



Seattle Design Commission

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

02 June 2005

Gregory J. Nickels,
Mayor

David Spiker
Chair

Charles Anderson

Pam Beyette

Karen Kiest

Hannah McIntosh

Anindita Mitra

Sheri Olson

Nic Rossouw

Dennis Ryan

Darrell Vange

Guillermo Romano,
Executive Director

Layne Cubell,
Commission Coordinator

Projects Reviewed

Fire Station 10 Improvements
Alaskan Way Viaduct Workshop
SR – 520 Improvement Project Update
Safeco Street Vacation and Skybridge Follow Up Briefing

Convened: 8:30am

Adjourned: 2:30pm

Commissioners Present

David Spiker, Chair
Pam Beyette
Hannah McIntosh
Anindita Mitra
Sheri Olson
Nic Rossouw
Dennis Ryan
Darrell Vange

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Layne Cubell
Joan James
Tom Iurino
Emily Podolak



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Development

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02June 2005 Project: Fire Station 10 Improvements

Phase: Design Development

Previous Reviews: 7 April 2005 (Alley Vacation), 16 December 2004 (Schematic Design),
18 November 2004 (Concept Design), 15 July 2004 (Pre-Design)

Presenters: Monica Lake, Fleets and Facilities Department
Ken Johnsen, Shiels Obletz Johnsen/FFD
Ed Weinstein, Weinstein A/U

Attendees: Barb Graff, Seattle Emergency Management
Beverly Barnett, Seattle Department of Transportation
Steve Marten, Seattle Emergency Management
Eric Hanson, GGN Ltd.
Emily Pizzuto, GGN Ltd.
Chester Weir, Weinstein A/U
Ruri Yampolsky, Seattle Arts Department
Molly Douce, Seattle Fire Department

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 221 DC00334)

Action: The Commission thanks the proponents for their presentation of Fire Station 10 Improvements, appreciates their refinement of the project, and their integration of art, landscape architecture and architecture ;

- **strongly encourages proponents to maintain the quality of the project through the bidding and construction processes;**
- **recommends exploring the use of permeable materials for the parking surfaces;**
- **appreciates the simplicity of the walls along the western side of the site, but would encourage proponents to reach the same level of refinement, perhaps in the concrete detailing on the wall, as exists in the rest of the project;**
- **recommends examining other, more active uses over time for the NW corner, previously designated for the service center, feeling it should not remain just a retaining wall;**
- **appreciates the selection of ginkgo bilobas for street trees because of their long life, their slow growing quality and their history, but questions the spacing along 5th Avenue and suggests continuing ginkgos along South Washington to unify the site;**
- **appreciates the proponents' successful use of the color red and suggest that it could perhaps be used elsewhere, such as the frame of the entry gate off of 4th Avenue ;**
- **recommends using a different surface material on the plaza at the front entry to the fire station and reexamining the size and details of the mechanical louvers along South Washington, perhaps considering a brick screen instead of a metal louver;**
- **commends the proponent's commitment to sustainability, including the proposed green roof and the reuse of fire test water;**
- **encourages proponents to look closely at the bollards requirement and at the potential pigeon problem on the balcony and roof;**
- **recommends approval of design development.**

Project Presentation

Proponents reviewed project principles and program imperatives which were presented during previous meetings and include:

Project Principles

- The design of the facility should respond conceptually to its site context
- The facility should be appropriately “civic” in character
- The facility should be functional, efficient, and cost effective
- The facility should be perceived as “threat aware” not “threat driven”
- The facility should demonstrate sustainable design features appropriate to building type/budget
- The open spaces at the perimeter of the site should be visually appealing and user-friendly
- Fire Station 10 should be the most visible and publicly accessible component of the facility
- The EOC and FAC should be understated, yet identifiable
- Surface parking should be located and screened to minimize its visual impact

Program imperatives

- 20’ setback from property line required for EOC and FAC
- EOC and FAC require a 35’ standoff from Yesler Way
- Clear sight lines are required around the perimeter of the facility
- EOC and FAC should not be above fire station apparatus bays
- EOC and FAC should not be located above parking garage
- Fire apparatus bays should be level
- Fire station should have a drive-through apparatus bay
- Fire apparatus to exit to Washington Street
- EOC entry should be at grade
- EOC and FAC should be collocated as they share infrastructure and requirements
- Service Center should be located to minimize impacts on FS-10, EOC and FAC
- Service Center should be located to minimize impacts adjacent properties
- 44 on site parking spaces are required

Overview of building design

Same plan as seen before in terms of the general disposition of pieces,

Floor plan L1A:

4th and S Washington access for fire vehicles through entry apron into apparatus base bar along east storage area.

narrow bar along 4th on multiple floors the admin and support components of project. Most challenging aspect was establishing a reasonable entry at southwest corner, imperative of station office to be on same level as apparatus bay so therefore entry floor public lobby and interpretive center buzzed in and then buzzed upstairs into station office, sight lines down into the lobby. Under EOC and FAC will have mechanical and electrical room.



View from 4th Ave. and Washington St: Fire Station 10 Concept Drawing

Floor Plan L1B:

- almost the same as reviewed before
- resource management center, class room, meeting room, restrooms, functional room at mid level, over storage off of the entry apparatus bay a green roof which is a new addition

Floor Plan L2:

- majority of active spaces happen on the staff level, third level, has all staging rooms, officers quarters, day room, kitchen and eating space, exercise room, private for the firefighters but open and active at the same time,
- exercise room and eatery open up onto south facing terrace, quiet spaces, sleeping spaces to the north to the interior of the site the active spaces are located to the south, taking advantage of views and sun.
- parking accessed off of 5th and pedestrian bridge that connects across the green roof and storage below to terrace level for access to Fire station 10 and the EOC

Floor Plan L3:

- access to FAC similar to the access to EOC,
- green roof over Fire station 10

Roof:

- Green roof over the operations component of the FAC
- All together about 50% of roof is green roof, taking a site that was previously 100% impervious and have 25-30% pervious, one of our significant sustainable design strategies. Looked at many day lighting devices for the FAC, currently looking at linear skylights with baffles below to control light

In summary, in terms of plan, design is a series of low volumes that step down the hill; with fire station administrative components to the west and FAC and EOC located to the south.

Overview of landscape concept-layout and materials :

Concept for layout in plan view started with the apparatus bay and apron, which will be the focal point of building. Design concept pulled the floor of apparatus bay out into the apron and onto the sidewalk which set precedent for pavement modules, which are reproduced throughout site becoming three dimensional, becoming planters or platforms for art pieces.

Planting design emphasizes the differences of each street and has a color scheme that echoes the red and provides a surrounding glow and warm base to the brick which extends a warm zone around the base of the building which relates to Pioneer Square and the International District. Proponents followed strict criteria for choosing plants that are drought tolerant, low maintenance, unable to hide things in, are low growing plants within a 1' maximum range and offer an array of textures and colors throughout the seasons.

Ginkgo bilobas chosen as the street trees on 4th and 5th Ave., relating to the International District and other street tree plantings downtown. Propose limited street trees on Washington Street because of concern for site triangle for fire trucks pulling out into traffic, street trees chosen for Washington Street are Saphora japonicas.

The material concept of the landscape, looked at how to take basic material of concrete and treat it in different ways and textures. All of the plan view surfaces are sandblasted in different textures to emphasize the separate modules. The west facing retaining walls are treated with horizontal striation. The metal used on site is intended to be dark.

The design concept along 5th Avenue S centered on the ritual of moving through the dark threshold of the underpass and moving toward the light in the International District. The plants selected change from darker more shade tolerant plants near the overpass to the north and moving to brighter and brighter colors as it moves south.

The design concept along S Washington Street focused on the major elevation change. The goal of the design is to emphasize the very dramatic grade, and provide places for people to rest along the hill climb.

4th Ave S. is treated like a city avenue, urban in its proportions. The idea is to help the landscape work with the architecture to provide a façade with a destination point at the end: a plaza at the entry to the fire station. Vines on top of a concrete vehicle barrier keep fire trucks from rolling off the edge and on top requires a guard rail; at the edge of the parking area the concrete wall and vine design is a complete artifice, emphasizes the topography of the site but does not have landform behind it.

Commissioner Questions and Comments

- Asks if one can walk up some of the pleats
 - One can walk into them, yes, edges are flush with the sidewalk and then lean up towards wall
- Asks if pleats are high enough to be a seating wall
 - They vary from between 6-8” and up to a foot
- Asks for clarification on the artwork and its relationship to the steps
 - One of the themes the artist has been working with is taking inspiration from the idea of false perspective and working with the grade, and how stacking upward implies distance and perspective,
- Asks how art first impacts one and draws them up hill with layered perspective and exaggeration
 - Do not have placements yet but they will be very organic and use entire width of the landscape
- Asks if there is a reason why design couldn't allow walk up over the pleats as an alternative to the sidewalk
 - Can walk up it, stresses importance of desire to keep sidewalk defined and comfortable in its perceive scale, sidewalk to feel like an independent element
- Comments how at art museum there is an alternative of stairs or sidewalk, nice to have choice, this is kind of a tease because the pleats look like steps but aren't
 - Want it to be a separate destination space rather than an expanded walkway
- Asks to clarify concept in tree selection
 - Followed precedence of neighborhood street trees, but wanted difference between those that run north/south and those that run east/west
- Asks about details of tree grates
 - 15' long and 5' wide. They are heroically oversized, ginkgos grow slow and are long lived but need lots of space
- Asks about spacing of street trees
 - Started with city standards but then had to remove some within site triangle and where there are existing light fixtures
- Asks about lighting
 - Mostly relying on street lighting, plaza will have a down light coming from rail which will warm up the wall
- Asks what is siding material
 - Profiled enamel metal siding
- Appreciates refinement of project
- Requests that proponents look at permeable materials for parking surface

02June 2005 Project: Alaskan Way Viaduct/Seawall Follow Up

Phase: briefing

Previous Reviews: 05 May 2005 (staff briefing)

Presenters: Commission staff

Attendees: none

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 228 DC00242)

Summary: The Commission reviewed a preliminary draft of their report summarizing their recommendations on the Future of Alaskan Way and agreed that two Commissioners would work with staff to edit text substantially and that the graphics still needed refinement. The goal is still to issue the final report later this month in time for WSDOT's next round of Viaduct public meetings.

The Commission reviewed their discussion during the May 5, 2005 meeting about their involvement in the three Viaduct/Seawall workshops, which focused on the surface design of Alaskan Way and its environs (including a lid that would extend from Pike Place Market to the waterfront) once the viaduct is removed and the tunnel built. Since last meeting, the staff has drafted the text and Commission members have provided edits. They discussed the need to clarify terms and further pare down text creating a hierarchy and summary of the key important points and agreed on what sketches to include in the document. The Commission reviewed the first draft of the layout and graphics. The goal remains to finalize the document by 6/20 and hope to have copies of the report available for distribution at the Viaduct/Waterfront Open Houses, 6/21- 6/23.

02 June 2005 Project: SR 520 Improvement Project

Phase: Design Update

Previous Reviews: Courtesy Briefings: 15 July 2004; 2 October 2003;
7 March 2002; 16 October 2002;

Presenters: John Milton, Washington Department of Transportation
Julie Meredith, Washington Department of Transportation
David Allen, Seattle Department of Transportation

Attendees: David Graves, Seattle Parks Department
Peter Stoner, Better Bridge
Rob Wilkinson, Better Bridge
Jean Amick, Laurelhurst Community Center

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 221 DC00262)

- **Summary: The Commission thanks proponents for their update on the SR-520 Improvements Project and would like to make the following comments and recommendations**
- **reiterates the mantra of "make the bridge slimmer" and encourages simplicity and elegance in the design and detailing of the bridge structure and believes that the mass over the wetlands should be minimized;**
- **appreciates the cooperative work that the proponents have done with the Montlake and Roanoke neighborhood groups to explore project alternatives that reduce negative impacts and maximize benefits;**
- **requests that they would like to see sections or profiles of all the alternatives under consideration to better understand their character and impacts ;**
- **expresses concern about the potential impacts on the Arboretum under the new interchange proposed with the Pacific/Stadium bridge alternative;**
- **appreciates the work that the proponents are doing on water quality treatment as part of the project and hope that this will become a model for highway projects of this type ;**
- **encourages continued work on enhancing the bicycle and pedestrian networks through this project and think that there should be in particular an effective connection to the Burke Gilman Trail, the Arboretum Trail system, Madison Park and the Lake Washington neighborhood;**
- **requests that they would like to be briefed in more detail about the traffic and transit impacts of the four and six-lane options and looks forward to seeing both the bridge aesthetic refinements and urban design work for the lids as they develop;**
- **appreciates the design update and looks forward to more .**

Project Presentation

Proponents updated the Commission on new aspects of the project since their last presentation on July 15, 2004. They have completed an EIS for 4 and 6 lane and have identified some alternatives and options to the base 4 and 6 lane. In March 2005, the proponents took Governor Gregoire on a tour of the bridge and showed maintenance and structural issues which helped explain the complexities the project has to face as well as the bridge's overall condition. Proponents also have been working on a transportation partnership package, the project was included in the 500 million dollar award, but it is not enough to complete the entire project, and they must get RTID funding in order to go forward with project. They also began geotechnical work using a barge boring 18 holes on north and south side of bridge; the project will take about two more weeks to complete. The proponents also addressed the Commission's suggestions from last presentation which include: Madison park bike/pedestrian connections, slimming the overall width of bridge, and bridge profile over Foster Island.

Funding update

State – Nickel Package: \$52 Million Total Between 2003 and 2011

State – Transportation Partnership Package: \$500 Million

Tolls: \$700 Million

Regional: To be determined in regional package

Budget Proviso: In the 2005 Transportation Partnerships package legislation, it requires that all jurisdictions along the corridor must come to consensus on the selection of the preferred alternative before moving forward with construction

Goals for project include increasing mobility for people and goods, improving safety and reliability, and avoiding, minimizing and/or mitigating the project effects to neighborhoods and the environment.

Explored Alternatives

4-Lane

- Rebuilds transit stops on the outside at 92nd, Evergreen Point Road, and Montlake
- HOV ramp access to I-5 express lanes during AM Peak – Westbound to Southbound
- Bicycle/pedestrian trail on north side of bridge
- Sound walls throughout corridor
- Water quality improvements with stormwater treatment
- Larger pontoons to accommodate future HCT

4-Lane + 2 HOV (6-Lane)

- Expands SR 520 to 6-Lanes, adding one HOV lane in each direction
- Rebuild transit stops on the inside at Montlake, Evergreen Point Road., and Montlake
- Includes five lidded sections of freeway at 92nd, 84th, Evergreen Point Road, Montlake, and 10th Ave/Delmar
- Reversible HOV access to I-5 express lanes – Westbound to Southbound in the AM – Northbound to Eastbound in the PM
- Looking at five additional lids: 2 on west side and 3 on east side, and reversible access to I-5 express lanes

Based on assumption of full funding the 4 lane alternative is estimated to cost 1.7-2 billion dollars and take 4-6 years to complete the floating portion of the bridge and 7-8 years to complete the entire bridge. The 6 lane alternative is estimated to cost 2.6-2.9 billion dollars and take 4-6 years to complete the floating portion of the bridge and 9-10 years to complete the entire bridge. These numbers are based on the assumed start for construction is in 2008

6-Lane decreases Transit/HOV travel time by up to 80% compared to No Build
4-Lane: 7% more person trips in 13% fewer vehicles than No Build Alternative
6-Lane: 25% more person trips in 3% more vehicles than No Build Alternative

Since January, the 520 team has done considerable work to refine the 6-Lane Alternative and develop additional options. WSDOT initiated this effort when it became clear that the 6-Lane footprint that we had developed for the Draft EIS was just too big—especially through the sensitive areas of Portage Bay, Montlake, and the Arboretum.

While the 6-Lane Alternative—with HOV lanes in each direction—provides much greater reliability and travel times for transit and carpools, the total footprint was a bit large in these areas. We wanted to find ways to reduce the footprint while retaining the functionality of the 6-Lane Alternative. In addition to WSDOT’s efforts to reduce the footprint, several leaders from the Montlake community brought forward an idea for a high-level bridge through Portage Bay with a new bridge to Pacific. This additional analysis has required us to postpone the release of the Draft EIS until later this year. We’ll review the schedule in more detail at the end of the agenda.



6-Lane Alternative with Pacific St. Interchange

Proponents explored the removal of the Montlake Freeway Transit Stop. There were two primary reasons to explore the removal of the Montlake Freeway Transit Stop:

- To narrow the footprint through Montlake.
- To improve transit connectivity by having transit more consolidated at the North Link Station at Husky Stadium.

In addition the Montlake Community has made a proposal for a High-Level Bridge

- Premised on a 6-Lane configuration
- Floating bridge and approaches will be built first
- Reduce size and effect of 6-Lane footprint
- Connect transit to North Link station
- Reduce traffic congestion on Montlake Blvd from SR 520
- Create graceful landmark structures
- Provide continuous green space from Montlake Playfield to Arboretum

Several of the agencies asked WSDOT to again explore the possibility of adding a second Montlake Bridge.

Environmental benefits of new bridge

Sound walls reduce noise for majority of nearby residences

Lids provide community connectivity

Lake Washington water quality improved

Fish habitat improved

Arboretum & Parks improvements

Special studies

Quieter Pavement

Lake Washington Boulevard Ramp Closure

Madison Park Bike/Pedestrian Connection

Transit Origin and Destination Study

South Kirkland Park and Ride Transit Access

Transit Operating Concepts

Seattle Parks Workshops

Many of these studies will be completed later this summer, providing important information to WSDOT and the jurisdictions in the Corridor. Of particular interest to the UW are the studies on the Lake WA Blvd Ramp Closure, the Madison Park Bike/Pedestrian Connection, the Transit Origin & Destination Study, and the Transit Operating Concepts. The Transit Operating Concepts study is just being launched with Metro and Sound Transit to develop transit service options that will correspond with the design options that we'll be describing to you today.

Finally, we have been conducting workshops regarding Seattle Parks that are adjacent to the 520 Corridor. The purpose of these workshops has been to develop ideas for what the Arboretum and adjacent parks could look like after the 520 Project is built. We will be displaying drawings of these concepts at the public Open Houses at the end of June.

The purpose of the collaborative effort between WSDOT, Seattle Department of Parks & Recreation, University of Washington, and the Arboretum Foundation was to develop design concepts for the Arboretum area that reflect future changes to SR 520. The concepts will be displayed at the next public open houses planned for June 27, St. Luke's in Bellevue, 6 – 8 p.m. and June 28, MOHAI in Seattle, 6 – 8 p.m.

Public Comments and Questions

Rob Wilkinson, Montlake Resident, betterbridge.org

Great deal of work that needs to be done in the marsh land interchange; it should be something to pay attention to as we progress further with. Has been in contact with Santiago Caldaria as bridge architect, continue communication in regards to finding a project in Seattle also the University Bridge is a prime candidate for legacy treatment, proposal to Caldaria, get him to come out and take a look at opportunities,

Jean Anick, has been following the project since 1995, notes that the width of the bridge will really be 11 lanes, considered about the width of both options

Commission Comments and Questions

- Comments that there are no profiles of the bridges, would appreciate that view
 - Just started this process in march, a lot more work needs to be done to carry alternative forward. Bridge will be approximately 100' over portage bay, 56' over Montlake and 45' over foster island
- Asks about the advantages to putting new intersection at pacific is that
 - It reduces impact on Montlake in the neighborhood and arguably get a better sound transit, yes
- Asks if there are any other advantages
 - The 6 lane alternative will have allow a lid over entire Montlake neighborhood, right now under the base six there would be a lid but at Montlake there would still be off ramps and on ramps, the lid would have limited value. The presence of off and on ramps at Montlake also wouldn't allow to reduce width; the 6 lane alternative also would allow a narrower footprint going up Portage Bay to I-5. It also provides better access from the north to get to 520.
- Clarifies that the 4 lane option has not been dropped
 - No it has not
- Asks that then all of this work will also be done with the 4 lane option
 - No this work has been paired with the 6 lane option because we think it has a better transit enhancement connected, so it is 4 lane option and 6 lane option and under 6 lane option there are alternatives. There is a possibility for later could taking ideas from the six and plugging them into the 4 lane option
- Comments still not clear why transit works better on the inside and not on the outside
 - If transit is on the outside, every time there is an access point they will be slowed down and it will be difficult for transit to get on and off ramp and merge with traffic. Lanes on the inside is the best way to maintain traffic flow through
- Believes that it is a traffic engineer's analysis not an analysis of the physical impact on the environment and its location, be eliminating center off ramp and bringing lanes back together, it reduces what is now a huge structure
 - This is planning level, this is what it could be, comments are coming through from the environmental process which could influence footprint but there are

trade offs, there will be a loss in travel time for buses, weigh options and come up with the best solution

- Asks if community is behind the six lane option
 - The community is intrigued by this option because it does reduce impact on area
- Notes that where the interchange is proposed is above the most significant collection of wetlands in the entire city, to do something like this in such an environmentally sensitive location needs a lot more exploration and analysis
- Comments that it makes sense to get the university traffic back to the university side
 - Agrees the desire line of traffic is to get to the north end of the bridge, the shortens this desire line
- Asks if there is any technical reason cant do this with the 4 lane option
 - Not that I can see
- Asks then why it isn't being considered
 - The 4 lane option is one the table to replace basically what is there today, the smallest footprint proposed and still build something, 6 lane option is being considered as a way to replace and enhance transit movement and mobility and that's why concept is being developed
- Comments that it suggests that WSDOT has a preference for the 6 lane option
 - The executive committee has expressed opinion and it is the 6 lane, many alternatives varying from no build to 8 lanes have been explored, an attempt to strike a balance
- Comments that the four city representatives who sit on the much larger executive committee have remained strident in their support for a 4-lane alternative
- Asks what is the transportation improvement of 6 lanes, minutes saved
- Asks if expanding to six lanes how many years does it buy us until it gets clogged again
 - Do have the numbers but not with me, it is significant travel time savings benefit for the HOV lanes
- Asks what is significant
 - Will get details to the Commission if desired
- Asks for more detail on the bike/pedestrian lanes
- The bike/pedestrian lane will be located on new floating structure on north side of the bridge; in it will connect to the university, and in addition tie into the proposed arboretum network
- Asks if bike/pedestrian lane will be connected to downtown
 - There is not a specific connection to downtown, and part of the reason is that to go up Portage Bay section it is very steep and will then have to go up another 16 feet to tie it into the local city street grid, there is also not an official trail connection to downtown, but are working with the city at a potential bike connection from Madison Park area

- Supports a convenient connection to Burke Gilman trail, believing it is a critical element and also supports connection to Madison Park
- Encourages improved transit connection
- Believes that there needs to be a better traffic analysis
- Requests more detail on 4 lane and 6 lane options to understand tradeoffs
- Asks if there is community support for
 - yes
- Comments that the Commission can get involved in upcoming design work through the bridge aesthetics and parks workshop and perhaps the university studio
- Recognizes complexity of project, and encourages creative new design thinking and problem solving
- Believes that the is compelling because it could be connection to light rail
- States preference for low structure, recognizes the communities interest in an iconic structure, but feels that there is so much natural iconic imagery in the location already, would like option that reduces number of columns
- Asks about the possibility of one stretch of bridge being emphasized and raised profile, perhaps at could be the gateway to the university
- Reminds that the existing bridge footprint is 54' wide, minimum proposed alternative is 97' wide, four lane almost doubles existing footprint and brings it up higher, the six lane is 2.5 to 3 times wider
 - It is higher over foster island, must be widened for shoulders and for current standards
- Question of capacity, comments that we have learned we cant build our way out of congestion
- Commends the work with various community groups
- Urges having some way to pay attention to these variables while someone else is working on the design, it is possible to put all of the pieces together in a simple and an elegant way but doesn't think we have the history of how to do that
- Comments that it is not so much 4 or 6 lane choice but rather what is being done to build the city of tomorrow, need to continue thinking about this while also working on the details

June 2 Commission Business

- | | | |
|-------------------------|----|--|
| ACTION ITEMS | A. | <u>TIME SHEETS</u> |
| | B. | <u>MINUTES FROM 04/21/05 AND 05/05/05-PODOLAK</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ BOTH SETS APPROVED |
| DISCUSSION ITEMS | C. | <u>OUTSIDE COMMITMENTS-CUBELL</u> |
| ANNOUNCEMENTS | D. | <u>VIADUCT OPEN HOUSES</u>
6/21-6/23, LOCATIONS TBD |
| | E. | <u>ARCADE</u>
RECEPTION 6/2, 5:30 TO 7:30, W HOTEL |

02.June 2005 Project: Safeco Insurance Project

Phase: Vacation and Skybridge Briefing

Previous Reviews: 5 May 2005 (Vacation and Skybridge Briefing)

Presenters: Dan Huberty, Zimmer Gunsul Frasca
Phillip Goodman, Safeco Insurance
Roger Pearce, Foster Pepper Sheffelman

Attendees: Steve Trainer, Seneca Group
Mike Hassenger, Seneca Group
Jeff Hencz, Safeco Insurance
Rebecca Herzfeld, Legislative Department
Bill Blair, Seattle Parks Department
Moiria Gray, Seattle Department of Transportation
Beverly Barnett, Seattle Department of Transportation

Commissioners Karen Kiest and Hannah McIntosh recused themselves from the presentation as their firms are involved in the project

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 170 DC00000)

Action: The Commission thanks the proponents for their presentation and especially appreciates their specific responses to the recommendations and comments that the Commission made during the last presentation a few weeks ago;

- **appreciates that the proponents have aligned the skybridge with the mid-block crossing and have reduced the width of the skybridge from 26 feet to 14 feet;**
- **commends the proponents for locating public uses at the street level along Brooklyn Avenue NE in Building A and for making aesthetic improvements to existing buildings in addition to the proposed new facilities;**
- **appreciates Safeco's pledge to make improvements in the future to the north plaza that are integrated with Sound Transit's plans, if and when they are determined;**
- **encourages the proponents to continue to think of the project as a "campus" both in building design relationships and in the expression of public space;**
- **asks that proponents design the Brooklyn Ave. mid-block curb cuts in a manner that supports Brooklyn Ave. as a bicycle/transit route;**
- **is intrigued by the potential of incorporating art into the skybridge, encourages more public exposure to the existing art collection, and suggests engaging their curator in the planning process**
- **supports enlisting a public artist to collaborate with the architect on the design of the public spaces;**
- **asks that the proponents consider significant enhancements to the building corner at 45th and 12th, both at the sidewalk level and in the larger expression of the building mass at the corner, as this is the most visible part of the Safeco campus and needs improvement;**

- asks that the south end of Building A on 43rd Ave. include a pedestrian island to minimize vehicular and pedestrian conflicts ;
- As a condition of approval, asks that the proponent take special care to avoid blank walls, especially where there are no retail uses or public entries to the buildings, and ensure that the streetscape improvements are substantial, including the installation of large caliper trees similar in type and size to those existing;
- As a further condition, asks that the proponents agree to engage an artist to develop an art program or specific art features as part of the public benefit package;
- Additionally, asks that a condition be imposed that the proponents return to the Design Commission for a final presentation after the building architects are selected and there is more detail on the physical benefits and bridge design;
- recommends that, should City Council approve the proposed subterranean vacation and skybridge, an amended public benefit package including those features specifically listed in the June 2nd handout in addition to the further recommendations made in this action is appropriate.

Project Presentation

At the May 5, 2005 Commission meeting, the Commission determined that the proposed subsurface street vacation and skybridge were justified based on their urban design analysis, however asked that the proponents return to present a revised public benefit package. As the Commission suggested, the proponents reviewed the entire office campus, not just the areas where the new buildings might be constructed or where the subsurface street vacation and skybridge would be located. This broadened focus will allow proponents to concentrate public improvements in areas where they would be most effective, including high-pedestrian areas.

The public benefits proposed, by geographic areas are as follows:

New Building A – Brooklyn Ave NE and NE 43rd Street

- Active street level uses along Brooklyn Ave NE and NE 43rd St. through building lobby, such as customer-oriented office or retail uses such as the proponent's regional claims office, human resources applicant center and/r regional surety offices.
- Special paving (e.g. brick to match existing plaza materials or granite) for mid-block crosswalk – clearly marked pedestrian crossing area that slows traffic and provides for safe and secure crossing point mid-block
- Extend special paving as element in sidewalk at building entrances
- Special finish concrete for other sidewalks adjacent to New Building A
- Curb bulb-outs for mid-block crosswalk that includes additional landscaped areas – allows better visibility for both pedestrians and motorists at the crosswalk area
- Bollards or flower pots at crosswalk
- Weather protection for Brooklyn Ave NE and NE 43rd St Facades
- Pedestrian Scale Lighting – lamp posts, accent lighting, street lighting
- Work with Safeco curator to enhance the public's accessibility to Safeco's art collection

New Building A – Mid-Block Alley

- Mitigate bulk and scale along south end of alley frontage opposite retail users – increase transparency of building along the alley by providing open sections between structural columns

Existing Building – along NE 45th St

- Overhead weather protection
- Pedestrian Scale Lighting – lamp posts, accent lighting, street lighting
- Improvements to pre-cast façade by one or more of following: tile or other material at pre-cast panels, landscape/trellises at pre-cast panels, signage that could include PDA community messages
- potential to wrap this treatment around corner onto 12th Ave NE

Existing Building – along 12th Ave NE facade

- Pedestrian Scale Lighting – lamp posts, accent lighting, street lighting
- Refurbish existing skybridge exterior materials

New Building B – facades and existing Brooklyn Ave NE façade up to South Plaza

- Special finish concrete sidewalks
- Pedestrian Scale Lighting
- Pedestrian Scale treatment of facades including such elements as glazing, trellis/landscaping, tile and other materials on pre-cast portions of existing façade

South Plaza

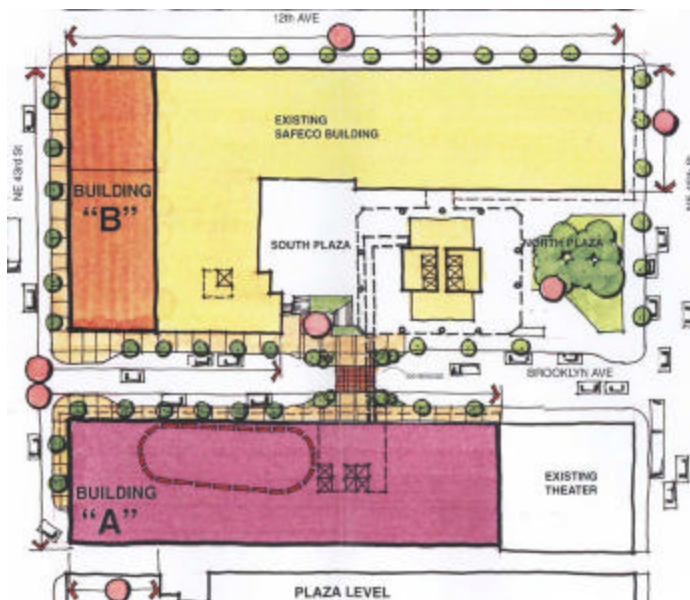
- Improve disabled access and connection to mid-block crosswalk
- Improve visibility from Brooklyn Ave NE access to existing public seating
- Provide additional lighting to enhance existing sculpture

North Plaza

- Maintain existing park-like setting and public seating
- Retain for potential use of Sound Transit station access. If selected by Sound Transit, a package of public streetscape amenities would be developed at that time
- Provide additional lighting to enhance existing sculpture

New Skybridge (changes from prior presentation on design goals)

- Reduce width to 14 feet exterior
- Relocate skybridge to align with mid-block crosswalk – to provide more unified design and some weather protection for crosswalk below
- Work with artist on skybridge design, or design of NE 45th Street façade



Safeco public benefits concept plan (left); and cross section - Brooklyn Ave. looking north (above)

Proponents understand that the following improvements are required by land use code and thus not considered part of the public benefit package

- Street level use along NE 43rd St between Brooklyn Ave NE and mid-block alley (retail or consumer office uses specified in Land Use Code)
- Street trees where practicable along frontage of new buildings
- Standard pavement treatment where pavement is affected by new construction

Public Comments

Bill Blair, Seattle Parks and Recreation Department

Interested in the project because working on a park plan for the University District, one key strategy is to use Brooklyn as a link from Collins Park down to the canal, this is consistent with the idea of pedestrian connections down Brooklyn and on 42 and 43 west to residential areas so this will be very welcome, the street is very wide as of now, with bike shoulder in traffic no room for separate bike lane, hope that it is designed in a way to facilitate bicycle traffic on the street and not impede it, might impact how wide street bulbs, pulled back a little for bikes to sneak through and the importance of pedestrian scale lighting, if 43rd can be enhanced as the connection, if transit center is here there will be a lot of traffic, possibility of pulling back the building a little bit to widen sidewalk and pedestrian scale lighting underneath trees very important, would like to work with Safeco about ideas to improve 43rd.

- Asks how far out is final park plan for University District
 - Getting ready to distribute draft internally

Commissioner Questions and Comments

- Asks what if any interim plans for the lot that is building B
 - IHOP is currently the client and they will continue as long as possible, until building B is constructed
- Area on Brooklyn wrapping 45th where existing building, asks if there is a proposal for that area
 - Working with Sound Transit to find out, didn't want to make a proposal for something that hasn't been determined yet, reserving to work with Sound Transit
- Asks if proponents think project is going ahead of Sound Transit at this point
 - Yes, that is part of the reason proponents appreciate expediting these hearings and the Commission's consideration. In order for proponents to build these buildings and get our 1350 employees from Redmond over here we need to move along at a pretty quick pace, much faster than Sound Transit
- Asks how South Plaza is used currently
 - Its primarily open hardscape with seating wall, plantings on the east side and public people from the area come over to eat lunch in the sun, pleasant area
- Asks for the width of sidewalks on Brooklyn and 43rd Ave NE
 - Eight feet on both sides of 43rd, Brooklyn 12-13 feet. Trying to maintain street parking as well, as a request of the community
- Façade on 43rd Avenue street level

- First floor will be glass
- Would art collection hanging in lobby be accessible to the public in a way that they would know access for other than if they have business there
 - Good question, will have to talk to curator to tell us about security, not sure in terms of advertising it
- If you are suggesting it as a public amenity it will have to be something that the public would easily be able to access, without the sense that they are going into private territory
 - At this point, cant make that commitment due mostly to security reasons because there will be secured access getting into the elevator lobby and secured office space
- Rather see a simple skybridge, rather than an art feature and rather have art concentrated on the corner of 45th and along 12th because it would be seen by more people and the façade needs a lot of help, suggests one larger, art/architecture piece
- Makes suggestion of art windows, making art visible from the street. Comments that whatever is done it needs to very publicly accessible in order to be a public amenity
- Likes art incorporated into the skybridge
- Asks why Paving along 12th stops at the end of Building B
 - There is very little pedestrian use on 12th other than accessing street level parking and parking and garage, do not see it as a worthwhile investment to pull out existing concrete to replace, problem with drug use in that area, needles found along the street so landscaping would not be conducive for safety, we kept it austere, but added lighting
- Understands that proponent are in the process of preparing or issuing an RFP for design of buildings
 - Issued last week and have three architecture firms from Seattle who are preparing proposals for June 13th
- Recognizes that the public benefit package very carefully excludes anything architectural in regards to buildings, so what is in RFP or specs or guidelines that might give indication what you are thinking with regards to the building: architectural treatment, footprint, any of this info in your RFP package
 - Not at this point, only size, square footage, location, use of general office as far as we have gotten, visioning exercises will be done with design firm and senior leadership to talk through culture of Safeco and consolidation of campus.
- Comments that a suggestion last time was to consider some public open space over and above the sidewalk amount on the south edges of the buildings, but does not see it here, is it a possibility
 - Guidelines for 43rd St. street improvements, the sidewalks are not wide, wanted to line up street frontage in order to create a continuous street front and also try and keep the street active and invite into existing plaza areas
- Comments that it doesn't mean cant have one generous corner
 - Correct, and the building has not been designed it is something to consider
- Asks if proponents plan to refinish the existing skybridge
 - Existing is tinted glass, will keep it but will freshen it up

- Comments that one thing proponents mentioned but have not written down is larger caliper street trees, will they be included
 - Yes, it is something we can include
- Asks if Building B is an extension of the existing building
 - Correct
- Asks if proponents think buildings will have a similar architecture character, distinctive, will three buildings all of one type or different
 - Want to tie in elements of the existing building but would be at a scale more consistent with the residential context and pull elements of building A into building B
- Comments that without building design it is difficult to comment on some points of the potential for greater open space on the corners
- Appreciates the focus on the pedestrian environment
- Encourages proponents to, in long range planning, consider improving the pedestrian environment through incorporating retail, pocket retail spots, perhaps at Building B 43rd and 12th, develop a campus where the need for skybridges becomes less critical because of the enjoyment on the street
- Comments that the blank walls on street are harsh and unrelenting
- Suggests getting a vendor to set up in the south plaza during lunch time perhaps, to bring life to the area
- Comments that other neighborhoods are developing art walks, and that while the University District is a long way from holding their own perhaps proponents could help lead effort, work with people who have collections, little galleries, a way for public to access proponents collection
- Comments that can't require them as a private entity to provide retail, but anything that can be done to enhance pedestrian level experience is good,
- Encourages glazing at street, pedestrian level
- Suggests landscaping on façade of blank walls
- Requests map of larger context in further presentations
- Comments that bridge isn't in perspective drawing
- Commends approach of looking at old and new as a whole and trying to create a pedestrian environment for the whole thing is
- Asks if SDOT will take the skybridge and subterranean vacation petition together to the transportation committee
 - Yes, conditions will be imposed on both permits
- Asks if there is a way to require an island for pedestrian crossing at the corner of 43rd and alley south of Brooklyn Ave, at the entrance and exit to the parking garage
 - Yes, good suggestion there will probably be some structural element there
- Comments that if Brooklyn is to be a green link it would be nice to see lots of trees on the street, but recognizes the difficulty of moving streetlights in order to line up grid of street trees
- Requests that proponents don't make the buildings the same as the existing one

- Believes that the public benefit package barely reaches the minimal consideration for vacations for skybridge approvals
- Comments that personal feeling is that it is a good attempt, a good list of benefits that can be accomplished, and quantified specific items
- Comments that it is still vague and the buildings are not designed yet so one condition should be to review the project again when there is more detail