



Seattle  
Design  
Commission

APPROVED  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
06 October 2005

Gregory J. Nickels,  
*Mayor*

David Spiker  
*Chair*

Charles Anderson

Pam Beyette

Karen Kiest

Anindita Mitra

Sheri Olson

Nic Rossouw

Dennis Ryan

Darrell Vange

Guillermo Romano  
*Executive Director*

Layne Cubell  
*Senior Staff*

Projects Reviewed

Jefferson Park Expansion – Phase 1  
318 Westlake Avenue North Skybridge

Convened: 9:30am

Adjourned: 2:30pm

Commissioners Present

Nic Rossouw, Vice Chair  
Pam Beyette  
Karen Kiest  
Anindita Mitra  
Sheri Olson  
Dennis Ryan  
Darrell Vange

Staff Present

Layne Cubell  
Tom Iurino  
Guillermo Romano  
Alison Maitland Scheetz



Department of Planning and  
Development

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**06 Oct 2005 Project: Jefferson Park Expansion – Phase 1**

Phase: Project Briefing

Previous Reviews: 6 May 2004 (Design Development - Golf Driving Range),  
15 August 2002 (Conceptual Design – Community Center  
Expansion) 6 Dec 2001 (Briefing), 15 February 2001  
(Project Briefing)

Presenters: Randy Robinson, Department of Parks and Recreation  
Michael Shiosaki, Department of Parks and Recreation  
Carolyn Law, Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs  
Greg Brower, The Berger Partnership  
Andy Mitton, The Berger Partnership

Attendees: Bruce Rips, Department of Planning and Development

Time: 1 hours (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00036)

**Action: The Commission appreciates the update on the concept design for Jefferson Park, pulled largely from the Site Plan reviewed and approved several years ago by the Commission.**

- respects the incremental development approach that has been pursued historically on site;
- values the designation of 1% for the arts program funding for this site and the attitude of the larger ProParks Art Plan to this park;
- finds the design to offer an exciting palette of programs and functions, but urges more emphasis be placed on the dramatic overlooking views;
- appreciates the thoughtful approach to budget and scope, but recognizes that this project will ultimately be a careful balancing act, responding to community desire and yet leading the Phase I design effort; and
- would like to hear more discussion of how the design responds to its surrounding context and adjacent uses, particularly the school next door.

### **Presentation**

This project entails park improvements on a 43-acre segment of Jefferson Park and Beacon Reservoir. The project's area is generally bounded by 15<sup>th</sup> Ave S., S. Spokane St, Beacon Ave S, Jefferson driving range, and the S. Dakota St. service drive, Mercer Middle School and 16<sup>th</sup> Ave S. The project site area includes both the existing North Beacon Reservoir and the South Beacon Reservoir.

Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) plans to decommission the north reservoir and reconstruct the south reservoir as a buried reservoir with a hard cover. Park improvements will be made in the footprint of the north reservoir, above the buried south reservoir, and adjacent areas.

Design of the Jefferson Park Expansion project began in the summer of 2005 and will conclude in the spring of 2007. Construction will begin in the spring of 2007 and continue through 2008.

Budget for the expansion project is \$7.3million, including funds from the Pro Parks Levy and the Cumulative Reserve Fund. (This is approximately a fifth of the original estimate of \$35million.)

### Overview of Progress

- Currently in Phase I of the development plan, which focuses on the NE corner of the park
- Now in the early stages of the schematic design. Hope to return in December or January with the schematic design
- Held a public meeting last week and received input on the components and desires from the community. Discussed the trade offs between a variety of components and established high, medium and low priorities
- The commissioned artist, Elizabeth Conner, is identifying the scope and site for her work as recommended/established in the Pro Parks Arts Plan
- A community advisory group meets once a month and provides ongoing oversight



Community Priorities



Overview of Site Plan

The improvements presented are consistent with the direction established in the Jefferson Park Site Plan developed with substantial community participation, between 2000 and 2002. The proposed plan is not a redesign. It only addresses the programmatic needs assessment and critical infrastructure elements.

A new promenade creates a spine through the park, extending from the lower SW corner of the site to the Community Center on the NE side. A paved area in front of the Community Center, and next to promenade, allows for gatherings and connects to the overlook terrace. A sports plateau, with an adult soccer and baseball field covers the South Beacon Reservoir.

Less programmed spaces within the park, as requested by the community, include the terrace on the west edge of the park and the great meadow covering the North Beacon Reservoir. These areas are also highlighted as potential locations for the artwork integration.

### **Commissioner Questions and Comments**

- Expresses concern over the extent of space programming, and asks that the proponents remember the community's request for unprogrammed areas within the park.
- Asks how the design focuses on the unique views of the site
  - There is a new emphasis overlook at the North-West corner of the park
- Believes that the re-grading of the site provides a great opportunity to accomplish a sculptural landscape, which creatively combines art and budget interests.
- Asks why the proponents are respecting the master plan so closely
  - The lay of the land and the flow of water is intuitive and therefore won't change. However, as the plan is reworked the programming and materials will change.
- Believes that proponents should step back from the program elements and facilities, and fully explore all options
- Asks that next time the relationships and connections to the surrounding neighborhood are presented
- Suggests a better understanding of topography, site challenges and opportunities, such as the adjacent Middle School

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**06 Oct 2005 Project: 318 Westlake North Skybridge**

Phase: Skybridge Petition

Previous Reviews: none

Presenters: Sharon Coleman, Vulcan Development  
Bill Briggs, Group Health Cooperative  
Mike Scott, Callison Architecture

Attendees: Kris Snider, Hewitt Architects  
Justin Ruiz, Callison Architecture  
Nancy Dunn, Trammell Crow Company  
Rachel Ben Shmuel, Vulcan Inc.  
Jess Harris, Department of Planning and Development  
Rex Stratton, Seattle Department of Transportation  
Keith Miller, Seattle Department of Transportation  
Susan Mueller, Seattle Department of Transportation

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 170)

**Action: The Commission appreciates the presentation of 318 Westlake Avenue North Skybridge and the background and context information, and**

- asks proponents to clarify and better explain the public benefits of the proposal and why these public benefits cannot be achieved without the bridge. The Commission noted that skybridges are anomalies and are only permitted in exceptional cases with adequate public gain;
- requests more detail on the bridge design and also more examination of what the skybridge does to make the larger and immediate environment better;
- feels that while the character of the alley may be improved with a mid-block crossing, this is not necessarily what needs to happen in terms of safe and optimal pedestrian use of the site;
- appreciates breaking up the scale of the buildings, but encourages a bolder exploration in making an architectural statement with the skybridge that encourages healthy environments;
- suggests looking at the possibility of walking on top of the bridge to support the corridor's openness;
- is concerned that the current design seems to advocate a desire for an alley vacation without requesting it and recommends that more public benefit be demonstrated; and
- cannot approve the skybridge proposal at this time and recommends that the proponents return to present this project again with refinements.

## Presentation



The proposed design seeks approval for a skybridge over a 20' uninterrupted alley in South Lake union. The skybridge will connect the east and west buildings on block 40 that will be occupied for the most part by Group Health. Group Health will occupy all four floors of block 40 east and the second and third floor of block 40 west. The concept has been presented to the local community, who reportedly support and recommend the design. The skybridge design provides a means to strengthen the horizontal connectivity of the buildings addresses issues of security and safety for Group Health employees and activate the alley.

## Preferred skybridge alternative



The preferred design proposal recommends a mid-block skybridge, on a slight diagonal, connecting the second floors and stairwells of the buildings. This allows employees to walk between departments with less reliance on elevators. This design option also proposes a mid-block surface connection from Westlake Ave North through to Terry Avenue. This surface connection is emphasized by greater sidewalk setbacks, landscaping and alternative paving material, which extends out to the curb. Generous landscaping and setbacks are also recommended at the entrance points to the alley on Harrison and Thomas Street.

## Underground Tunnel Alternative



This design proposes a tunnel two levels below the parking. While the design is feasible, it places a greater reliance on the use of elevators and is not favored by Group Health.

## Surface Alternative



A surface only proposal is a modest connection providing employee only entrance points either side of the alley. This alternative also raises safety concerns.

## **Commissioner Questions and Comments**

- Expresses concern over lack of bridge design presented
- Asks if the mid-block surface connection will be open 24hours.
  - only business hours
- Asks if the preferred design alternative proposes different improvements to the City standard specifications
  - There is seating either end of the mid-block surface connection.
  - Paving will be upscale from standard sidewalk
- Asks if the materials of the buildings could be integrated into the design of the bridge to mask its presence.
  - Yes, if applied for permit
- Expresses disappointment in the traditional corporate design presented
- Feels that the architectural design does not promote a working environment that endorses health and wealth for the user.
- Asks whether the proponents considered a request for an alley vacation

- Yes, but chose not to do so and sees the preferred design as a balanced option
- Underscores the City's disapproval of skybridges and questions the public benefit of the bridge
- Expresses concern over the lack of connection to the surrounding neighborhood
- Asks how the proponents expect the alley to be used by pedestrians
  - The alley is not intended to for pedestrian use any more than it is now
- Asks for clarification of public benefit of the mid-block surface crossing and wonders if conflicts are inherent in this design
- Requests to see a detailed design of the bridge
- Requests a stronger argument for a skybridge

**6 Oct. 2005: Commission Business**

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**ACTION ITEMS**

- A. TIMESHEETS
- B. MINUTES FROM 9/15/05 -CUBELL
  - **Approved**

**DISCUSSION ITEMS  
BOARD**

- C. SEATTLE PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY BOARD
  - Megan Hoytt - SDOT
  - Amster – Burton
  
  - Agreed to share minutes and consult each other for professional advice when necessary.
- D. DC OUTSIDE COMMITMENTS - CUBELL
- E. PREP FOR CIP DEPARTMENT BRIEFINGS- CUBELL
- F. PSB SITE WORKSHOP PREP – CUBELL
- G. NEW DESIGN COMMISSION WEBSITE - IURINO
- H. DESIGN COMMISSION ANNUAL SITE TOUR
  - September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2005 8.30am-2.30pm