



APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

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June 5, 2014

Convened 8:30 am

Adjourned 5:00 pm

Projects Reviewed

Waterfront – Design Oversight Subcommittee
Broadway Streetcar and Center City Connector
PC-1 Partial Vacation of Armory Way
SR 520 Montlake Lid and Portage Bay Bridge

Commissioners Present

Osama Quotah, Chair
Shannon Loew, Vice Chair
Bernie Alonzo
Brodie Bain
Lee Copeland
Thaddeus Egging
Megan Groth
Ellen Sollod
Ross Tilghman

Commissioners Excused

Martin Regge

Staff Present

Michael Jenkins
Valerie Kinast
Nicolas Welch



June 5, 2014 1:30 – 3:00 pm	Project:	PC-1 Partial Vacation of Armory Way	
	Phase:	Urban Design Merit	
	Previous reviews:	none	
	Presenters:	Nathan Torgelson	DPD
		David Miller	Miller Hull
		Steve Doub	Miller Hull
	Attendees:	Beverly Barnett	SDOT
		Ryan Durkan	HCMP
		Ben Franz-Knight	Pike Place Market PDA
		Holly Golden	HCMP

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

Purpose of Review

The purpose of this review was to review the urban design merit of the partial vacation of Armory Way for the PC-1 site at the Pike Place Market. The PC-1 site is the last undeveloped parcel at the Market and is currently used for surface parking. The Pike Place Market Preservation and Development Authority (PPMPDA) is constructing the Pike Place Market Waterfront Entrance Project at this site, the 30% design of which the Design Commission reviewed in January 2014. The present review, however, covered only the partial vacation under consideration. Furthermore, given the project's location in a historic district, the Market Historic Commission (MHC) reviewed the public benefit package associated with the vacation of Armory Way on May 14, 2014, and the Design Commission considered only the urban design merit of the petition.

This was a unique review for the Design Commission. This portion of ROW does not currently serve a transportation function and may never have been improved for transportation purposes. As a result, the impacts associated with the proposed vacation are minimal. Furthermore, because the area in question is a steep slope, it is unlikely to have a future transportation, utility, open space, or other use.

Summary of Proposal

The PPMPDA is petitioning to vacate an approximately 1,300 sf narrow sliver of Armory Way, a platted City ROW most of which was supplanted but never vacated by the Alaskan Way Viaduct in 1948. The vacation would 1) enable the parking included as part of the Pike Place Market Waterfront Entrance Project, which is required mitigation for the parking lost as a result of the Alaskan Way Viaduct removal, and 2) allow construction of structure that supports not only the Waterfront Entrance Project but the future Overlook Walk connection, a component of the City's central waterfront redevelopment.

Summary of Presentation

Nathan Torgelson introduced the design team, shared the history of this site at Pike Place Market, and noted the tremendous public value this project holds for Seattle. He mentioned the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and PPMPDA. He stated that Pike Place Market Waterfront Entrance

Project is important because of the connections it would create among Victor Steinbrueck Park, the Pike Place Market, and the Waterfront and because of the replacement parking required by the WSDOT due to the loss of the viaduct. The project also includes affordable housing and new commercial space for the market. Mr. Torgelson stated that the City and Office of Waterfront are supportive of this project and the proposed vacation.

David Miller introduced the Pike Place Market Waterfront Entrance Project and the reasons that the proposed vacation of a sliver of Armory Way is essential to the proposed development. His presentation is dated June 5, 2014, and available on the [Design Commission website](#). He described the context of the project site and presented a series of slides showing the phasing of the proposed Pike Place Market Waterfront Entrance Project.

Steve Doub referred to the ordinances that established Armory Way in the 1930s, described the location of the 1,300 sf portion the team is petitioning to vacate, and showed the surrounding topography. According to Mr. Doub, the proposed partial vacation of Armory Way avoids a loss of critical parking spaces and open space for the Pike Place Market Waterfront Entrance project. Given the project's location within a historic district, Mr. Doub explained that the Market Historic Commission reviewed and supported the public benefit package associated with the proposed vacation.

Summary of Discussion

The Commission hoped to see a clearer representation of the no-vacation alternative. Accordingly, they asked the design team for additional information about the impacts to parking and open space that the vacation would avoid. Since maintaining parking is part of the rationale for the vacation, the Commissioners were interested in the *minimum* number of parking spaces lost; the presentation showed how retaining the ROW would affect the preferred design only. However, the design team stated that the loss would prevent meeting the parking targets required by the Viaduct mitigation plan, and therefore they didn't study how to minimize the number of stalls lost. There was also discussion of the impacts to open space and to a regional transmission line that will ultimately be relocated.

While the Commission saw no current and likely no foreseeable future transportation function for Armory Way, they struggled with the notion that maintaining parking could justify vacating City ROW. However, they recognized that this was not a private project but rather part of a laudable City effort to connect the Pike Place Market to the redeveloped waterfront. There was concern about ceding public land to the PPMPDA—a quasi-public entity—but the Commission supported the proposal since the vacated land would remain publicly accessible.

Lastly, there was strong and unanimous agreement that this vacation did not establish a precedent that any other project could subsequently follow.

Agency Comments

Beverly Barnett noted that all vacations of any size and scale go through this process in order to ensure a thorough review prior to going before the City Council. The purpose is to identify all impacts resulting from vacating City ROW. For the current proposal, Ms. Barnett acknowledged that the ROW is adjacent to a City Light but stated that she sees no impacts associated with vacating this portion of Armory Way.

Public Comments

none

Action

The Design Commission thanked the project team their presentation and reiterated the unique nature of the review. With a **vote of 8 to 1**, the Design Commission approved the urban design merit of the proposed partial vacation of Armory Way.

The Commission stated two fundamental and important characteristics make this vacation of City ROW unusual. First, the platted ROW does not appear ever to have been improved for transportation purposes, currently does not have a transportation use, and is unlikely in the future to serve transportation, utility, open space, or other function (the eventual transmission line relocation notwithstanding).

Second, the proposed vacation facilitates the implementation of the Pike Place Market Waterfront Entrance Project at the PC-1 site and the development of public open space, pedestrian circulation, public parking, and a future connection to the Overlook Walk. The vacated land will establish the underlying structure for the initial phases of the waterfront redevelopment. This integration with the public waterfront is unique and unlike any other project in the city. The vacated area is public space and will remain public space.

Given the history of this particular right-of-way, which is very unusual, the present vacation does not set any precedent for future such vacations.

Commission Quotah voted against approval because he disagreed with the assumption that preserving parking or a preferred massing are a justification for taking over the ROW and believed additional analysis was needed for justification.