Seattle Design Commission

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APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

1 April 2004

Projects Reviewed

Joint Training Facility
Street and Alley Vacation Policy Updates
Project Updates and Correspondence
Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck

Convened: 8:30am

Adjourned: 1:00pm

Commissioners Present

David Spiker, Chair
Charles Anderson
Pam Beyette
Frances Nelson
Nic Rossouw
Tory Laughlin Taylor

Staff Present

Layne Cubell
Tom Iurino

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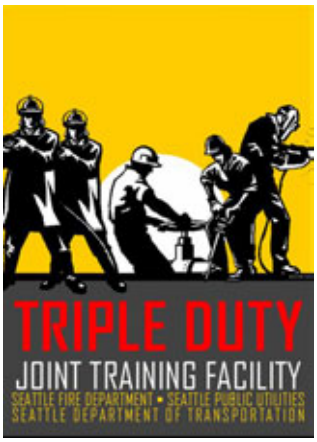
1 April 2004 Project: **Joint Training Facility** (Olson Pl SW & Myers Way S)
Phase: Design Development
Previous Reviews: 15 May 2003 (Schematic Design); 16 January 2003 (Pre-Design)
Presenters: Dove Alberg, FFD
Martha Turnbull, FFD
Joe Chauncey, Boxwood
Darrell Turner, Boxwood
Melanie Mills, SvR Design
Attendees: Jeff Phillips, Boxwood
Sue Partridge, FFD
Brian Harris, TCA
Brian Mills, SFD
George Drayseth, SDOT

Time: 1.25 hour (SDC Ref. 221 | DC00294)

Action: The Commission thanks the team for coming and giving them the opportunity to see the changes to the project and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- **Appreciates the clear and strong leadership evident on this project throughout its development;**
- **Finds the project to exhibit a good balance of user needs and multiple functions;**
- **Commends the project which seems to have only improved with the latest redesign and especially the strong partnership approach among the participating departments;**
- **Appreciates how well the integration of art and landscape builds on overarching principle of sustainability;**
- **Acknowledges the team's effort to achieve a Silver LEED rating, but most notable is the broader thinking about sustainable design, particularly the attention to healing the landscape and working with UW students on a restoration plan for the site;**
- **Art Plan is finely crafted and the Commission only hopes that the budget allows the plan to be realized in its full dimension;**
- **Observes that with the reduced project budget, efficiency is evident in rationalizing the building uses and putting coherence to the overall site design;**
- **Congratulates project team on combining elements and reducing building programmatic needs without compromising function for the project overall; and**
- **Recommends approval of design development and does not need to see the project again.**

The Joint Training Facility is a key component of the Fire and Safety Levy that was approved by voters last fall, but the bond provided approximately $4 million less in funding for this project than was



Triple Duty Motto

Perspective Drawing, Joint Training Facility

originally anticipated. Consequently, some major changes to the project have been made in the last few months. The changes center on the complete redesign of the classroom training building with a new program and footprint. With the redesign of this building, the campus now has better integration as the design of the two main buildings now exhibit a similar design vocabulary. The props scattered throughout the campus remain as previously presented and the entire campus remains dedicated to sustainable design.

The project's motto is "triple duty" and the project team, comprised of representatives from FFD/SFD, SPU and SDOT, have worked in collaboration to realize this in all the project's components and maximize use of the site.

The project is located at the far south end of Seattle, on the site of an old sand and gravel pit in a largely industrial area, with adjacent residential areas to the west and north, a park and ride lot to the north, low income housing to the south and a church to the east. Views along Meyers Way will remain heavily vegetated which will obscure views onto the site and similar buffering exists on the hill to help screen the site from adjacent residential areas. The slope provides expansive views north to Seattle from the surrounding hillside, but the site itself will be mostly obscured from view.

Site Plan, Joint Training Facility

The proponents gave a quick review of the site components which include two main buildings, one dedicated to offices and classrooms for training and the other to apparatus storage, several training props and open areas that include a segment of Hamm Creek. The site employs a surface water collection system that is central to the landscape design; the project is all about water, from above and below and moving across the terrain. Dewatering the site is essential to address the high water table during and after construction. Landscape design has evolved and now features less impervious surfaces, softer edges, and the site

is now more than 50% green.

The design team presented a detailed landscape plan which was not yet developed at the last presentation. The landscape design embraces the site as industrial while acknowledging its evolution over time with lots of instability and an extensive history of disturbance. The site was once a forested hillside, but was leveled by past sand and gravel mining operations. Elements of the new campus will be sited sensitively with the goal of protecting and enhancing over time the natural functions, wildlife and native vegetation of the site. The intention is to heal the environmental damage that has been perpetrated for decades and to decrease future impacts on the greater watershed.

The public right of way along Meyer's Way will be treated as a natural drainage system with a vegetative bioswale modeled after SEA Street in north Seattle and features a meandering pedestrian walkway and vegetative buffer or screen at the site's outer edge. Hamm Creek restoration is another key element of the site's landscape design. A 100' buffer will be established along the corridor of the creek. The design team is working with UW students from the Restoration Ecology Network (REN) on a restoration plan that will engage volunteers from the community. On-site natural systems will be both functional, featuring a biofiltration swale that mimics Hamm Creek to mitigate extensive impermeable surfaces on site and treats the surface runoff, and therapeutic, creating an environment that will serve as a retreat for training center participants and users.

Another landscape element is the building entrance drive and pond. A detention pond will be constructed adjacent to the classroom training building. The building features a river rock trench that receives roof rainwater runoff and a mix of brightly colored vegetation and native plants. The entry drive is a cul de sac that runs parallel to the pond and terminates at the entry to the Classroom Training Building.

The landscape plan materials will feature multiple native plant palettes for the various site conditions including the ability to adapt to the high water table. The more visible and well used areas will include native plantings as well as some ornamental grasses, flowering trees, lots of color and a variety of ornamental trees selected to provide year round interest and some shade. Lighting throughout the site will be mounted on fixtures and will be oriented downward so as to minimize glare for adjacent residents. Outdoor furniture will include benches made of sustainably harvested ipe wood and recycled content bike racks.

The art plan for the site has been funded through the City's 1% for Art program and that is still intact, though the price of steel might reduce how much gets carried out. Roberto Rivero from San Francisco has developed a scheme for a family of bridges and has worked as a fully integrated member of the design team. The bridges will use, expose and reinterpret found objects on the site and also employ objects and materials found elsewhere from the three participating agencies and rely heavily on glass to emphasize the site's water motif. Three bridges are envisioned as part of the plan. One large bridge, roughly 40' long, will be located at the north end of the site across Hamm Creek and will feature a curled leaf inspiration and be fabricated from an existing culvert which will be cut open with an elevated platform walkway of stainless steel and shattered glass inserted and suspended through it. Two smaller bridges, fabricated similarly from culvert remnants into leaf-like forms, will be located over the weir between the upper and lower detention ponds at the southeast corner of the site and across the bioswale near the props at the west end in front of the Oasis Building.

Detailed architectural plans, sections and elevations for the new classroom building were presented by the design team. The building is now a one-story structure with a reduced program of just 23,500 square feet. The program was developed with the original User Group and the building now features simpler

architectural forms that will be cheaper to build. South elevations reveal an abundance of glass and overhangs to address strong exposure to the sun while east elevations show fewer windows. Skylights are employed strategically to light offices and classrooms and a mechanical penthouse is tucked into the roof to minimize its impact and make for an aesthetic appearance.

The building's interior layout now features a common skylit entry corridor with two access points from the north and south. The plan includes clear separation of public and private areas defined by the corridor with a Multipurpose Room, a Library/Resource Room, flexible and expandable classrooms ranging in size from 30-150 occupants with some "dirty" classrooms which will be fully washable, offices, a Work Hardening room for testing, storage and locker rooms. The Multipurpose Room and kitchen are located at the east end and will be available for after-hours use along with public restrooms. The building is smaller than before, but more flexible and designed to accommodate growth. Daylighting and natural ventilation have been well thought through to make this a truly functional building. Simple, elementary materials will be employed including steel framing, concrete block, wheatboard, lots of glazing and large roll-up doors.

Main Building Elevation, Joint Training Facility

The site is still a collection of parts with several training support structures. The other main occupied building on campus is the apparatus building with an adjacent hose tower which features similar forms and materials and the same reliance on natural daylight and ventilation. These have not changed from what was presented before. But a good result is that the structures now relate very well in form and materials. In addition, there are numerous props scattered around the site, but these are not really buildings and not subject to code, and are built mostly of concrete block.

To sum up, the entire site is conscious of being City property, but is largely invisible from the bluff above. The project remains with its focus on water, remains "green" meeting a LEED Silver rating, continues to be symbolized largely by its dewatering plan and leaf inspiration that integrates sustainable thinking into both the art and landscape design, but now has a reduced budget of $4.1m with simpler built forms.

<u>Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns</u>

- What is the construction schedule?
    - The project will go to bid in five and a half weeks, construction will start this summer and the project is set to open in 2006.
- The project team should be commended for its good, continuous design oversight since the changes have only improved upon the project.
- The project is remarkable on many levels, including the successful collaboration evident with the artist.

- The Commission should applaud the interagency cooperation on this project; seems to be great synergy on the team and clearly the project will benefit everyone involved.
- The bridges are very compelling and represent truly integrated art, so only hope that all three stay in the budget.
- Sees the project as a great example of sustainability taken to heart by reclaiming scarred industrial landscape and making it an exciting place to be with efficiency still in mind in all aspects.
- Classroom building redesign is being handled well and the reduction has been positive with good design decisions along the way, such as the concealment of the mechanical penthouse.
- The choice of asphalt vs. concrete for paving on site to save money is a bit of a concern.
- Project is commendable on many fronts. Redesign of the classroom building to match the design of other buildings is critical to creating a campus feel.
- What is the role of the community?
    - The community has been actively involved at all stages and in artist selection, too.
- The project has taken a 20% budget cut from $19.6m to $15.9m. What are the specific cuts involved?
    - Mostly materials have been downgraded and some elements have been cut, but the changes were decided with User Group input.
- How will after hours use be handled?
    - Certain rooms/spaces will be available to the public on a scheduled, rental basis only.
- Art Plan and the approach to art are terrific, but has any thought been given to carrying over to Props on site, especially since the pipes/culverts lend themselves so well to that use? Will any art be included on building interiors?
    - The decision about scope and 3 bridges vs. 1 main bridge depends ultimately on the price of steel as we proceed with construction. No additional sites have been identified and there will be no art commissioned for inside buildings.
- The landscape architecture plan is well thought out and clearly integrated with overall design. The educational goals and prospective use of UW students is inspiring.
- The Commission is very comfortable with the final design including the recent changes and does not need to see the project again.

Key Visitor Comments and Concerns

- The project will proceed into permitting and then the start of construction this summer.

- The team has appreciated the thoughtful review by the Commission and the constructive input that has helped to realize a better, more sustainable project.

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1 April 2004 Project: **Street and Alley Vacation Policy Update**
Phase: Staff Update
Previous Review: 17 July 2003 (Briefing), 15 May 2003 (Briefing)
Presenter: Beverly Barnett, SDOT
Attendees: none
Time: .75 hour (SDC Ref. # 170 | DC000031)

Summary: **The Commission appreciates the good overview and practical guidance offered on this important topic, as it continues to look at street and alley vacation petitions and advise the City on the design consequences. The Commission recognizes the value of mapping the larger design context and appreciates the map packets on several recent vacation petitions that have been presented today for illustrative purposes.**

SDOT staff noted that the Vacation policy revisions first discussed with the Commission last summer are still in the works and a briefing and update will be scheduled with the Commission soon. The purpose of the briefing today is two-fold. SDOT staff wants to provide a short course on the City's vacation policies, given that several new members have joined the Commission in recent months, and given the Commission's ongoing role of review, it seemed timely to do another periodic update. Also, SDOT staff wants to pass along to the Commission some recent map studies, prepared by Marilyn Senour for internal SDOT staff and Council, that are very telling about urban design conditions and grid patterns and together provide good background on vacations. The maps provide an historical overview of select sites where vacations were approved over the last 50 years or so and their proximity to parks, creeks and natural areas. They give a sense of the City's thinking about vacations and how it has changed over the years.

The City's current vacation policies date from 1986 when the City last reevaluated its approach to vacations and in effect stopped granting vacations in single family zones. An understanding of vacations must start with clarity about Rights of Way which are dedicated through supereasement to the City as a trustee of the general public. If platted as a street ROW, a street remains so in perpetuity. A hierarchy of roads exists in the city:

- Arterials
- Streets
- Alleys

The power to vacate streets and alleys is granted by the State to municipalities and requires a legislative decision which in Seattle means action by City Council. Any adjacent property has the right to petition for a vacation, but it requires signatures from 66% of adjacent property owners. City Council has asked SDOT to staff this function for the City.

The latest revisions to Vacation policies were made in 1986 and clarified three issues: 1) streets and alleys serve an important public function in providing services to and visual breaks on City blocks; 2) the land use impacts including bulk and scale resulting from any proposed vacation must be considered; and 3) public benefit must be provided from the vacation, which recognizes that the loss of an asset must be addressed through long term public benefit. Over time, Council has looked beyond a proposed development's economic potential or the mission and purpose alone of any property to the physical additive benefit that will result, such as a plaza or trail. In recent years, Councilmember Conlin, who currently chairs the Transportation Committee, has wondered how the City could make its policies more

consistent or provide more certainty to potential petitioners. He has encouraged SDOT staff to develop a matrix and menu of options with ratings assigned to make values apparent and the balancing act more discernable to all. The City typically has different considerations for commercial versus public or institutional petitioners. Also, what is proposed for a single site might be fine, but any petition can have different cumulative impacts and long term consequences that deserve scrutiny, too. For now, SDOT staff is focusing on clarifying a menu of public benefits.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Wonders if the whole City is mapped like this to show vacations in the context of their larger neighborhoods and on the scale of a few blocks, whether commercial or residential. At the least, it would be great to map commercial areas in downtown, especially in those areas that are rapidly changing such as South Lake Union and along Madison. The maps are helpful in understanding the quirks of a particular area and allow for strategic thinking on a citywide level and imply some larger hierarchy about where vacations might be desired, possibly desired or not desired at all.
    - SDOT staff noted that these were samplings only and to map the whole City would be ambitious, but the hope is to expand map work and commercial areas could be targeted next.
- Suggests the City needs to also work on Land Use Code revisions to alleviate pressure and motivation to vacate streets and alleys in the first place.
    - SDOT staff acknowledged that had proven difficult in the past, but the hope is to make Vacation policies clearer citywide.
- Stresses how important it is to understand the tradeoffs inherent in giving up alleys and notes that this is an important message to convey to the development community.
- Suggests that the City needs to counter the nostalgia for private, beautiful alleys which are just not possible in all places. It is important that the street network be vital and allowed to serve the function it was intended to.
- Wonders if the maps might be tied into sub area plans which are now being developed at DPD, which was an idea first suggested by the Commission several years ago. All were reminded that the Commission has long been fascinated by the topic of vacations and issued its own issue paper in 2001 that looked at the urban design impact of street and alley vacations.
- Suggests that in developing any matrix or menu of options, it would be important to note what other options exist, such as a long term permit, which could make the vacation less desirable.
- Notes that the Design Commission follows a good 2-step process in its reviews of vacations which has been helpful and might be a good resource for SDOT and Council. Recognizes that enforcement is always tricky and the Commission can only hope with Council reinforcement and staff follow through that the benefits get realized.
- Believes that the long term, bigger picture view is most important and finds it curious that the City itself is reluctant to say no. Other cities have done so with greater vigilance. There is a tenuous connection between economic vitality of City and a developer's right to petition for a vacation.

- Supports efforts to clarify decision making about vacations. Urges SDOT and the City to take on bigger issues with the Matrix and look at framing it in larger overarching principles. Also, notes it is important to lay out choices clearly - yes, maybe or no – with specific stipulations. Look at being more rigid and adhering to principles once they are established. For example, a strong statement could be made that alley vacations should only exist where they correct urban design mistakes or platting oddities. Recent examples of these include both New Holly and 2040 East Madison.

- Encourages SDOT staff to continue its discussions with all who play a role in review of vacations – the Commission, SDOT, DPD and of course, City Council. It will be important to tie discussion of vacations into larger initiatives, such as the Center City Strategy, to get the Mayor's ear and then work on bigger revisions over time.

- Asks what next steps are planned in the City's upcoming vacation policy revisions and suggests that meetings with high level decision makers will be important in realizing real changes. Recognizes it is hard to say no on a project by project basis, so the City must rely on its larger policies and this will be an important message in those meetings. By looking solely at public benefits, it seems like a bit of the tail wagging the dog and not an effective way of dealing with the larger issues with vacations.

    - SDOT staff noted that some real challenges exist with petitions currently under consideration by the City. Recognize the need to clarify options available to petitioners up front. In some cases, the best option for the City might be a long term permit versus a vacation with conditions. Permits are temporary, renewable and can be issued with long terms of 25 or 50 years, though 10 years is most common. Vacations however are permanent.

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1 April 2004 Project: **Project Updates and Correspondence**
Phase: Staff Briefing
Previous Reviews: none
Presenters: Layne Cubell, Design Commission staff
Attendees: none
Time: .50 hour (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00009)

Summary: The Commission discussed several ongoing work efforts, how best to follow up on past projects with letters and reviewed an outline for their upcoming briefing to City Council's Urban Development and Planning Committee.

The Commission reviewed a draft letter regarding the City's future plans for the Public Safety Building site and found it to be timely. An electronic version will be transmitted to all Commissioners including those not at today's meeting for their comments and revisions. It was suggested that previous Council action on the City Hall project in the form of an ordinance passed in 2001, be reviewed as additional background to the letter. Staff reminded Commissioners that in that case, Council had asked for Commission follow up on specific design concerns and conditions.

Preparations for the Commission's presentation to City Council's Urban Development and Planning Committee scheduled for later this month are underway. A discussion outline was reviewed and a briefing memo will be drafted by staff in the coming weeks. Four Commissioners are planning to attend the briefing along with Commission staff. The briefing is the first of two semi-annual briefings to the Committee that Commission staff has arranged in the effort to have more direct dialogue with Council on key issues and projects.

Recruitment efforts for anticipated vacancies on the Commission will get underway soon. The Urban Planner position remains open and will be folded into the upcoming recruitment process. The closing date for applications from candidates for the CityDesign Manager and Design Commission Executive Director has passed. Reviewing resumes will be the next charge and an interview schedule will then be developed. Three Commissioners along with staff will play active roles in the screening and interview process.

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1 April 2004 Project: **Councilmemeber Peter Steinbrueck**
Phase: Briefing
Previous Review: none
Presenters: Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck
Attendees: none
Time: .25 hour (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00009)

Summary: **The Commission appreciates CM Steinbrueck making time in his schedule to briefly meet and introduce himself to the full Commission.**

David Spiker, Chair, described the purpose of the Commission and provided a biographical sketch for each of the Commissioners, noting they represented a cross section of the design disciplines. He mentioned that the Commission had just celebrated its 35th Anniversary last December, with more than 3,000 projects and 85 members to its credit. The Commission reiterated that their mission was to advise the City on CIP projects, those constructed with City dollars or on City land, and their mandate affords them broad purview. The challenge of recent years has been how to balance their work, especially with many large transportation infrastructure projects, to ensure the Commission continues to look at projects throughout the City, including some small gems.

CM Steinbrueck expressed his desire to strengthen ties between Council and the Commission and have Council rely on their advice on design matters. He currently serves as Chair of Council's new Urban Development and Planning Committee and described the Committee's focus as a 3-leg stool, including design, planning and economic development in an integrated way, to ensure broader thinking about the City's public realm. He stressed the importance of maintaining a long term vision for the City and showing concern for design consequences. He values the Commission tremendously, believes its role of review should remain pure and not be compromised by politics, and urges active efforts to make the Commission's recommendations heard at Council. He recognizes the expanded role the Commission has taken on to address the major projects facing the City and would support the addition of new members, especially transportation specialists, and new staff. He no longer is on the Civic Center Client Group, but hopes the Commission will continue to weigh in on the Civic Center. Other critical projects for the City identified by CM Steinbrueck include: Parks projects, the Monorail and the Viaduct. CM Steinbrueck looks forward to a more complete update on the Commission's recent work at a briefing to his Committee which has been scheduled for later this month.

1 April 2004 Commission Business

ACTION ITEMS

A. MINUTES FROM MARCH 4 - APPROVED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

B. RECRUITMENT UPDATE/CUBELL AND RAHAIM

C. MONORAIL REVIEW PANEL/CUBELL

THE COMMISSION DISCUSSED THE NEED TO ASSIGN A REPRESENTATIVE TO MRP TO REPLACE DON ROYSE WHO WILL BE STEPPING DOWN AFTER ONE YEAR DUE TO OTHER PRESSING COMMITMENTS ON HIS TIME. THE COMMISSION AGREED TO SEEK POSSIBLE CANDIDATES FROM ITS ROSTER OF PAST COMMISSIONERS.

D. OTHER OUTSIDE COMMITMENTS/ALL

THE COMMISSION DISCUSSED RECENT REQUESTS FOR DELEGATES TO SERVE ON CONSULTANT SELECTION PANELS FOR BOTH VAN ASSELT COMMUNITY CENTER AND THOMAS STREET PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE. VIADUCT DEIS REVIEW SESSIONS WILL GET UNDERWAY SOON AS THE DEIS WAS RELEASED YESTERDAY AND IS NOW POSTED TO WSDOT'S WEBSITE.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

E. CENTRAL WATERFRONT PUBLIC PRESENTATION – APRIL 7, 5:30-9PM, BELL HARBOR CONFERENCE CENTER

F. DC/PC VIADUCT DEIS WORKING SESSION#1 – APRIL 9, 11:30 AM-1:30 PM, KT 4096

G. VIADUCT LEADERSHIP GROUP - APRIL 12, 4-7PM

H. COUNCIL URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING COMMITTEE BRIEFING - RESCHEDULED TO APRIL 28, 2PM