

WSCC Expansion

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Commissioners Present

Shannon Loew, Chair
Ellen Sollod, Vice Chair
Lee Copeland
Thaddeus Egging
Rachel Gleeson
Theo Lim
John Savo
Ross Tilghman

Commissioners Excused

Brodie Bain
Martin Regge

Project Description

The Washington State Convention Center (WSCC) is proposing to vacate three alleys and two streets on three blocks bounded by Pine St, 9th Ave, Howell St, and Boren Ave. The petitioner is requesting the full vacation of the following three mid-block alleys:

- Block 33 (Site B) - bounded by 9th Ave, Howell St, Terry Ave, and Olive way
- Block 43 (Site C) - bounded by Terry Ave, Howell St, Boren Ave, and Olive Way
- Block 44 (Site A) - bounded by 9th Ave, Olive Way, Boren Ave, and Pine St

The petitioner is also requesting a full street vacation of Terry Ave, between Olive Way and Howell St, as well as a subterranean street vacation of Olive Way, between 9th Ave and Boren Ave.

The preferred scheme includes approximately 2.385 million square feet (sf) of development on three sites. The WSCC expansion would occur on Site A and extend through the subterranean vacations of Olive and the Terry Avenue vacation. The remaining two sites will include co-developments. The preferred proposal includes:

- 1,499,700 square foot building located on Site A
- 29 story, approximately 400 unit residential tower located on Site B
- 16 story, 515,700 sf office tower located on Site C
- 43,000 sf of developable space dedicated to street-level uses
- Partially below-grade parking for 700-800 vehicles
- Below-grade loading services

Meeting Summary

The SDC was briefed on the Washington State Convention Center's (WSCC) proposal as it relates to the proposed street and alley vacations. The purpose of the meeting was to have the SDC receive a presentation of the overall project and the related vacations and to provide initial feedback to WSCC regarding the project and the vacation impacts.

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

February 4, 2016

9:00 - 11:30 PM

Type

Vacation

Phase

Briefing

Previous Reviews

None

Project Team Present

Mark Reddington

LMN Architects

Matt Griffin

Pine Street Group

Attendees

Howard Anderson

Denny Triangle Neighborhood Association

Amanda Bailey | MIG/SvR

Beverly Barnett | SDOT

Lyle Bicknell | OPCD

Alex Brennan | Capitol Hill Housing

Cath Brunner | 4Culture

Jim Castanes | PPUNC

Ryan Durkan | HCMP

Clair Enlow | Citizen

Jim Erickson | FHIA

Holly Golden | HCMP

Joshua Gurnee | PPUNC

Laura Haddad | Haddad Drugan

Brock Howell | Citizen

M.E. Hudgins | FHIA

Alex Hudson | FHIA

Bruno Lambert | PPUNC

Abby Lawlor | United Here Local 8

Jack Mackie | Citizen

Genessee Martin

Capitol Hill Times

Stefan Moritz | United Local Here 8

Steven Ward | STE

February 4, 2016



Figure 1: Project site location

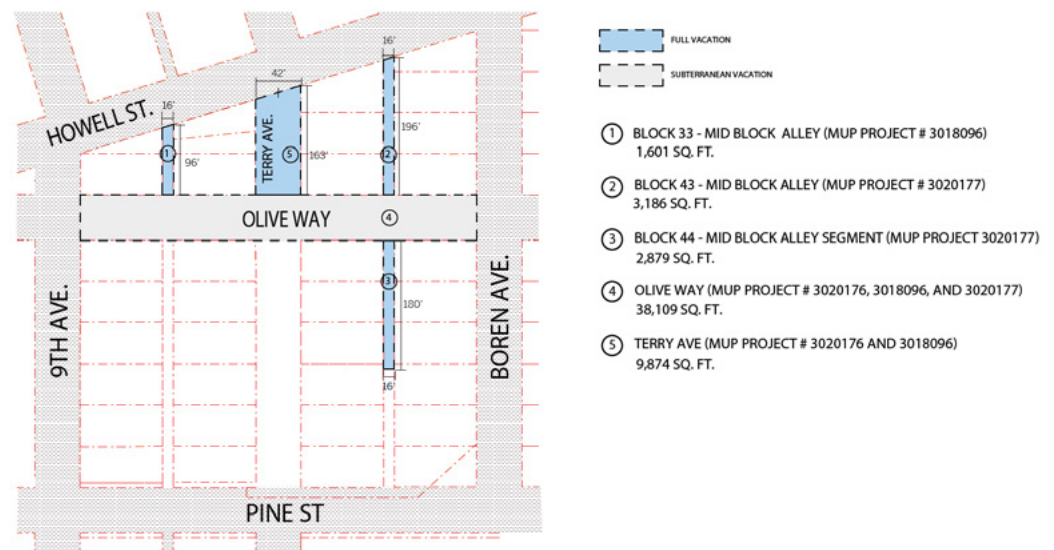


Figure 2: Proposed vacation petitions

Summary of Presentation

The project was presented by Mark Reddington, of LMN Architects, and Matt Griffin, of Pine Street Group. Mr. Griffin provided a summary and background information about the proposed convention center expansion. The proposed expansion is on behalf of the WSCC Public Development Authority. The project is funded through a bond issuance by WSCC, which is supported through an existing hotel tax. The goal of the expansion is to expand the capacity of the convention center and the events that can be attracted to the facility.

Mr. Reddington presented the proposed design and programming for the project under a vacation and no vacation scenario. The project is located on three sites along Pine St, 9th Ave, Howell St, and Boren Ave (see figure 1). The convention center expansion is located on site A, which currently serves as the King County Convention Place Station. Two co-development sites, Site B and C, will include a mix of residential, office, and retail space. The project is requesting the vacation of three (3) mid-block alleys, a full vacation of Terry Ave between Howell St and Olive Way, and a subterranean vacation of Olive Way between 9th Ave and Boren Ave (see figure 2).

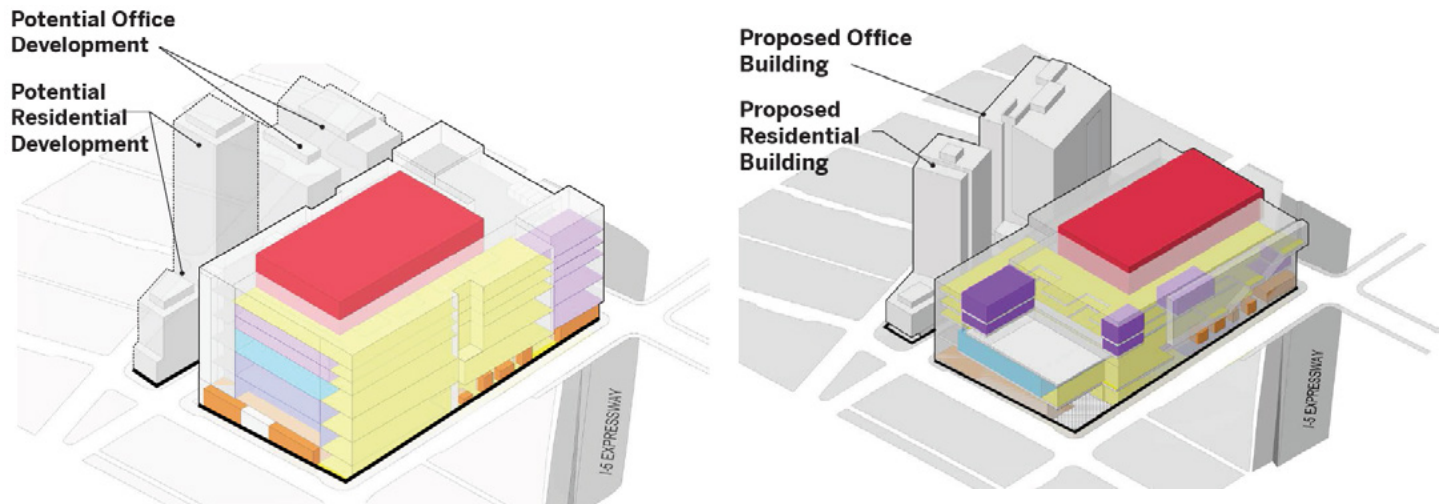


Figure 3: Proposed urban form under no vacation (left) and vacation (right) scenarios



Figure 4: Proposed programming under no vacation (left) and vacation (right) scenarios

Under the vacation scenario, the project will include developing Sites A, B, and C. Site A will include a 1,165,000 sf building for the convention center, Site B will include a 357,123 sf residential tower, and Site C will include a 515,735 sf office tower, see figure 3 for more detail. This scenario allows for the proposed convention center expansion to occur, with substantial portions of the facility to lie below grade. The proposal assumes that truck loading for the expanded convention center will occur at Site C, with trucks entering Boren and leaving on the vacated Terry Avenue segment. The vacations also allow for a change in the way that Sites B and C can be developed. The alley vacations on these sites create the opportunity to develop one residential tower and one office tower, as opposed to two separate office and residential towers under a no-vacation alternative, see figures 4-7 for more detail.

Under a no vacation scenario, the project will develop on site A only. Site A will include a 1,165,000 sf building for the convention center, while Sites B and C will not be developed (see figure 3). Under this scenario, loading services will be located below grade on site A and accessed from the mid-block along Olive Way. Partially below-grade parking will also be accessible from Olive Way. Due to the amount of loading services and programming needed, a limited amount of street level retail and walk-up shops will be located on Pine Street and 9th Ave as well as at the corner of Olive Way and Boren Ave, see figure 4 for more detail.



Figure 5: Proposed programming on Olive Way under vacation scenario

9TH AVENUE

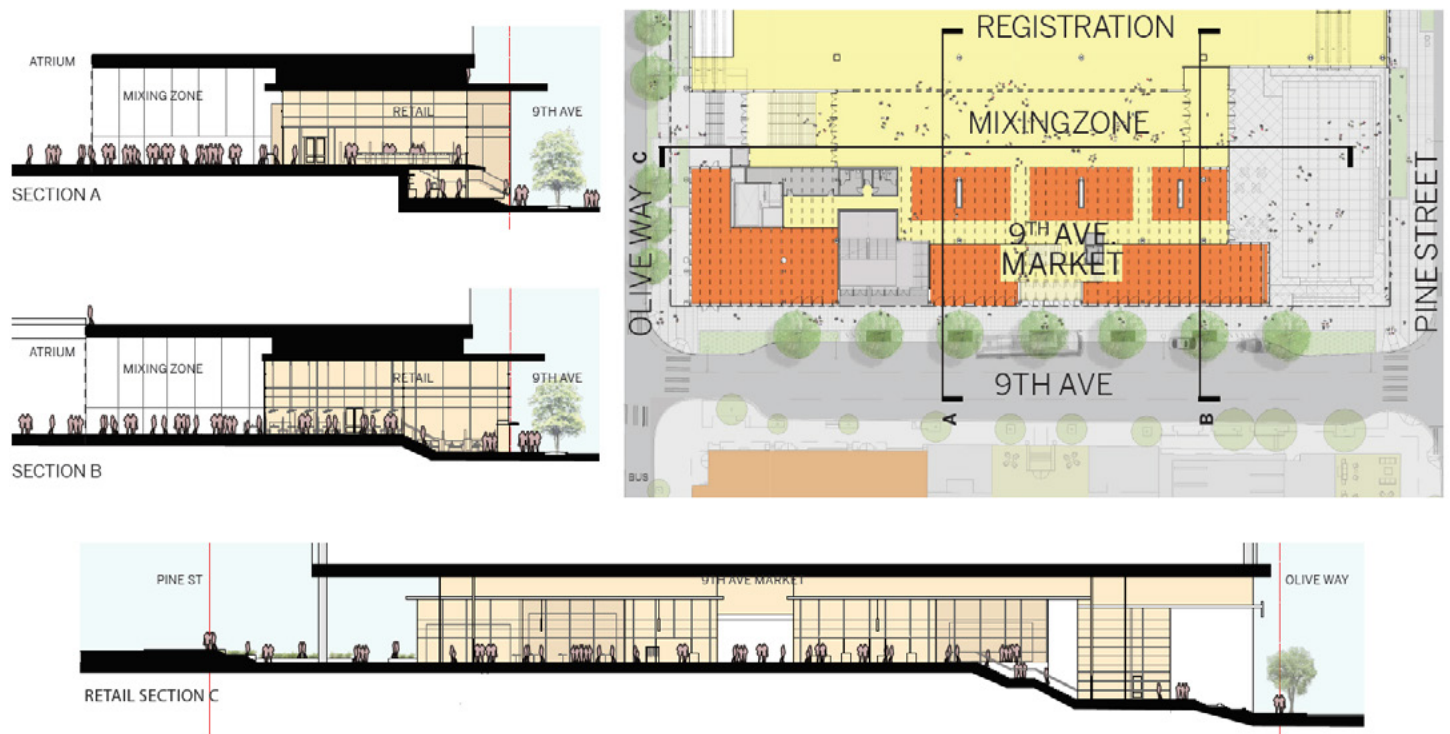


Figure 6: Proposed programming on 9th Ave under vacation scenario

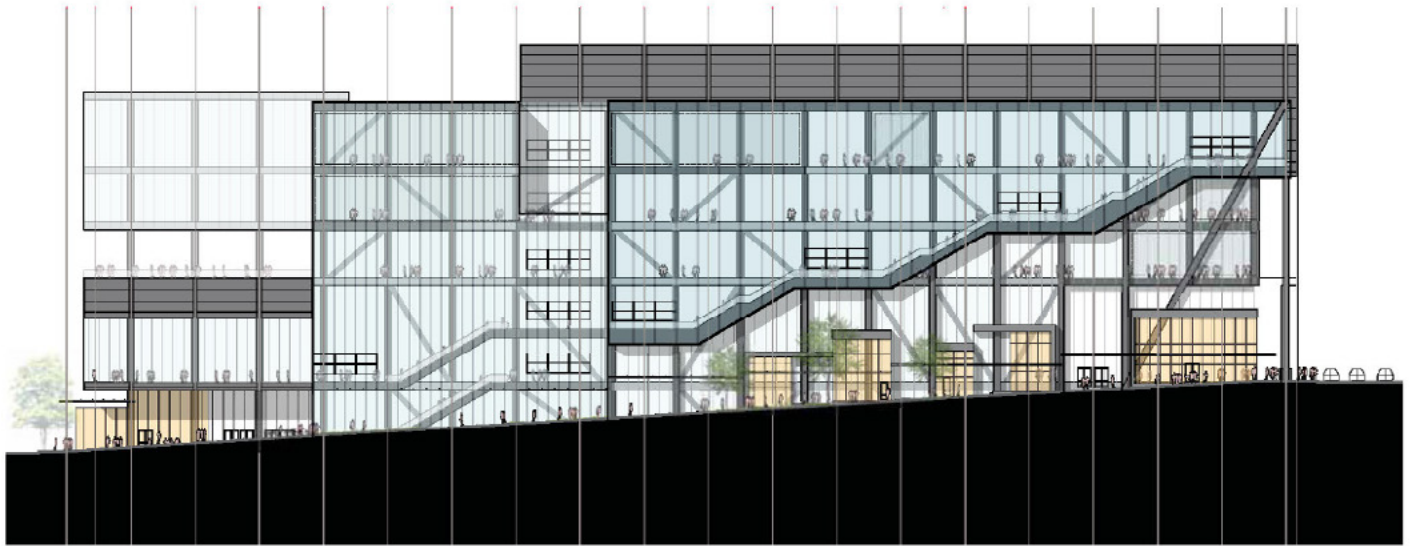


Figure 7: Proposed programming on Pine St under vacation scenario

In both scenarios, emergency and support services will be located along 9th Ave, Olive Way, and Boren Ave. The design team is proposing to incorporate a series of green walls, graphics, lighting, or artwork to enhance the pedestrian experience along Boren Ave.

Agency Comments

Beverly Barnett, of SDOT, stated that she manages the street vacation process. She explained there are two significant pieces of the vacation review, the SDC review and environmental review through SDCI. Street vacation decisions are legislative decisions made by city council and stated that SDOT creates a packet to bring to them with our recommendations. She then explained that the environmental impact statement (EIS), which is currently being drafted, is important in addressing many things that were presented today, from access to curb cut, volume and size of trucks, and understanding how those trucks will move through the city system. Ms. Barnett stated that the EIS will set a foundation for SDOT to understand fully what mitigation needs are required as a result of the project. After which, SDOT will then be able to understand what can be accepted as public benefit measures. Ms. Barnett then explained that the SDC provides valuable input regarding the adequacy of the public benefit package.

Cath Brunner, of 4Culture, stated that the Seattle Transit Tunnel marked a significant moment in the history of public art within this region. She explained that this project allowed lead artists to work closely with transit engineers and station designers, which marked the earliest project in what has become to be known as design team collaboration. The tunnel is still cited as a model for artists' concepts and artwork in transit system infrastructure. She recognizes that cities are in a constant state of change and the redevelopment of Convention Place will bring new possibilities and economic benefits. Ms. Brunner voiced her concern about the negative impacts the development will have on existing, integrated, and site-specific art at the station. While recommending the deaccession of several onsite pieces, Ms. Brunner explained that the PAC did not recommend deaccession for the two marquee signs by Alice Adams nor any art within the city ROW. She then explained that the PAC recommended the signs be re-sited and integrated

into the project by the developer in a location and context that retains the meaningful dialogue of the cityscape and respects the original public investment.

Public Comments

Howard Anderson, of Denny Triangle Neighborhood Association, views the project site as a gap that has always been between the Pike/Pine retail core and Denny Triangle Neighborhood. Mr. Anderson believes all of the neighborhoods can benefit by this project, stating that increased connectivity will have a huge impact on the surrounding areas. Mr. Anderson added that the project team needs to continue to address traffic and housing impacts.

Alex Brennan, of Capitol Hill Housing, stated that today was the first time he had heard information regarding job creation and would like to emphasize the importance of including affordable housing. He asked whether hospitality workers at the convention and in surrounding businesses would have the opportunity to live on site. Mr. Brennan briefly mentioned the importance of lidding I-5 in order to reconnect Capitol Hill with Downtown.

Jim Castanes, of PPUNC, stated that on behalf of PPUNC, he requests the applicant include completing the lid adjacent to the Plymouth off leash area as part of the proposed public benefit. Mr. Castanes also requested the applicant include a study to complete the I-5 lid between Pike and Olive St., which includes affordable housing, neighborhood business, and open space components.

Jim Erickson, of FHIA, is working together with other community groups within the First Hill neighborhood to seek public benefit funding as mitigation for the street vacations that have been requested. Mr. Erickson explained that because Freeway Park is the backyard of the current convention center, it will experience an increase in users once the expansion is completed. He stated that an increasing number of pedestrians will utilize the existing park as a path to enter the First Hill Neighborhood. He urged the city to consider allocating a portion of the public benefit funding to the enhance Freeway Park's existing entrances as well as a robust update of lighting and wayfinding throughout the park.

Joshua Gurnee, of PPUNC, participated in the Pike/Pine St. work group and supports the concept of the expansion; Mr. Gurnee would like the expansion to serve as a landmark for the city. He continued by saying that the project needs to do more than merely acknowledge the fact that there will be a I-5 lid in the future and encouraged the design tem to continue pushing the envelope.

Jack Mackie, Lead artist on downtown Seattle Transit Project, stated that the artwork he designed for the transit tunnel is going away. Mr. Mackie explained that an existing on-site advantage included the marquee signs at the intersection of 9th and Pine. He stated that the intersection is the primary gateway along Pine St., between downtown and Capitol Hill, where human scale encompasses all of the corners. Mr. Mackie feels that the current plan to destroy the artwork with no justifiable rational prevents the proposal from rising to standards set by the SDC. He further explained that there is no requirement for removal of the marquee signs and advocated their inclusion in the project proposal in a way that preserves historic and cultural context.

Stefan Moritz, of United Here local 8, said there is an opportunity to address a lot of urban design and affordable housing issues. Mr. Moritz then stated that the design team needs to push the envelope in order to create a project the effectively addresses urban design and housing affordability within the surrounding neighborhood context.

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Circulation and access
- Utilities and environmental sustainability
- Urban form (program as building hits the ground, different strategies around different edges)
- Light, air, views, and open space

Circulation and access

The SDC had several concerns regarding project circulation and access. The Commission is concerned with the absence of an analysis of pedestrian movement throughout the project site and surrounding urban context, especially between the proposed site and existing convention center location. Commissioners were also concerned with the limited analysis done for vehicular travel along surrounding corridors. Rather than only analyzing pedestrian and vehicular

traffic impacts within a nine-block area, they recommend the design team analyze how the development will affect movement patterns throughout the downtown area and adjacent neighborhoods.

The SDC requested that the project team develop a more fully articulated rationale for all of the vacations, in particular due to the impacts created along Olive Way and Boren Avenue. Commissioners questioned the project team's reason for requesting a full vacation of Terry Ave. The Commission recommended the team further explain how loading service routes will affect the function of Terry Ave. as a public street.

Commissioners also recommended the project team explore the opportunity to create an accessible street level connection to the Westlake light rail facility.

Utilities and environmental sustainability

The SDC perceives this project as demonstrating leadership in environmental sustainability and setting an example for other communities within the city, region, and country. The Commission recommended the project team exceed LEED silver standards and encouraged the design team to continue integrating innovative sustainability measures, specifically as they relate to stormwater, materials, and life cycle analyses. Commissioners also recommended the project team gain a fuller understanding as to which utilities will be rerouted or eliminated so that they will not obstruct proposed sustainability programming such as the proposed green roof.

Urban form

The SDC complimented the project team for their approach on reducing the bulk and scale of the building facades, so that they better integrate into the neighborhood context. The commission also was supportive of the approach along 9th Avenue and the related open space at the corner as well as the proposal to extend the building over I-5 at the Boren and Pine corner. The Commission cautioned the design team from including "pop-up" retail spaces along the Pine St. façade. The SDC encouraged the design team to envision how the overall project connects within the surrounding context, recommending the team understand fully how the proposed project's long-term contribution will affect the continually evolving neighborhoods surrounding the site.

Commissioners are concerned with the limited design of the east façade along Boren Ave as well as the limited programmable elements near the corner of Boren Ave. and Pine St. The SDC encouraged the design team to consider their response to the potential development of a lid, proposed by others, over interstate 5 along Pine St while designing the Boren Ave. façade and programming elements near the corner of Boren Ave. and Pine St.

The SDC is also concerned with limited amount of cultural context considered by the project team. The project site includes a set of marquee signs located at the intersection of 9th Ave. and Pine St. that were previously constructed by artists. Commissioners encouraged the design team to incorporate these signs into the future design rather than removing them.

Light, air, views, and open space

The Commission had several concerns addressing open space as it relates to the overall project proposal. Commissioners agree projects of this scale will affect the surrounding public realm. They encouraged the project team to understand how the configuration of the proposal in its entirety, including design, form, views and open space, will have the effect of making the program and related spaces appear more public to those people other than convention or event attendees. Commissioners cautioned the project team from labeling mixing zones located within the facility as publicly accessible, recognizing space located outside and adjacent to the sidewalk as much more accessible to the public.

The SDC recommended the design team continue to focus on created a stronger, diverse, and better engaged community within the downtown area through the inclusion of community oriented on-site programming such as affordable housing and day care facilities. Commissioners encouraged the design team to explore the opportunity for providing public access to rooftop programming.

Action

The SDC did not take an action at this meeting. The SDC will not take an action on Urban Design Merit until after the Final Environmental Impact Statement has been published.