

1101 8th Ave Alley Vacation

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Commissioners Present

John Savo, Vice Chair

Ben de Rubertis

Lee Copeland

Thaddeus Egging

Rachel Gleeson

Laura Haddad

Brianna Holan

Rick Krochalis

Jescelle Major

Commissioners Excused

Ross Tilghman, Chair

Project Description

Lennar Multifamily Communities is proposing to vacate an alley in the block bounded by 8th Ave, Seneca St, Hubbell Pl, and Spring St. The vacation proposal includes the development of two high-rise residential towers with ground level retail, restaurant, office, and residential space. The proposed alley vacation would allow for the combination of loading, storage, service facilities, and parking below grade. Specific elements of the project proposal include:

- Two high-rise buildings, 300 ft. in height, abutting Spring St, Hubbell and 8th Avenue
- 42 ft. wide pedestrian passage, including a one-way truck access for Town Hall
- Publicly accessible open space, terraces, plazas, and seating areas
- Approximately 387 stalls of below grade parking
- Drop-off and pick-up zones along Spring St; and
- Connections to adjacent Freeway Park and Town Hall property

The property is located within a study area included in the First Hill Public Realm Action Plan.

Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) third review of the proposed alley vacation. The purpose of this meeting was to review the public benefit proposal. After the presentation and discussion, the SDC voted, 9-0, to approve the public benefit proposal for the 1101 8th Ave Alley Vacation with one condition and several recommendations.

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

July 6, 2017**9:00 – 10:30 am****Type**

Alley Vacation

Phase

Urban Design Merit & Public Benefit

Previous Reviews[5/4/17](#), [3/2/17](#)**Presenters****Kelty Mckinnon** PFS Studios**Daria Supp** Perkins + Will**Attendees****Riisa Conklin** Freeway Park Association**Jim Erickson** FHIA**Tom Foy** Perkins + Will**Stephen Goodman** Citizen**Moira Gray** SDOT**Jason Haas** Perkins + Will**Doug Holtom** FHIA**Katie Kendall** McCullough Hill Leary, PS**Jack McCullough** McCullough Hill Leary, PS**Chris Tyner** Perkins + Will**Mike Weller** Point 32**Summary of Presentation**

Kelty Mckinnon of PFS Studios and Daria Supp of Perkins + Will presented the public benefit proposal for the 1101 8th Ave Alley Vacation. Jack McCullough of McCullough Hill Leary, PS started the presentation with a project overview as well as updates since the last Commission meeting. Since the last commission meeting, an agreement between the project team and Town Hall has been finalized. Daria Supp provided more details about site context and project background. Kelty Mckinnon then gave an overview of the landscape plan, which focuses on the plaza, wooneerf, and mews as the three main landscaped spaces, followed by a presentation on each public benefit element.



Figure 1: Landscape plan

The project team then focused on addressing the following recommendations provided during the May 4, 2017 SDC meeting:

1. Provide additional information about the public outreach process
2. Provide clarity as to what open spaces are being considered for public benefit
3. Provide information explaining why special paving should be considered a public benefit
4. Provide information explaining why enhanced seating should be considered a public benefit
5. Consider specifying trees with a high caliper
6. Consider replacing the proposed dogwood trees with a higher limbed tree
7. Consider inclusion of necessary utilities to allow for future lighting possibilities near the west façade of Town Hall

The canopy and weather protection on 8th Ave, widened sidewalks along 8th Ave, bike features, and plaza design are all a direct result of public outreach. The project team provided a new diagram of which open spaces are being considered for public benefit and how they are complemented by the water feature and landscaping in the required open spaces that are not part of public benefit. The paving as public benefit promotes wayfinding and placemaking, as it creates a clear expression of what is public. The project team then emphasized that the enhanced seating goes beyond what is required by the City. Although the seating is technically within the property line, it is accessible from the public right of way and therefore constitutes public benefit. As for the caliper, or trunk diameter, of the trees, the proposed trees meet

the SDOT standard and the project team is additionally preserving two mature trees on the site. The project team also provided assurance that the lower limbs of the proposed dogwood trees would not significantly impede views. Finally, citing concerns from Town Hall staff over interference with the historic building's active uses, the project team has opted to create low level lighting in the plaza that will accentuate the façade of Town Hall.

After addressing concerns from the previous meeting, the project team then provided details on the four public benefit areas:

- The public plaza
- Town Hall improvements
- Right of way improvements
- Freeway Park connection

The plaza will be accentuated by the acoustic element of the waterfall terrace on the southern edge, and will provide opportunities for community programming such as markets and outdoor performances. The Town Hall improvements include a 4-foot queueing area for patrons at the southeast entrance, a series of landscaped terraces, and funds that will allow Town Hall to update the concrete sidewalks. The right of way improvements all go beyond what is required by SDOT. They include pedestrian light poles, bike racks, seating, and the canopy on 8th Ave. The Freeway Park connection consists of a curb ramp to complete accessibility at the intersection of Seneca St and Hubbell Pl and will be designed in conjunction with Freeway Park.

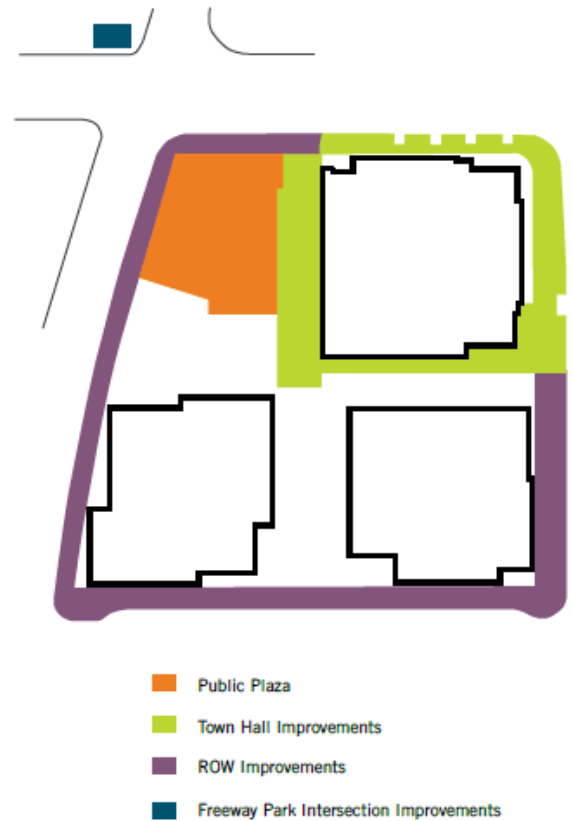


Figure 2 (right): Public benefits diagram

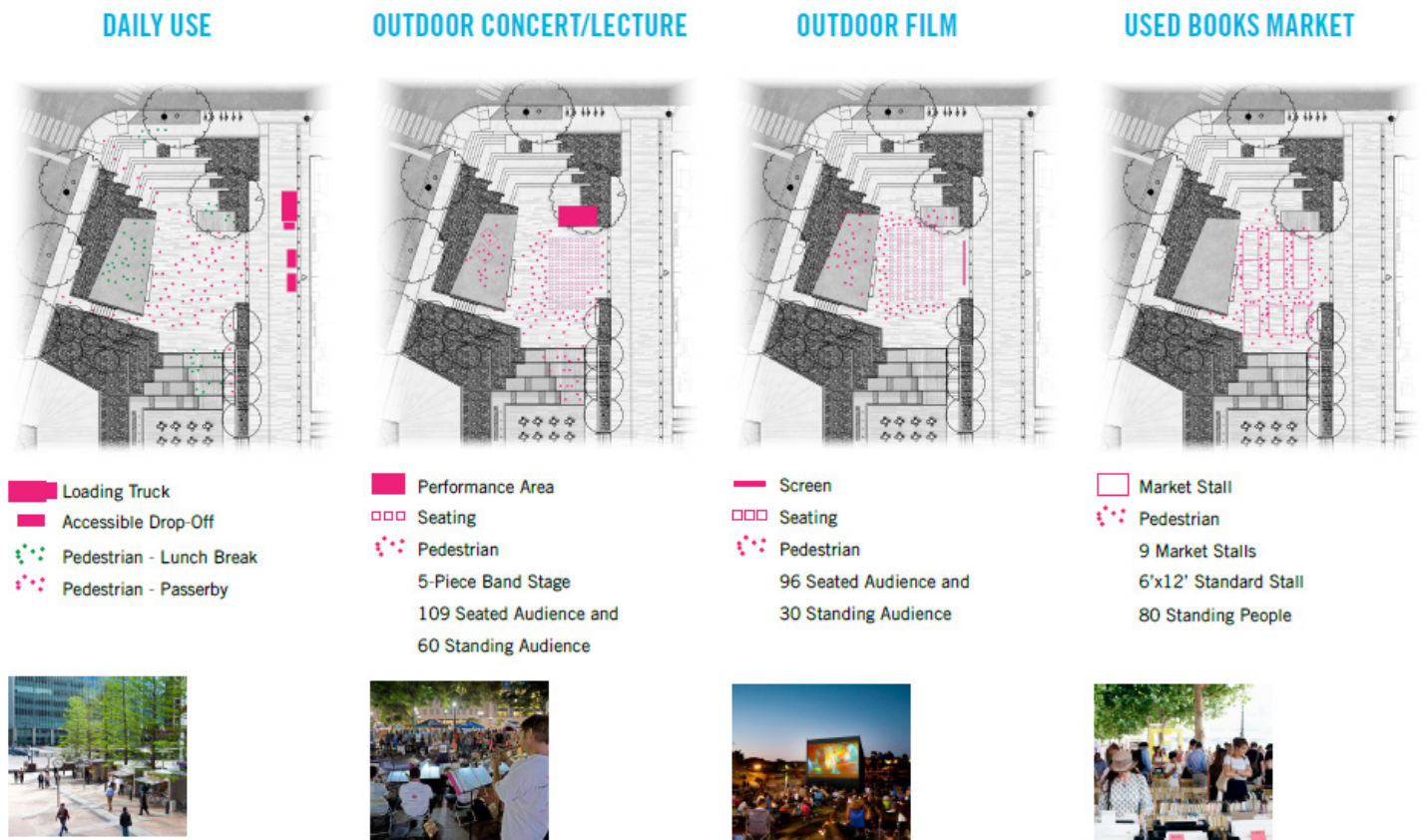


Figure 3: Potential plaza programming opportunities

Agency Comments

None.

Public Comments

Riisa Conklin, Freeway Park Association (FPA), thanked the project team for their community engagement process. Riisa Conklin stated FPA was approached very early in the process, Ms. Conklin said the collaboration between the project team and community resulted in providing improvements that complete the intersection of Seneca St and Hubbell Pl., which provides an important connection to Freeway Park. Ms. Conklin and FPA look forward to continued collaboration.

Jim Erickson, FHIA, thanked the SDC for asking if the project team had considered elements for bicyclists, which then started a conversation within the First Hill Community. Mr. Erickson stated that, as a result of feedback from the SDC, bicycle racks are now located along street curbs on three sides of the block. Mr. Erickson then stated that FHIA is starting to facilitate a discussion to recommend an east/west cycle track through the First Hill Neighborhood, which may pass by the project site.

Doug Holtom, FHIA, thanked the project team for their outreach process. Mr. Holtom stated the proposed design provides great connections and that the proposed project podium and plaza will complement Town Hall facility.

Summary of Discussion

The commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Public Plaza
- Town Hall Improvements
- ROW Improvements
- Freeway Park Connection

Public Plaza

The SDC commended the project team for the design and integration of the public plaza with the surrounding environment. The commission acknowledged the positive impact the plaza will have on the First Hill Community. Commissioners appreciated the alignment of the plaza with Town Hall as well as the adjacency with Freeway Park. Commissioners encouraged the project team to explore possibilities to increase the physical and visual connection between the southeastern edge of the public plaza and woonerf. Several commissioners commented that they would have appreciated more information about what the project team learned from the community outreach process. SDC requested more information about landscape and hardscape materials, recommending the project team return to present this information at a subcommittee meeting.

Town Hall Improvements

The SDC appreciated the generous buffer between Town Hall and the proposed building. The commission also appreciated the project team's attempt to provide lighting along the west façade of the Town Hall facility. The commission recommended providing pedestrian lighting that would also focus on the west façade of Town Hall. Commissioners appreciated the project team's commitment to preserving mature trees along the exterior of the project site.

ROW Improvements

The SDC appreciated the proposed right-of-way (ROW) improvements near Town Hall and acknowledged the positive impact it will have on the pedestrian experience. The commission commended the design team for providing understory planting along the streets surrounding the project site. Although many of the proposed benches and bicycle racks are located within the property line, the commission agreed both elements should be considered as a public benefit because they are directly accessible from the public right of way. Several commissioners recommended relocating the bicycle rack along 8th Ave so it does not directly align with the pedestrian pathway. Commissioners agreed the enhanced paving along Spring St should not be considered as public benefit.

Freeway Park Connection

The SDC commended the project team for enhancing the curb ramp and providing funding for other intersection improvements. The commission agreed the project could serve as a catalyst for improving the adjacent Freeway Park entrance. Commissioners requested further information about the recipient of the funding. The project team then

stated that funding will be used to work with Freeway Park Association (FPA) to create a design for the intersection, which will then be submitted to SDOT for approval.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for the public benefit package presentation of 1101 8th Ave alley vacation. The commission appreciated the breadth and level of detail provided for each public benefit element. The SDC voted 9-0 to approve the public benefit package for the 1101 8th Ave Alley Vacation on the condition the project team returns for a subcommittee meeting to address the following issues:

- Providing a detailed planting palette and show physical samples of selected hardscape materials
- Exploring possibilities to increase physical and visual connection between the southeastern edge of the plaza and woonerf
- Clarifying the relationship between the proposed public plaza, which is a public benefit, and the surrounding open space that is required by code – specifically addressing how the water feature will be perceived from the public plaza and how the public can be assured it will be maintained over time as a feature serving the public space

The SDC also recommended that the project team continues to work with Town Hall on providing a lighting solution for the façade of Town Hall and/or continues to provide pedestrian lighting along 8th Ave.