



APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Mike McGinn
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Marshall Foster
Planning Director, DPD

Julie Bassuk
Chair

Mary Fialko

Laurel Kunkler

Shannon Loew

Tom Nelson

Julie Parrett

Osama Quotah

Norie Sato

Donald Vehige

Debbie Wick-Harris

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Tom Iurino
Senior Staff

February 16, 2012

Convened 8:30am
Adjourned 4:00pm

Projects Reviewed

Swedish Medical Center Cherry Hill Skybridge
Alaskan Way Viaduct – North End and Portal
Trail to Treasure
FS 20 West Queen Anne Interbay
SR 520 I5 to Medina

Commissioners Present

Julie Bassuk, Chair
Shannon Loew
Tom Nelson
Julie Parrett (excused from 8:30-9:00 and 2:15-4:00)
Osama Quotah (excused from 2:15-4:00)
Norie Sato
Debbie Wick-Harris (excused from 8:30-9:00)

Commissioners Excused

Laurel Kunkler
Mary Fialko
Don Vehige



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Staff Present

Tom Iurino



February 16, 2012

Project: **Alaskan Way Viaduct – North End and Portal**

Phase: Design Update

Last Reviewed: Nov 3, 2011; May 20, 2010; May 6, 2010

Presenters: Lesley Bain, Weinstein AU
Katey Bean, WSDOT

Attendees: Bob Newsom, HTNB
Brian Elrod, Seattle Tunnel Partners
Dave Peterson, WSDOT
Diane Hilmo, WSDOT
Eric Tweit, SDOT
John Coney, Uptown Alliance
Kate Weiland, Weinstein AU
Katey Bean, WSDOT
Katie Zemtseff, Daily Journal of Commerce
Lorcan French, WSDOT
Mike Johnson, SDOT
Rick Browning, PBWorld
Susan Everett, WSDOT
Shane DeWald, SDOT

Time: 10:15am-11:30am

Summary of Project Presentation

The design team presented the urban landscape and design of the Alaskan Way Viaduct – North Portal area, which reconnected the streets between lower Queen Anne and S. Lake Union over the lid of the bored tunnel and tunnel portal. The team noted the project was true to the design guidelines established at the beginning of the project. The team coordinated with Mercer West, Gates Foundation, S. Lake Union Mobility, and the Lake to Bay Loop projects as well as the Queen Anne and S. Lake Union communities.

The team created a street tree hierarchy, in concert with SDOT and existing plans, which emphasized connections to the neighboring communities. For example, the team chose Scarlet Oak trees for Aurora to blend with the character north of Mercer Street, and it chose Autumn Flame Red Maple trees for Thomas Street, as recommended by the DPD's Thomas Street Green Street planning document. The team's design for Aurora Ave was formal, maximized the use of trees in the median, and made the adjacent lots attractive for redevelopment. The lid over the tunnel influenced some of the decisions; for example, green stormwater infrastructure wasn't possible due to contaminated soil and soil that would not infiltrate. The team proposed increasing the canopy by a net of 100 trees. The team has reduced the number of parking stalls required for the tunnel's maintenance vehicles and noted that the temporary parking lot would be sold within two years of project completion to a developer who would promise to provide the parking underground, aided perhaps by a subterranean alley vacation.

ACTION (by Parrett)

The Design Commission thanked the design team for its presentation of the Alaskan Way Viaduct – North End and Portal. The commission appreciated: the use of tree species to connect to similar species in other

neighborhoods; the design of 6th Ave to better connect Mercer Street and the Gates Foundation; the simple and elegant design of the tunnel entrance; the team's adherence to the established design guidelines; and the collaboration with city departments and neighboring groups.

By a vote of 7-0, the commission voted to approve the urban landscape and design as presented, with the following comments:

- Encourage the city to codify the landscape plan, perhaps through a street master plan, so that it will be executed as designed. Much of the proposed design and associated plantings are on property not covered by the project.
- Make the parking lot parcel as developable as possible. Pursue all options, such as a subterranean parking lot that would make feasible an underground garage as well as an option for the developer to provide off-site those parking spaces required for WSDOT.
- With partner agencies, explore adding wayfinding elements at the street corners especially on Aurora Ave. at the Rapid Ride stops. Consider how the design of street improvements including landscaping and view corridors also aid in wayfinding.
- Provide both diversity and continuity of species along the street in the understory and groundplane. Consider using the understory to further differentiate each street or block.
- Use the biggest Garry Oak tree possible, as it is a slow growing tree; consider requiring a minimum size to plant. Support the idea of a legacy tree.
- Document the research that showed the natural stormwater elements were not feasible. This will increase awareness of the issues of soil quality and infiltration at this location.
- Show great care in the plan's execution and the construction of the built form.

The commission requested to see the textures of the walls and the forms of the portal entrance with landscaping when the team returns for the review of the north operations building's landscape plan.