

Waterfront - Union St. Pedestrian Bridge

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Samuel Assefa
Director, OPCD

Ben de Rubertis, Chair

Brianna Holan, Vice Chair

Justin Clark

Laura Haddad

Mark Johnson

Rick Krochalis

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Commissioners Present

Ben de Rubertis, Chair
Brianna Holan, Vice Chair
Justin Clark
Mark Johnson
Amalia Leighton
Vinita Sidhu

Commissioners Excused

Laura Haddad
Rick Krochalis
Elaine Wine

Project Description

As part of the City's redesign of the waterfront following the removal of Alaskan Way Viaduct, the Office of the Waterfront has proposed improvements to the Union St right-of-way between Western Ave and Alaskan Way. The project begins at the east end at the intersection of Union St and Western Ave and extends west towards Alaskan Way and the Seattle Waterfront. An elevated walkway, staircase, and elevator will improve the east-west pedestrian connection between the waterfront and the city's cultural core.

Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) third review of the Waterfront - Union St Pedestrian Bridge project. The purpose of this meeting was to review the design development (90% design) phase for the project. The SDC also reviewed the design details that were conditioned during the January 3, 2019 review of the Marketside Flats Skybridge project. The SDC voted, 5-1, to approve the design development phase for the Waterfront - Union St Pedestrian Bridge project with several recommendations. The SDC then voted to approve the condition of the January 3rd, 2019 approval of the public benefits package for the Marketfront Flats Skybridge.

Recusals and Disclosures

None

September 19, 2019

10:30 am - Noon

Type

CIP

Phase

Design Development (90%)

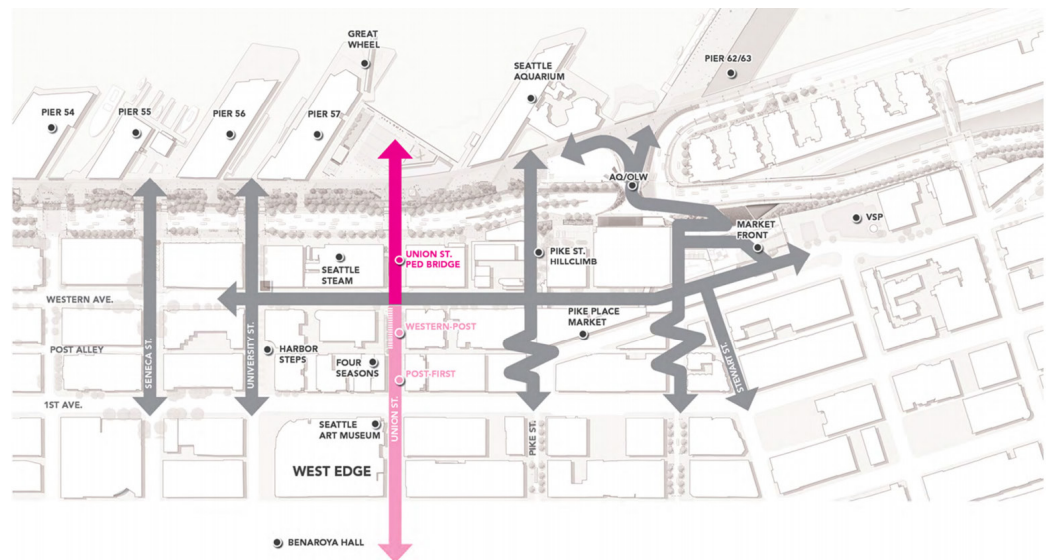
Previous Reviews[4/3/14](#), [10/17/13](#)**Presenters**Barbara Lee
Office of the WaterfrontMike Mariano
Schemata WorkshopNorie Sato
ArtistAndrew tenBrink
JCFO**Attendees**Margaret Knight
Schemata WorkshopSteve Pearce
Office of the WaterfrontSchaun Valdovinos
V+M Structural DesignRuri Yampolski
OACStephanie Wood
DarkLight Design

Figure 1: Proposed location of the pedestrian bridge

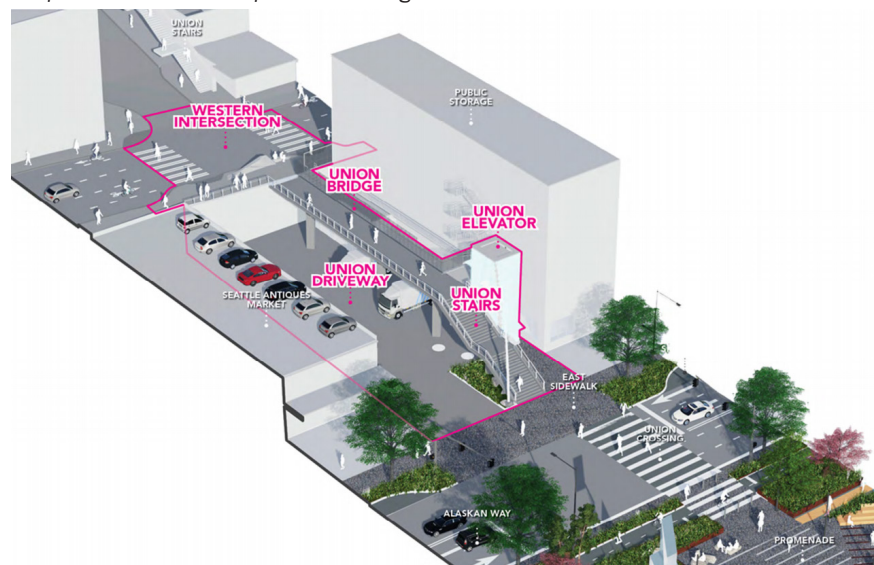


Figure 2: Proposed design of the pedestrian bridge and surrounding area

Summary of Presentation

Mike Mariano, of Schemata Design, Norie Sato, Artist, and Andrew tenBrink, of JCFO, presented the 90% design for the Waterfront – Union St Pedestrian Bridge project. The project team provided a brief overview of the Waterfront Seattle project and how the Union St Pedestrian Bridge fits within the overall design as well as existing conditions around the Union Street streetend. The project will provide access from 1st Ave and Western Ave to Alaskan Way and the Waterfront. The updated design includes a pedestrian bridge with a publicly accessible stairway and elevator connecting Western Ave and Alaskan Way. The elevator will include exterior lighting and will serve as a visual beacon for users moving along the waterfront and between downtown and the Waterfront. The updated design will also provide improvements to the Western Ave intersection as well as site furnishing elements such as handrails, vegetation, and a seating bench on the western edge of the Western Ave intersection. Proposed artwork includes an art screenwall along the southern edge of the pedestrian bridge as well as a sculpture in the shape of an enlarged fern frond at the base of the public stairway. The proposed artwork concept, including plants and birds, is designed in response and contrast to the surrounding industrial context along Western Ave. (see figures 1 & 2 for more detail.)

Agency Comments

None

Public Comments

None

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Circulation
- Design details
- Art integration
- Response to previous comments

Circulation

The SDC recommended the project team reconsider the design of the Western Ave intersection. Specifically, Commissioners recommended the team reconsider the design of the bench as well as visual sight lines between the intersection, pedestrian bridge, and elevator.

The commission asked what analysis was done of the wall and why it was not being replaced with this project. The team responded that replacement of the wall is not within the project definition. The criteria is to design the project to not impart additional load to the wall. An analysis will confirm the loads from the improvements on Western Avenue meet the “due no harm” tolerances of the existing wall.

Design details

The SDC questioned the use of concrete paving material on Union St and recommended the project team consider using asphalt as a cost saving measure. The Commission also recommended the project team provide clarification of the beacon element and its relationship with surrounding lighting elements.

Art integration

The SDC commended the artist for creating a strong art concept. Commissioners appreciated how the art concept responded the surrounding industrial context.

Response to previous comments

The SDC supported the use of the elevator tower as a beacon but acknowledged that it was in conflict with the proposed artwork. Commissioners encouraged the project team to consider lighting the elevator shaft in way that will not conflict with the adjacent artwork.

The Commission then commented that the intersection should include an overlook to provide a place for users to pause. The SDC then recommended that the design of the intersection be reviewed at a subcommittee meeting.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for their presentation of the design development phase (90% design) for the Waterfront – Union St Pedestrian Bridge project. The Commission approved, 5-1, the design development phase for the Waterfront – Union St Pedestrian Bridge project with the following recommendations:

1. Return for a subcommittee to review the design of the Western Ave intersection, specifically the proposed design of the bench
2. Provide further clarification of the beacon element
3. Provide further clarification of paving materials; consider the use of asphalt for cost savings
4. Provide further information on the retaining wall

The SDC then voted, 6-0, to approve the condition for the reauthorization of the Marketfront Flats Skybridge, which included the review of the design details of the proposed barrier and refinement of the intersection design. The SDC will review the proposed content and design of the plaque during a subcommittee meeting.