



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

Seth Geiser

Megan Groth

Debbie Harris

Laurel Kunkler

Shannon Loew

Martin Regge

Ellen Sollod

Michael Jenkins
Director

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September 19, 2013

Convened 8:30 am

Adjourned 4:30 pm

Projects Reviewed

10th Avenue Hillclimb

Westin Building Skybridge

Commissioners Present

Tom Nelson, Chair

Osama Quotah, Vice Chair (present 10:00 am – 2:30 pm)

Bernie Alonzo (excused at 12:30 pm)

Seth Geiser

Megan Groth

Laurel Kunkler (excused from 10:30 am – 12:00 pm)

Martin Regge

Ellen Sollod

Commissioners Excused

Brodie Bain

Debbie Harris

Shannon Loew

Staff Present

Michael Jenkins

Valerie Kinast

Joan Nieman



September 19, 2013 8:30 – 4:30 pm	Project:	10th Avenue Hillclimb	
	Phase:	60% design	
	Previous reviews:	4/4/13	
	Presenters:	Alan Grainger	GGLO
		Marieke Lacasse	GGLO
	Attendees:	Kelly Bryant	community member
		Kathlyn Paananen	Seattle Housing Authority
		Dave Rodgers	SvR Design
		Kiwon Suh	GGLO

Recusals and Disclosures

Commissioner Kunkler was recused. Commissioner Groth disclosed that she is an employee of GGLO. She did not work on the project before the Commission. She was present but did not vote.

Purpose of Review

The purpose of this meeting was to assess the design development plans of the 10th Avenue Hillclimb. The project was previously reviewed on April 4, 2013, when it received 30% design approval. This project is one of several public benefit elements approved in 2011 as part of the Yesler Terrace street vacations. In the vacation conditions, the applicants were required to bring each public benefit element back for review at concept design, schematic design, and design development. In the future, the Commission will review other elements such as the pocket parks and green streets.

Summary of Proposal

SHA is planning to build a hillclimb in the ROW of 10th Ave S between S Main and the alley halfway between S Main and S Jackson St. The hillclimb would connect the Yesler Terrace development and First Hill to the International District. It is a public benefit item of the Yesler Terrace street vacations. The site is at the south edge of the proposed Yesler Terrace development. It will be built in Phase I of the overall Yesler Terrace project along with the large central park at the community center and buildings at the center and north of the center.

The hillclimb is planned in a 66' wide ROW, currently an unimproved grassy slope. Another 37.5' of width will be dedicated for the hillclimb, by extending onto an SHA owned lot to the east. The hillclimb consists of a stairway "spine" at the center, with a regimented series of ramps and landings that zigzag up the hill. It includes triangular planted areas, sitting walls and benches at the landings, and storm water runnels running on either side of the stairway. At the top of the walkway is a small plaza with lookout, plantings, benches, and bike racks. To the east, the hillclimb will connect to community gardens, which will be built in a later phase.

Summary of Presentation

Alan Grainger and Marieke Lacasse gave the presentation dated September 17, 2013, and available on the [Design Commission website](#). Ms. Lacasse went over the context, public involvement efforts, and

design. She explained how consultation with SDOT and SPU has influenced the proposed design. Due to geotechnical slope stability conditions, the idea of bio-infiltration had to be abandoned. Ms. Lacasse also explained that the artist selection was still in process, a finalist would be named by September 30, and the art elements would undergo administrative review.

Summary of Discussion

Overall, the Commission was positive about the design presented. The conversation started with accolades for the greater generosity adding width to the walkway had brought. The angles and seating along the “spine” had loosened up the design, but the Commissioners encouraged the designers to go further with the playfulness. They also talked about finding resolution at the point where the ramps hit the outer edges of the site, especially considering the views people would have as they walked down the ramps.

There was a thoughtful, lively conversation about how the bike runnel, joints, lighting, and common thread of water the length of the stairway could be brought together to express the idea of movement along the corridor. Solutions for the terminus, especially at the base of the hillclimb, were discussed.

The plaza at the top of the hillclimb was considered. Commissioners said it had become a much stronger element, and much more a piece of the hillclimb ensemble.

Agency Comments

none

Public Comments

Kelly Bryant, community member, expressed concern about the risk of skateboarders using the bike runnel.

Action

The Design Commission thanked the project team for their presentation of the design development plans for the 10th Ave Hillclimb project. Commissioners expressed appreciation for the direction the design had taken since the last review. Specifically, they appreciated the increased width of the stairway and size of the landings and the further development of the bike runnel and plant palette. The Commission thanked the team for coordinating the design of the road with the upper plaza and the advantages that provided.

With a **vote of 6 to 0**, the Design Commission approved the design development plans for the 10th Ave Hillclimb that is a public benefit element of the previously approved Yesler Terrace street vacation. Commissioner Groth abstained from the vote. The Commission expects to review the project once more administratively to assess the response to the following recommendations:

- Think about safety related to pedestrians and skateboards.
- Study phasing for artwork to accommodate future funding.
- Tie together the lower and upper levels with color, lighting, and detailing.
- Study wayfinding and signage at both the upper plaza and bottom of the stairway.
- Provide information to SDOT for the Bike Master Plan.
- Reevaluate the need to maintain walls given bio-infiltration is no longer part of the plans.

- Consider how the walls might be adjusted to add more dynamism to the hillclimb.
- Study connectivity of the water runnel and its expression along stairs, through wall, and at the top and bottom of the climb.
- Address how the switchback ramps hit the side edges of the site.
- Study the relationship between the bike runnel and water runnel.
- Investigate the use of light, color, and art to reinforce the concept of movement and provide character at day and night.
- Look into whether signage is required that communicates that the connection south beyond the site is not ADA accessible.
- Study reducing the number of bollards and their relationship to the edge of the shared street.
- Look into whether there is a conflict of the footings with the gas line.
- Study bike rack location to maintain visibility to racks but also porosity at street edge.

The Commission also made the following recommendations to SDOT and DPD

- Facilitate a connection from the 10th Ave Hillclimb south to S Jackson St.
- To the extent possible, promote an ADA-accessible pedestrian path on the property located on the east side of 10th Ave S north of S Jackson St when it is redeveloped.