



Seattle Light Rail Review Panel

Julie Bassuk
Design Commission
LRRP Co-Chair

David Cutler
Planning Commission
LRRP Co-Chair

Catherine Benotto
Planning Commission

Dan Corson
Public Art Advisory Committee

Kurt Kiefer
Public Art Advisory Committee

Malika Kirkling
Design Commission

Laurel Kunkler
Design Commission

Kevin McDonald
Planning Commission

Tom Nelson
Design Commission

Julie Parrett
Design Commission/
Public Art Advisory Committee

Osama Quotah
Design Commission

Norie Sato
Design Commission/
Public Art Advisory Committee

Donald Vehige
Design Commission

Debbie Wick-Harris
Design Commission

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Tom Iurino
Senior Staff

September 15, 2011

Convened 8:00 am
Adjourned 11:00 am

Project Reviewed

University of Washington Station Pedestrian Bridge/Montlake Triangle

Panel Members Present

Julie Parrett, Chair
David Cutler
Catherine Benotto
Laurel Kunkler
Norie Sato
Tom Nelson
Malika Kirkling
Debbie Wick-Harris

Recused Panel Members

Osama Quotah

Excused Panel Members

Julie Bassuk
Dan Corson
Kurt Kiefer
Kevin McDonald
Don Vehige

Staff Present

Valerie Kinast
Tom Iurino

September 15, 2011	Project:	University of Washington Station Pedestrian Bridge/Montlake Triangle
	Phase:	90% Design/60% Design
	Last Reviewed:	Dec 15, 2010; Jan 7, 2010
	Presenters:	Tracy Reed, Sound Transit Mark Reddington, LMN Bernie Alonzo, GGN
	Attendees:	Andy Casillas, University of Washington Brian Bishop, GGN Debora Ashland, Sound Transit Doug Powell, Sound Transit Gareth Loveridge, Swift Company Howard Fitzpatrick, LMN Jacob McCann, KPFF Kristine Kenney, University of Washington Mark Reddington, LMN Molly Chapman, Sound Transit Nancy Callery, Bassetti Architects Rebecca Fuchs, GGN Ross Wildman, Masonry Institute of Washington Ruri Yampolsky, Arts and Cultural Affairs Shoji Kaneko, GGN Todd Schwisow, LMN

Time: 8:30am – 11:00am

Recusals

Panel member Quotah did not participate in the review because he works for LMN Architects, the designer of the University of Washington station.

Disclosures

Panel member Sato used to create public art for Sound Transit's Central Link Light Rail.

Panel member Cutler is working a contract for a housing project at the University of Washington.

Panel member Parrett is a member of the Public Art Advisory Committee.

Presentation

Sound Transit presented the 90% design of the University of Washington station pedestrian bridge and the 60% design of the Montlake Triangle. The projects are designed to connect the main and medical campuses of the UW with the light rail station and to improve the Montlake Triangle and enhance it as a gateway to the campus. The project is bound by many constraints of the site and its several partners; there are five contributing agencies.

The team presented the project's numerous components, including the station pedestrian bridge and bike ramp, mixing plaza, Montlake entry court, Pacific Place landbridge and walls, and the planting plan. The project features a central, formal space on the triangle and irregular paths that connect to it. The pedestrian bridge is 30' wide; it connects to separate paths 10'-14' feet wide. The lighting on the bridge is similar to that on campus; the color of the bridge reflects the light rail station.

ACTION

The Light Rail Review Panel thanked Sound Transit and its design team for its excellent presentation of the 90% design of the University of Washington station pedestrian bridge and the 60% design of the Montlake Triangle. The panel appreciated the team's overall resolution to the complicated puzzle. By a vote of 8-0, the panel approved the design with the following comments:

- Make the seat wall as extensive as possible; it should reach the elevator plaza. The more places there are to rest the better.
- Study the design the elevator plaza. Provide the appropriate space for those waiting for the bus and elevator; avoid encouraging too much gathering. Reduce the impact of the dead spaces behind the bridge columns and consider altering the landscape design under the bridge and stairs; how the landscape works is important to the success of this space. Design and detail the bridge to enhance the view of it from the plaza underneath; the bridge splits overhead and creates a unique design opportunity.
- Develop the infrastructure for the Drumheller Fountain to enable irrigation. Disappointed that the design doesn't include it. Encourage the University of Washington to fund now this necessary infrastructure to meet its sustainability goals.
- Use successional planting to improve the successful establishment of the landscape. Disappointed that successional planting is not proposed.
- Reconsider the design of the bridge railings. They look heavier than they need to be.
- Improve the transition from the formal, collegiate gothic benches to the modern benches on the triangle. Add more detailing to better relate the design of the benches.
- Consider flaring the ends of bridges to ease the turning movements of bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Ensure that the lighting plan complies with dark sky principles.
- Consider ADA requirements when creating the signage strategy. Follow goals of universal design for signage. Consider design solutions for navigation such as paving.
- Develop an operations and maintenance agreement, particularly for permeable pavement and the low impact development and other sustainable structures.
- Give special attention to the design of the gabion seat walls to ensure that any elements vital to their design and function will not be lost during value engineering. Ensure the plants will work with the gabion walls.

Panel Members' Questions and Comments

Could you describe the bridge where it splits? Do the railings come to a knife edge?

It's not a knife edge. It is 2 ½ feet wide.

Will the seat wall along the perimeter extend to the elevator plaza? I like the seat wall.

That's our ideal. Not sure if budget will allow. We may form the wall differently to lower costs.

How do you access the station when walking or biking down Montlake from University Village on the University side of the street?

You could use the hec ed bridge to the north. Or go down the existing stairs and cross via the triangle.

You did not present an signage. There are different users: commuters vs medical center and other one time visitors. Are they relying on visual cues?

There are five agencies participating in the project. We haven't discussed signage yet. Sound Transit has its standard signs on east side. We plan to defer to the campus for the triangle. The signage program at UW is on hold; signage here would be part of that. We fully expect there will be signs, but part of later process.

At the point where the bridge lands on the triangle, there is a lot of mixing, with everyone is going in different directions. A lot of people will be going north. Consider flaring out this intersection.

How do pedestrians and bikes mix at the south end of the bike ramp on eastside of Montlake? It appears bikes are making turns and picking up speed.

There is 60 feet of a slowdown zone, plus rumble strip.

What is the stormwater strategy for the hardscape?

The stormwater goes into a building drain system above garage. We are on track with green stormwater management.

Do the colored lights meet dark sky requirements? Some of the light goes up. Check it out and comply.

We don't know if it complies. We'll check.

Did you study raked horizontal rather than picketed vertical for the railing on the landbridge.?

We studied it. We decided not to do horizontal railings so people couldn't climb them. We wanted to minimize the concrete structure which is how we chose this design and spacing. Tipping the rail would introduce complex geometries and add to cost.

The transitions work well, no small feat considering there are five agencies involved. But I am concerned about maintenance and operation. Do you have a plan?

Good point. The project is funded by state, the University of Washington and Sound Transit. Sound Transit owns the bridge over Montlake and the University of Washington owns the bridge over Pacific. The University of Washington and Sound Transit will negotiate a long term maintenance agreement. The design has developed with a general understanding of University of Washington and Sound Transit standards.

Happy to see the elevator tower looks better.

It is a simple space for access. It is not carved in, so it feels public and visible. The stair now touches the land in light way.

The elevator plaza shouldn't be a gathering space of its own. It is not a place to sit. Further develop how landscaped areas feel and work.

Do you have strategy for value engineering the seat wall?

We're not quite there. We're looking to save money in infrastructure behind the scenes to save money for things people see and touch such as the seat wall.

I'm disappointed you can't do successional plantings. You will always be trying to play catch up.

In the view to Rainier from the triangle, it looks like all deciduous trees and plantings were used. Why are there fewer conifers there?

We are also planting doug firs. We do not want a Christmas tree farm. We can't do successional planting, so at the very least we want something resilient and strong from day one. We are installing multiaged doug firs.

How will you keep alive the planting in gabian?

The baskets where we plant will be different. We need an irrigation system to establish but it could also be used for maintenance.

Are there drainage issues through the gabian wall? Will water rush out? Will it collect trash? How comfortable is it to sit with legs exposed to texture?

We don't think the gabian wall will be a problem. The baskets have larger boulders in the bottom and smaller ones in the top. There will be some drainage area at base of gabian, but there is permeable pavement at the foot of the wall.

The design of the pedestrian bridge shows a separate handrail and bike rail. Could the handrail be part of guard rail, much like ramp over campus?

The language of the pedestrian bridge, including the railings, follows the language of the main station.

How much distance is there between the columns and wall in the elevator plaza? Can you move the columns away from the planting wall? The spacing feels tight. Can you incorporate the columns into the plantings? I hesitate to plant more under the bridge though.

The distance is three feet. It is not primary circulation. We can study it.

The view from the elevator plaza up through the fork in the pedestrian bridge could be special. Make it a feature. Make more magic in that spot and the space behind the columns.

The transition of benches from campus gothic to modern wooden benches feels too sudden. Develop a little more relation between them. Don't need to continue campus gothic.

The detailing needs to be refined on the benches. It was deliberate to use both styles. The modern wooden benches will be made of reclaimed wood.

What are the plans for sustainability? Will there be irrigation for grass? What is the potential for reclaimed water?

Yes, we are planning for sustainability and use of reclaimed water. We are looking into using the Drumheller Fountain in the future. For now, though, we are using permeable sidewalks, minimizing the export of soil, and salvaging topsoil.

Develop a wayfinding plan. Integrate wayfinding into railings, in paving patterns, etc. Follow universal design principles.

You can't have too many places to stop and rest. The facility will serve an aging population going to the medical campus.