



Seattle  
Design  
Commission

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

02 September 2004

Gregory J. Nickels,  
*Mayor*

David Spiker  
*Chair*

Charles Anderson

Pam Beyette

Frances Nelson

Iain M. Robertson

Nic Rossouw

Donald Royse

Sharon E. Sutton

Tory Laughlin Taylor

Guillermo Romano,  
*Executive Director*

Layne Cubell,  
*Commission Coordinator*

Projects Reviewed

South Lake Union Park  
Metro Bus Tunnel Improvements  
Street/Alley Vacation Policy Revisions

Convened: 8:30am

Adjourned: 2:30pm

Commissioners Present

David Spiker, Chair  
Charles Anderson  
Pam Beyette  
Frances Nelson  
Iain Robertson  
Nic Rossouw  
Donald Royse  
Sharon E. Sutton

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano  
Layne Cubell  
Carrie Duncan



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**02 Sept 2004 Project: South Lake Union Park**

Phase: Design Development

Previous Reviews: 19 June 2003 (Schematic Design); 6 March 2003 (Schematic Design); 19 December 2002 (Concept Design)

Presenters: Colleen Browne, SPR  
Marcel Wilson, Hargreaves AssociatesAttendees: Steve Bull, Mithun  
Mary Margaret Jones, Hargreaves Associates  
Michael Shiosaki, SPR  
Nick Dunaske, Hargreaves Associates

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 169| DC00051)

**Action: The Commission greatly appreciates the presentation on design and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.**

- Encourages proponents to add more trees in the street-edge precincts;
- Encourages proponents to look at family-friendly activities in the park, specifically places families can gather to enjoy the space;
- Will miss the canal as an aesthetic and its function to move water out of the bay;
- Encourages proponents to look at the social uses of the park and to focus on creating more *places* rather than *paths* that move people around the site;
- Encourages the examination of desire lines and extension of the diagonal path to lead more directly the to the Model Boat Pond;
- Feels that the use of storm water is very conventional, and encourages proponents to consider biofiltration methods for draining water into Lake Union;
- Encourages proponents to retain the more elegant, custom-designed “Catherine” as the bridge of choice and to seek outside funding;
- Urges the integration of the design of the neighborhood, specifically all surrounding streetscapes;
- Encourages the consideration of ways to better integrate the parking lot into the site;
- Encourages the distillation of the pallet of planting materials;
- States that the SE precinct or clamshell area seems somewhat empty, and encourages proponents to make the space richer and more fitting as an entry;
- Recommends approval of design development.

Since the last review of SLU Park, a couple of features have been removed—the wetland along the west waterway and the canal, both due to ecological barriers. Proponents have also made changes regarding access for the Center for Wooden Boats.

Proponents walked through the process of design development, siting park elements that were prescribed in the Approved Program Master Plan, and an explanation of site framework—elements of adjacent developments, design evolution, etc. Two alternatives from the Commission’s last review of the project

were discussed, and proponents summarized the key elements of those designs—the placement of the canal element, the fountain, site entries on Valley Street signified by a grove of trees and maritime flags, connections within the park through the use of the boardwalk, and the points of access on the west side of the site.

The site plan was designed based on current and future adjacent projects and elements that spurred design evolution. Adjacent projects include future Vulcan projects, SLU and Waterfront Streetcar, the Historic Ships Wharf, the Center for Wooden Boats Master Plan, and the UIAT Longhouse and Carving Shed. The developments that have taken place since the last review include the Geotechnical Report that confirmed poor soil conditions, an investigation of the bulkhead wall replacement, repositioning the fountain due to the removal of the canal, bridge design limitations due to budgetary constraints, and the design of a low-profile play feature.

Current design of SLU Park includes locating the fountain at the threshold; a parking lot within the grove of trees; formal trees along Valley to create a streetscape row; wall edge improvements; planting islands; a shortened boardwalk for loading and unloading ships; a landscape approach for reaching the water’s edge; and maintaining current conditions of the armory.



Plan Rendering

Proponents propose a wide variety of materials for site design that are intended to enhance the experience of visitors such as concrete unit pavers, colored concrete, wood, colored asphalt, and crushed shells. Plantings for the park include lawns, tall grasses, grove trees, lake edge plantings, and evolving planting islands. Site lighting and furnishings address Terry Avenue, the fountain, the Model Boat Pond, and the planting islands; and include pole lights, planting island uprights, Model Boat Pond LED lights, concrete seatwalls, fountain perimeter benches, and standard benches. The fountain will have an interactive, playful, random jet pattern.



Aerial Rendering

Proponents presented two bridge schemes for the structure located on Waterway 3. “Catherine” is designed to heighten the experience over the waterway, is narrow, and presents a small visual presence. “Steadfast” is 8 feet wide, includes manufactured truss elements, and creates a stronger presence on the water.

The pumphouse is located in the grove. The structure is roughly 18’ x 32’, and is partially recessed. An exposed concrete wall rises 5 feet off the ground, and ties into the site program by including similar materials, covered bike parking, benches, a vegetated roof, and covered seating.

### **Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Asks proponents to address design elements on the west side of the park.
  - Proponents stated elements such as:
    - Bike trail through the park;
    - Pathway to the upper west corner;
    - Plantings that will act as passive recreation areas;
    - Seating in the north corner

- Artist installation by Peter Richards that will include a sound piece that echos the sound of the water; and
  - Future buildings for UIAT.
- Asks if there are places around the site where people can touch the water.
  - Proponents stated that the Model Boat Pond and the fountain are two interactive, structured areas, and stated that they are not encouraging people to touch Lake Union. The boardwalk will also be maintained as a working waterway.
- Asks proponents to clarify that visitors will not be able to access Lake Union on the western side of the site.
  - Proponents stated that the slopes are the steepest in those areas and the soil is poor. Instead these areas will be used for important habitat.
- Asks if the landforms and the lawn are places where people will be occupying.
  - Proponents stated that the nature of activity will determine where people occupy.
- Is excited about the presentation, but states that it still looks complex because there are so many zones.
- Encourages drama with regards to the earth mound shapes, but states that they should not be mown like crazy.
  - Proponents stated that the steeper faces may grow longer and provide division, while the leaner faces will be mown.
- Asks about the promenade of trees, and cautions that there are too few trees in the grove.
- Points out that there is a diagonal path that begins in the southeast corner of the site that appears as though it has a natural extension to the fountain. States that it would be neat if the path made its way to the water feature.
- States that shoreline plantings can be difficult.
- Is concerned with the loss of the canal because of stagnation issues in the bay.
  - Proponents stated that they are engaged in an on-going conversation with Vulcan.
- Asks for clarification on the smaller, intimate spaces around SLU Park.
  - Proponents stated that people can engage in more private activity in the grove of trees; the solitary places along the boardwalk; the casual, shaded and non-shaded grass areas along the western edge; along the north edge of the site; and in the curvilinear areas near the seatwall.
- Asks if proponents have considered the placement of the Wuwona and whether the ship will remain in Lake Union.
  - Proponents stated that they have considered the ship's placement, and that it will remain in Lake Union as a rejuvenated Wuwona, or will be replaced by another boat in order to keep the iconic nature of the park.
- States that the site is programmatically lacking picnic bench/bbq types of activities.
- Does not feel like people can walk to the site.
- States that the social uses of the park seem to be more about *paths* than about *place*. Two destination places are the Model Boat Pond and the fountain, and encourages proponents to move people off the path and into places that allow for the finding of the destinations.
- Asks about the sustainable dimensions of the park.
  - Proponents stated that public comment has redirected the intention of using all native plantings, but recycled materials are still under consideration, as is the potential for stormwater systems.
- Feels that this revised site plan is simpler and that the site can be used efficiently and effectively.

- States preference for “Catherine” and states that a small bridge presence on the water will be a positive element of the park.
- Encourages proponents to examine the larger contextual links to the park, and to integrate these links where possible.
- Encourages proponents to design a parking scheme that is flexible.
- States that the palette of site design materials seems to be too broad and asks if proponents have considered making further edits.
- Encourages proponents to think about contextual issues and other CIPs in the area such as the South Lake Union and Waterfront Streetcar, the Mercer Corridor project, etc.
- Asks if the formal grove of trees can be extended to span the western edge of the site.
  - Proponents stated that the idea seems very logical given that the early driver of the site was the long view along Westlake Avenue.
- States that the project is very interesting. Questions if the seashell element of the site is too abrasive, dry, or aggressive for kids.

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**02 Sept 2004 Project: Metro Bus Tunnel Improvements**

Phase: Overview and Concept Design

Previous Review: None

Presenters: George Frost, SDOT  
Felix Kwakwa, K2 & Associates, Inc.  
Jon Layzer, SDOT

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00337)

**Action: The Commission thanks proponents for coming and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.**

- **Appreciates the efforts to integrate Light Rail with the existing bus system;**
- **Appreciates the awareness of other transportation projects downtown, specifically the Monorail, and the Alaskan Way Viaduct project;**
- **Appreciates the efforts for public involvement, especially getting property and business owners engaged;**
- **Appreciates the long-term approach to making transit a priority, rather than single-occupancy vehicle use in the downtown area;**
- **Appreciates the delicate balancing act of transit improvements vs. metered parking;**
- **Would like proponents to consider tree grates as a better solution than planters considering the limited sidewalk widths;**
- **Would like proponents to consider improved signage or graphics for pedestrian safety;**
- **Appreciates efforts to improve pedestrian crossings, especially in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and Yesler location;**
- **Recommends approval of concept design.**

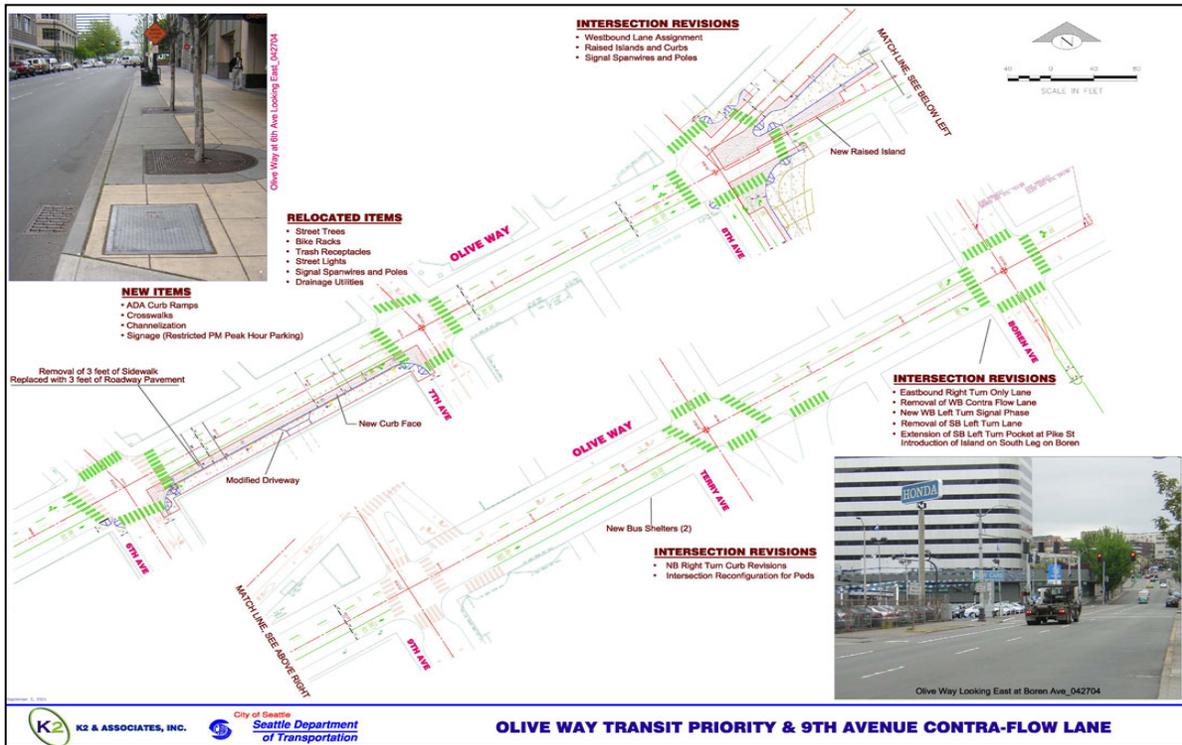
Proponents gave the Commission an overview of the light rail project and the downtown surface street improvements. The Sound Transit Tunnel Closure Mitigation Program describes what the schedule will be for implementation of street improvements and tunnel closure over the next 2 to 3 years.

Originally, proponents looked at closing the bus tunnel and retrofit it for light rail operations. Now, because of reconfiguration, the tunnel will be open for operation by both light rail and busses. Proponents discussed four different phases of light rail integration, and stated that the main focus of the program is to keep people and busses moving through the downtown area. The first is converting the transit tunnel for light rail. Second is the Pine Street Stub Tunnel, which entails building a short light rail extension tunnel under Pine Street. This phase is currently under construction. The third phase is improving downtown streets and sidewalks and maintaining access to downtown businesses. The fourth phase is shifting bus routes downtown to ease the impacts of tunnel closure. The tunnel carries 140 busses during peak hour that will be redirected to the surface.

Proponents will make extensive changes to 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue that include traffic restrictions to transit and right-turn-only during peak periods, and increases in bus volumes (roughly doubling the bus traffic during peak hours).

Proponents discussed many key projects listed in the Sound Transit Tunnel closure Mitigation Program. These projects include:

- **Prefontaine Place South Reconfiguration/Fifth Avenue South Contra-Flow Lane**
  - Includes changes to street and sidewalk alignment, lane channelization, on-street parking, traffic signage, improvements in traffic signalization, elimination of parking on the east side of the street, contra-flow lanes, and street pavement and landscaping.
  - Currently undergoing 90% design review.
  
- **E3 Busway—CBD Transit Priority**
  - Includes new traffic signal and modifications to other signals; new or relocated bus zones and associated work in the street ROW including street paving, curb, sidewalk, landscaping, drainage, and utility work; street/curb use revisions including changes to signage, striping, circulation, parking, lane widths, and lane use; and minor modifications to trolley operations.
  - Currently undergoing 60% design review.
  
- **Olive Way Transit Priority**
  - Includes changes to street widths, signage, lane channelization, traffic islands, on-street parking, transit signalization, and sidewalk cut-backs.
  - Currently working toward 90% design review.
  - Between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenues
    - Includes widening the street by up to 3 feet; replacing charcoal pavings with new design; adding irrigation elements, bus-only lanes, and loading dock driveway modifications.
  - 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue
    - Includes a reconfiguration of pedestrian islands at intersections.
  - 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue
    - Includes the redesign of intersections, and continuing bus-only lanes to Boren Street.
  - Terry and Boren
    - Includes the removal of the contra-flow lane.
  
- **Ninth Avenue Transit Contra Flow Lane**
  - Includes changes to on-street parking, lane channelization, signal phasing, and a signal upgrade.
  - Currently working toward 90% design review.
  
- **Emergency Vehicle Signal Priority**
  - Equips SFD vehicles with Opticom emitters, and installs receivers at up to 40 intersections on 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenues, and Marion and Spring Streets.
  - Currently undergoing 90% design review.
  
- **Third Avenue Peak Period Traffic Restrictions**
  - Implements various signage, lane channelization, curb/sidewalk modifications, and loading and unloading access on 3<sup>rd</sup> and Pine.
  - Currently undergoing 60% design review.



Olive Way Improvements



9<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor Improvements

Public outreach efforts have extended to property/building owners in the area. Future meetings are scheduled with owners in the Prefontaine area, as well as those owners on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenues. Proponents are working closely with the owners of Pacific Place, and hope to extend the outreach further in order to ensure a strong, working relationship during phases of construction.

**Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Asks about the number of busses that will return to the tunnel after all necessary improvements are made.
  - Proponents stated that approximately 120 busses during peak hours will return to the tunnel, along with 20 light rail vehicles per hour.
- Asks about the overall parking reduction.
  - Proponents stated that overall, 50 to 60 parking spaces will be eliminated. Lost spaces are throughout downtown, and many of the spaces are not lost altogether, but are restricted.
- Encourages creative solutions with regards to tree plantings, and states tree grates as a better solution
- Appreciates the approach proponents use to deal with busses in the downtown area in the long run. Further appreciates the long-term look at how the solutions examine transit issues; the efforts the team is putting in to improving pedestrian crossings at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Yesler; and the efforts to examine the crucial bus service on Olive Way.
- Asks if this project is being looked at in context to other issues in downtown.
- Asks about the permanence of the project.
  - Proponents stated that the pavement on Prefontaine will stay the same and will reflect the phasing of implementation for other projects; and is less sure about the contra-flow lanes on 9th, etc.
- Asks what measures are being taken to address issues of safety with regards to the contra-flow lanes.
  - Proponents stated that there will be extensive signage that directs drivers, busses, and pedestrians; graphic information and color-coding such as that found in London, etc.

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**02 Sept 2004 Project: Street/Alley Vacation Policy Revisions**

Phase: Staff Briefing

Previous Review: 1 April 2004 (Staff Update); 17 July 2003 (Briefing); 15 May 2003 (Briefing)

Presenters: Beverly Barnett, SDOT

Virginia Beas-Garcia, Council Central Staff

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 168 | DC00166)

**Summary: The Commission thanked the proponents for the briefing on street and alley vacation policy revisions and would like to make the following comments.**

- **Appreciates the sustainability of the simple, reduced scale of the draft document, as well as its added clarity for users;**
- **Recommends strengthening the language of the hierarchy of Identified Public Benefits (Guideline 5.1) so that it clear that the City ranks A through D in that order;**
- **Recommends clearly describing the Commission's role in both initial project reviews and in following up on conditional approvals granted by Council;**
- **Recommends that proponents use bold type and possibly reorder some sections to highlight the most important components of the document;**

Proponents updated the Commission on the Policy Revision documents. The draft is a staff-level document consistent with what Council wants to do, and is based on professional feedback with those familiar with Land Use law. Proponents had further input from community members and other City staff. The draft expresses support for the underlying policies that were drafted in the early 1980s, but now contains new, clarified language, and greater coherency. The document does not talk about process and timing. Proponents are hoping to present the draft to Council on the 14 and 28 September meetings.

Proponents sited revisions to the Land Use section—the elimination of irrelevant references, etc. The new section is edited and references the City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan. The Public Benefits section has also been edited, and now addresses issues of what a public benefit actually is and why it is needed, what an acceptable public benefit is, is clear about the information that needs to be presented in order to receive a public benefit, and is laid out in a manner that attempts to be more objective for developers—a factual picture that presents *who* is getting *what* from the vacation. Proponents have been careful to include both objective and subjective information, and have attempted to be clearer about public benefit issues.

**Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Suggests that language should be stronger.
- States that it would be nice to have a rational way for the City to accept monies when dealing with public benefits, and encourages proponents to think about establishing a fund.
- Appreciates the clarity, use of language, and coherency of the document.
- Suggests clarifying and rationalizing the procedures for public benefit. Suggests clarifying hierarchies for criteria in some sections such as Special Districts of Zoning in Residential Areas, etc.
- Suggests emboldening particular areas that sum up policy pieces, etc. or shifting them forward as a

way to signify key elements, but should be consistent throughout the document.

- Recommends that the language relating to vacations in Single Family areas be strengthened and make it clear these would not normally be granted.

September 2 Commission Business

**ACTION ITEMS**

A. TIMESHEETS

B. MINUTES FROM 5 AUGUST AND 19 AUGUST—  
APPROVED

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

C. OUTSIDE COMMITMENTS—ALL

D. PROJECT UPDATES—CUBELL

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

E. ARCADE RECEPTION—9/2, 5:30-7:30 PM, HENRY ART GALLERY

F. COUNCIL URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING  
COMMITTEE BRIEFING—9/8, 2-2:30 PM

G. DESIGN COMMISSION SITE TOURS—9/9, 8:45 AM-2 PM

H. CENTER CITY STRATEGY OPEN HOUSE—9/20, 5-7:30 PM, CITY  
HALL

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**02 Sept 2004** Project: **Business Updates**  
Phase: Discussion  
Presenters: Layne Cubell, DPD

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00009)

Recruitment efforts concluded on Tuesday with Commission and staff selecting two candidates for each of the four open SDC positions. Two representatives from the Mayor's Office were in attendance for all interviews, and the interview panel is hoping to have the appointments approved by the Mayor within the next two weeks and forwarded to Council for confirmation at the 22 September meeting.

Five members of the Commission will be briefing City Council on 8 September on SDC activities and City CIPs under review. The Commissioners will address issues of the major transportation projects such as the Viaduct/Seawall and Central Waterfront Plan, the Monorail, South Lake Union and Waterfront Streetcar, the Mercer Corridor Project, Magnolia Bridge Replacement, the Light Rail Review Panel, and SR-520.

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**02 Sept 2004** Project: **Executive Director Report**

Phase: Update

Presenters: Guillermo Romano, Executive Director, DPD

Time: 1 hour

(SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00009)

Guillermo Romano discussed with the Commission their relationship with CityDesign, DPD, and the Center City Strategy. He requested input from the Commission on how the relationships have evolved over time, and where they see their efforts best directed in the future.