

# Overlook Walk & Ocean Pavilion

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Mayor

**Samuel Assefa**  
Director, OPCD

**Brianna Holan**, Acting Chair

**Justin Clark**

**Mark Johnson**

**Rick Krochalis**

**Amalia Leighton**

**Vinita Sidhu**

**Lucas Whitesell**

**Elaine Wine**

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Strategic Advisor

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**Commissioners Present**  
Rick Krochalis, Acting Chair  
Mark Johnson  
Amalia Leighton  
Vinita Sidhu  
Lucas Whitesell  
Elaine Wine

**Commissioners Excused**  
Brianna Holan, Vice Chair  
Justin Clark

## 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 Overlook Walk includes a series of walkways, stairs, plazas, and overlooks that provide a key connection between the Central Waterfront and Pike Place Market. The Overlook Walk also includes two buildings, one of which is already constructed, to include retail tenant spaces and arts and cultural facilities. The Overlook Walk will also provide pedestrian connections to the Seattle Aquarium Ocean Pavilion's rooftop to include a series of public spaces, an amphitheater, vegetation, publicly accessible stairs, and an elevator.

The Ocean Pavilion is an extension of the Seattle Aquarium and will provide additional exhibit and educational space. The Aquarium facility will integrate with the Overlook Walk's Bridge, overlook, and south stair.

## Meeting Summary

This is the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) fourth review of the Overlook Walk project and the second review of the Ocean Pavilion project. The purpose of this meeting was to review the schematic (60% design) phase for both projects<sup>1</sup> and the integration of these two public investments. The SDC reviewed both projects simultaneously, taking separate actions for each project. The SDC voted, 6-0, to approve the schematic design for the Overlook Walk with several recommendations. The SDC then voted, 6-0, to approve the schematic design for the Seattle Aquarium Ocean Pavilion project with several recommendations.

## Recusals and Disclosures

**Elaine Wine** disclosed that she is working with the design consultant on a separate project

**Amalia Leighton** disclosed that she is working with SDOT on a separate project located near the Overlook Walk and Ocean Pavilion projects.

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<sup>1</sup>The Overlook Walk went through an extensive redesign in 2018 and 2019 to better align with the Aquarium. Both are now at 60% - or schematic - design phase

**March 5, 2020**

9:00 am - 12:30 pm

**Type**

CIP

**Phase**

Schematic Design (60% design)

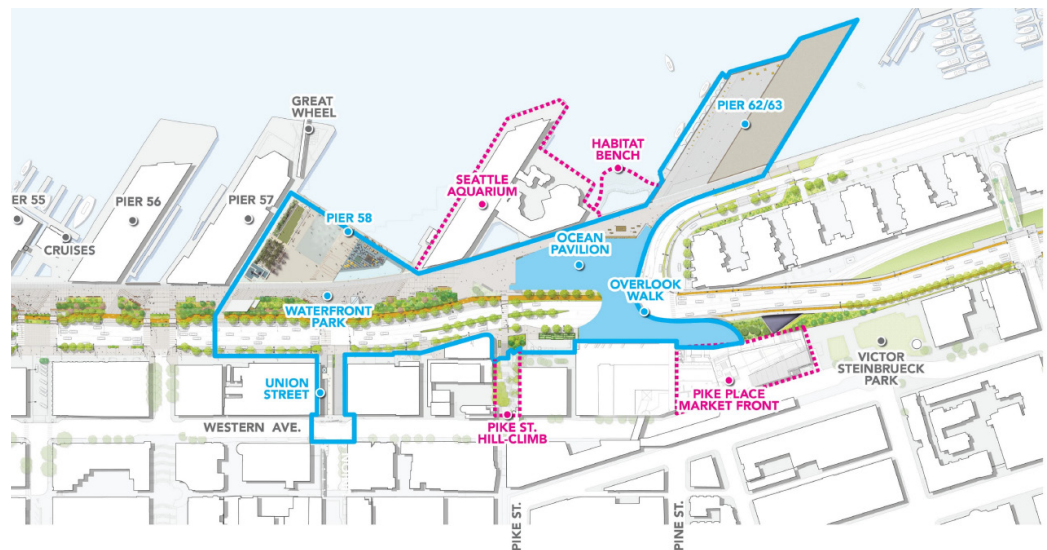
**Previous Reviews**[4/19/18](#), [7/21/16](#), [7/19/14](#)**Presenters**Colleen Echohawk  
Headwater People ConsultingDavid Miller  
MillerHullMark Reddington  
LMN ArchitectsAndrew tenBrink  
JCFOOsama Quotah  
LMN Architects**Attendees**Vanessa Abin  
LMN ArchitectsGrant Abel  
Seattle AquariumDerek Baker  
Seattle AquariumDongtao Bi  
MillerHullSusan Bullerdick  
Seattle AquariumSean Crawford  
Seattle AquariumAlyne Fortgang  
Friends of Woodland Park Zoo  
ElephantsBen Franz-Knight  
SOJDavid Graves  
SPRRobin Little Wing Sigo  
Suquamish Tribal CouncilBob Messina  
ResidentJessica Murphy  
SDOTIris Picat  
EnviroissuesJody Robinson  
JacobsValerie Segrest  
Muckleshoot MemberSarajane Siegfriedt  
Resident

Image 1: Location of Overlook Walk and Ocean Pavilion

**Summary of Presentation**

Colleen Echohawk, of Headwater People Consulting, David Miller, of MillerHull, Andrew tenBrink, of JCFO, and Mark Reddington and Osama Quotah, LMN Architects presented the schematic design for the Overlook Walk and Ocean Pavilion projects. The project team provided a brief summary of comments and recommendations from previous meetings. The team then discussed how the Overlook Walk and Ocean Pavilion are integrated within the greater Seattle Waterfront project (see image 1) and ongoing involvement with the Coast Salish Tribes as well as the project's goal to support ongoing nature conservation efforts.

The project team presented the updated design proposal in two phases. The team focused on the updated Overlook Walk design and followed by the Ocean Pavilion.

**Overlook Walk**

The Overlook Walk connects the Pike Place Market to the Waterfront through a series of walkways with interspersed open spaces that provide opportunities for rest and recreation. The Overlook Walk also includes a structure divided into two sections – The Café and pavilion as well as the maintenance base located below the Overlook Walk bridge. Along the Overlook Walk and its various open spaces there are a wide variety of planting areas, seating, and hardscape materials that are designed to reflect a design concept that provides a transition from an upland/bluff to shoreline environment. The Overlook Walk is divided into the following areas:

1. The Bluff Walk - is located along the northeastern edge of the project site, between the Marketfront and Elliot Way. The bluff walk serves as a hillclimb assist and includes a main viewing area, stair, and pathway leading to the overlook bridge. The updated design also includes a play slide and climbing wall built into the slope, seating opportunities, and native vegetation. The updated design reduces the amount of space for access and circulation, reserving a portion along the northern edge for re-planting. See image 3 for more detail.
2. The Overlook Bridge – The bridge and underbridge area spans Alaskan Way, connecting the bluff walk with the Salish Steps and Ocean Pavilion roof. The updated bridge design includes a wide gathering space surrounded by two large native planting areas along the north and south edge. The bridge provides seating opportunities along the planted edges while the central area is reserved for gathering and circulation. The



Image 2: Location of Overlook Walk and Ocean Pavilion

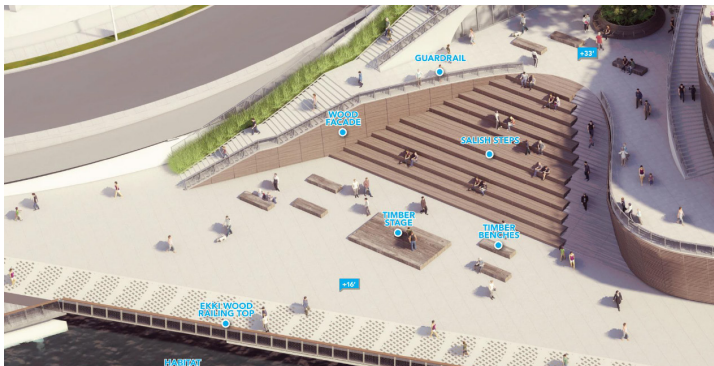
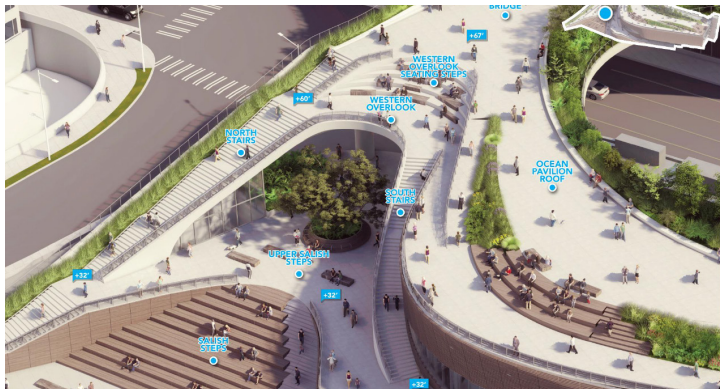


Image 3 (Upper left) : Bluff Walk

Image 4 (Upper right): Overlook Bridge & Cafe Pavilion

Image 5 (middle left): Ocean Pavilion Roof

Image 6 (middle right): Western Overlook, North & South Stair

Image 7 (bottom left): Salish Steps

underbridge includes a maintenance base along the eastern side of Alaskan Way. The functions of the facility will be screened by a scrim façade which will include artwork visible from the street. *See image 4 for more detail.*

3. The Café Pavilion- located along the eastern edge of the Overlook Walk Bridge, near Western Ave. The pavilion area includes an enclosed café and a covered outdoor pavilion with moveable tables and chairs. The proposed canopy is translucent to provide light below while also harnessing energy. The pavilion area also includes a pathway connection to Western Ave as well as an elevator and stairway to Alaskan Way below. *See image 4 for more detail.*
4. The Ocean Pavilion Roof- while located above the Ocean Pavilion facility, it is integrated into the overall design and circulation of the Overlook Walk. The Ocean Pavilion roof top is divided into two grade separated areas, connected by ADA accessible ramps, stairs, and seating areas. The Ocean Pavilion roof top includes seating and viewing areas along the western and southern edges, gathering space, and native planting areas. An elevator and open stairwell are located at the southeastern corner of the roof, providing a direct connection to the Ocean Pavilion Plaza and Waterfront below. *See image 5 for more detail.*
5. The Western Overlook, North & South Stair, and Salish Steps - The western overlook includes opportunities for seating and gathering while the north and south stair, and Salish Steps connect the bridge to the waterfront. The updated design for the Salish Steps includes amphitheater like seating and provides an opportunity for gathering and programming. *See images 6 & 7 for more detail.*

### *The Ocean Pavilion*

The structure housing the Ocean Pavilion will allow the Seattle Aquarium to expand its programming through additional exhibit space and ancillary support areas. The updated design of the Ocean Pavilion is integrated with the Overlook Walk and will work to highlight sustainability and conservation efforts as well as acknowledging the role of indigenous design and knowledge in sustaining land and waters. The building form includes a curvilinear design with a natural wood screen along the north and west façade (*see image 8*). The building form design was updated to include additional highly transparent areas along the façade to provide views into the facility and exhibit spaces. The east side of the facility reflects the industrial and commercial feel of the surrounding Pike Place neighborhood through the use of materials and increased transparency in specific areas to highlight working areas within the aquarium facility (*see image 9*). The main entrance is located on the south side of the building and will visually connect to the adjacent Ocean Pavilion Plaza through the use of a distinct paving pattern. The underside of the building overhanging the Ocean Pavilion Plaza will include an opportunity for public art as well as a viewing window into an underwater exhibit. A publicly accessible elevator and open stairwell is located at the southeast corner of the Ocean Pavilion and will connect users between the public plaza and Ocean Pavilion roof *see image 10*).



*Image 8 (Top left): West facade of Ocean Pavilion*

*Image 9 (bottom left): East facade of Ocean Pavilion*

*Image 10 (bottom right): South facade of Ocean Pavilion*

## Agency Comments

None

## Public Comments

**Alyne Fortgang**, Friends of Woodland Park Zoo Elephants, expressed their concern with the public engagement process related to this project, stating that many people hadn't heard about the project until recently. Alyne then mentioned that they have become increasingly aware of the negative impacts captivity will have on animals and now has a better understanding that putting intelligent animals in a small tank will lead to negative and or abnormal behavior. Alyne then asked that the shark tank exhibit be reconsidered, stating that our society is technologically advanced to support a 'dry aquarium' concept that includes nonliving exhibits, but highlights issues around animal conservation and the natural environment.

**Ben Franz Knight**, SOJ, speaking on behalf of Mary Bacarella, of Pike Place Market, voiced their support for the Overlook Walk and Ocean Pavilion project. Ben then stated the Ocean Pavilion will serve as a critical piece in the long term goal of the Seattle Waterfront while also serving as a key connector between the waterfront, Pike Place Market and the Downtown area. Ben also mentioned that the Overlook Walk will help in sharing interpretive programming with the greater community. Ben then commented that the Salish Sea serves as the largest platform for conversation in the Northwest and that the Seattle Aquarium, which provides many programming opportunities, will help further the mission to educate and inspire conservation for the future generation.

**Robin little Wing Sigo**, Suquamish Tribal Council, mentioned that they have had an ongoing connection to this project since childhood and they wanted to attend this presentation because of the continued positive relationship the Seattle Aquarium team has with the Indigenous community as well as with the natural environment. Robin reminded everyone that Coast Salish tribes are excellent hosts and that they specifically enjoy hosting people at the waterfront. Robin then mentioned that the new Ocean Pavilion will exhibit the ecosystem of another Indigenous group from Bali and that they wanted to be able to welcome them here in a significant way as well as providing the ability to also highlight the environmental degradation occurring in Bali. Robin then stated that this is an important project and they are excited to be a part of the team.

**Bob Messina**, resident, stated that the project team needs to continue to think about how the Overlook Walk elevator can be better integrated into the circulation for the site. Bob also thanked the project team for providing an additional ADA access point to Western Ave. Bob then questioned where restrooms would be located and recommended that the restroom facilities be designed so that only half would be closed off at any given time for cleaning. Bob stated that if restrooms would not be located near the project site, then they would like to know where they will be located instead.

**Valerie Segrest**, Muckleshoot member, stated their background in nutrition and health sciences and traditional foods of the northwest as well as their ongoing work on tribal food sovereignty systems. Valerie then mentioned that Coast Salish tribes have been practicing nutrition and health sciences through the use of traditional foods and are currently utilizing this practice to work on a way to better manage natural resources. Given that the Ocean Pavilion will serve as a destination, Valerie expressed interest in working with the Seattle Aquarium team to create and implement an educational curriculum to address health and nutritional value of traditional foods. Valerie then stated that they have an important story to tell and they want to ensure that it is represented and told cohesively as the City continues to rebuild and highlight the history of the Seattle Waterfront.

**Sarajane Siegfriedt**, Resident, stated that the plan included trees that would block views to the waterfront, including the great wheel, and recommended those be moved outside of the viewshed. Sarajane then mentioned that they hoped the project team would consider seasonality and color when specifying trees and other plantings. Sarajane then expressed concern over two ADA issues - the proposed red metal chairs located in the Overlook Café are not ADA friendly, specifically for senior citizens, and that the wide stair along the Salish Steps should include a railing for assistance. Sarajane also commended the project team for programming Coast Salish art throughout the design proposal.

## Summary of Discussion

### Overlook Walk

The Commission organized its discussion on the Overlook Walk around the following issues:

- Access
- Programming & materials
- Planting
- Café Pavilion
- Building façade along Elliott Ave
- Misc. comments

The Commission also addressed the following, while discussing each of the issues listed above:

- Response to previous recommendations or conditions
- Refinements made to design concept
- Resolution of issues with site constraints
- Integration with the urban fabric
- Art integration

#### *Access*

Overall, the SDC appreciated how the Overlook Walk design advancements have improved circulation between the waterfront and Pike Place market, including the additional connections between the Overlook Walk, Heritage Parking lot, and Western Ave. While the commission recognized that this project improves access to the waterfront, they are still concerned with the limited amount of accessible routes through the project site. Specifically, commissioners are concerned with limited access along the north side of the project, between the bridge, western overlook, and north stair as well as limited connectivity between the north side of the waterfront and the elevators located along the south side of the project site, near the Overlook Café Pavilion and Ocean Pavilion Plaza. The Commission strongly encouraged the project team to consider increasing accessible routes through the overall site, as well as providing clear access along the north side of the site. Commissioners then expressed concern with the limited visibility of the elevators located on the eastern side of the Overlook walk, near the Overlook café and pavilion. Commissioners indicated that elevator access should be better integrated with the overall circulation along the Overlook Walk. Commissioners also expressed concern about long-term elevator maintenance to ensure that access remains available if one of the two on site elevators is out of service.

#### *Programming and materials*

The SDC recommended the project team provide more information on potential programming along the Overlook walk and Salish Steps. Commissioners also recommended the team provide wayfinding information for restrooms and other services and how that will support programmed events.

The SDC indicated their overall support for the choice of materials on the Overlook Walk. Commissioners were impressed with the material palette, which adequately represents the surrounding natural environment, as well as how the materials are reflected throughout the project. The commissioners specifically noted the successful choice and application of materials on the Salish steps. The Commission recommended the project team advance the design of the Salish Steps to clearly delineate which portions are for seating versus circulation.

#### *Planting*

The SDC commended the project team for including a planting palette that is culturally relevant to Indigenous communities and the overall surrounding natural environment. The Commission expressed concern with how climate change might affect native plant species and recommended the project team continue to study how native plant species will be successful in this urban environment. The SDC also discussed the role and location of the landscape within the overall user experience. While the Commission approved of the use of vegetation to frame views, commissioners are concerned that users are not able to interact with the plantings and vegetated areas along the Overlook bridge and Ocean Pavilion roof and strongly recommended the project team increase the experience, such as through the location of smaller pathways through vegetated areas or the orientation of benches.

### *Café Pavilion*

The SDC commended the project team for the updated design of the Café Pavilion and are excited to see how the design continues to develop, specifically mentioning how building lighting will enhance the Overlook Walk. Commissioners expressed their concern with the limited development of the adjacent pathway connecting the café area with Western Ave and recommended the project team consider a design solution that will help draw users into the space. The Commission also recommended the project team consider the use of a green roof, or other sustainability strategies, on the enclosed building within the Café Pavilion as well as providing seating options for individual and group uses.

### *Building façade along Elliott Ave*

The SDC commended the project team for design update to the building façade along Alaskan Way. The SDC recommended the project team continue to develop the pedestrian experience in the section where the Overlook Walk overhangs and crosses Elliott Ave, including additional details about the proposed art program in this location.

### *Misc. Comments*

The SDC commended the project team for their integration of the building and landscape to form one experience. Commissioners were impressed with how the project continued to visually represent the journey between land and water. Commissioners then acknowledged that the Salish Steps has the opportunity to be a great gathering space.

### **Ocean Pavilion**

The Commission organized its discussion of the Ocean Pavilion around the following issues:

- Response to previous recommendation
- Art integration
- Circulation
- Building form and façade
- Ocean Pavilion roof
- Misc. comments

### *Response to the previous recommendations*

The SDC appreciated the project team's response to recommendations made during the previous SDC review.

### *Art integration*

The SDC appreciated the project team's commitment to art integration, specifically their commitment to include native art, but were concerned with the limited amount of detail provided about the integration of art in designated areas above the Ocean Pavilion Plaza and along Elliott Way. The Commission strongly recommended the project team provide more detail on art integration during the next meeting.

### *Circulation*

The SDC recommended the project team provide additional information on the anticipated elevator demand for the elevator located at the southeast corner of the Ocean Pavilion and how the project designs will address that demand.

### *Building form and façade*

The SDC commended the project team for their continued development of the Ocean Pavilion building. Specifically, commissioners appreciated the overall building form, material palette, and transparency into the building and exhibits from the public place and street. The SDC noted how the building form and overall design results in an unimposing form that provides a sense of warmth along the waterfront. Commissioners appreciated how the building form integrated with the Salish Steps and the Ocean Pavilion roof as well as the overall natural theme of the building as a place where land meets the sea. The SDC also appreciated how Indigenous design concepts have been incorporated into the project through the non-linear building form and its use of natural materials. Commissioners hope that the designs will be an opportunity to advance Indigenous design along the waterfront. The Commission then recommended the project team continue to refine the idea of this site providing a space for gathering, hosting, mixing of cultures in a way that is evident to users.

The SDC then commended the project team for how the Ocean Pavilion is being integrated into the Overlook Walk and surrounding public places. Commissioners appreciated the high level of transparency into the building and how it will activate adjacent public spaces. The Commission commended the project team on creating a sense of welcoming, specifically regarding Indigenous cultural elements, as one enters the plaza near the main entrance to the facility. The Commission stated that transition between the building entrance and adjacent public spaces was well thought out and will contribute to the overall public experience along the waterfront. Commissioners also appreciated how equity plays into the ability for the public to experience views into the facility, including the shark tank areas at the entrance, without having to pay an entrance fee.

The SDC then discussed the building façade. Commissioners commented that the design will be successful in drawing users into the area. The Commission then encouraged the project team to continue to think about access to sunlight during different seasons, specifically beneath the overhang along the southern façade, as the design continues to develop. Commissioners appreciated the design of the southern façade and how it provided a strong connection from the roofline to the ground plane below. The SDC appreciated the project team's explanation of the eastern building façade along Elliott Ave. Commissioners appreciated the transparency of the band at street level to allow visibility into some of the back of house areas as well as the team's intention to connect the mechanical systems into the overall design of the façade. The SDC recommended the project team continue to develop the design of the eastern façade.

The SDC then discussed the use of materials and their relationship to supporting and enhancing the building form and concept. The Commission appreciated the specification of wood siding and commented that it will set a precedent for other developments along the waterfront to use natural textures and forms. Commissioners also appreciated the project teams use of sustainable materials, specifically the use of low carbon concrete and cement. The Commission then commended the project team for thinking about long term maintenance and the life span of materials. The SDC then recommended the project team continue to study how the form and design aesthetic of the elevator shaft at the southeast corner of the building as it continues to evolve. Commissioners agreed that the form did not necessarily need to use the same materials found elsewhere on the building but did not specifically recommend a type of material for the project team to consider.

#### *Ocean Pavilion roof*

The SDC then reiterated comments and recommendations made earlier about the proposed planting palette of the Ocean Pavilion roof. Commissioners stressed the importance of thinking of the roof top and overlook walk as one space and strongly recommended the project team continue to think about what elements within the interpretive garden are being interpreted, why they are being interpreted, and how that will be experienced by users

#### *Misc. Comments*

The SDC encouraged the project team to think about bicycle parking near the Ocean Pavilion entrance.

#### **Action**

The SDC took two separate actions during today's review. The first action was taken for the Overlook Walk. A second action was taken for the Ocean Pavilion project.

The SDC thanked the project team for its schematic design presentation of the Overlook Walk. Overall, the Commission appreciated the continued development and refinement of the proposed design. The commission reminded the project team that the following recommendations build upon wanting to make the Overlook Walk a great experience. The SDC voted, 6-0, to approve the schematic design for the Overlook Walk with the following recommendations:

1. Consider increasing accessible routes through the overall site, as well as providing clear access along the north side of the site.
2. Better integrate elevator access near the Overlook café and pavilion within the overall circulation and experience.
3. Provide more information on potential programming along the Overlook walk and Salish Steps.
4. Provide information on the location of restrooms and other services and how that will support programmed events.



5. Provide additional information on which areas of the Salish Steps are meant for seating and which areas are meant for circulation.
6. Continue to think about how native plant species can be successful in this urban environment.
7. Increase the ability for users to experience the planting and vegetated areas on the Overlook bridge and Ocean Pavilion roof, such as through the location of smaller pathways through vegetated areas or the orientation of benches
8. Refine the concept for the interpretive garden to be clear about what is being interpreted, why they are being interpreted, and how that will be experienced by users
9. Consider a design solution that enhances the pathway between the Café Pavilion and Western Ave.
10. Consider the use of a green roof, or other sustainability strategies, on the enclosed building within the Café Pavilion
11. Consider providing seating options for individual and group uses in the Café Pavilion area.
12. Continue to develop the experience along Elliott Ave below the Overlook Walk underbridge, including additional details about the proposed art program in this location.

The SDC thanked the project team for its schematic design presentation of the Ocean Pavilion. Overall, the Commission appreciated the proposed sustainability strategy, materiality and building form as well as the increased transparency and activation to make it a shared experience within and outside of the building. the SDC voted, 6-0, to approve the schematic design for the Ocean Pavilion with the following recommendations:

1. Provide more detail on art integration in designated areas above the Ocean Pavilion Plaza and along Elliott Way.
2. Provide additional information on the anticipated demand of the elevator located at the southeast corner of the Ocean Pavilion and how the team expects to meet that demand
3. Continue to refine the idea of this site providing a space for hosting, mixing of cultures in a way that is evident to users.
4. Continue to refine the design of the eastern façade along Elliott Ave.
5. Continue to study the form and aesthetic of the elevator shaft at the southeast corner of the building as it continues to evolve.
6. Continue to think about what elements within the interpretive garden are being interpreted, why they are being interpreted, and how that will be experienced by users