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APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

November 6, 2008

Convened 9:00 am
Adjourned 2:30 pm

Projects Reviewed

Epiphany School Alley Vacation Part 2 – Public Benefit
SPU Director Chuck Clarke Briefing
Madison Valley Storm Water Improvements

Commissioners Present

Tasha Atchison
Brendan Connolly
John Hoffman
Mary Johnston
Karen Kiest
Dennis Ryan
Norie Sato
Darby Watson
Darrell Vange

Unconfirmed Commissioners Present

Julie Parrett
Nathan Polanski

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Tom Iurino
Shannon Glass

Celebrating 40 Years 1968-2008



November 6, 2008	Project:	Madison Valley Storm Water Improvements
	Phase:	Schematic Design
	Last Review:	September 18, 2008
	Presenters:	Brent Middleswart, SPU Peter Nelson, Karen Kiest Landscape Architects
	Attendees:	Peter Triandafilou, Greater Madison Valley Community Council Celia Kennedy, SPU Grace Manzano, SPU Ruri Yampolsky, Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs

Time: 1 hour

169/RS0607

ACTION

The Commission thanks the Madison Valley Storm Water Improvements team for their presentation, and unanimously approves thirty percent schematic design with the following recommendations and comments:

- Appreciates the challenge of designing a facility which has such serious technical requirements, while trying to meet the community's needs and desire for more recreational space; so far it is an exciting and sensitive solution.
- Encouraged that an artist will be selected for Phase I and Phase II, as art could be an important player in fulfilling the site's interpretive potential.
- Encouraged seeing the inclusion of more plant material in the lower portion of the site. The dry stream bed is very successful. There is some concern, however, that vegetation may be too dense in some parts of the site in terms of safety considerations.
- The fence along the east edge is an important unifying element, and is strongly encouraged.
- Encourage a larger play area, and exploring the possibility that non-traditional play structures could cascade down the slope.
- There is some concern about clarity and consistency of the drawings; there is a desire to see more of the site, and context.
- Encourages being more playful with the gabions. There are some concerns with a five foot height on security, accessibility, views, context, et cetera.
- The edges offer opportunities for activity nodes, viewing or overlook platforms, gathering spaces
- Encourage referencing the CPTED guidelines and creating clear lines of site.

Recusals: Commissioner Kiest recused herself from the presentation.

Project Presentation

Project Background and Context

The projects scope is to expand stormwater storage in the Madison Valley basin to greatly reduce stormwater flooding and sewer backups. The project includes the expansion of the 30th Avenue East and East John Street above-ground stormwater facility; a new stormwater pipeline in a section of the basin; and approximately 2.0 million gallons of stormwater storage in Washington Park. The focus of the presentation is Phase I, the expansion of the 30th Avenue and John Street facility.

Last time the design team shared two concepts, one formal and the other more naturalistic. This thirty percent design combines elements of those two concepts. The design team selected a naturalistic concept, which includes elements from the community input.

Themes SPU Heard from the Community

Safety and Security

- Maintain clear visual access into and across the site
- Address flood safety through clear routes and signage

Children and the Neighborhood

- Kids as key users in design of circulation and spaces
- Incorporate playful elements into design
- Develop area for kids near southwest entry

Recreation

- Provide more open lawn on west edge for recreation
- Add to recreational opportunities in the neighborhood

Community Uses

- Provide loop walk, seating spots, overlooks, perches
- Rolling lawn, plaza can serve as performance space
- Wrap the rolling lawn around sides to capture more sun

Landscape

- Reference natural history in "dry creek" and plantings
- Preserve existing trees or reference in new plantings
- Select plants with a variety of textures and seasonal color
- Simplify plantings, and broaden lawn for maintenance in the southeast portion of the site

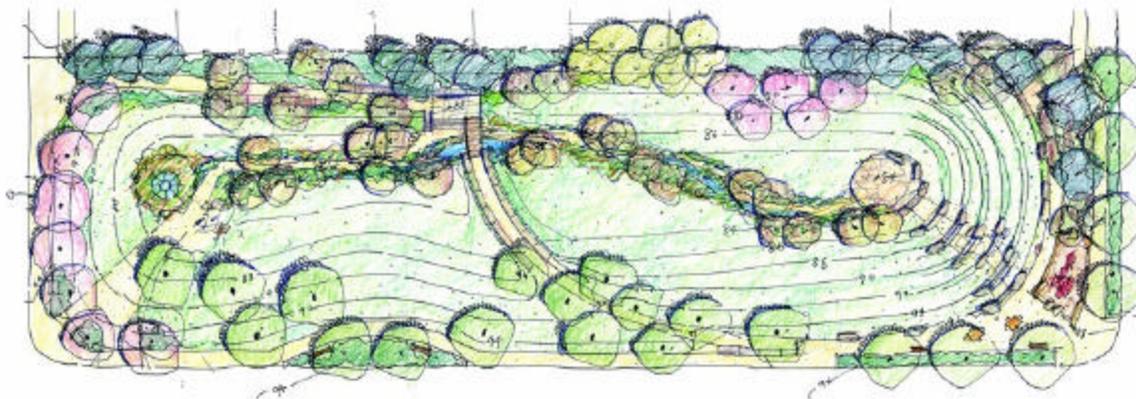
Art and Culture Understanding

- Tell the story of the community

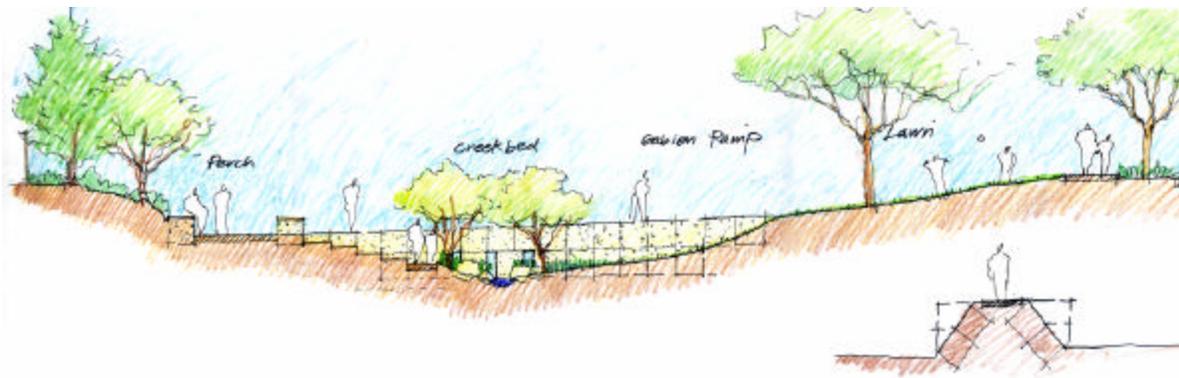
Design Update

The design team has focused on two elements:

- Creating clear access through the site, which is ADA accessible and experiential walk
- Making the south end the "activities" and kid-friendly zone



To unify the site, material simplification is being considered. Gabions create a trestle-like trail. A low vegetated hedge would soften the trail experience, while maintaining views across the site.



Public Comments

Ruri Yampolsky, Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs.

An artist will be selected to create something specific for this site, as well as the Washington Park site.

Peter Triandafilou, President of Greater Madison Valley Community Council

Most community members view this site as a "pit." Has heard from the community that the proposed design may not meet the community's needs. It is a fast-growing community, which may want more play area, as the closest play spaces are one-half or one mile away. There is concern about how little of this space is devoted to play area and community gathering spots. Perhaps a portion of the site could be lidded to increase usable space. Encourage appreciation of how it is currently being used as a children's play area and dog park. Since the site could become contaminated with sewer backups, perhaps people should not be walking through it. Partial decking might increase usable space at street level. It may be feasible, though cost is an issue. Thinking outside of the box might enhance potential uses.

Celia Kennedy, SPU

There are different interpretations of what is considered the right scope for the project, but there is considerable community support for the current design, based on the input at the public meetings. If the community wants a portion of the site lidded, which one community member has suggested, it's up to City Council to approve a significantly increased budget for the project. There are geotechnical issues with creating lidded area, such as liquefaction zone pilings, which would add substantially to the cost.

Commissioners' Comments & Questions

What is the nature of the children's play area?

Boulders and a more naturalistic approach, in keeping with the material language.

What is the cage height?

About three or four feet tall.

Since this has been a controversial site, ways to incorporate educational opportunities and public outreach would be a design bonus, such as a datum, marking, or stone feature.

One of the questions last time was how to expose the engineering and function of the site. There is a struggle to balance that interest with the community's lack of interest in that.

Is there water flowing through the stream bed on a regular basis?

It is a "dry stream" bed, with water flow only after very large storms.

Is there a fence, and what kind?

The fences are private in some cases and jointed owned in others. The fences are mostly cedar and about six-feet-tall. Building one solid fence is being considered for continuity.

Describe the design of the south end of the site.

The southwest corner is the only flat area and there is not enough space for play structures, so boulders are being considered for natural play.

How often are four feet storm events expected?

Currently, overall capacity is a million gallons. The facility now has capacity to hold fifteen- to twenty-year storms. When Phase 1 is complete, it will hold 40-to 50-year storms. Once Phase 2 is complete, the system capacity, based on modeling results, will handle all the historic storms in a 157 year record.

With the current configuration, there is about six inches of water every four years. A lot of storms are already absorbed in that. Every eight years, there's about two-and-a-half feet of water.

Is the basin lined, or meant to infiltrate as it filled?

There is a liner with soil on top, drain material, and a French drain at the bottom to allow for infiltration.

The lawn is maintained, or is it a meadow?

It is a maintained lawn, to allow for recreational use.

What material is being considered for the "dry creek" walk?

A gravel path with wet-loving, native plants next to it.

Is it intended to be accessible?

It's intended to be ADA accessible.

Is there a sense of how art might work within the design?

The design is not at that level yet, however there is an interest in a reference to water.

Are there street lights on 30th Avenue?

Yes, there are existing street lights.

Concern that obstructed lines of site may lead to areas of mischief. Make sure areas are open with site lines from the perimeter. Think about using trees to make backdrop in performance areas.

If play space is an issue, consider feasibility of non-conventional play structures, such as rocks on slopes; it may also help with activate the area.

The design can be pushed further to increase the amount of play area, given the community needs.

Mark sections on plans so there is a reference. For the presentation, expand the context boundaries so there is a better perspective of the surroundings.

Is the gabion bridge intended to address ADA slope issues? Does it divide the site in half?

Yes, it is a response to ADA constraints. It is also an opportunity to create a bridge and dramatic topographic interest.

Perhaps the unstructured play areas could happen in the gathering areas.

The gabions are an interesting idea; perhaps they could be more playful.

Are gabions safe for children to play on?

They are stable.

The five foot gabion height may be a concern; three-and-a-half to four feet may be preferable.

This project seems like a great opportunity to incorporate small demonstration projects, such as porous paving.

There are attractive and interesting pedestrian paths in the site. If a play area is possible on the southwest corner, it would be attractive. The hole is not deep, so it might be pleasant to walk into; and the opportunities for children to climb, roll down the hill, and so on appropriate.

The fence bordering the neighbors is an important element, featuring the nature of this park. The continuous datum will reinforce that public interest. Consideration of bike racks is encouraged.