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APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

November 3, 2011

Convened 10:30am
Adjourned 3:30pm

Projects Reviewed

Mercer West II
South Lake Union Mobility Plan
Alaskan Way Viaduct – North End and Portal

Commissioners Present

Julie Bassuk, Chair (excused from 1:00pm-1:30pm)
Julie Parrett (excused from 11:00am – 2:00pm)
Tom Nelson
Osama Quotah (excused from 10:30am-1:00pm)
Norie Sato (Chair from 1:00pm-1:30pm)
Donald Vehige

Excused Commissioners

Malika Kirkling
Debbie Wick-Harris
Laurel Kunkler

Incoming Commissioners Present

Mary Fialko

Staff Present

Valerie Kinast
Tom Iurino



November 3, 2011

Project: Mercer West II

Phase: 60% design

Last Reviewed: Jan 20, 2011

Presenters: Eric Tweit, SDOT
Amy Cragg, GGN

Attendees: Dennis Haskell, SRG
Jason Huff, Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs
Katey Bean, WSDOT
Lesley Bain, Weinstein AU
Monica Moravec, KPFF
Susan Bartlett, KPFF

Time: 10:30am-12:00pm

Presentation

SDOT and its design team presented the 60% design of the Mercer West II project. In conjunction with the Mercer East project, it will create a direct, two-way connection between I-5 and Elliott Ave. West. The project widens Mercer between Dexter and 5th Ave. N, converts Mercer to two-way operation between 5th Ave. N and Queen Anne Ave. N, converts Roy to a two-way street between 5th and Queen Anne Ave., creates a new 6th Ave. N between Mercer and Harrison streets, and closes Broad Street to re-connect the street grid. The team studied but did not propose improvements to West Mercer Place. Bike facilities will be built as part of this project, such as a two-way bike path from Dexter to 5th.

The team presented in detail the Aurora underpass and the approaches to it. East of Dexter, the Mercer West II project will use the same elements in the public realm – trees, lighting, furniture and fingers – as in Mercer East. West of Dexter, the project switches street trees to London Plain to match those at Seattle Center. The underpass' sidewalk drops with the road; next to the sidewalk is a separate bike path. The underpass' walls contain art, a moire pattern of 4x8 foot panels. Outside the underpass, an alternating species of vines covered the walls, and an alternating pattern of evergreen and deciduous plantings covered the ground next to the sidewalk. Both the green walls and the green ground plane created a rhythm. The team studied green stormwater but found it to be infeasible, due to the tight spaces and soil conditions.

ACTION

The Design Commission thanked SDOT and its design team for their clear presentation of the Mercer West II project. The commission appreciated the team's consideration and response to its past comments. By a vote of 5-0, the commission approved the 60% design, with the following comments:

- **Study how the plantings, especially those on the vine walls, work in the interim period before they fully mature. Review the use of snowberry and mahonia to make sure they will not create maintenance problems and will survive in this tough environment. Use species that blend the neighboring projects.**
- **Consider additional wall treatment to create additional interest, especially before plants mature and when they are not covering the wall completely.**
- **Provide the most innovative bicycling and pedestrian facilities possible by adding infrastructure and separating the conflicts between pedestrians, bicyclists and cars. While the team's work to**

date has been good, strive to set a new, higher standards with this important transportation improvement.

- Better integrate the art into the wall and develop the wall design so that the art makes a larger statement. Help to increase the art's scale (which is limited by its budget) by using lighting and by developing wall's texture, color or shape.
- Design 6th Ave as a complete street, including its intersection and signalization with Mercer. While the immediate area will not have many pedestrians due to the current uses of property, it may in the future as the nearby land is developed and adjoining neighborhoods are connected.