



Seattle Design Commission

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

January 17, 2008

Greg Nickels
Mayor

Karen Kiest
Chair

Tasha Atchison

Brendan Connolly

John Hoffman

Mary Johnston

Juanita LaFond

Dennis Ryan

Norie Sato

Darrell Vange

Darby Watson

Guillermo Romano
Executive Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Projects Reviewed

West Thomas Street Pedestrian Overpass

Fire Station 30—Mt. Baker

SR-519 Grade Separation

Center City-Open Space Work

Commissioners Present

Karen Kiest, Chair

Tasha Atchison

Brendan Connolly

John Hoffman

Mary Johnston

Juanita LaFond

Dennis Ryan

Norie Sato

Darrell Vange

Darby Watson

Convened: 10:30am

Adjourned: 5:00pm

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano

Valerie Kinast

Tom Iurino

Vivian Chang

Ian Macek



**Department of Planning
and Development**
700 5th Avenue, Suite 2000
PO Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-2000

T: 206-615-1349
F: 206-233-7883

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17 January 2008 Project: West Thomas Street Pedestrian Overpass

Phase: Concept Design

Last Reviews: 12-07-2006, 7-06-2006, 12-16-2004

Presenters: David Hewitt, Hewitt Architects

Barbara Hinkle, SDOT

Brian Sperry, ABKJ

Attendees: John Coney, Uptown Alliance

David Graves, Parks

George Frost, SDOT

Pong Jongjitirat, ABKJ

Barbara Lee, ABKJ

Jeen Sundboay, Uptown Alliance

Ruri Yampolsky, Arts and Cultural Affairs

Time: 1.0 hours

(SR 169/RS0606)

Action

The Commission thanks the team for their presentation, and while the Commission supports this project as a whole, it unanimously does not approve schematic design of the bridge alignment based on the following comments:

- Concern about moving forward into future design phases if this is the design due to current funding situations
- Concern over the level of detail presented, making it hard to review and feel it is lacking compared to past presentations. Contents shown a year ago offered more detail than presentation materials today.
- Regret that efforts put into preparing materials for the artist weren't brought to the table to understand the current level of design and detailing
- Concerns over crossing over Elliott, yet also understand the need to avoid a signalized crossing at Elliott.
- Concerns about future phases of the project without the accessible access point at Elliott
- Images of how the structure crosses Elliott are critical to understanding the project and the urban design merits, and must be displayed
- Suggest reconsideration of the phasing that includes phasing the Elliott crossing rather than the Elliott access point
- Great concerns about the safety for cyclists and pedestrians, especially at the corner intersections and 90 degree bend as the trail enters the park. Flaring, nodes, or other means of wider passage, including a belvedere or some means of respite, would add function, safety and good design
- Suggest the study of potential for simplifying the ramp alignment to the mound to avoid unnecessary kinks and cost in the project.
- The sloping mound as a starting point for the ramp is seen as a positive and unobtrusive element.
- This project is extremely important, but the scope of the project needs to be reconsidered relative to the amount of funding available.

- The quality and application of utilitarian detail should achieve a higher standard than the images shown; learn from examples like the adjacent Sculpture Park.
- Utilize this as an opportunity to complement the Heizer Sculpture.
- If there is not going to be a multi-use trail, then regrade is recommended.

Proponent's Presentation

Project Background

The team is at 20% design, and will achieve 30% design by early 2008. The West Thomas Street Pedestrian Overpass is a \$6.3 million Capital Improvement Project. The budget will not allow for many of the enhancements discussed in the 12/07/06 Design Commission presentation.

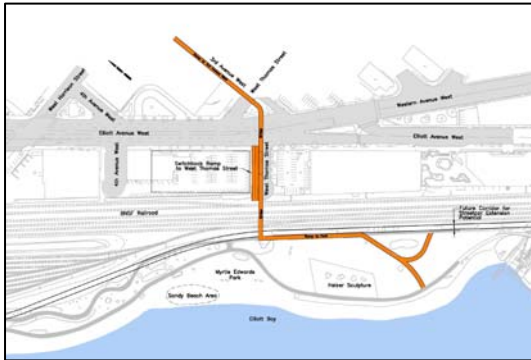


Figure 1: Pedestrian overpass concept design.



Figure 1: South view into park.

The ramp on Elliott Avenue West will be left out of the budget as a link to South Lake Union, Queen Anne, and other neighboring communities, which will save \$700,000. The new development along Elliott Avenue West will be able to access the structure to the west. The overpass will cross Elliott Avenue West and BNSF and will end at Myrtle Edwards Park, where there will be an angled fence towards the park. Heizer has reviewed and approved the project.

Over the years, many bridge types have been looked at. The three main bridge types are the simple concrete precast girder, the precast concrete tub girder, and the steel box, which can be very attractive with proper paint job. A streamlined design was most favorable, which was the concrete precast girder. The current overpass design is a basic structure in order to stay within the budget. Specifically, it will be a concrete eye girder, which meets the goals of the December 2006 presentation, although the team would like to go towards a steel box structure.

The Mayor's office preferred an extended signalized crossing, rather than a signalized crossing in West Thomas Street. The Parks Department will coordinate the way the overpass will land on the Myrtle Edwards side and provide a concept sketch of connections between the existing pedestrian and bike trail connections to the edge of the road. There is a ten foot walking surface that spans 12 feet in width, which is not standard for a multiuse trail, which is 14 feet.

Public Comments

- Is there an art plan?
 - Art will be placed on the east side of Elliott.
- Who will maintain the trail?
 - SDOT is the recipient of this trail. Parks will maintain the trail, whereas SDOT will maintain the bridge.
- There is a huge danger potential due to no midpoint access.
- A key element of the neighborhood plan is to increase safety.
- Pleased to hear Michael Heizer is fine with this and this project will enhance the value of his work.
- 3rd and Thomas are the most important pedestrian paths.
- Uptown Alliance: demolition of the Mountaineers' building and bridge.

Commissioners' Comments

- Walking through the images and plan, how does the overpass thread over the potential streetcar route and bike trail?
 - The bridge will extend about twenty feet beyond the trolley fence line and the ramp will be offset by the bridge centerline.
- It is hard to tell if the two girders dead-end in space, with a concrete slab beyond that.
 - Yes, they do.
- Is there a highway pass over the bridge? Will those be detailed similarly? Is there a single concrete pier?
 - The pier is 2.5 feet diagonally and will be round.
- Is there a stair tower at the corner?
 - There will be an open belvedere with a flare at the bridge.
- Can the team get rid of the ramp on Elliott and build stairs instead?
 - The team cannot pick and choose, due to ADA access.
- This is concept design, not schematic design. There are no sectional drawings or elevations. It is difficult to approve this project due to lack of documentation. SDOT should evaluate if they have adequate funding for the project. The same amount of detail from a year ago has not been presented today.
 - Is there a baseline?
- Regarding the ramp east of Heizer, could the angle be more radial with a gently curved segmented precast?
 - That would be a cast in place solution, which would not be in the budget. Yes, the team will make it more round horizontally
- There is a throw fence over the tracks, but why not along the side adjacent to the tracks?
 - It's not a direct overhead, so it does not need a fence.
- The design to raise the mound five feet seems very important. Is that part of your design?
 - Yes, for 30% design.
- Where is the 500 feet for the no art work line? Middle of the tracks?
 - Way across the tracks for 500 feet.

- There are three aspects to the overpass, which include the part where it crosses Elliott that is visually significant, where it crosses the BNSF tracks that is less visually significant, and where it comes down to Myrtle Edwards Park. The path was created for bike ramps with the idea to cross Elliott and land gracefully in the park. However, pedestrians now cannot access a graceful arc across Elliott (steel with curve). Would value engineering permit access from the west side with steeper ramps?
 - Yes, this ramp is at 5% but can increase to 8.3% which require landings that need to be 10 feet wide.
- Feel that the project is underfunded and worried about moving forward.
- On a positive note, switch from steel to concrete is okay because it models the quality of the Heizer sculpture.
- There are visibility issues in turning corners over the I-90 trail due to limited sightline. A node for respite, clearances and corners need to be incorporated.
- Some issues are not just enhancements, but integral to the project. The pedestrian bridge needs to be well designed and be good for pedestrians and bikes.
- There needs to be concept of the alignment of the bridge.
- The Commission does not support proceeding at this time if there will not be further funding.
 - The team can work on perspectives next month.
- Where is the work that was shown to Michael Heizer?
 - The team can deliver that work to the Commission.
- Today's feedback can help gear the team towards design to improve the resolution of 90 degree turn and to resolve the blunt corner.
- What the DC suggested last year: west crossing, belvedere treatment, go directly south into the park
- The materials need to be applied in a very deliberate and well designed manner
- Original ramp was 560 feet long, and curving it saves 106 feet
- Sloping mound is less obtrusive and insecure than the previous mound
 - Three CSOs cannot allow ramp support
- Bike slopes should not be applied since people will walk their bikes
- Crossing of Elliott is not worth the money; work on the part behind Heizer; west side; Immunex bridge; danger of Elliott is not apparent;
- Honesty, simplicity, multiuse, lighting, etc.
- Recommend the Commission not support the concept design while supporting the project

17 January 2008 Project: Fire Station 30—Mt. Baker

Phase: Schematic Design

Last Reviews: 11-15-2007, 6-21-2007

Presenters: Ida Ottesen, Nakano & Associates
Walter Schacht, Schacht Aslani Architects

Attendees: Dove Alberg, FFD
Kelly Davidson, Arts/Cultural Affairs
Jess Harris, DPD
Andy Ishizaki, FFD
Peter Law, Schacht Aslani Architects

Time: 1.0 hours

(SR 169/RS0609)

Action

The Commission thanks the team for their presentation and unanimously approves schematic design with the following comments:

- **Appreciate the quick response to changing information about site conditions**
- **Concern about location of art and are mindful of historic nature of Mt. Baker Blvd**
- **Supergraphic idea for sign is well received, but concerned about visibility**
- **Consider solar heat gain on west elevation as a sustainable feature**
- **Landscape may have a more formal relationship between building and landscape**
- **Concern about complete transparency in north elevation; recommend more translucent material use and visibility**
- **Supports and encourages greater skewing structure of roof to show off building from Rainier**
- **Support height increase**
- **Support selection of the artist and interested in where the proposed art piece could be located. Reinforce the nexus of that piece to the fire station**
- **Excited about the use of geothermal energy for use in the demands of the fire station's heat needs**

Proponent's Presentation

Project Background

Fire Station 30 is at the base of Mt. Baker and Rainier Valley neighborhoods. The project involves tear down of the current building with a rebuild in the same location. The station is located in a transitional area where adjacent building heights will be from NC-65' to 110'. The height limit at the site is 25 ft. but the proponent will be asking the Council to build to 30 ft. and would like Commission support for this. Development in the area is expected to increase with the future opening of a light rail station.

A recent geotechnical analysis determined the site has liquefiable soils, adding considerable cost to the original design. The new schematic design takes these considerations into account using a sheet metal skin with light wood framing. The roof

has become trapezoidal to provide overhangs in both the front and back of the building. The front façade will be made of both transparent and translucent glass. The doors into the apparatus bay will be opaque. A supergraphic with the number and name of the station is proposed for the front stairway using translucent glass and paint or a mural on the back wall to compliment the apparatus bay doors. The new design of the building will require a slight height change due to the sloping terrain, as well as a setback change to accommodate the new roofline.

Modern landscaping will be used along Mt. Baker Boulevard, while native plantings and bioswale will be along the east and west. Water will also be collected in a cistern for use in irrigation. The project may also incorporate an art piece into the design. It would be located in front of the fire station, forming a gateway between commercial and residential zones, and would be internally lit to act as a beacon. The art piece would be located in the tree-line and the team is considering the alternative of replacing the tree. The overall project will receive a Silver LEED status when completed.

Public Comments

- Accurately disclosed departures; City Council can modify departures from design standards
- Arts program funding depends on the materials

Commissioners' Comments

- Appreciate that the team has come with a new design with other materials
- The commission thanks the team for providing great context
- Don't be afraid to make this a contemporary civic building
- Siding: vertical metal, galvanized
- Standing sheet metal, except for west side, where there is concrete, backside: one infill panel that is corrugated
 - Color: needs more thought, light metallic, standing seam product made locally that snaps on, allows to put siding in more traditional way, panels are 5-8 feet, and every time the panels are put together, more detail is obtained; quality of fabric in west façade



Figure 2: Fire Station 30 schematic designs.

- The articulation of metal when you go over the slab has a change in the thickness
- The material of using metal instead of copper; landscape should not be independent of the building and should reference the vertical elements of the building and alley
- Solar heat into bunk rooms, potential art or landscape elements to cool the spaces
- Mechanical apparatus on the roof?
 - Ventilator fans out of bathrooms and kitchen, all mechanical will be in inside the building
 - Looking for opportunity to put generator under the building due to grade change
 - Chain link enclosure required along alley for parking
- Roof could be more emphatic
 - Needs deeper setback
- Are there stairs?
 - Yes, from the deck
- Geothermal locations?
 - 6 total, underneath the bioswale
- Does the liquefaction zone apply to the 65' zone?
 - NE corner soil falls, unsure about other sites
- A little part of façade next to the doors could be highlighted in a different way
- Red "30" is good visual from north, but may be obscured from side
- Color: sympathetic color choice to Franklin High School
- Friends of Olmsted; pay attention to reflective quality of the glass, consider that when deciding interior wall color
- The north elevation—clear walls cannot hide clutter
 - Transparency vs. translucency
- Concern about art location due to height of building to the west and obscuring
- Art element needs to take into consideration the whole boulevard
- Art may be accidentally associated with Franklin High School and not the fire station because of its location in the Olmsted Boulevard
- Keep art piece closer on Rainier if it is meant to enhance the entrance to the Boulevard
- Flagpole, art, signage need to be balanced

17 January 2008 Project: SR-519 Grade Separation

Phase: Urban Design Guidelines

Last Reviews:

Presenters: Roland Benito, WSDOT
Colleen Grants, PRR Public Relations
Gerald Hansmire, Makers-Architecture & Urban Design
Kirsten Hauge, PRR Public Relations
Mike Johnson, SDOT

Attendees: Lindsay Boyd, WSDOT
Stephanie Brown, SDOT
Rose Evonuk, EnviroIssues
Kristian Kofoed, DPD
Richard Patterson, WSDOTS
Pietro Potesta, Makers
Sara Schmitt, WSDOT

Time: 1.0 hours

(SR 169/RS0606)

Action

The Commission would like to thank the team for their thorough presentation that responds appropriately to our earlier comments. The Commission unanimously approves the Urban Design Guidelines as presented, with the following comments:

- **Recommend specifying exact materials in Design Guidelines when trying to replicate elements associated with Safeco Field**
- **Consider opportunities to extend pedestrian experience to Light Rail station along Royal Brougham**
- **Recommend design-build description for potential art locations which allow flexibility in actual character of art installations**
- **Encourage art installations to be broader than sports theme**
- **Make sure plaza is comfortable on non-game days**
- **Look at potential for low impact drainage design**
- **Recommend bold landscape design statement at 4th and Royal Brougham**
- **Strongly support lighting plan**
- **Continue to consider bicycle movements and safety in grade separated Royal Brougham**
- **Commend presentation thoroughness and response to Commission's previous comments**

Proponent's Presentation

Project Background

The project encompasses a number of street improvements. Coordinated intersection improvements at South Atlantic Street and 1st Avenue South, new ramp connections between SR 519 and South Atlantic Street, and construction of grade separations at South Royal Brougham Way will take place.

The team's presentation looked at context-sensitive design and approach; refined pedestrian access, art work potentials and special design elements; refined South Royal Brougham Way plan; and the process and schedule for next steps. The project wants to be consistent with the surrounding elements and has context sensitive objectives such as street lighting and pedestrian fixtures, sidewalk paving patterns, tree grates, street furniture, railings, and handrails. The goal is to create and promote a positive pedestrian experience by maintaining handicap access, considering future pedestrian volumes, and coordinating with sport teams.



Figure 3: Royal Brougham Way.

The bulk of the presentation looked at the grade separations at South Royal Brougham Way. The project will include a plaza as part of the pedestrian overpass. The ramp from the plaza over the railroad tracks will be 5%. The other side will have an elevator and stairs which descend near Safeco field. The overall project will include many amenities such as safety lighting, an emergency circulation route, elevator and stair connection and security, and art installation opportunities. Project quality will be maintained during the design build process by meeting design team requirements, oversight, request proposal and contractual conditions, and construction oversight.



Figure 4: Atlantic Ramp.

The current schedule includes notice to proceed, request for qualifications, request for proposal, environmental assessment, and finding of no significance. The project goes out for RFQ at the end of May 2008, and it will take 8-10 weeks to develop a proposal. The team will evaluate the proposals and award the contract in August 2008. The project must be completed by 2011, and will be on a fixed schedule.

Public Comments

- Design build process was of concern, haven't figured out process; critical for south end project to end by 2011; overall, team has done well mirroring stakeholder requests

Commissioners' Comments

- Is the structure of the grade separation similar to previous design?
 - o CH2M Hill will oversee through the 100% design

- o Will look at safety of crossing at 1st and Atlantic
- Unclear about purpose of Royal Brougham
 - o Safety mobility issue: context of the area changed and pedestrians crossing the railroad tracks became very unsafe
 - o Takes majority of traffic from Fourth Avenue to 1st and Atlantic, and creates a car/pedestrian/bike overpass over the tracks
- Are the urban design guidelines too rigid?
 - o It departs at some points; ensures quality
- How much of Safeco field do you want to see?
 - o Depends; wants to separate the overpass from Safeco
- The reasons for consistency are the magnets; staircase could be an art piece itself; color is needed; signage becomes part of the visual environment
- Are the design elements going to continue?
 - o No, it is the pedestrian path
 - o The closure of 5 lanes of Royal Brougham will no longer be needed
- Does design take into consideration elevations at the Royal Brougham?
 - o 6 feet over the tracks, 4.5' normal
- Who is managing the art?
 - o May need to go to Arts and Cultural Affairs to get idea
- Wondering whether the artwork could be non-sport related
- The artist on the team can suggest other idea, i.e. historic context
- Plaza should feel comfortable during off-season; low impact design for draining
 - o The landscape is perfunctory; get rid of green in the west, concentrate on significant landscape
- Strongly support lighting concept underneath pedestrian structure
- Keep in mind of cyclists on Royal Brougham; signalization

17 January 2008 Project: Center City-Open Space Work

Phase: Update

Last Reviews:

Presenters: Gary Johnson, DPD

Attendees: Rebecca Herzfeld, Legislative Dept

Time: 1.0 hours

(SR 265/RS05017)

Action

The Commission appreciates the thoughtful and informative update on the City's Center City Strategy to make Seattle livable, walkable, and welcoming of future growth and economic development, with the following comments:

- **The Commission supports the creation of a typology of downtown streets and looks forward to weighing in not only on the specific urban design elements, but also on the hierarchy of improvements needed to achieve great open spaces in street ROW in the Center City.**
- **The Commission appreciates facilitation of communication between agencies, community, and City Council on the many moving parts that contribute to the Center City Strategy implementation.**
- **The Commission recognizes the development potential in the grey areas surrounding the neighborhood boundaries shown in the brochure and encourages you to continue to allow areas outside the Center City proper to contribute to the strategy's goals.**
- **The Commission feels that regularizing the street grid in what is known as the Clise property/Denny Triangle area could open up some open space opportunities.**
- **Similarly lids over I-5 would present interesting opportunities for open space; I-5 acts a barrier between residential neighborhoods and the downtown core; the Commission would encourage some pedestrian connections over I-5 to humanize the area.**
- **The Commission is excited about the opportunity for increased infrastructure such as elementary schools that would support family life in the Center City area, and to that end encourages the development of creative partnerships with Seattle Center or other local institutions to make that happen.**

Proponent's Presentation

Project Background

The City Center Seattle is a strategy for encouraging economic growth, transportation, new housing, and great urban neighborhoods in the downtown core and the nine areas immediately around it. The exact boundaries are intentionally left vague due to the importance of each area to the other. There are 3.5 million people in the Puget Sound region, and that number is estimated to double in next several decades. By 2024 this area will produce 50,000 new jobs and 22,000 new housing units. Consequently, land use and zoning changes were necessary to absorb growth and help shape types of development.

Smart growth strategies have been used to divide the area into five traditional neighborhoods and four urban centers.



Figure 5: The ten neighborhoods that form City Center Seattle

Housing is a critical element in City Center Seattle. The greater downtown area has good affordable housing choices, although north downtown has too many high end homes. The key is to attract families with children. This can be accomplished with an area wide approach through design, programming, and art to create places for families. To facilitate this, the strategy emphasizes the installation of important infrastructure like affordable housing, workforce housing and schools. An urban nontraditional collaborative public elementary school could be located in north downtown. If schools and affordable housing aren't seen as a priority, the strategy won't happen.

Open space creation is seen as a challenge in Center City Seattle as downtown Seattle has the lowest per capita open space. The Seattle Art Museum has helped with the creation of the Olympic Sculpture Park and other projects (Civic Square Project, enlargement of Hing Hay Park, and Denny Park improvements) will add to the amount of open space in the area, as it is difficult to acquire new traditional parks. A new ranger program is in the works that will provide information to welcome and provide safety. The waterfront plan is also seen as a way to dramatically increase the open space in downtown Seattle. The Strategy also looks at underutilized opportunities that streetscapes provide such as: sidewalks as delightful public realm experience; short term improvements; speeding up sidewalk café permit; banner program; and gray signal control box art programs.

Public safety improvements downtown can be accomplished through increased police presence, urban design improvements, dumpster bans, revamped noise ordinances for clubs, and increased funding for programming.

Over the next several months the Center City Seattle project will prioritize CIP projects. The downtown area has many fascinating projects and opportunities and the area around the hospital, Yesler Way, Little Saigon, and Seattle U is an important future spot for the center city.

Commissioners' Comments

- Appropriateness of density around stadium area vs. smart growth
- Regularizing the streets around Clise property can increase open space
- Lids over I-5, Madison, etc. can create open space (Cherry to Boren to Pine)
- There is so little continuity of roads for pedestrians to humanize areas where there could be connections
 - Hopefully Madison will be the first
- Park over Denny Triangle, ways to take a couple of million dollars; collaborate with Cornish and Lenora Street to leverage development to create park-like place there where there otherwise not be possible
- Schools—Seattle Center
- Antioch University could go 400' in Center City; redevelop their half block to create an elementary school
- Bike infrastructure
 - Lack of downtown investment
 - Portland's downtown has slower speeds, narrower streets
 - Bike share program, like car share
- Depends on the Viaduct coming down; surface alternative