, amphitheater, and educational space on the rooftop, which is directly connected to the pathways and public spaces along the upper portions of the Overlook Walk and is publicly accessible through stair and elevator along the southern edge of the pavilion.

Meeting Summary

This is the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) third review of the Overlook Walk project and the first review of the Seattle Aquarium Ocean Pavilion project. The purpose of this meeting was to review the concept design phase for both projects. Although the Overlook Walk has been reviewed several times by the SDC, the project has undergone major revisions and is considered to still be at the concept design phase. The SDC reviewed both projects simultaneously but took separate actions for each project. The SDC voted, 8-0, to approve the concept design for the Overlook Walk with one condition and several recommendations. The SDC then voted, 7-1, to approve the concept design for the Seattle Aquarium Ocean Pavilion project with one condition and several recommendations.

April 19, 2018

9:00 am - Noon

Type

CIP

Phase

Concept Design

Previous Reviews[7/21/16](#), [6/19/14](#)**Presenters**Tatiana Choulika
JCFODavid Miller
Miller Hull PartnershipMark Reddington
LMN Architects**Attendees**

Derek Baker | Seattle Aquarium

Juanita Benetin | Resident

Dongtao Bi | Miller Hull Partnership

Susan Bullerdick | Seattle Aquarium

Angela Brady | Office of the Waterfront

Scott Crawford | LMN Architects

James Corner | JCFO

Nicole Fischetti | Studio Matthews

Ben Franz-Knight | SOJ

Brian Frederick | Resident

Holly Golden | HCMP

David Graves | SPR

Heidi Hughes | Friends of Marketfront Seattle

Tim Kuniholm | Seattle Aquarium

Eugene Lau | Miller Hull Partnership

Matt Martenson | Berger Partnership

Bob Messina | Pike Place Market Constituency

Heather Page | Anchor QEA

Garry Papers | OPCD

Lauren Patnoe | LMN Architects

Osama Quotah | LMN Architects

Sian Roberts | Miller Hull Partnership

Mary Anne Smith | LMN Architects

Andrew TenBrink | JCFO

Patti Wilma | Seattle Planning Commission

Ruri Yampolsky | OAC

April 19, 2018

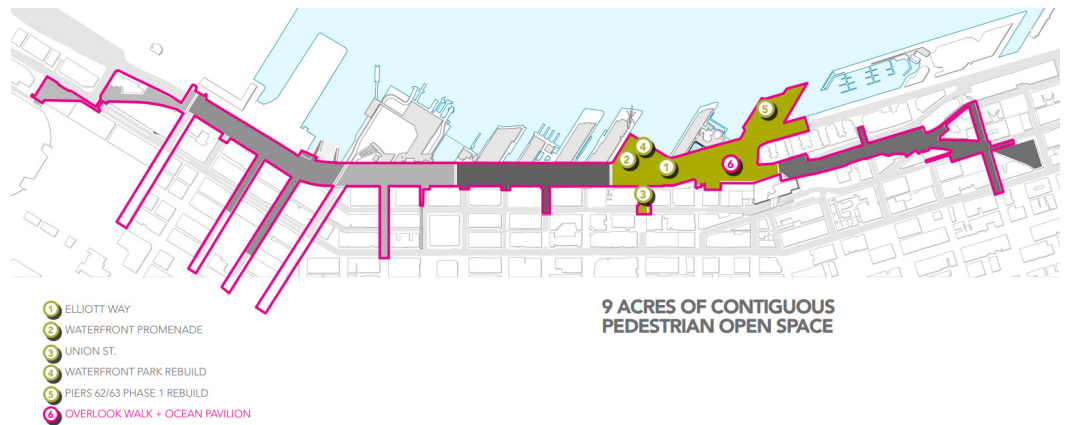
Recusals and Disclosures**Brianna Holan** recused herself as her employer, LMN Architects, is working on the Seattle Aquarium Ocean Pavilion project.**Justin Clark** disclosed that his employer, WSP, is working on the Waterfront Seattle project. He is not involved with the project nor does he have a financial stake in this work.

Figure 1: Waterfront - Central Public Space

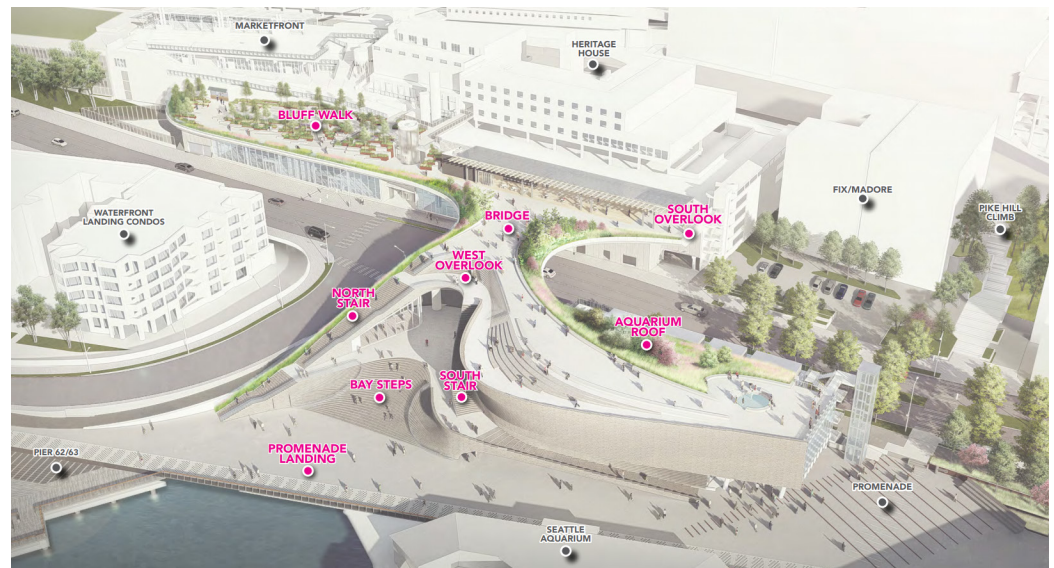


Figure 2: Proposed design - Overlook Walk and Seattle Aquarium

Summary of Presentation

Tatiana Choulika, of JCFO, David Miller, of Miller Hull Partnership, and Mark Reddington, of LMN presented the concept design for the Overlook Walk and Seattle Aquarium Ocean Pavilion projects. The presentation included a brief summary of the central waterfront project area, proposed open spaces, and proposed pedestrian connections. The project team then explained how the Overlook Walk and Seattle Aquarium Ocean Pavilion projects integrated within the overall central waterfront plan. The team also explained how the project proposals related to the waterfront framework plan, which was reviewed in 2012 (figure 1).

The Overlook Walk connects the Marketfront Building, Pike Place Market, and the Downtown commercial core with the Seattle Waterfront, Aquarium, and

adjacent public spaces located across Elliott Way. The Overlook Walk project includes a series of pathways, planting areas, and open spaces, which will serve as gathering, seating, and play areas, and other pedestrian amenities (figure 2). Project elements located east of Elliott way include the Bluff Walk and Overlook Building. The Bluff Walk connects pedestrians between the Marketfront Building and Overlook Building and bridge across Elliott Way. The Bluff Walk includes a central pathway with a series of planting areas, seating, and play elements as well as an elevator and stair to connect pedestrians with the street below. (figure 3). The Overlook Building is a two-story structure with retail spaces located along Elliott Way. The second story aligns with the elevated Overlook Walk and includes café/retail area with covered outdoor seating. The propose bridge will provide an elevated crossing over Elliott Way, connecting the Bluff Walk and Overlook Building with elements east of Elliott Way, and includes a large central pathway with planting areas to serve as buffers. Elements west of Elliott Way include overlooks, north and south stair, public restrooms, and Bay Steps as well as additional gathering space and seating areas. This area also provides direct access to Elliott Way and the Seattle Aquarium Ocean Pavilion roof top. (figures 4 & 5)

The Seattle Aquarium Ocean Pavilion is an extension of the Seattle Aquarium facilities. The additional facility is located between Elliott Way and the Waterfront Promenade and is not connected to the existing Aquarium facilities. The facility will provide additional exhibit and education spaces. The Aquarium roof top is publicly accessible and will include terraced seating, gathering space, vegetated areas, and a plaza with views into the exhibit below. The Roof top will connect with the

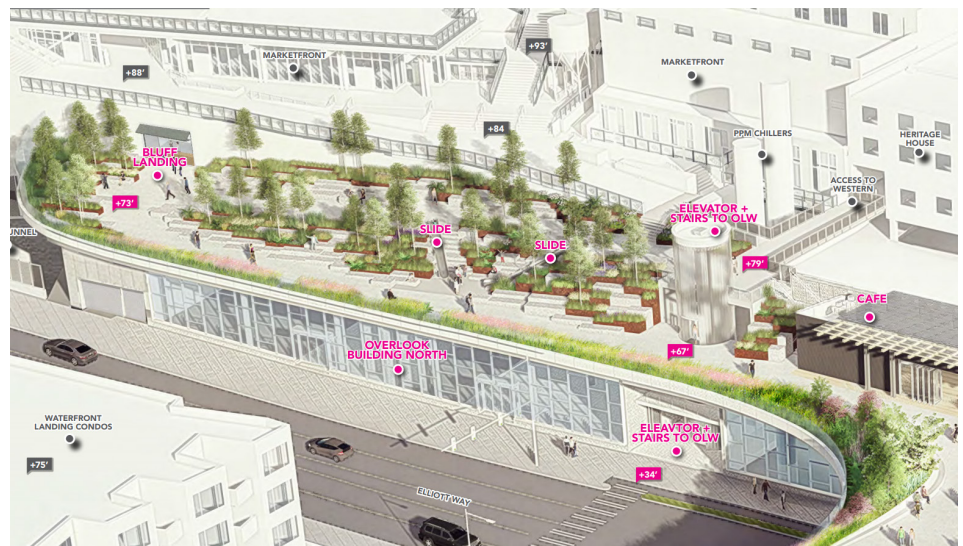


Figure 3: Proposed design - Bluff Walk

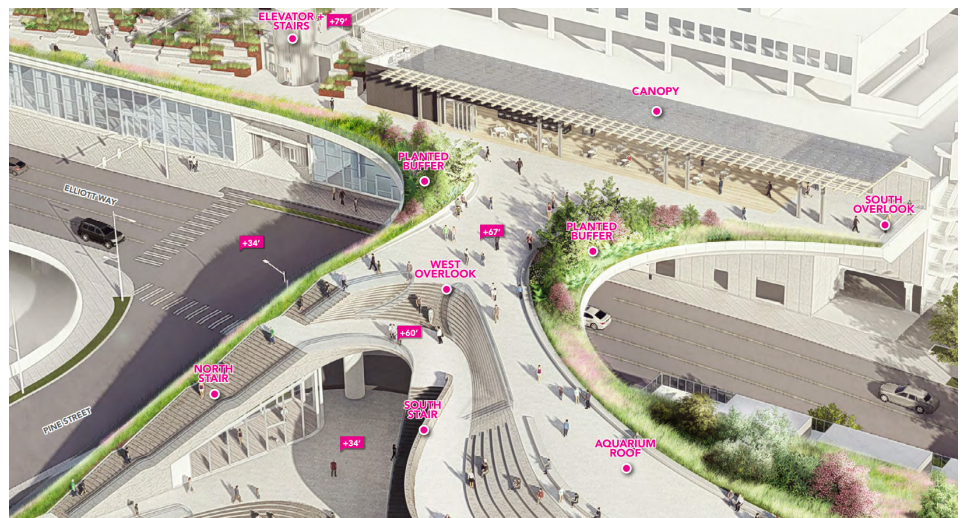


Figure 4: Proposed design - Overlook Walk Bridge

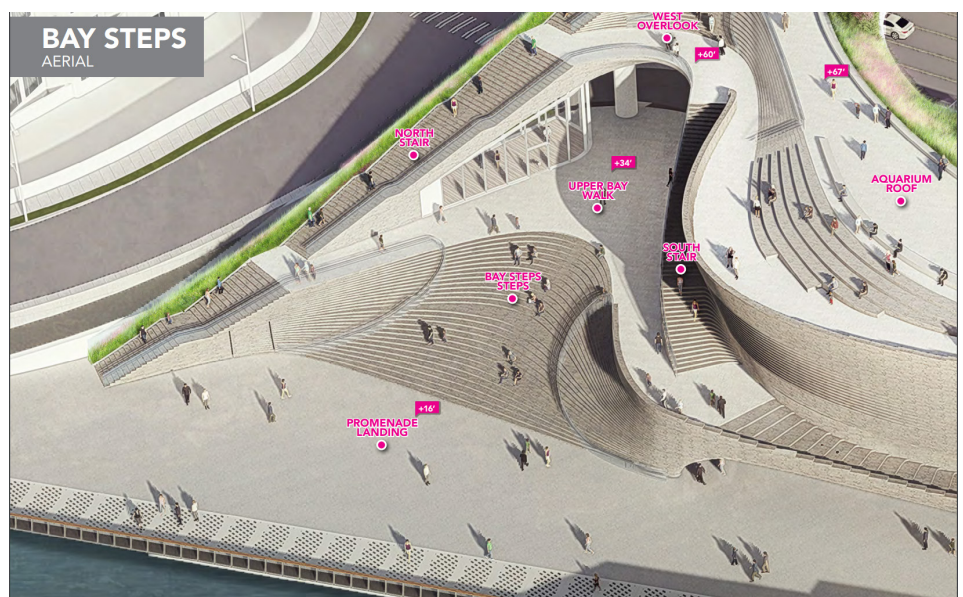


Figure 5: Proposed design - Bay Steps



Figure 5: Renderings of the Seattle Aquarium

upper level of the adjacent Overlook Walk. A public stair and elevator will connect the rooftop area with the plaza below.

Agency Comments

David Graves, SPR, mentioned that SPR owns the existing aquarium building and that the department is very excited to see how the expansion fits into the overall waterfront redevelopment. Mr. Graves then said that with the Overlook Walk and Seattle Aquarium Ocean Pavilion there will be a seamless connection from Steinbrueck park all the way to the waterfront.

Public Comments

Heidi Hughes, Friends of the Waterfront, expressed her support for the integration of the Seattle Aquarium Ocean Pavilion into the overall design of the Waterfront as well as the associated open spaces. Ms. Hughes stated that the design proposals follow the previous framework guidance and that they Friends of Waterfront group will continue to raise money for this project, which will become a hub for Seattle residents.

Bob Messina, Resident, stated that this iteration of the Overlook Walk design proposal is well thought out and that the design provides great viewpoints through the building structure. Mr. Messina then commented that, due to the large subset of users that will rely on the elevator adjacent to the Aquarium expansion, the elevator must be reliable and large enough to meet the expected demand. Mr. Messina then suggested providing a better waiting area for the elevator at the ground level for people to gather while it is raining.

Juanita Benetin, Resident of Waterfront Landings, is concerned by the way the city is funding the Overlook Walk project as well as the negative impacts regarding accessibility the project will have on the adjacent Waterfront Landings building. Ms. Benetin stated that due accessibility to the market from the Washington Landings building will be greatly impacted due to the reconfiguration of Elliot Way. Ms. Benetin continued to say that the proposed project is cutting off ADA access that currently exists.

Brian Frederick, Resident of Waterfront Landings, stated that the adjacent residential building includes a large aging population. Mr. Frederick is also concerned with the negative impacts the project will have on access to and from the Waterfront Landings building. He then encouraged the design team to think about how to address future accessibility issues.

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Bluff Walk
- Overlook Walk – Overlook Building (upper level), Café, and Aquarium Roof
- Bay Steps, stairs, under bridge pavilion, Overlook Building (lower level), and promenade
- Aquarium building
- Programming
- Arts & Culture
- Sustainability

- Equity
- Project connectivity

Bluff walk

The SDC encouraged the project team to think about how the design of the Bluff Walk can evolve from serving primarily as a pathway to becoming a series of spaces between the Marketfront and main Overlook Walk area. Commissioners then encouraged the project team to explain how the current design was influenced by lessons learned from the design and construction of the Marketfront. The Commission then emphasized the importance of vegetation. Commissioners commended the design team for the amount of vegetation along the Bluff Walk and encouraged the design team to increase the amount of vegetated areas, if possible.

Overlook Walk – Overlook Building (upper level), Café, aquarium roof

The SDC commended the project team for re-designing the Overlook Walk area to be level rather than sloping towards the waterfront. Commissioners agreed this would maximize view opportunities from several locations along the walk. The Commission agreed with the proposed location and design of the Overlook Building, which takes cues from existing buildings that make up Pike Place Market. The SDC also commended the project team for integrating sustainability strategies within the Overlook Building. Commissioners then recommended the project team to consider further developing the south overlook.

The SDC supported the narrowing of the bridge and agreed the reduced width would still provide adequate gathering space. Commissioners encouraged the project team to reconsider the height of the proposed plantings along the bridge, which currently obstruct views to the north and south.

The SDC then commended the project team for integrating the Aquarium facility's roof top open space with the Overlook Walk but encouraged the project team to think about what programming will occur on the rooftop open space. Commissioners also commended the project team for providing views into an aquarium exhibit from the rooftop.

The Commission then discussed the proposed public stair and elevator connecting the Overlook Walk and Aquarium facility rooftop with the plaza below. The SDC agreed with the location and high transparency of the stair and elevator. Commissioners strongly recommended the project team provide an elevator that is reliable and sized to meet the expected demand. The Commission then recommended the project team design the adjacent stair to be more appealing to potential users.

The SDC also suggested the project team continue to analyze accessibility issues from Waterfront Landings.

Bay steps, stairway, under bridge pavilion, Overlook Building (lower level), and promenade

While the SDC commended the project team for the form and curvilinear design of the Bay Steps, several commissioners voiced their concern with the areas located on either side of the Bay Steps between the stair railing and wall. Commissioners questioned how these spaces would be used, if it is occupiable, and maintained long-term. Commissioners then commented on the location, material, and functionality of the stair railing, which serves a barrier to the overall design of the Bay Steps. The commission strongly recommended the design team to address these issues as the design develops while maintaining the strong curvilinear design.

The SDC commended the project team for providing transparent storefronts along Elliott Way that also connected with the adjacent public plaza and Bay Steps. The Commission then recommended providing programming focused on arts and culture within the spaces on the lower level of the Overlook Building. Commissioners then recommended provided programming within the space beneath the North Stair that responded to programming elements within the adjacent plaza. Commissioners then encouraged the project team to incorporate references to the tidelines along the stairways.

As both projects continue to develop, the SDC strongly recommended that the materials and color palette stay the same along the stairs, bay steps, and aquarium façade. Commissioners also recommended the project team continue to use the same materials for elements such as lighting and railing found throughout the design.

Aquarium

The SDC commended the project team for providing a design that is well integrated with the Overlook Walk. The Commission then restated that the public elevator adjacent to the aquarium facility will be well used and encouraged the project team to provide an elevator that is adequately sized to support the expected number of users. Commissioners then expressed their concern with the high visibility of the rooftop mechanical system and recommended the project team minimize the mechanical equipment as much as possible. The SDC then stated that although the proposed Aquarium facility will serve as part of the existing Aquarium institution, adjacent piers, and Waterfront Park, it is unclear how it will be integrated with those spaces. The Facility will also serve as the northern terminus of the waterfront. The Commission then conditioned the project team return for a subcommittee meeting to review how the proposed Aquarium facility and Aquarium Plaza will interact with the existing Aquarium institution, adjacent piers, and Waterfront Park as well as other elements previously reviewed as part of the Seattle Waterfront project.

Programming

The SDC acknowledged the possibility to provide several different programming elements within spaces throughout the project. Commissioners recommended the project team provide a visual representation of the location of proposed programming and open spaces throughout the project site so to see how each space and programmed element will relate to one another and to ensure the proposed programming is located within the correct area.

Art and culture

The SDC recommended the project team continue to integrate art into the project as it evolves.

Sustainability

The SDC commended the project team for including photovoltaic cells above the Overlook Building. Commissioners recommended the project team include information on their sustainability strategy during the next review.

Equity

The SDC appreciated the project team's understanding that the Overlook Walk will serve as a place for everyone living and/or visiting the community. The Commission commended the project team for providing publicly accessible restrooms. Commissioners also appreciated the inclusion of accessible views and overlooks to Elliott Bay and Downtown as well as views within the Seattle Aquarium Ocean Pavilion exhibit. The Commission then encouraged the project team to explore programming opportunities other than retail and commercial programs to activate the space.

The Commission then strongly recommended having representatives from the Native American community at future meetings. The SDC also recommended the project team provide further information about how Native American art and programming are integrated within the Overlook Walk and Seattle Aquarium Ocean Pavilion plaza.

Project connectivity

The SDC commended the project team for providing a cohesive, well thought out design. The Commission then commended the project team for integrating the design with both the Marketfront and Waterfront projects, specifically with how the defined rectilinear forms of the Bluff Walk transition into a free flowing, curvilinear form along the waterfront. The Commission appreciated the design and location of the amphitheater and central stair as well as their overall integration within the design of the Aquarium facility. Commissioners also appreciated the use of specific design elements, such as lighting and massing, to connect the different spaces located throughout the project. The Commission then commented that the design is successful in mimicking the shoreline, which includes several folds and curves, as it opens up onto the waterfront. The Commission also appreciated the difference in the design of the Bluff Walk and overlook walk and aquarium facility. Commissioners thought there was a good transition between the small spaces provided in the Bluff Walk to larger spaces along the Overlook Walk, Aquarium rooftop, and waterfront.

The SDC recommended the project team look at the hierarchy of passages, pathways, and spaces throughout the project. The Commission encouraged the project team to consider the Bluff Walk as a sequence of spaces that prioritized gathering over pedestrian movement. The SDC then reiterated the need to integrate Native American culture throughout the design.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for their presentation of the concept design for the Waterfront- Overlook Walk and Seattle Aquarium Ocean Pavilion. Overall, The Commission appreciated the integration of both projects with each other as well as within the surrounding context. Commissioners also appreciated the grand gesture of the stairs, the visual unfolding of the spaces and views, proposed sustainability measures, and the inclusion of publicly accessible restrooms.

The SDC voted, 8-0, to approve the concept design phase of the Waterfront – Overlook Walk. The SDC then voted, 7-1, to approve the concept design of the Seattle Aquarium Ocean Pavilion. The SDC voted to approve both projects with the following condition:

1. Prior to the next SDC meeting, return for a subcommittee review to address how the south plaza and public spaces west of the proposed Aquarium Ocean Pavilion function for the overall Aquarium institution as well as for the other spaces located along and connecting to the Waterfront.

The SDC also provided the following recommendations for both projects:

1. Commission and integrate art into the project as soon as possible
2. Solidify how the design will reflect Native American community interests and provide information on how Native American art and programming are integrated within the projects in a way that is consistent with the [Tribal Presence presentation](#), which was presented by the Waterfront team on January 15, 2015.
3. Provide more information on the proposed sustainability program
4. Provide a visual representation of the location of proposed programming and open spaces throughout the project site. Explain how each space and programmed element will relate to one another and why it was located where it is.
5. Look at the hierarchy of passages
6. Provide information on universal accessibility and circulation
7. Continue to provide the same materials and color palette along the stairs, Bay Steps, and Aquarium façade
8. Further develop the south overlook as it relates to the new canopy
9. Provide an elevator that is reliable and sized to meet the expected demand; design the adjacent stair to be more appealing to potential users
10. Further analyze the areas outside of railings on the Bay Steps as the design develops while maintaining the strong curvilinear design.
11. Integrate or screen the mechanical equipment on the roof of the Aquarium facility, to the greatest extent possible.

The following are statements from commissioners who voted against the concept design phase for the Seattle Aquarium Ocean Pavilion:

Rachel Gleeson – I need to see how the proposed Aquarium facility will function in conjunction with the existing Aquarium building.