

S Lander Street Bridge

Edward B. Murray
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Director, OPCD

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Ross Tilghman, Vice Chair

Brodie Bain

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Ben de Rubertis

Thaddeus Egging

Rachel Gleeson

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Commissioners Present

Ross Tilghman, Vice Chair
Brodie Bain
Lee Copeland
Thaddeus Egging
Rachel Gleeson
Laura Haddad
Jescelle Major

Commissioners Excused

Shannon Loew, Chair
Ben de Rubertis
John Savo

Project Description

The project is located on S Lander St between 1st Ave S and 4th Ave S, which is one of three east-west connections for the South Downtown (SODO) Neighborhood. The proposed bridge will rise above an existing at-grade railroad crossing, reducing travel time and increasing safety for users. The bridge will be constructed within the existing right-of-way (ROW) and will include vehicular travel lanes as well as a multi-use pathway. The project was initially proposed in 2003, but was placed on hold due to limited funding. The project was reactivated in late 2015 and has received additional funding from the Move Seattle Levy, WSDOT, and the US Department of Transportation.

Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) first review of the S Lander St Bridge project since the project was reactivated. The commission reviewed a version of the proposal in 2007. The purpose of this meeting was to review the design, which is between the schematic (30%) and final (60%) design phases. After the presentation and discussion, the SDC voted, 6-1, to approve this phase of the S Lander St Bridge project with conditions and recommendations.

Recusals and Disclosures

Thaddeus Egging disclosed that his employer, KPFF, had worked on the bridge design prior to the project being placed on hold.

January 5, 2017

10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Type

CIP

Phase

Concept design

Previous ReviewsNone**Presenters**

Jessica Murphy

SDOT

Jim Howard

HBB Landscape Architecture

Attendees

Colie Hough-Beck

HBB Landscape Architecture

Barbara Moffat

COWI

Richard Patterson

COWI

Eric Strauch

SDOT

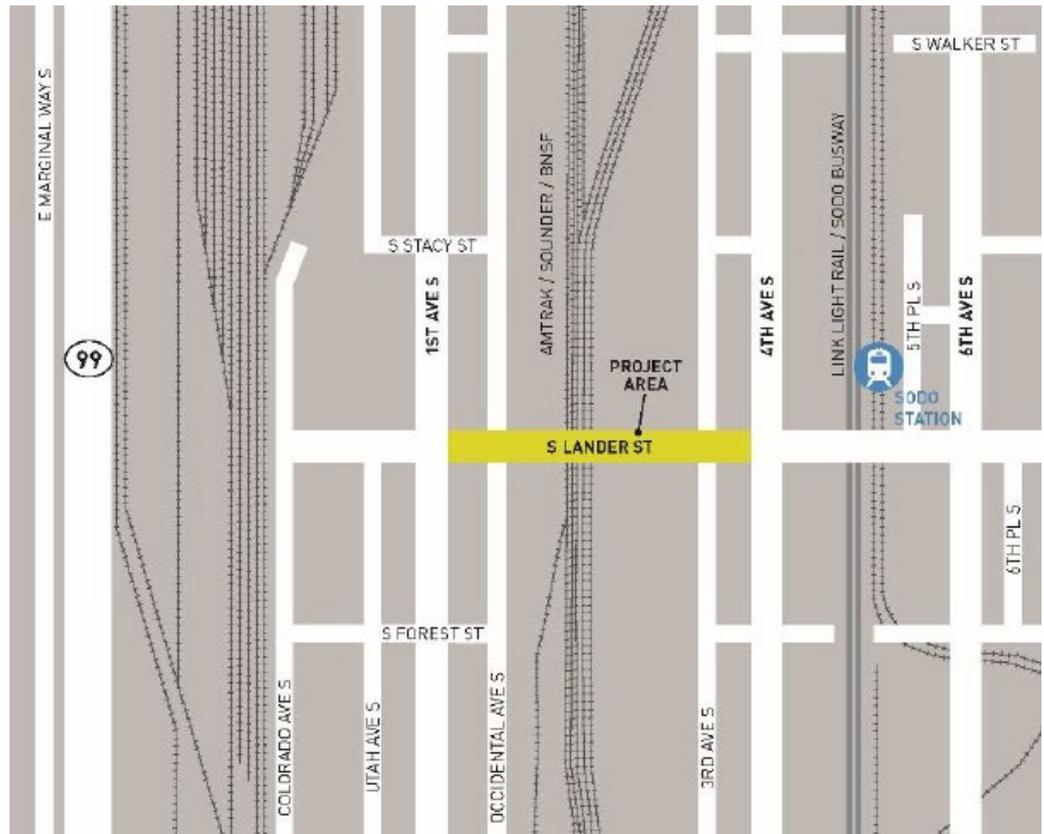


Figure 1: Project location

Summary of Presentation

Jessica Murphy, of SDOT, and Jim Howard, of HBB Landscape Architecture, presented the S Lander Street Bridge proposal. Jessica Murphy presented information about the project background, timeline, funding, and goals. Jessica Murphy referred to safety considerations for pedestrians crossing the train tracks as well as long wait times as reasons behind the project, though also noted that vehicular traffic on Lander Street is lower now than it was in the 2000's when the project began.

Currently, S Lander Street serves as an important east-west corridor within the SODO neighborhood for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists and it connects the SODO light rail station, at 5th and Lander, to destinations on 1st Avenue S (see figure 1). S Lander St is also home to several local businesses. The proposed bridge would eliminate the at-grade railroad crossing between 1st Ave S and 4th Ave S, better serving vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists who use S Lander Street to commute into and do business in the SODO neighborhood.

The proposed bridge will fit within the existing S Lander Street ROW. Two options were proposed – one with pedestrian and bike lanes on both sides of the bridge and one that provided a multiuse path on the north side; both would have two travel lanes in each direction. SDOT's preferred option includes a bridge with four, 11-foot-wide vehicular traffic lanes, a 14-foot-wide multi-use path on the north side of the bridge, and a lane separator between the travel lanes and the multi-use path (see figure 2). Underneath the bridge, near the 3rd Avenue ROW, a separate frontage road will be created for businesses on the south side of the proposed bridge. It will provide access and parking spaces and connect underneath the bridge to the Seattle School District offices on the north side, which is also to be accessed by 3rd Avenue S. (see figure 3).

Occidental Ave S, running north-west parallel to 1st Avenue S, will be dead-ended both north and south of the bridge, terminating in high concrete approach walls at both ends. A second option to retain automobile access for Occidental Ave was provided. This option would bend Occidental east so it can pass under the bridge

where it gets higher, but that option would require the purchase of additional property and was not pursued.

The SDOT team has worked extensively with business and property owners in the area to address issues about access, crime, safety, connectivity, and traffic circulation.

In response to the community's desire for a design that includes architectural elements which reflect the character of the SODO neighborhood, the project team proposed two theme alternatives for the bridge design – Industrial and Art Deco. (see figure 4). Each theme would influence the design of specific architectural elements, artistic features, wall detailing, textures, and patterns. While a detailed design was not presented, the proposed bridge will include elements such as a 12-foot throw barrier, handrails, traffic

Design option 1: Multi-use path on north side



Design option 2: Sidewalks on both sides

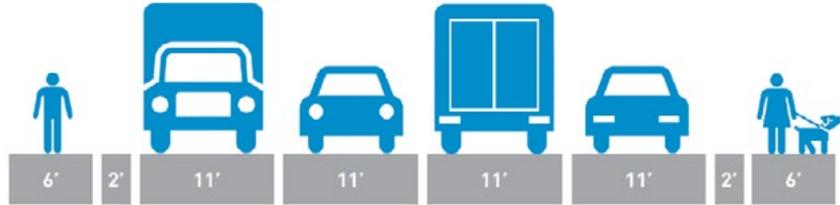


Figure 2: Proposed road conditions

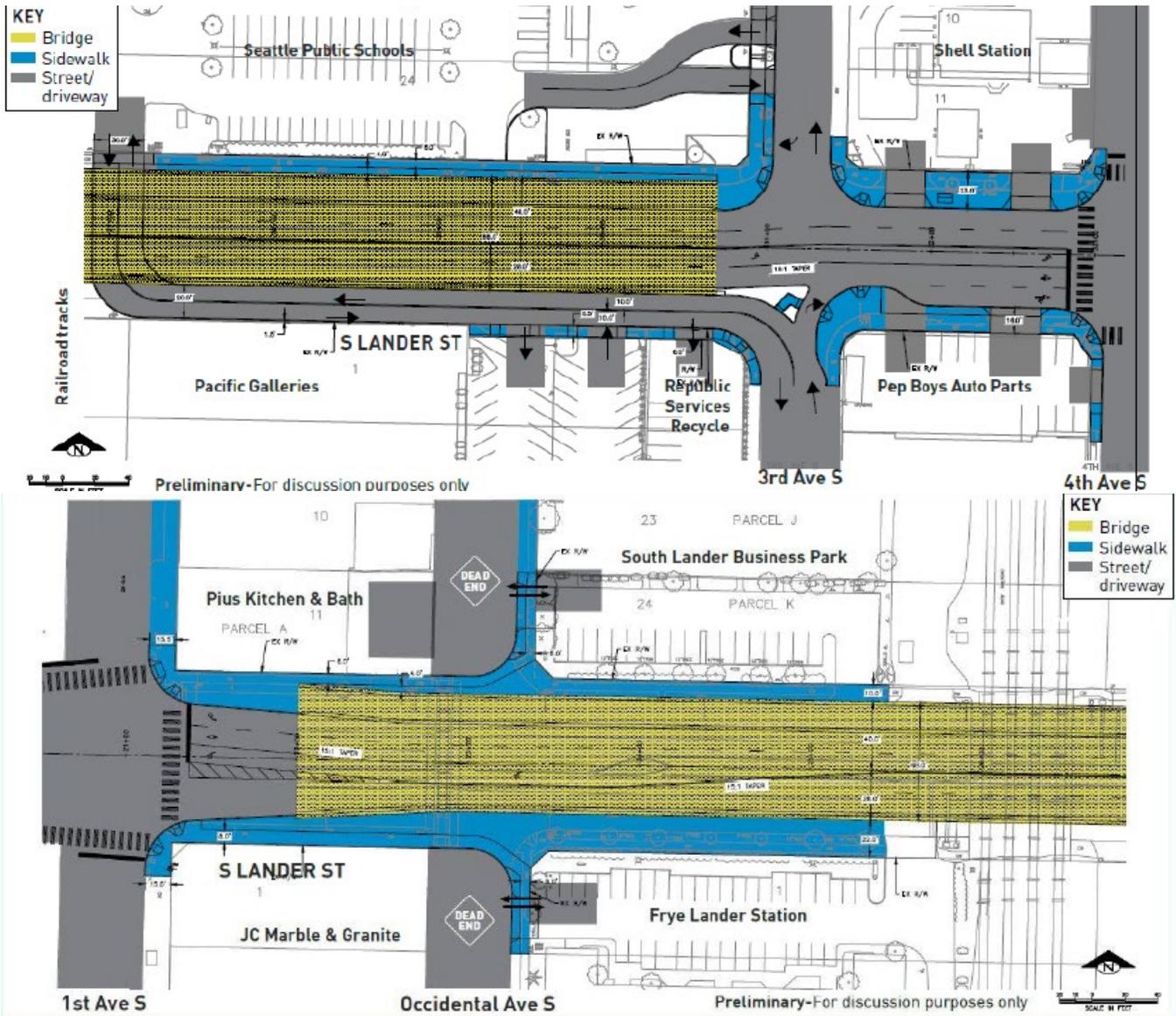
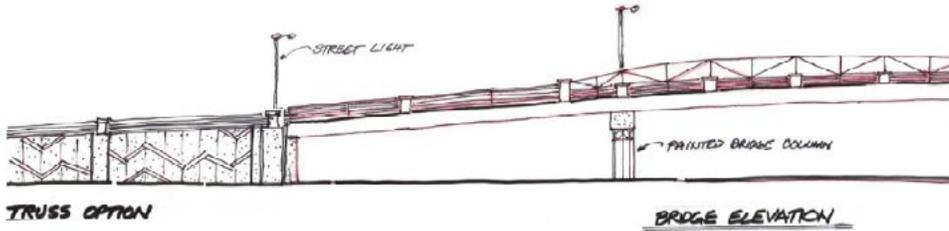
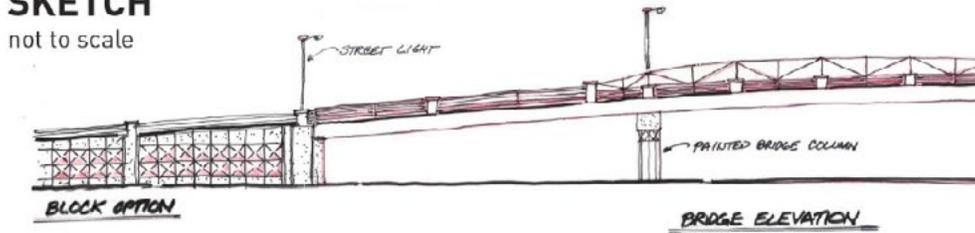


Figure 3: Proposed design east (above) and west (below) of railroad tracks

SKETCH

not to scale



SKETCH

not to scale

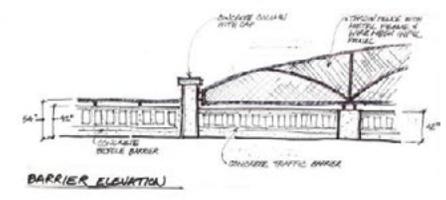
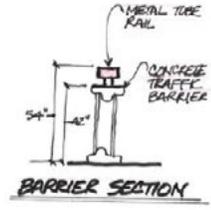
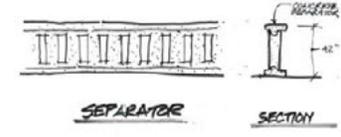
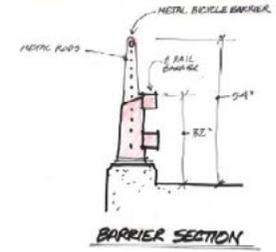
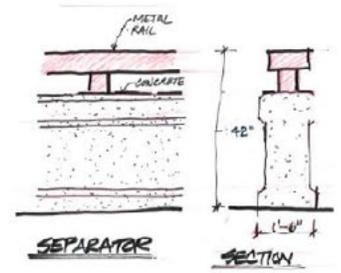
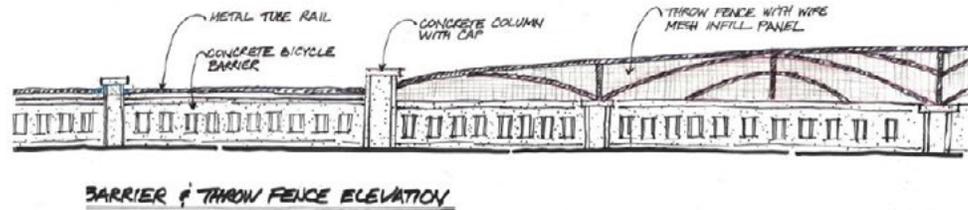
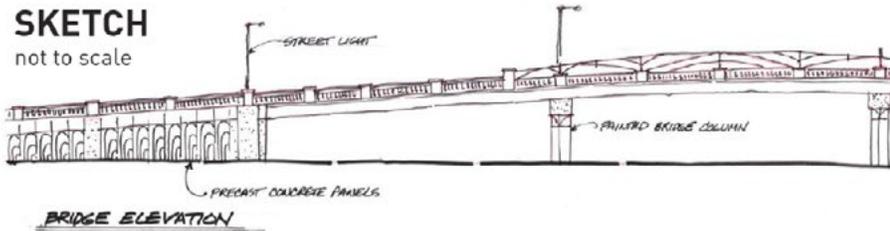


Figure 4: Proposed design themes - Industrial (above) and Art Deco (below)

barriers, vehicular lighting, and precast wall treatments. Although funding has not been secured for this design element, the proposal may also include a pedestrian lighting plan.

Agency Comments

None

Public Comments

None

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Circulation vehicular and bike/pedestrian
- Equity and outreach
- Bridge design
- Lighting

Vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation

The SDC expressed significant concerns about the elimination of through access for pedestrians and cyclists along Occidental Ave S. The SDC recommended the project team return with options for maintaining through movement

on Occidental Ave S. for pedestrians and cyclists. Commissioners also requested more information about freight circulation in order to better understand how the bridge supports the overall freight circulation plan for the SODO neighborhood.

The SDC appreciated the inclusion of a wide multi-use pathway along the north side of the proposed bridge. The Commission also acknowledged that the design of the frontage road, which provides access for adjacent businesses, worked with the overall vehicular circulation system. The SDC noted that Lander is the most pedestrian-oriented east-west street in SODO and that the bridge will make it more vehicular, and recommended the design team strengthen the pedestrian experience along S Lander St between 1st Ave and 4th Ave.

Equity and outreach

The SDC appreciated and supported the efforts by SDOT to engage with the community about the project. However, commissioners are concerned the proposed bridge will disproportionately benefit vehicles over cyclists and pedestrians and recommended the project team strengthen the connection for pedestrians and cyclist.

Bridge design

The SDC encouraged the project team to create a bridge design that will enhance pedestrian safety, specifically where the proposed frontage road near 3rd Avenue S intersects with the bridge landing. Commissioners also encouraged the project team to design the walls in a way that will maintain sight lines through to the other side of the bridge while minimizing the visual weight of the proposed bridge walls near Occidental Ave S. Commissioners recommended the project team consider incorporating an Industrial theme into the bridge design, noting that Art Deco has limited application in SODO, where it is used only on the Starbucks building, whereas Industrial is more universal and also relates to Art Deco. The SDC encouraged the team to design artistic elements that will be visible to different types of users and to further integrate the metal throw barrier with the rest of the bridge design.

Lighting

The SDC is concerned due to the lack of allocated funding for pedestrian lighting. Commissioners request further clarity as to why there is no funding for pedestrian lighting. The Commission also recommended the project team return with options related to integrating street and pedestrian lighting into the bridge design.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for presenting the concept design phase for the S Lander Street Bridge project. Specifically, the SDC appreciated the public process used to influence the proposed design concepts. The Commission also appreciated the complexity of the proposal given the associated design challenges. The SDC voted 6-1 to approve the concept design phase for the S Lander Street Bridge project with the following conditions:

- Prior to the next the full commission meeting, the SDC will convene a subcommittee to review options for maintaining through movement on Occidental Ave S. for pedestrians and cyclists
- Prior to the next full commission meeting, the SDC will convene a subcommittee to review detailed design drawings (wall details, barriers, lighting, etc.) for the proposed bridge

The SDC also provided the following recommendations:

- Provide a broader overview of the truck and freight circulation strategy for SODO to better understand the context in which the proposed bridge would function.
- Encourage the strengthening of the pedestrian environment as you approach each side of the bridge, as well as on the bridge.
- Encourage the pursuit of CPTED design on the east end of bridge on the touch down point.
- Consider the exploration of an industrial theme for the bridge design.
- Provide options for street and pedestrian lighting that will enhance pedestrian safety and comfort.
- To the extent possible, bring in artist assistance for insight and advice.
- Provide aesthetic relief on the walls, paying attention to the scale of the proposed patterns.

The following are comments from commissioners who voted against the project:

Laura Haddad – I would like to see more information as to why the proposed bridge is needed. The proposed bridge will be very disruptive to the street grid of the SODO neighborhood and I would like to know why the existing overpasses, which have had recent major infrastructure investments, haven't been able to deal with freight and other traffic, if that is why the bridge is being built. This project will create a permanent cut and the SODO neighborhood will never be put back together, which is why I am opposed to the project all together.