

# Seattle Design Commission

**APPROVED**

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**21 July 2005**

Gregory J. Nickels,  
*Mayor*

David Spiker  
*Chair*

Charles Anderson

Pam Beyette

Karen Kiest

Hannah McIntosh

Anindita Mitra

Sheri Olson

Nic Rossouw

Dennis Ryan

Darrell Vange

Guillermo Romano,  
*Executive Director*

Layne Cubell,  
*Commission Coordinator*

### Projects Reviewed

Four Seasons Hotel  
Seattle Bicycle Trail Plan  
Seattle Center Garage

Convened: 9:30 am

Adjourned: 3:00 pm

### Commissioners Present

David Spiker, Chair  
Charles Anderson  
Pam Beyette  
Karen Kiest  
Hannah McIntosh  
Anindita Mitra  
Nic Rossouw  
Dennis Ryan  
Darrell Vange

### Staff Present

Guillermo Romano  
Layne Cubell  
Joan James  
Tom Iurino  
Emily Podolak



Department of Planning and  
Development

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**21 July 2005 Project: Four Seasons Hotel**

Phase: Street Use Permit Exceptions – Follow Up

Previous Reviews: 7 July 2005 (Street Use Permit Exceptions)

Presenters: Tony Puma, Seattle Hotel Group  
Robert Bruckner, NBBJ  
Jim Tully, NBBJ  
Tom Berger, Berger Partnership

Attendees: Bill Bain, NBBJ  
Michael Dorcy, Department of Planning and Development  
George Dragseth, Seattle Department of Transportation  
Tom Gehrig, Harbor Properties  
Roger Nyhus, Seattle Hotel Group  
Nick McDaniel, NBBJ  
Keith Miller, Seattle Department of Transportation  
Cary Moon, community member  
Nick McDaniel, NBBJ  
Paula Raso, 98 Union Resident and Board Member  
Nancy Rogers, Cairncross & Hempelmann  
Kenn Rupard, community member

Commissioner Charles Anderson recused himself from presentation;  
his firm is involved in the project.

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 170)

**Action: The Commission recommends approval of the street use permit exceptions based on a greatly improved design scheme. They appreciate the proponents' response to the Commission's comments and suggestions made at the last presentation, and**

- **believes that the latest design for the Union Street upper terminus is simpler, clearer and more direct, with greater clarity regarding the public use of the void between the building and its neighbor 98 Union;**
- **asks proponents to improve pedestrian signage to clearly delineate connections to the waterfront, particularly ADA access, but to minimize the clutter in the view corridor (with vertical directional signs etc.) through creative solutions ;**
- **is of mixed sentiment regarding the clustered layout of street trees on First Avenue, and asked that proponents strengthen the street's pedestrian quality;**
- **asks that the proponents revisit their previous scheme since the Commission had appreciated the public stairs that had offered direct through-connection between upper and lower Union Street on both the north and south sides of Union;**
- **recommends that proponents work with the Seattle Department of Transportation to widen the staircase as much as structurally possible without impeding on the access and quality of the street and sidewalk below;**
- **echoes the sentiments of the community members present that the pedestrian quality of lower Union and Post Alley needs to be greatly improved. The**

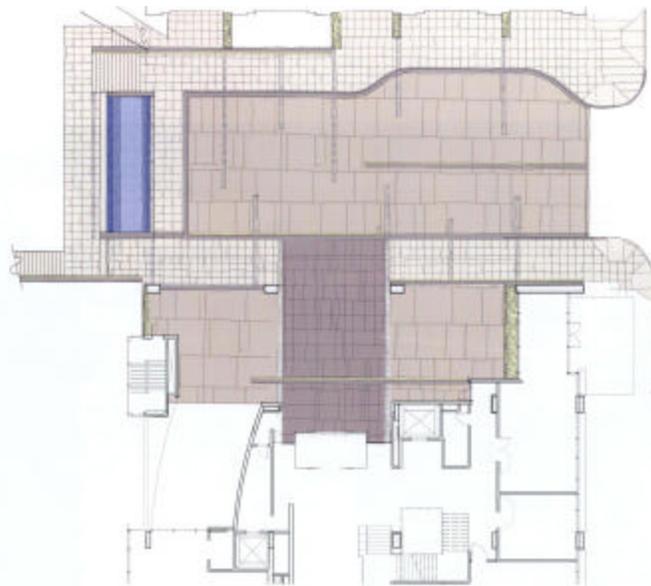
**Commission asks that the proponents explore ways to improve the quality of those spaces, specifically the area under the overlook on Upper Union, the east-west connection and view to and from the waterfront, as well as under the stairs. In this regard, the Commission urges City Light, as an adjacent property owner, to participate and contribute towards helping improve the pedestrian quality of lower Union Street.**

Based on feedback from last presentation the main theme of today's presentation focused on enhancing the Union Plaza area's open space for the public and building residents; and also addressed safety issues and connection to the waterfront.

### **Union Plaza Design**

The sidewalk surfaces will build upon standard concrete sidewalks beginning on 1<sup>st</sup> Ave a peppering of flecks of granite will be added to concrete and will intensify as the sidewalks approach the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Ave and Union Street and increase more as they approach the overlook and stairway to the waterfront. This design element sends a message to pedestrians that they are approaching the main event: the view of the waterfront. The sidewalk on the south side of Union Street will be widened to 12 feet and the sidewalk on the north side of Union Street will remain the same at 11 feet wide.

The plaza street material will be composed of concrete pavers and contain horizontal granite bands, which compliment the flecks of granite in the sidewalk. The bands extend from the beginning of the public space, at the building/sidewalk intersection, and run through the sidewalks and into the street material, creating a sense of connection north/south across the plaza. Paving material consistent with the hotel lobby area, gray granite, extends outside across the lobby entrance, through the sidewalk and to the street pavers, delineating the entry to the hotel's main lobby.



proposed Union Plaza plan

Lighting strips built flush with the street pavers create an east/west connection across the plaza; and help guide vehicular traffic through the roundabout and direct pedestrian traffic to the overlook area.

Plantings previously proposed on both sides of Union Street remain only on the north side of the street surrounding the entry area for the residents of 98 Union. This landscape element is important to the residents, believing it provides them a green edge and buffer area between public and private space.

When looking west towards Elliott Bay, a water feature sits at the end of the plaza (Union Street) and is the focus of the plaza design when walking west. Water runs over a concrete table, which measures approximately 30" tall and is the width of the street. The water cascades off the table in each direction and falls about 8 ½ feet on its west side to a lower balcony. Walking along the south side of Union Street towards the water feature and the waterfront, after passing the hotel lobby entrance, there is an overlook area which provides a space to pause and look at the tremendous views of Elliott Bay.



proposed Union Plaza perspective

Pedestrians wishing to use the hill climb assist to travel to the waterfront will then turn north and walk along the east side of the water feature and then descend down stairs to the lower balcony area where the water feature cascades behind them. The lower balcony sits out over the Post Alley right of way and provides a separation point between upper Union Street and the waterfront. The lower balcony then continues into the hill climb assist stairway down to Post Alley, Lower Union Street and the waterfront.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Avenue Streetscape Design**

In addition to the sidewalk paving as mentioned above, the proponents are currently working closely with Metro to determine how many street trees can be planted along the street, as there is a large mid-block bus stop. A row of three trees will be planted for certain; the remaining length of the street will be based on feedback received by Metro.

### **Commissioner Questions**

- Asks what is the difference in elevation between Union Plaza level and the lower balcony.
  - Six feet
- Asks for clarification on quality of paving outside hotel lobby
  - It is the same as the floor surface from lobby, which is gray granite. Design element used to delineate auto crossing space, the sidewalks ramp down so autos can cross it

- Asks what is staircase width
  - Six feet
- Asks if there is a hotel entrance on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue
  - No, 1<sup>st</sup> Ave it will have retail and other residential entries
- Asks if something will be required at top of first set of stairways, if they are 11 feet wide, to keep cars from driving down them
  - A bollard will most likely be used

### **City Agency Comments**

#### Seattle Department of Transportation

- Conceptually the design presents itself well, and believes that the concrete structure of fountain is sufficient to stop traffic from accidentally traveling over drop, but suggests possible signage to note the dead end. Their analysis now will be down to the level of analyzing choice of material, paving, etc

#### Department of Planning and Development

- Suggests that the paving extending from lobby over sidewalk should remain as concrete to accentuate pedestrian east/west connection

### **Public Comments**

#### Paula Raso, 98 Union Resident

- Brought note declaring positive remarks from 98 union residents, who are excited about how it will improve auto and pedestrian and resident safety relative to cars exiting parking garage

#### Cary Moon, Westlake Ave. Resident

- Believes that the proponents have done a great job resolving issues of public space on Union Plaza area but is concerned about the lower area, the environment of Post Alley. She believes that the proponents need to study ways to improve the pedestrian experience in this area.
- Also thinks that the six-foot wide stairway is not wide enough. The hostel below generates a lot of energy. She believes that it is also important to update the existing stairway on the north side of the building. She also encourages proponents to incorporate the existing Seattle Light Building and its rooftop public art.

#### Kenn Rupard, Westlake Ave. Resident

- Does not believe that the design adequately addresses public connection to the waterfront, suggests full steps down, and is concerned about the environment on Post Alley, specifically under the overhang and near the parking garage façade. Asks proponents what they intend to do with Post Alley.
  - Have not yet concluded, possibly projected images, lights
- Asks about possibility for steps full width of street down like Harborview Steps

- This option was considered but there are right of way issues and the alley and Union Street below still function to access businesses. Believes that although the design is not the full width of the street, it offers a unique experience from Union St. down to the waterfront, great views and areas to stop and rest.

### **Commissioner Comments**

- Expresses that the issue has been raised within the city about a full width stairway and the constraints limit proponents' ability to address this design. Proponents do not have to build a hill climb at all, so this stairway provides more than required
- Believes that it is much improved, simpler and appreciates more generous sidewalks
- Expresses concern about the effects of the stairway of the balcony on the quality of the environment below in Post Alley
- Asks that proponents address two elevations that were not adequately addressed during presentation, the façade of the parking garage under the lower balcony and the restoration of the façade facing existing stairway
- Believes that the stairs should descend from both sides of upper plaza to lower balcony like in last presentation scheme; believes it will better support activity and finds it frustrating that this new design is an overlook but does not allow access
  - Removed staircase based on feedback received last time from Commission that the plaza was focused too much on the hotel. With the stairs only on the other side of street, they attract pedestrian traffic to both sides of street
- Asks what was the reasoning for the width and depth of the balcony landing and the distance of drop between two levels, and expresses concern about the lower balcony's impact on Post Alley suggesting proponents keep all of overlook at existing level
  - It is wide enough to create enough substance to feel like a main event, and create separation from the plaza above
- Urges proponents to address façade underneath overhang as it will be the focal point for people moving east from waterfront
- Believes that six feet is too narrow for stairway, and asks that proponent widen to eight feet if possible, as previously proposed
- Believes that sidewalk material should carry all the way through south side rather than be interrupted by hotel lobby pavers
- Asks for elaboration on design treatment for Post Alley
  - Again, nothing specific has been determined yet, but is responding to the Design Reviews request to explore ways to activate and improve the aesthetic quality of the space
- Encourages partnering with the Office of Cultural Affairs to improve the lower streetscape through art
- Asks proponents to explore widening the lower part of stairway
- Suggests planting strip under stairway, recognizing that it is not a mandate, but believing it will discourage other negative activities

- Suggests that proponents explore ways to allow natural light through the overhang to decrease impact on lower post alley environment
  - It is 26 feet high; don't know if it will even cast a shadow, but will look into it
- Asks proponents to consider how to get more eyes on the street for safety reasons, especially on the lower balcony
- Asks the purpose of the raised planter boxes outside of 98 Union
  - Based on residents' requests; they create a threshold area which could possibly be used for cafes and outdoor seating
- Suggests proponents not use much signage, if any, in the Union Plaza area to reduce clutter in view of waterfront
- Believes that 98 Union ADA access needs to be better signed
- Expresses that on 1<sup>st</sup> Ave, doesn't like the two clumps of three trees, but would rather have standard street tree width or no street trees, suggests that proponents try to compliment the existing street trees on the other side as much as possible
- Expresses caution that the design does not make the area Bellevue-ized, and believes that the up lights on trees are unnecessary
- Believes that there should be center handrails down the 11' stairway, and would like to see all of stairway widened
- Likes the paving material of lobby extending through the sidewalk
- Suggests encouraging and working with Seattle Light to work on pedestrian environment on lower Union Street
- Believes that six feet is too far down for lower balcony and believes that three or four feet would better activate the upper and lower spaces because you could see people below using them
- Likes the six foot drop, it allows the views from the top level to not be impeded by people on the lower level and also believes it helps to break up the distance of the hill climb
- Encourage proponents to explore additional art opportunities of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Post Alley

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**21 July 2005 Project: Seattle Bicycle Trail Plan**

Phase: Briefing

Previous Reviews: 17 March 2005 (Concept Design), 5 August 1999 (Briefing)

Presenters: Peter Lagerway, Seattle Department of Transportation  
Paul Wang, Seattle Department of Transportation

Attendees: Eugene Wasserman, North Seattle Industrial Association

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 169 DC00081)

**Action: The Commission supports the City of Seattle's existing Urban Trail Plan and strongly encourages the City to fund its share of the Comprehensive Bike Plan to realize the completion of the planned urban trails in a timely fashion;**

- **believes that the creation of a gracious and effective bicycling and pedestrian system in the city is crucial to making the city both livable and sustainable;**
- **congratulates SDOT staff on their rapid progress and imminent completion of the Chief Sealth Trail, as well as portions of other trail systems that are important links in the larger network ;**
- **offer its assistance by 1) participating in the value engineering process for the "Mountain to Sound Greenway" trail connection from I-5 to the waterfront, and 2) looking at the design issues that would make possible the peaceful coexistence of bikes and heavy industry, specifically on the Burke Gilman Trail in Ballard and along the Duwamish Trail in South Seattle ;**
- **looks forward to future presentations on proposed bicycle signage plan and the bicycle facilities list created in conjunction with Cascade Bicycle Club, two topics that were intended to be covered in this presentation, but due to time constraints were postponed.**

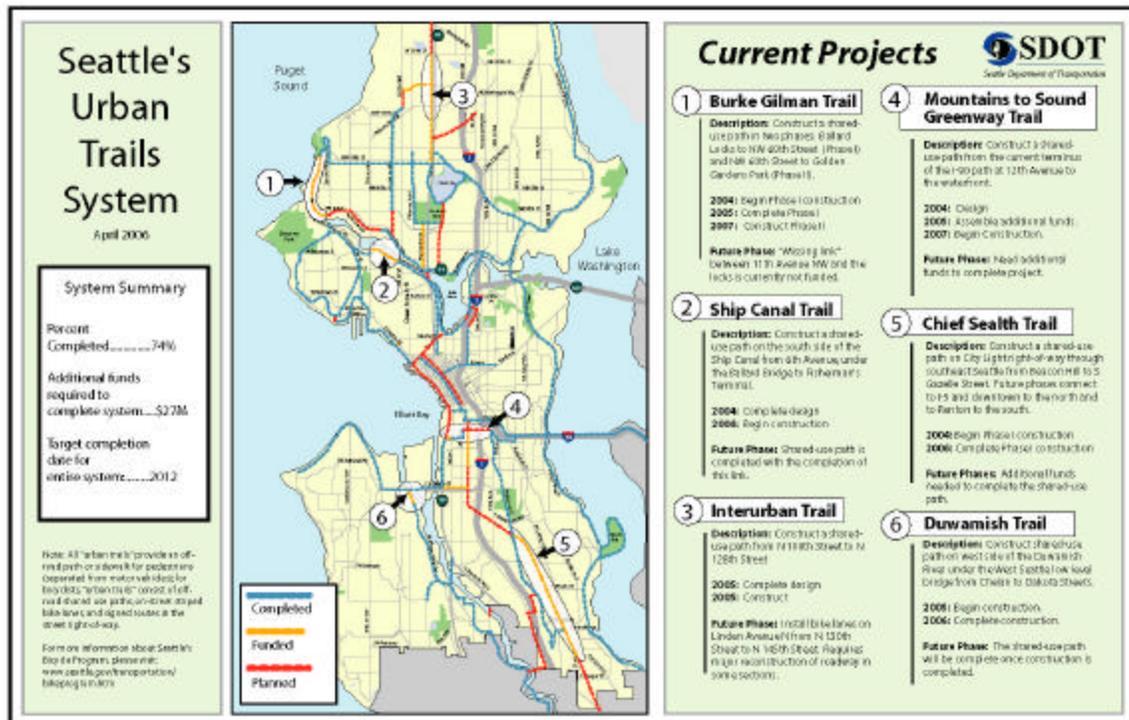
To this date the City of Seattle has not had a separate bicycle plan for the city, the strategy up to this point has been to integrate bicycle planning into other documents such as the Comprehensive Plan, the Transportation Strategic Plan and various open space plans. The City of Seattle is at a point that it believes it is a good idea to take the next step and create a separate comprehensive bike plan. It is in the budget for next year and if funded will go forward, nevertheless, Seattle Department of Transportation is currently going forward with pieces of it, and that is the focus of today's presentation

There are currently three different efforts going on: developing an urban trails network, designing an urban trails signing program and creating a wish list with the Cascade Bike Club determining needs. All three efforts will be integrated into the comprehensive bike plan. An urban trails plan has been adopted and is included in the City's Comprehensive Plan and the Transportation Strategic Plan. Work for the comprehensive bike plan will take what has already been done and regroup it together in one place as opposed to a variety of documents as it is currently.

## Urban Trail System

Seattle is a built environment and only has so many opportunities for trails. The opportunities include: disused railroad corridors, parallel to active railroad right of ways, and utility corridors.

All possible corridors in the city have been secured. Efforts to acquire this land for public ownership have been the focus over the last fifteen years. Establishing trails contains two parts: acquiring the property and developing the property. The plan is currently in period of transition; has completed acquisition of land and is moving towards completing the construction of the trail system. Roughly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the trail system is complete, approximately 27 million dollars needed for completion. A target completion date is set for 2012.



## Overview/Status of Trails

Summary of the urban trail system, thinking of Seattle as an hourglass, with six points of entry, From the:

- west: the ferry system, many people traveling with bikes on ferries
- northeast: Burke Gilman Trail
- northwest: Interurban Trail
- east: Mountain to Sound Trail
- southeast: Chief Sealth Trail
- south/Southwest: Duwammish Trail

The intent is to complete them and bring them all together as they come into the downtown area.

### Burke Gilman Trail

Just completed Locks to 60<sup>th</sup>. There will be a ribbon cutting ceremony on Monday June 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 west of the locks to celebrate. The section from 60<sup>th</sup> to Golden Gardens funding was included in the 2000 Parks Levy; it is under design right now and should be completed next year. Don't know if there is enough money to complete it because there is a complicated bridge, ramp and retaining walls area that is fairly expensive because the embankment has to hold up freight trains.

### Ship Canal Trail

Located on the south side of the ship canal starting just beyond 3<sup>d</sup> Ave. It is a trail extension across Ballard Bridge over to Fisherman's Terminal. If only looking at numbers of bicycles, this is the most important link. It will connect Seattle Pacific University, all the way downtown and connect Magnolia and Queen Anne. Construction will be three phased starting this summer building water line, then making crack adjustments, and one year from now the construction of the trail will begin. This trail is partially funded by the 2000 Parks Levy.

### Interurban Trail

Construction for section located between 109<sup>th</sup> Ave and 128<sup>th</sup> Ave along a disused railroad corridor, behind the cemetery, west of Aurora. Has gone out to bid this week. Both north and south of the project the trail will be on the street, between 128<sup>th</sup> and 145<sup>th</sup> it will be along Linden Street. The right of way is there but the pavement is in poor condition. The route will be signed. It will meet up with the City of Shoreline's section which returns to the disused railroad corridor. South of 145<sup>th</sup>, the trail splits to line up where the proposed bike lanes on Linden Street, the transition is very well coordinated for the future use of the street. Funding for this section was not included in the 2000 Parks Levy. The Interurban Trail can eventually travel all of the way to Everett; under the power lines which can be seen at Alder Wood Mall.

### Mountains to Sound Trail

Aims to connect the downtown waterfront to Issaquah, to the Old Milwaukee Rail Line and John Wayne Trail that goes across the mountains to Idaho. Currently ends at ? Bridge. Also needs to continue through the I-5, I-90 intersection to the waterfront. There is 4 million available for the project, and it is a 7-8 million project. This fall the design will go through a value engineering process; it is a very expensive project and want to make sure it is exactly right. It is mostly on WDOT property and they have taken the lead, have done the initial design which is currently at 30%, another \$600,000-700,000 is needed to finish design but currently on hold until completion of the value engineering study. Encourages one commissioner to be involved with this process, will spend three days of intensely going over design and Commission input would be a huge help.

### Chief Sealth Trail

Located along City light right of way. Beacon to Henderson is currently under construction, the paving will begin next week depending on weather. The stretch is partly funded by 2000 Parks Levy. It is located in a very hilly area with 17-18% grades, which made cost estimate 15 million to import fill to eliminate the hills and steep grade. Sound Transit Link Light Rail project came in and had a tremendous amount of fill left over. A partnership with Sound Transit brought in fill and sculpted it; Seattle Department of Transportation paid for the design. This collaboration decreased the trail construction price to 3 million dollars and allowed completion in 18 months.

Although it will be paved next week, it will not open until next spring because it is tied into the opening of Link Light Rail system.

### Duwamish Trail

The trail is currently not well signed but will be in a year or two, it connects through South Park to the Green River System, which King county has done a fabulous job completing. There is one piece missing at West Marginal Way where it dead ends and picks up on the other side of the street. This section of trail used to exist, but the Port of Seattle's redesign took out a piece of the trail; they are helping to rebuild this piece. Have walked the trail and completed personal interviews with tenants along trail system to address safety issues and the interface between industry and pedestrians. It is not in the 2000 Parks Levy, but has received some federal grants; this stretch is a design challenge more than anything else.

### **Commissioner Questions**

- Asks what is covered by the proposed 27 million needed for completion
  - On Burke Gilman, the missing link to Ballard, which is currently half funded; the Chief Sealth Trail cross over Beacon and into downtown and the bridge connection east west at Military Road
- Inquires about the Broad Street connection, what is the proposed bike/pedestrian route
  - It is a moving target and will be impacted by South Lake Union, Viaduct, Mercer, and Aurora; all proposals have two or three options with domino effects that will affect the trail system; but all options will include some type of bike connection between South Lake Union and the waterfront. Another piece to connect to the waterfront which is planned, will be the overpass on Thomas Street.
- Inquires about the 520 situation
  - The good news is that all options include a multi-use trail on the north side of the bridge connecting Kirkland to downtown and the University District
- Asks about the 1883 Bike Club Trail Network through the arboretum and Interlaken, and why this network is not being reestablished
  - Interlaken Blvd is the only remaining trail from that period that is sort of intact, and a white and brown historic sign is used to mark this stretch, similar approach will be used in future signage.
  - The parks department has a new comprehensive plan for the arboretum; the long term plan for a trail along Lake Washington Blvd through the arboretum. Another option is just to the west along streets there is a signed bikeway.

### **Public Comments**

Eugene Wasserman, North Seattle Industrial Association

- Comments on two pieces of trail and asks for design commission's help.
  1. Along the Duwamish Trail, at a recent meeting of manufacturing and industrial council, there were issues raised about the location of the trail and safety;

important that the proponents and the Commission also address pedestrian/truck crossing/industrial issues.

2. Along the Burke Gilman missing link section, he feels that Seattle Department of Transportation has a design blind spot when it comes to active industrial areas. In the zeal to put bicycle trails on rails there are some safety risks and design concerns that we feel SDOT has ignored, believes that it would be remiss for the design commission not to look at this point of view, believes there is a severe threat to the safety of the public and based on liability issues this trail would wipe out a whole downtown industrial sector and needs to be addressed as an economic issue and a design issue. The industrial council has engineers and designers that would like to be part of the conversation and present in front of the Design Commission.

### Commissioner Comments

- The Commission doesn't have members of the public or groups make formal presentations but can take verbal and written comments or can have engineers come and make comments at SDOT presentation. Most of Commissioners are not clear on the suggested conflicts that have been raised and if council can get us something in print form we can go over it.
  - The missing link is currently not funded but as soon as it is proponent agrees that all should get together and vet issues to develop safest, best designed trail possible.
- Asks how proponents are coordinating with rapid transit to meet bikers needs at stations and on transit
  - Metro is currently looking at a rack that holds 3-4 bikes; sound transit can take bikes aboard, there is a set amount per car; working with Light Rail folks on station area planning for bike parking which is a major concern and looking at bike connectors to the stations. Also working with Monorail but have had less success getting anything out of it.
- Questions title of urban trails, is it bike, pedestrian or both trail system
  - They are multipurpose trails, not just bike trails. In all cases the urban trail system accommodates both bikes and pedestrians but there is a difference between walking facilities that allow bikes, such as the Greenlake Trail, biking facilities that allow walkers such as the Burke Gilman Trail; they have different tones, feeling and design standards. In terms as what qualifies as an urban trail, the term is used loosely, but wherever possible allows separated facilities from automobile traffic, but if not possible places bikes on signed streets and pedestrians on the sidewalk.
- Expresses interest in the Commission looking at design standards and categorization and organization of trails
  - Proponents use the design standards from the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials, which was last revised in 1999, and is available for review. Tend to follow it closely, knowing that the result is good design; the key is safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles
- Applauds efforts to improve the area between Queen Anne and Magnolia

- Asks about idea of putting bike path on the other side of parked cars
  - Doesn't believe it is the best solution, but does work in some places like Netherlands and Denmark where the nature of biking is completely different: people ride one speed usually traveling only 6-8 mph, the trail is more urbanized, and there are shorter blocks and signals at each block. Has heard that even there it doesn't work to well, other cities are moving away from this concept because of level of incidents.
- Asks about 520 crossing and dealing with headlights, how to mitigate issue, possible elevation change
  - Have tried to change elevation but it is not enough to change the effect, and don't want to put up an opaque wall because of security reasons.
- Asks if proponents complete studies of types and numbers of accidents
  - We are not a research organization so we don't compile info for a public report but we do track information and trends. We keep up to speed on studies done in the United States and also volunteer as a city in studies
- Asks what changes have been made based on information received
  - Nothing has been changed but we have received a lot of good studies to confirm that we are doing things correctly
- Suggests proponents look at how China uses bikes
- Comments that they would like to see more education and licensing for bicyclists and better understanding of mutual respect
  - In terms of education, Cascade Bike Club has full time bike educator that travels around to schools. In terms of licensing, must license the bike or the person, and must be done at the state level. Not sure if the logistical and administrative commitment, is outweighed by the value added of licensing

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**21 July 2005 Project: Seattle Center Garage**  
Phase: Concept Design Update  
Previous Reviews: 03 March 2005 (Concept Design)

Presenters: Jill Crary, Seattle Center  
Jeanne Iannucci, NBBJ  
Dan Simpson, NBBJ  
Shannon Nichol, GGN  
Craig Norsen, Seneca Group  
Molly Hurley, Department of Planning and Development  
Dawn Bern, Department of Planning and Development  
Joe Taskey, Seattle Department of Transportation  
Jim McDonald, Seattle Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs

Attendees: Christian Carlson, NBBJ  
John Coney, Magnolia/Queen Anne District Council Chair  
Bart Heath, Seneca Group  
Gareth Loveridge, GGN  
Jack McCullough, McCullough Hill  
Trevor Schaaf, NBBJ  
Allison M Scheetz, University of Washington Student  
Bob Sheh, NBBJ

Time: 2 hours (SDC Ref. # 220)

**Action: The Commission recommends approval of the concept design update, and appreciates the presentation team's clear address of the issues and concerns expressed in the initial Commission review earlier this year, and the design's evolution since then. The Commission**

- **appreciates the proponents' efforts to make the garage a safe and light environment, taking a typically unattractive building type and successfully rendering it as an attractive and sophisticated structure;**
- **asks that the proponents further study the whole east façade, which has not yet been shown, and the primary vehicular entry approach along Harrison from the East. They encourage the design team to better incorporate the parking office massing and roof into the overall building design;**
- **is skeptical of the green roof components, specifically the louvered sections over the entry areas and asks proponents to further explore the function and feasibility of this design element;**
- **asks proponents to better integrate the large readerboard sign planned for Fifth and Harrison into the entry plaza design and the overall character of the project;**
- **believes that the effectiveness of blade signage along Harrison and Republican deserves another look**
- **asks that the proponents explore the functionality and capacity of the staircases and elevators during peak hours and of the elevator lobby areas as shelters during bad weather at peak hours;**

- **asks that the proponents consider using lighting or special paving systems to alert drivers to likely pedestrian flows to strengthen the intersection at Harrison and Fifth Avenue , an important pedestrian crossing;**
- **asks that the proponents consider carefully the impact of the open planting strip along Fifth Avenue in terms of both plant health and pedestrian movement;**
- **encourages proponents to include the Queen Anne Community Arts Council in the selection and evaluation of the art program and suggests giving the artist creative latitude to influence the shape and character of the art.**

This is second presentation in front of the Design Commission; at the last meeting the Commission stated its preference for a below grade scheme and proponents have continued to develop that scheme.

A change was made from last presentation from using design/build as a means of delivering the garage to a conventional approach; the design team today will take it to full 100% design. Since last presentation the skate park relocation is in process. Working with the skate park advisory group the parks department got approval to relocate to a site on Elliott. Proceeded with community involvement through their design selection and made a recommendation to superintendent, the first public meeting will be held on August 11<sup>th</sup>.

The current beginning construction date for the garage is scheduled for September 2006, with schematic design completed in November 2005 and design development completed in January 2006. Proponents will come back to present in front of Commission after each stage in design.

In preparation for today's meeting, the proponents compiled a handout that covers the program guidelines, design goals and art process, the potential changes to street grid, the delivery method for garage, and the master use permit process.

The proponents thank the Commission for their partnership and feedback in the past and want to readdress the four questions they posed during last meeting and ask at the end of presentation for feedback on how the design has evolved to address the issues.

The four questions include:

1. Proponents are interested in strengthening our Harrison Street presence as an entry to Seattle Center. How might the west and east sides of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue best relate?
2. The crossing of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a key pedestrian entry experience and is currently a major car vs. pedestrian challenge. How might this conflict be resolved?
3. The new Monorail station will be located approximately 2 blocks from the garage site. How should these transportation facilities, as they serve Seattle Center, relate to one another? What implications are there for design of the garage?
4. The Republican St. entry to the garage will be a multi-purpose entry serving the public and Seattle Center clients and serving the Gates Foundation. How should these multi-purposes be represented in the design of the Republican St. entrance?

## Garage Design

The key configuration has changed since last presentation, but it is still the below grade option, it will contain four levels of parking, with the upper most level at grade. The entire structure will be covered with a green roof and include an area for a light well to allow light to penetrate down into the parking levels below. The benefits of the green roof include reducing urban impact, decreasing the heat island effect and treating storm water.

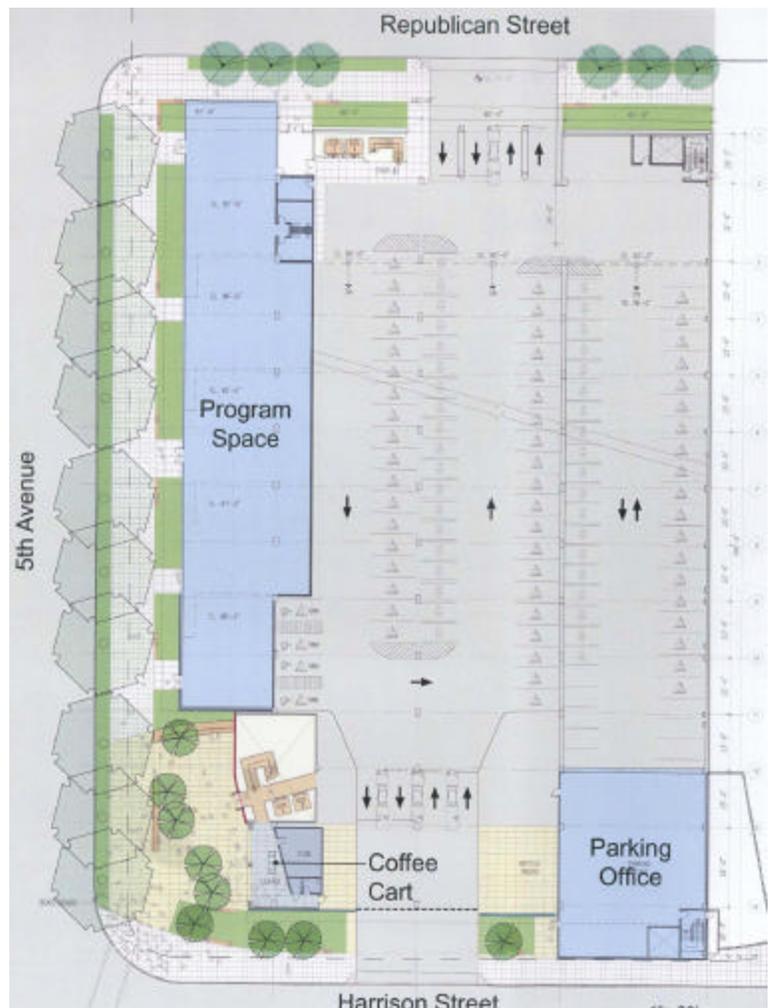
In terms of the garage floor plan, the main entrances are located at Harrison and Republican, on either side of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Plaza. The landscaping in the plaza area connects point of vertical circulation to the main street corner crossing, and the plaza contains a smaller space adjacent to it for coffee cart/vending area. The roof has a series of slits at the entry points, which allows a transition period between natural light and artificial light of parking garage. An expanded area around the elevators and stairs is a light well that allows natural light into parking garage and directs people from their car to the garage exit.

## Landscape Design

There are three contextual influences from the neighborhood scale that drive the landscape design: two important street/axial experiences that intersect at the garage and one view issue.

One of the street experiences is 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, it is a promenade with great proportions and feels very civic and public; it has a good potential to be the neutral walkable threshold between the Seattle Center and Gates Foundation campuses. The tradition and edge condition suggested by the London Plane street trees currently creates an entry way and threshold into Seattle Center; this condition is important to respect and continue in design.

The proposed streetscape along 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. is to maintain its tradition of threshold and boulevard; enhancing what is already there. Plans include opening up the tree pits that are already existing and creating a continuous tree planting trench to improve growing conditions. The 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue sidewalk is 18 feet wide and can support bikes.

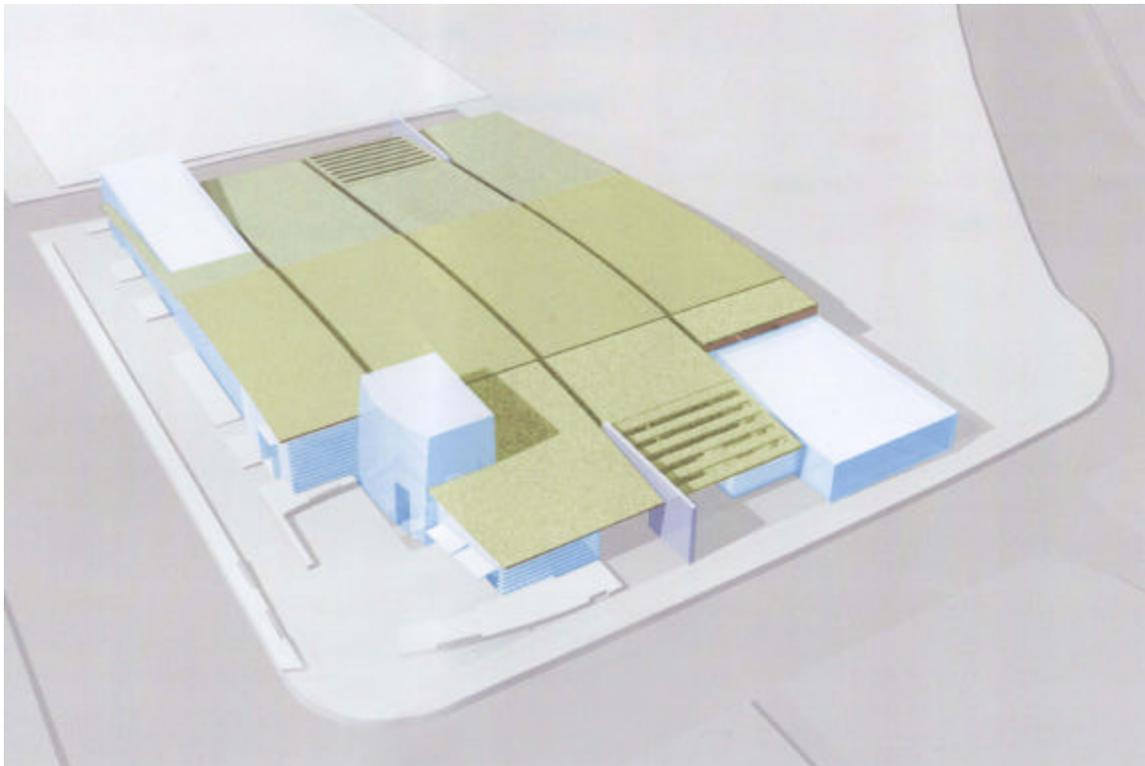


proposed street landscape plan

The other street experience along Harrison Street is very different. It is not a grand civic street, but it is one of, if not the main entry, to Seattle Center. There are plans to strengthen this main thoroughfare through Seattle Center and connection to Key Arena. The one view issue is from Queen Anne and from 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Taylor looking down on the site; it is a billboard of sorts that will be a green roof.

The proposed streetscape along Harrison targets drawing people into Seattle Center and also relating to the diagonal visual relationship coming out of the garage, and has a formal playful treatment in sidewalk. This allows Harrison to be special but yet informal and incorporate softer, curvilinear geometry rather than 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue's design as a neutral piece through the city. Bringing two streets together and creating a space rather than just an intersection in plaza area.

The plaza will incorporate seating and combine a variety of seating types, materials, and orientations depending on the size of planned gathering spaces. Coming out of the elevator lobby, the plaza design allows physical and visual desire lines of where one wants to move.



concept aerial view from the southwest

The main goals for the green roof include: that from a distance it reads as a textured green plane surface, and it will be something that will last over the long haul, proponents are looking at what are the basic proven methods for green roof design and employing them. The green element from afar is broken up by relatively elementary forms which are the program spaces. The focus of energy and drama is towards the taller piece which is the major circulation hub, and is responding to forces of relationship to the corner, and the axis.

Public art program was brought early into the project which is terrific. As the program evolved, we were open to determine where the artist could be involved in the site. Wanted something that

was a 24/7 piece recognizable in day and night, determined best use in the sweet spot in the southwest corner.

Hope to get MUP in September with conditions and proceed through design with Design Commission input, and discuss more about green roofs,

### **Commissioner Questions**

- Asks about programmed space depicted in blue on map
  - There have been discussions but no final commitment of who will do what in the space, expected that we are looking for lots of activity and interaction between the street and the space as possible. We will bring ideas back to next meeting. Guidance from downtown code as to possibilities for retail and office space
- Asks for clarification of parking office
  - It will hold offices for parking staff, handle administration for parking, and cash transfer services
- Asks if oversized vehicle parking will be parked on ground level
  - Yes
- Comments that last presentation had a split entrance to delineate Seattle Center from Gate Foundations, is that still true
  - No, have had good discussions and decided that there is no need to segregate areas/uses
- Asks for clarification of the use for the triangular piece of land
  - They anticipate that the Gates Foundation campus will grow in phases over time, prospect that 6<sup>th</sup> and Republican may come back through site. Gray area will be turned into office campus. The illustration shows the potential alignment for 6<sup>th</sup>, this piece of broad street will become a part of this parcel, no definition to site geometry so leaving flexible space
  - Possible changes to street grid, at 6<sup>th</sup> Ave., Harrison would go straight through
- Comments that garbage and services need to be addressed
- Asks about design of reader boards
  - The siting and visibility of the element has been studied and relative to driving in car. Do not have final design at this time; sign element will be designed in terms of vertical support a series of planer pieces. The design will be integrated and is being designed by the architects of the building
- Asks if the exit stairs through the light well go up to roof, or if open volume from the ground level up
  - open volume from ground level up
- Asks if the character of this design is being incorporated with the character of the design of the Gates Foundation campus, intending for sameness or contrast
  - The studies completed for the Gates Foundation campus are very preliminary, but the intent is to have a strong sense of Seattle Center identity to the south and west

of the garage that reads as more energetic and more public. 5<sup>th</sup> avenue can be a great source of continuity between the two campuses; the landscape and sidewalk will be connecting elements

### **City Agency Comments**

#### Department of Planning and Development

- The master use permit (MUP) process application was done in late May, they will be getting revised drawing and be able to review; they will be doing a new public notice, as the design has changed since the first MUP came in. They need to approve structure and will be reviewing drawings.

#### Seattle Department of Transportation

- They have been early discussions focusing on pedestrian movement and event-based traffic. They have looked at volume and movement impacts on other surrounding intersections, and feel success will mainly be a result of controlling exit patterns/traffic. They look forward to seeing the pedestrian experience improve especially in east/west direction across 5<sup>th</sup> and Harrison and along 5<sup>th</sup> Ave.

### **Public Comments**

#### John Coney, Magnolia/Queen Anne District Council Chair

- Thanks proponents for working scheme in a direction of Uptown Urban Center friendliness and pedestrian friendliness; it is certainly a major improvement. On behalf of council want to thank you for working on 5<sup>th</sup> Ave frontage. However, is concerned about use for the Pottery Center.
- Believes that in the process of drawing up the art guidelines and goals that there was a lack of communication/cooperation with the local arts council in Uptown; they have not been consulted on the project and believe they should be involved in the community art process.
- Also believes that Seattle seems to be building a lot of vertical hanging sculptures in big glass boxes, and would encourage proponents and the Commission to consider other opportunities.
- Encourages Proponents to place a community kiosk for program announcements, community activities on the corner.

### **Commissioner Comments**

- Requests that the Uptown Arts Alliance and Community Center put together a list of potential tenants for retail space and community uses to forward to Seattle Center for their input, and to help them with decision-making
- Commends efforts to make parking garage beautiful
- Believes that the sweet spot landscape is fine
- Believes that the planter strip along 5<sup>th</sup> avenue question blocking access done for tree health, provides a better growing space; it also provides a buffer from moving traffic, and

there are no parallel parking on that side of street, and dissuade people from mid block crossing

- Encourages proponents to explore geometry at entry plaza and possibly simplify
- Likes the light well as an icon for building, how will it develop and how visible will it be from street if obscured by stuff in front of it, careful
- Entrances into garage, slivers of planting on roof, use finishing material from light well in the louvers instead, because little strips of planting will have trouble surviving
  - Agrees, question the viability of green roof strips
- Suggests that proponents look at Sam Mockbee, Rural Studio, and Community Center for examples of glass art
- Believes that 5<sup>th</sup> and Harrison entry is much improved
- Encourages proponents to strengthen visual cues to garage from south east corner for traffic traveling from the east
- Suggests that design team further explore parking office design, it is still just box, efforts needed to make it more significant
- Suggests that east façade needs attention
- Asks if there is a way to access or use the green roof
  - Prefers not to do that, it is not intended to be an open space
- Asks about functioning of garage in regards to surge traffic for events, is it adequate?
- Also concerned that pedestrian access is limited to just walkway 10' wide from parking to plaza, will it handle the surge
  - It does meet the vehicle egress demand, more important that entry because it happens all at once
- Asks if there is bike parking
  - Yes along Harrison and inside garage
- Asks if blade at entrance to parking garage, is elevated or on the ground, because if it is on ground, what is it separating,
  - They meet the ground, separating entrances and exits
- Asks that proponents reconsider the location of coffee cart so as to not block views for cars traveling in and out of garage
- Asks about light strips in ceiling
  - They are slices into the green roof that are 4' wide and create transition zone from light to dark
- Asks why not continuing green roof across whole building top
  - Proponents will explore that idea
- Believes that the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue crossing needs lighting or signs to signify pedestrians crossing
- Commends gaining community feedback for activating streetscape and implementing it into design

- Believes that the streetscape along 5<sup>th</sup> is very civic, and the full length planter could deter mid-block crossings
- Suggests looking to SDOT for distinct paving to differentiate high pedestrian traffic areas, lighting strips
- Encourages flexible RFP for art programs
- Agrees that it is a lovely garage but that it is still an above ground parking garage, questions why not putting it all underground, and leaving surface plaza or building on top, asks if this is the precedent the Commission wants to set or endorse
- Believes that light well is substantial, urban, and holds the corner well, yet its iconic value should not compete rather it should compliment the presence of the strong iconic language on the EMP across the corner.
- Likes the softness and scale in the rendering and hope that the realization looks like rendering.
- Can we reword the one above to say: There are several attributes to the building that contribute to its attractive appearance that should be maintained as the design evolves particularly the humane scale of the courtyard and streetscape (scale of the stairwell, the texture on the blank walls, the scale of the glass elements on the facades).
- Encourages that proponents look to improve the transitions between inside and outside space, perhaps some room to put up your umbrella as well as to accommodate the surge pedestrian flows after events.
- Recognizes that the sweet spot is also a windy spot, and encourages proponents to explore ways to address the issue
- Believes that the parking office as located and massed distracts from the quality of the south façade and the pedestrian right-of-way
  - Proponents recognize this and agree it needs formal study
- Believes that it is an enormous improvement and appreciates the feel character rather than object character of landscape
- Reviews four points asked by proponents:
  1. We are interested in strengthening our Harrison Street presence as an entry to Seattle Center. How might the west and east sides of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue best relate?  
**Good Progress**
  2. The crossing of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a key pedestrian entry experience and is currently a major car vs. pedestrian challenge. How might this conflict be resolved?  
**Good Progress**
  3. The new Monorail station will be located approximately 2 blocks from the garage site. How should these transportation facilities, as they serve Seattle Center, relate to one another? What implications are there for design of the garage?  
**Did not address**
  4. The Republican St. entry to the garage will be a multi-purpose entry serving the public and Seattle Center clients and serving the Gates Foundation. How should these multi-purposes be represented in the design of the Republican St. entrance?  
**There is no longer a distinction**