



APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Mike McGinn
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Marshall Foster
Planning Director, DPD

Mary Johnston
Chair

Andrew Barash

Julie Bassuk

Graham Black

Brendan Connolly

Lauren Hauck

Laurel Kunkler

Julie Parrett

Norie Sato

Donald Vehige

Guillermo Romano
Executive Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Tom Iurino
Senior Staff

May 6, 2010

Convened 8:30am
Adjourned 5:00pm

Projects Reviewed

South Transfer Station
Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement
Fire Station 6
Maple Leaf Reservoir Park
Rainier Beach Community Center

Commissioners Present

Mary Johnston, Chair
Andrew Barash
Julie Bassuk
Graham Black
Lauren Hauck
Laurel Kunkler
Julie Parrett
Norie Sato
Donald Vehige

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Valerie Kinast
Tom Iurino
Jenny Hampton



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May 6, 2010

Project: Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement

Phase: Design Update

Last Reviewed: Mar 18, 2010; Feb 18, 2010; Jan 21, 2010; Oct 1, 2009; Jun 18, 2009; May 21, 2009; Jan 15, 2009; Oct 16, 2008; Aug 21, 2008; Jul 3, 2008; Apr 3, 2008; Dec 20, 2007; Oct 18, 2007; Oct 4, 2007; Apr 19, 2007; Nov 2, 2006

Presenters: John Savo, NBBJ
David Yuan, NBBJ
Susan Everett, WSDOT

Attendees: John Hoffman, citizen
Pete Alderson, NBBJ
Jeffrey Bailey, NBBJ
Vaughn Bell, SDOT
Susan Everett, WSDOT
Diane Hilmo, WSDOT
Steve Leach, WSDOT
Steve Pearce, SDOT
Katey Bean, WSDOT
Jim Keller, Site Workshop
Greg Murphy, citizen
Wolf Saar, VIA
Matt Roewe, VIA
Jack McCullough, McCullough Hill
Geoff Wentlandt, DPD
Amy Turner, WSDOT
Travis Allen, NBBJ

Time: 10:15am-12:00pm

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ACTION

We are taking an action to approval the direction of changes of the project. Thanks for a well placed program and presentation, very positive expression of value engineering exercise.

- Like the smaller building massing and letting light and adjust orientation of fans were successful.
- These changes are allowing greater flexibility and allows for streetscape and landscaping opportunities.
- Given the structure of the contracts, there is an overall vision that is understood and the overall skeleton and vision is put in place so the spaces are unified.
- We express concern that we are not seeing the vision to date.
- The streetscape is crucial and would like to see this moving forward in addition to public interaction. This is currently being seen in the development more in the South building.
- On the north portal landscaping, we appreciate the improvements, the plaza arc needs some refinement.

- The pre-cast panels in the walls need to be reviewed on the terracing and roads and maybe reflecting in the buildings.
- Approve of the clear story on the north side building. Review it to make sure that it works with the other part of the building
- The commission recommends the street trees in from of the fan box and consider the legacy tree in future developments of the plaza.
- The parking configuration is a successful move and screening this is successful.
- There are positive comments on the material and pattern of the tunnel wall. The new configuration of the tunnel provides opportunity to create visual ques for entry and exit of the city.
- The plinth the glass box sits on is height and on the streetscape, it will be important to review how this articulated.
- The trees on the terraces should work for both the ramp and the terraces.

Project Presentation

Today we are going to focus on the operations building in North Portal. Since we last talked, we were asked to conduct a value engineering exercise for the buildings. We required the team to stay true to the values and principles that were presented and also true to the exterior building design and the tunnel concepts. It was a very successful exercise as it allowed us to take a clean look at the buildings and site and how the concepts and suggestions made by the Design Commission might be embodied.

We looked at the program very carefully. We combined spaces and decreased their height. We eliminated the garage below the building. We also reduced the number of fans.

We went through the design guidelines and provided visual examples of how we are meeting them. We are still designing the buildings to be beacons and are using durable materials that retain their character. We wanted to articulate the fan box, and also use simple volumes of precast massing. On the north building, the fan box retains its prominence on the northwest corner. It is visible to downtown. We lowered the first floor and the fan box is now more visible at street level. There are views from the street into the shops and fan room. We have kept a precast component for the shops and created a banding pattern of windows through the shop area.



North Building : view of 6th & Harrison

North Building: 6th and Harrison

At a more detailed level, we examined the pedestrian experience at the street level. We pulled the plane of the buildings back to create a pedestrian area on Harrison Street. Shops are located on the bottom of the street and wraps around Thomas Street. There is a slightly wider landscape area now created on Harrison. We pulled the building away from 6th Ave and created some additional space for new streetscape.

Harrison and Thomas will become true streets along with John since Aurora will be lowered. We think that Thomas and Harrison will be gateways to the area. With this larger urban context in mind, we thought about the landscape and how it will inform the space.

For Thomas, our goal is to enhance this street to make it 20 feet wider with street trees. For 6th Ave., we wanted to create different episodic experiences along the street. We propose a double row of trees to create a prominent entry and break up the operations. We did not propose any street trees along the glass enclosure. We propose a green screen along part of Harrison.

We envision the site across the alley to be used for parking. This site will also be used for construction phasing and to house a temporary structure and landscaping.



Site Plan

We also made some changes to the portal areas. The arc of the tunnel on Harrison Street is more broad than before and creates new plazas for pedestrians and terraces. The tunnel face itself resembles strata and features terracing, creating opportunities for lighting vertical reveals. The landscaping plan was inspired by an idea of the stream captured by the light trees below and taller trees up above on the stepped terracing. There is a marking of a gateway and exit tree from the spot.

The similarities among the north and south portals are the retaining walls and the use of landscaping to mark movement patterns. Differences have to do with the differences with each site.

Public Comments

Jack McCullough, representing owner of 505 building

I am here to present some comments on the south building, We have a very positive relationship with NBBJ. The five things important to us:

- the stack movement will provide light and air. Minimize the stack height
- pull the mass to the south
- minimize the height of the building
- create a step back on the building so it creates a little more room for our two buildings.
- encourage the design build contractor to work with the surrounding land owners.

Commissioners' Comments & Questions

I had a question about the stacked buildings and the opening of it of the roof so that it can be more transparent.

We need to have the area closed off because it needs to project the equipment. We may need to put acoustic information up on the ceiling.

With a guardrail on the roof, you might have an opportunity to open that roof up a bit more and keep that language of translucency.

Make sure that the little pockets of plantings you end up with around the facades of the building work within the larger streetscapes that will have to be pushed back due to timeline.

We will be working with the design build contracts to make sure that they do work together and are consistent. There will not be separate people looking at the design.

Aside from landscaping, what will the streetscape be and how would affect the urban design of the area?

I think that the changes to the building and site made through the value engineering exercise have improved the streetscape.

There are two incredibly important joints in the area over the portal arc; the east one still looks like it needs to be developed.

It is still evolving, as the corners of the intersection are pretty dead at the moment and it is only experienced by people coming off of the off-ramp and rounding a tight corner.

For the building, the walls have elegance to the patterns and I like the idea of the changing from vertical to horizontal. You might want to borrow a little bit of the patterning for the buildings. You might want to address the color of the building. I like the large doors you have on one building.

I am concerned that we will not be seeing the design guidelines until the last minute. What is not being shown in the presentation is the street experience and public space in these zones. I think that we have expressed that the public life around these buildings is critical and the landscape and public life are what needs to be emphasized. I think that it is critical that some of these buildings show what the streetscape and life will look like. For the contractor, I think that it is critical in the images you use and how you package it. You need to show and express what also might need to be happening.

I am also a little a little disappointed in what you have showed us for the streetscape. I think that it needs to be much more developed. I also question not using street trees around the box as it might make the space more a place that people actually want to be. I think that the parking configuration green screen might need to be rethought.

The functional drawing of the north portal makes me more concerned about the landscape and how it works with the terracing concept.

As it is working right now, I was trying to work with the rhythms of how you move into the tunnel and was trying to work with these rhythms and wayfinding experience.

I am not convinced of the placement of the legacy tree in the space. I think it should create a space not just an object. It seems like creating a space there instead of just an object will allow for more people.

I think that showing the landscape and the street trees in more development would be helpful. I think that the garage doors and the glass will help to activate the street.

As far as the building structure, I think that the massing is strong, but the materials need to work together. Consider taking one more look to the north side shop area.

The plinth on which the glass box sits on Harrison is high. Some thought about this needs to be developed. On the portal, I'm not sure the terracing is working here on this side.

The street trees around the box and the legacy tree are recommended by the commission. The legacy tree or an art object or whatever becomes of this space needs to be something that anchors the space. We need to see the context of this design and have a discussion about it.

We will try and get the design guidelines to you by May 15th.