

South Recycling Center

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Ben de Rubertis, Chair

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Commissioners Present

Brianna Holan, Vice Chair
Justin Clark
Laura Haddad
Mark Johnson
Amalia Leighton
Vinita Sidhu
Elaine Wine

Commissioners Excused

Ben de Rubertis, Chair
Rick Krochalis

Project Description

Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) is proposing to develop the South Recycling Facility, the second phase of the South Transfer Station facility, located near the intersection of 5th Ave S and S Kenyon St in Seattle's South Park neighborhood. Phase I, located across Kenyon St from the proposed site, was completed in 2013. Phase I was not planned to accommodate all solid waste needs. Phase II is a 10-acre site to include a recycling and reuse center, household hazardous waste facility, solid waste trailer parking, and support offices. The additional facility will provide for recycling and re-use needs for Southeast Seattle.

Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) fourth review of the South Recycling Facility project. The purpose of this meeting was to review the design development (90% design) phase for the project. After the presentation and discussion, the SDC voted, 4-3, to approve the design development phase for the South Recycling Facility project with several recommendations.

Recusals and Disclosures

None

October 3, 2019

1:00 - 2:30 pm

Type

CIP

Phase

Design Development

Previous Reviews

5/2/19, 10/18/18, 5/5/16

Presenters

Dean Koontz

HBB Landscape Architecture

Adam Kuby

Artist

Dean Koontz

HBB Landscape Architecture

Jeff Neuner

SPU

Vicky Raya

SPU

Alex Rolluda

Rolluda Architects

Olivia Williams

HDR

Hui Yang

SPU

Attendees

Susan Fife-Ferris

SPU

Rebecca Johnson

OAC

Susan Neaton

Rolluda Architects

Aaron Werner

SPU

Summary of Presentation

Olivia Williams, of HDR, Alex Rolluda, of Rolluda Architects, Dean Koontz, of HBB Landscape Architecture, Adam Kuby, project artist, and Hui Yang, Vicky Raya, and Jeff Neuner, of SPU presented the design development phase for the South Recycling Facility. The project presentation began with an overview of the project vision and race and social Justice (RSJ) and community outreach activities. The presentation then focused on responses to previous recommendations provided during the May 2, 2019 meeting as well as project design updates. The project team provided additional information regarding the near and long term site circulation for SPU solid waste trucks. The long term site circulation takes into consideration the addition of a Solid Waste Facility along the southern edge of the project site. The project team also presented modified pavement and coating alternatives, which were deemed to expensive to implement.

The project team then presented updates to the art integration strategy, which includes a low lying gabion wall filled with stones and recycled glass along 5th Ave S as well as an interior wall, increasing in height, to delineate between public and private uses. The interior wall will include an additional art element on the gate. The gabion wall along 5th Ave S will include lighting to illuminate the artwork at night. *See figure 1 for more detail.*

The updated landscape plan includes a plant palette to provide a cohesive design between the proposed facility and the existing South Transfer Station. Plantings will be concentrated along the 5th Ave S and will include a series of deciduous and evergreen street trees as well as understory planting (*see figure 2*). The plan has specified trees with phytoremediation qualities to sequester and release toxins within the underlying soil. The plan also provides a pedestrian pathway along 5th Ave S to connect with an existing pathway north of the project site.

The proposed sustainability plan includes the use of recycled materials, electric vehicle charging stations, provisions for future electric truck charging, solar ready facilities, and off site tree mitigation strategy.

Agency Comments**None****Public Comments****None****Summary of Discussion**

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Asphalt surface
- Art integration
- Sustainability
- Design details
- Design updates

Asphalt surface

The SDC continued to comment on the amount and materials used for the pavement. The commission recognized that there are limited opportunities to provide onsite mitigation due to the poor soil quality and then expressed their disappointment that the choice of paving materials wasn't considered to provide mitigation measures. Commissioners then stated that the project team missed an opportunity to provide a different paving treatment for the publicly accessible areas.



Figure 1: Rendering of updated art proposal



ELEVATION Summer



ELEVATION Autumn



ELEVATION Winter

Figure 2: Proposed landscape along 5th Ave

Art Integration

The SDC appreciated the integration of art within the infrastructure project. The Commission is concerned the proposed art will blend in with surrounding facility, resulting in users being unaware of the proposed art concept. Commissioners then commented that the strength of the details and materials such as the glass, lighting, and base, will determine the legibility of the art concept. The Commission also encouraged the project team to consider using additional objects and artifacts in the gabions identified as the focal point.

The Commission then appreciated the integration of artwork within the interior wall separating the public and private uses. Commissioners agreed that the art would help guide users into the facility entrance as well as serving as a clear delineation between public and private space. The commission then recommended the project team consider using art and other wayfinding elements on the north exit side of the facility to continue to guide users to the exit. The SDC appreciated the design of the panel, but questioned the use of English only. Commissioners also questioned the proposed location along the vehicular traffic lanes as it might slow traffic entering into the facility. The Commission encouraged the project team to relocate the panel where it would still be visible and to replace the gate along the wall with something that users can see while passing by without slowing traffic.

Sustainability

The SDC commended the project team for providing space for future sustainability elements. Specifically, commissioner's appreciated making the facility solar ready for the charging of electric trucks. Due to the amount of asphalt being proposed, the Commission strongly recommended the project team to continue efforts to plant trees. The Commission encouraged the project team to consider planting enough trees off-site to offset the increased urban heat island effect generated from the asphalt. Although the SDC appreciated the idea of providing a cohesive planting palette between the existing South Transfer Station and the future recycling facility, the commission recommended the project team provide a more diverse planting palette in the understory planting along 5th Ave S. Commissioners also recommended the project team increase the footprint of the southeast planter along 5th Ave S.

The Commission then recommended the project team incorporate sustainable building materials wherever possible to improve the facility's performance.

Design details

The SDC encouraged the project team use materials consistently throughout the publicly accessible area to help guide the public through the site. The Commission then recommended the project team clarify wayfinding to and through the project site.

Design updates

The SDC acknowledged that the updated design proposal included few refinements from the previous review. While the commission appreciated the project team's willingness to research design and material alternatives, commissioners agreed that the current project incorporated few creative solutions and innovative design strategies.

The Commission then commended the project team for the design of the walkway along 5th Ave S. Commissioners appreciated the width of the walkway as well as the use of vegetation to separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

The SDC also strongly recommended the project team continue to look to the future environment and opportunities for this project, not solely focusing on the current challenges.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for their presentation of the public benefit proposal. Overall, the SDC appreciated SPU integrating design and art into an infrastructure project. Commissioners applauded providing a solar ready charging station, how the public is guided through the facility, and how the team dealt with the challenges of the site. The SDC approved the design development phase with the following recommendations:

1. Continue to look for long term environmental opportunities for this project, and do not solely focus on the current challenges
2. Further develop the art and wayfinding on the north exit side of the facility
3. Continue the effort to plant trees offsite
4. Provide diversity in the planting understory along 5th Ave S
5. Incorporate sustainable building materials wherever possible
6. Continue to improve wayfinding to and through site
7. Increase the footprint of the southeast planter along 5th Ave S

The following are statements from commissioners who voted against the design development phase for the South Recycling Facility project:

Laura Haddad– I would like the project to include less asphalt and to have more visual appeal. I feel like the South Park Neighborhood deserves more effort to make this a compelling place.

Brianna Holan – I agree with Laura Haddad. I also think the project team was on the right track with the schematic design, but that there was very little incremental progress after the schematic design to elevate the project to the next level, making it difficult to support.

Mark Johnson – I voted to approve the schematic design because it carried that role of being an infrastructure project that provided more, but that energy did not translate to the final design. I feel like there was an opportunity to do more in this neighborhood, but the project did not take advantage of that opportunity.