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Chair

Andrew Barash

Julie Bassuk

Graham Black

Brendan Connolly

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Julie Parrett

Nathan Polanski

Dennis Ryan

Norie Sato

Guillermo Romano
Executive Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Tom Iurino
Senior Staff

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

August 20, 2009

Convened 8:30 am

Adjourned 3:00 pm

Projects Reviewed

Bus Bulb Design Guidelines

Cultural Overlay District

Green Stormwater Management

Commissioners Present

Mary Johnston, Chair

Julie Bassuk

Graham Black

Brendan Connolly

John Hoffman

Julie Parrett

Nathan Polanski

Dennis Ryan

Norie Sato

Commissioners Excused

Andrew Barash

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano

Valerie Kinast

Tom Iurino

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Celebrating 40 Years 1968-2008



August 20, 2009	Project:	Commission Business
	Phase:	N/A
	Last Reviewed:	N/A
	Presenters:	N/A

Time: 1 Hour

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The Design Commission will participate in the Waterfront Advisory Committee. Mary Johnston will represent the commission.

A commission sub-committee will review the Seattle Children's Hospital Master Plan that was not approved by the hearing examiner.

"Hole in the Ground" Workshop

The commission discussed what the final product of this effort will be. A brochure will be developed that includes text and graphics of options for interventions on stalled development sites. An 11" x 17" format will likely be used for the brochure. The commission discussed the Arts Commission and whether they should be involved in the temporary art installation on the site in front of City Hall. While the Arts Commission doesn't have the time or resources to be involved in all the temporary art installations, because of the central location and visibility of the site in front of City Hall the Arts Commission should be involved. The City Council has allocated \$60k for the temporary art installation on the vacant site in front of City Hall.

The commission discussed utilizing one insurance company to provide liability insurance for interventions on stalled development sites. Creating unique fencing that can replicate the chain link fencing that commonly surrounds development sites that are on hold should be considered. Allowing vendors on site is another option. Planting trees as a nursery for a P-patch are further options although property owners may be adverse to P-patches because they tend to be longer term.

A list of resources for property owners including a list of potential vendors or artists should be provided. Are there other organizations that may be able to utilize their existing resources to facilitate these interventions? Without such partnerships the success of the effort may be limited. Incentives for developers to participate in these interventions need to be a part of the effort. The commission needs a list of developers to target for interventions.

Workshop

The full commission will participate. A powerpoint presentation to introduce the effort at the workshop should be developed. The workshop will be a half -day workshop w/ lunch. An action plan will be developed during the workshop. A discussion of the "how" and "why" is more important than the "what can be done", which is a much easier question to answer.

Mid-October will be the target time for the workshop that will be held from 2-5 pm with a social gathering after. The Seattle University Alumni and Administrative Building is a great space for public meetings and could be used for the workshop. The workshop will tentatively be held on October 21st. The workshop needs a new name other than the "hole in the ground".

Design Commission Awards

The commission and staff will work to develop a list of names and organizations that have made a significant long-term contribution to the city.

Minutes for 6-18-09 and 8-6-09

Motion by Graham, seconded by Brendan. Minutes approved for 6-18-09. 8-6-09 minutes were not approved.

August 20, 2009**Project:****Bus Bulb Design Guidelines****Phase:**

Briefing

Last Reviewed:

N/A

Presenters:

Darby Watson, SDOT

Attendees:

Bill Bryant, SDOT

Time: 1 hour

(121)

ACTION

The Design Commission thanked Darby Watson for her presentation of the Bus Bulb Design Guidelines, and expressed support for the effort to provide a tool that will encourage consistency and assure good design of bus bulbs throughout the city. Commissioners' specific comments can be found following the notes on the presentation below.

Presentation

What are bus bulbs? They are a section of sidewalk that extends from the curb of a parking lane to the roadway. Bus bulbs improve pedestrian safety and enhance the waiting area for transit riders.

Design Principles

- Provide efficient transit
- Provide a pleasant and functional waiting area
- Provide a clear walkable zone
- Provide clarity through design elements
- Provide balance with the needs of other modes

Design Guidelines

- Surfaces
- Public Art
- Furniture
- Landscape

Porous pavement is the new SDOT standard. A minimum 2,000 sf required for the use of porous pavement along with a 10' setback from the property line.

Surfaces – consider the “language of materials”. Each material needs to have a clear purpose including the walkable zone, the bulb waiting area and the platform edge. The bus bulbs will consist of 2'x2' concrete sidewalk.



Bus Bulb Design Alternative

The SDOT crews now have the capability to do concrete stamp treatments. A brass inlay of a compass and logo will be installed at each bus bulb in front of the shelter.

Furniture – utilize vertical elements to reinforce safety. Turning the bench and placing it against the back of the street tree is being explored.

Landscape – Using longer tree pits opens up opportunities for landscaping improvements.

Sharrows/bike lanes – Pavement markings will be used adjacent to all bus bulbs and they will be retained wherever possible.

Commissioners' Comments and Questions

In terms of the slide with the movement of the pole (vertical elements), is it interfering with circulation?

These are new pedestrian lighting poles that will be installed along with the bus bulbs.

Have you considered using the stamping pattern at the intersection of the existing sidewalk and the bus bulb to provide a transition?

This was discussed with the community and they expressed a strong desire to have the bus bulb be part of the sidewalk and have a seamless transition. Where drainage must be incorporated, there is consideration of having a runnel run along between the sidewalk and bus bulb though.

Have you considered universal design issues in the development of these bus bulb guidelines?

I applaud you for pushing the standard for the use of porous pavement because I think it has a wider application than is currently being employed.

August 20, 2009	Project:	Cultural Overlay District
	Phase:	Briefing
	Last Reviewed:	N/A
	Presenters:	Fidelma McGinn, Cultural Overlay District Advisory Committee (CODAC)
	Attendees:	AJ Yang, University of Washington Frank Video, Legislative Department

Time: 1 hour

(122)

ACTION

The Design Commission thanked Fidelma McGinn of the Cultural Overlay District Advisory Committee for her presentation on the work of the Committee. Commissioners congratulate the committee for the approval of the work and recommendations by City Council on a 9-0 vote. This is a great beginning for the stresses that the arts and culture community are feeling for space and availability of other needed resources within the city. The Commission understands the extreme pressure on Capitol Hill especially, and hopes that some of these recommendations can take place sooner rather than later. The economic downturn has taken a bit of pressure off, giving some time to plan and put some of these recommendations into action. The Commission expresses support for the effort to develop tools and resources that will help ensure that arts and culture remain strong in Seattle's neighborhoods.

Some suggestions from the Commission included the following:

- In addition to neighborhoods, think about some potential overlay s or transition zones in light manufacturing/industrial areas for those types of activities that might conflict with mixed use neighborhoods in noise and other such conflicts.
- The "Cultural Liaison" person would most likely be a resource that is best placed in DPD where permits and plans are examined. Good communication with the Neighborhood Planning process would also make sense there.
- Retain as much of the older building stock as possible, but don't make it prescriptive. Are there any ways that codes could facilitate that?
- Make clear the link between arts/culture and economic vitality

Presentation

The Cultural Overlay District Advisory Committee (CODAC) was convened by Councilmembers Licata and Clark to address the affordability of art and cultural spaces within the city. The committee is a volunteer group that spent six months on the initial effort. A full report of the committee's work is available on the city's website.

Since the summer of 2008 over 40 arts related organizations – small theater and dance companies, and small businesses – have left Capitol Hill. Some have moved to other neighborhoods and others are permanently gone. The committee was convened in 2008 and included 16 members representing a broad range of stakeholders.

The goal of the committee was to ensure that arts and culture remain strong in Seattle's neighborhoods.

Our Goal: to ensure that arts and culture remain strong in Seattle's neighborhoods.

Our Brief: focus first on Capitol Hill, and develop tools and resources that could be applicable to all city neighborhoods.

Our Approach: develop a transportable toolkit of resources — partnerships, projects, incentives, financing — that would support the creation and retention of arts and cultural spaces within Seattle’s neighborhoods.

Recommendations

1. Designate cultural districts
2. District cultural manager
3. Create a cultural space “brand”
4. Provide technical assistance
5. Outreach with neighborhoods
6. Partner with public and private entities

Recommendation 1 – Allow for the creation of designated cultural districts within Seattle’s neighborhoods, to preserve and enhance space for arts and culture to thrive in local communities.

Recommendation 2 – Allocate a City of Seattle staff position to work specifically with cultural districts, and act as a liaison with other city departments, community organizations, and cultural agencies. This staff person should be responsible for coordination with all existing overlays, districts and neighborhood plans, and integration of cultural overlays with the comprehensive plan.

Recommendation 3 – Apply existing city incentives, regulatory tools and financial incentives to arts and culture projects.

Recommendation 4 – Provide technical assistance to ensure the most effective use of these tools.

Recommendation 5 – Develop partnerships with organizations, foundations, government agencies, institutions and individuals.

Recommendation 6 – Develop partnerships with organizations, foundations, government agencies, institutions, and individuals. (NOTE TO JEFF: this previous sentence is repeated from Recommendation 5. Remove this one?) Identify and pursue those potential partnerships with aligned goals, mutual support, and advocacy to achieve success.

CODAC has an extensive list of community supporters including the neighborhood council, Broadway’s business improvement district, Seattle Foundation, Sustainable Seattle, all ages movement, city-club, prosperity partnership, Washington low income housing, and Allied Arts.

The report was presented to the full City Council. A resolution from the council was passed in support of the plan by a vote of 9-0.

Commissioners’ Questions and Comments

What incentives are you looking at to implement the plan?

I’d have to defer you to someone who is better suited to answer that questions, but we did discuss the transfer of development rights and Floor to Area Ratios (FAR).

Will the cultural overlay district have additional regulatory restrictions or will it be more incentive based?

It will focus on incentives.

Where have the displaced arts organizations moved?

Many have moved to other neighborhoods.

How does this fit in with the Pike/Pine overlay?

There is a lot of overlap between the two efforts.

Is part of the effort of CODAC to preserve buildings that are over 75 years to preserve affordability?

Yes, it is part of our effort in order to promote affordability.

I'm wondering if, in your opinion, creating a cultural overlay district "ghettoizes" the arts community? Perhaps the incentives should apply citywide?

That is a discussion that needs to happen during the neighborhood planning process. Also, the City Council, responding to groups of displaced artists, felt that there are certain areas that have a concentration of arts and cultural activities.

Have you considered allowing or promoting arts and cultural activities in Industrial Zones, which the city is already involved in a preservation effort?

Have you thought about where the cultural liaison person will reside within the city departments?

Yes. Certainly the Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs, possibly the Departments of Planning or Economic Development should be considered.

Is there a provision that if developers can't provide the public benefits onsite can they provide funding in support of the effort?

Yes.

August 20, 2009 Project: Green Stormwater Management

Phase: Briefing
Last Reviewed: N/A
Presenters: Amalia Leighton, SvR Design
 Kathy Gwilym, SvR Design

Attendees: Dave LaClergue, DPD
 Angie Jones, Seattle Center
 April Mills, SPU
 Jeff Libby, DPD
 Selina Hunstiger, DPD
 Maggie Glowacki, DPD
 Zach Thomas, Groundswell NW

Time: 1 hour

(121)

ACTION

The Design Commission thanked Amalia Leighton and Kathy Gwilym of SvR Design for their presentation on green stormwater management. They also thanked City staff of SPU and DPD for information that they supplied during the discussion. Specific comments of the Commission can be found in the section below that follows the notes on the presentation.

Presentation

The new Seattle Stormwater Code is affecting the design of development projects in terms of green stormwater infrastructure (GSI). In addition, the Department of Ecology (DOE) has come out with a new stormwater manual that all cities in Washington State must meet. These factors have led to new and current trends in GSI that are affecting the design of development projects.

New Stormwater Code and Planning Implications

- Requirement of GSI where feasible
- Higher thresholds in watersheds for flow control (meeting durations of peak flows for pasture/forest conditions) and water quality
- Simplified approach for small residential developments and sidewalks
- Green Factor

Observations – GSI

- Ability to design multi-functional green stormwater infrastructure
- Stronger relationship between utilities, transportation owners, and architects
- Greater understanding and value of soils and vegetation in the urban environment
- Improved acceptance by the general public of green stormwater infrastructure
- Integrative design and multi-functioning systems
- Mobility, water, community, habitat, energy



Implementation of GSI

Public Acceptance

- Developers are asking for, and willing to maintain, GSI
- Neighborhood branding

Trends: Stormwater Management

- GSI/LID is not an option but required to “maximum extent feasible”
- Stormwater management needs to be planned at the beginning of a project during layout of the site. More upfront site assessment and design costs.
 - Soil conditions and site programming.
 - Design team integration in programming the site

Trends: Bioretention/Rain Gardens

- Standard off-the-shelf bio-retention soil mix for our region
- Published standard details for ROW bio-retention
- Still working on informing installers that “it’s not just another landscape bed. It’s a stormwater facility.”
- Future: certified installers and/or maintenance crews

Trends: Porous Pavement

- Used on large scale projects in our region (shopping centers, car dealerships, etc..)
- Region working on standard specification and details for porous or pervious concrete
- More used in private sector than public sector
- Pervious concrete – certified installer list is growing rapidly
- Local studies underway for using top layer and sub-base as the water quality treatment layer
- Use of prefab permeable pavers

Trends: Soils and vegetation

- Silva Cells
 - Allow for more soil volume in urban areas
 - Allow for large canopy trees in urban areas

Project Case Studies

- Yale Avenue Campus
- Thornton Creek Water Quality Channel
- High Point
- WSU Puyallup Research and extension center LID retrofit study
 - Research center for stormwater management LID
 - Rain Gardens w/ different plants

Other Trends

- Carbon sequestration, habitat, climate change, aesthetics, pedestrian corridors, green jobs
- Rainwater harvesting for small-scale non-potable use. More than enough water is generated so management of stormwater still required
- Stormwater retrofits – providing incentives for property owners

Considerations for the Design Commission when reviewing projects

- Can GSI provide multiple functions?
- Inspiration: Does it encourage others to implement?
- Stewardship: Who will maintain and care for installation over long term?
- Application: Is the type of GSI appropriate to the location?
- Future: Have existing GSI systems been accounted for in design?

Commissioners' Questions and Comments

Are there strategies that provide the most benefit relative to the cost?

It's going to depend on the site characteristics. If you have good soils, pervious concrete can be the foundation for the entire system. Alice Mills noted that SPU has found bio-retention is always the best value depending on specific characteristics of the site.

How do state and local laws affect the ability to collect rainwater?

The state does allow Seattle to collect rainwater in areas that are part of a combined sewer. Link to SPU website-

http://www.seattle.gov/util/About_SPU/Water_System/Projects/RainwaterPermit/SPU01_002450.asp

What is your take on the cost effectiveness of utilizing green roofs?

Depends on the specifics of the building and site, but I have seen cases where the benefits are not worth the additional costs.

Has there been any inclusion of improvements in the right-of-way as a credit towards meeting the stormwater requirements?

Silva cells get credit under the new stormwater code, but Silva cells can be costly for planting a tree. DJC reported \$20,000 in recent article on demonstration in downtown Seattle. .

Has anyone looked at an aggregate approach of, for example, using the center block in a nine-block area for a centralized stormwater system?

Yes, I believe it's been done on some level, but it is not likely to be cost effective. GSI is intended to disperse runoff at its source and so to centralize it would not be as effective.

Is there a minimum width of a bio-retention swale?

It depends on the area that is draining to it, City of Seattle has standard details for bioretention swales. If have vertical sides (stormwater planter) it could be 5' to 6' but if it was designed to have sloping sides then it would be wider. See standard details in Right-of-way Improvement Manual.