



**APPROVED**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
April 17, 2008**

**Seattle  
Design  
Commission**

Convened: 8:30am  
Adjourned: 4:30pm

**Greg Nickels**  
*Mayor*

**Karen Kiest**  
*Chair*

**Tasha Atchison**

**Brendan Connolly**

**John Hoffman**

**Mary Johnston**

**Juanita LaFond**

**Dennis Ryan**

**Norie Sato**

**Darrell Vange**

**Darby Watson**

**Guillermo Romano**  
*Executive Director*

**Valerie Kinast**  
*Coordinator*

Projects Reviewed

Fire Station 21 – Greenwood  
Councilmember Tom Rasmussen  
Rainier Vista at University of Washington  
Blume Yale Campus Woonerf & Swale  
West Seattle Wayfinding System  
Street and Alley Vacation Process  
Greenwood Avenue North Improvements

Design Commissioners Present

Karen Kiest, Chair  
Tasha Atchison  
Brendan Connolly  
John Hoffman  
Mary Johnston  
Juanita LaFond  
Dennis Ryan  
Norie Sato  
Darrell Vange  
Darby Watson

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano  
Valerie Kinast  
Tom Iurino  
Ian Macek



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17 April 2008

**Project:** Fire Station 21 – Greenwood

**Phase:** Concept Design

**Last Reviews:**

**Presenters:** Rich Hennings, Fleets and Facilities Department

Kate Spitzer, Miller Hull Partnership

Scott Wolf, Miller Hull Partnership

**Attendees:** Jayson Antonoff, DPD

Jess Harris, DPD

Jason Huff, Arts & Cultural Affairs

David Kunselman, Fleets and Facilities Department

Time: 1.0 hours

(SR 169/RS0609)

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## **ACTION**

The Commission thanks the team for the presentation and unanimously supports the pre-design phase with the following comments:

- The Greenwood “storefront” quality is important and the designers have identified it as a design influence. Therefore, the Commission encourages the teams to keep the apparatus bay doors as transparent as possible.
- Encourage investigation of daylighting the apparatus bay.
- There is opportunity for stormwater gardens on 73<sup>rd</sup> and look forward to seeing further development of that.
- Encourage making the pocket park a generous useable public space, while keeping it safe and open. Support giving a portion to the firefighters for ground level use.
- The Commission will be looking at the development of the station house and how it works with the slope on 73<sup>rd</sup>.
- The development of the street front and driveway will be important. The Commission supports overhead protection and other elements that support the active pedestrian activity on Greenwood.
- Support adding a traffic signal at the alley, and hope that the team’s budget is not burdened by it.
- Concerns about meeting the green factor on this project. Widening the sidewalk would be beneficial, but impacts green factor compliance. Permeable parking in the back parking lot may be an option.
- Appreciate the team walking through the site and providing programming analysis.

## **Project Presentation**

### *Project Background*

Fire Station 21 is in the Greenwood/Phinney Neighborhood, located on Greenwood Ave N between 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup>. It houses one engine company and the department’s mass casualty unit. The existing station is not suited for renovation, so a new one will be built in the same location, but on an expanded site. An interim facility will be provided during



## Commissioners' Comments

- Why not use 73<sup>rd</sup> for entry /exit?
  - The width, parking located there, elevation prohibit this. Greenwood logistically was the best choice.
- How far east does the alley go?
  - It continues down 73<sup>rd</sup>, and is continuous down to the next N/S street. Also looked at making an S-Turn into the alley, but that was not feasible as well.
- What LEED Strategies will be pursued?
  - Looking at same type of credits. Stormwater will be more challenging, due to creating cisterns to retain the water. Indoor air quality, energy credits, building and materials credits.
- Will there be a tower?
  - Looking at a tall hose tower. Using the two floors and the basement for drying. Demolishing basement and reconstructing it due to the hole being there. Could also be a hose dryer.
- Storefront nature of the street has been a large part of the presentation.
- Overhead doors are not as transparent as would like. Suggests transparency. How will the debate between transparency and non-transparency be addressed?
  - The team is looking at the transparency of the apparatus bay doors. This station often has its doors open too.
- What is the opportunity for natural light in the apparatus bay?
  - Looking at this issue. There is the opportunity to have clerestory windows along the north side.
- 73<sup>rd</sup> terraced landscape areas could be stormwater rain collection and gardens.
  - Working on developing, final pre-design will address this.
- The pocket park sounds good, but seems like something that people wouldn't use.
  - 3-6 feet so adding space to the public realm, not just a rain garden people can look at. Also looking into trying to balance the space. There currently is transient activity happening in the alley. Creating a space that can be accessed, but not maintained by the FS.
- Talked initially about using the grade, but it is not apparent in the plan.
  - Dropping the parking tray and looking at the articulation of the support bar.
- This station has more interaction between the sidewalk and the station than any others.
- Trying hard to make a storefront. Pay particular attention to the driveway and sidewalk treatment. Perhaps overhead weather protection could also be incorporated.
- Pocket park may not add much to the community. Make a separation, but may want to offer the open space to the firefighters to use.
- In support of the new traffic light at the alley.
- Will the traffic light be part of the overall budget?
  - It will need to be part of the total project costs.

- Is a geothermal heating system in the design?
  - Split system has become the standard if geothermal is not possible, but the decision has not been explored yet.
- Is there a light at 73<sup>rd</sup>?
  - Yes, it will be retained and a station light proposed at the alley.
- Appreciate the design process that the team has gone through thus far.
- What is the sidewalk width
  - 8 ft. on Greenwood.
- The station will be the activity on that block. Would encourage looking at widening the sidewalk in this area, working with SDOT to have a more generous width.
  - Have the opportunity to step the building back a bit. The team wanted to align with the other buildings on Greenwood.
- Not sure how the green factor will be incorporated into the site. Has this been explored?
  - Green roof was obvious at the beginning, but fell off due to budget and maintenance. Looking at the south edge vertical green and pocket park.
- Will the parking apron be permeable?
  - It is an option.
- Has the team thought about tucking parking stalls under the apparatus bay?
  - Something that the team can explore.
- Can pick up some green area on the east side if the parking was tucked under.



project, the UW Rainier Vista proposal and the future plans for the Husky Stadium. The Commission understands that many of these decisions are still pending funding but recommends that they should be brought to the process in a more comprehensive and holistic way.

The Design Commission will continue to see projects associated with Seattle Center and City parks. The discussion of the absence of the ballot measure for Seattle Center was addressed and although there is no proposal this or next year, the Council would like to have the Master Plan approved by this summer. Thus, any development or improvements that take place in the interim will be consistent with the Master Plan. With regards to the Parks the City Council is interested in keeping a pro-parks levy. If a measure is put on the ballot then perhaps there should be an element concerning the landscaping of parts of the Seattle Center. This could include some aspects of the Master Plan such as clear entrances, changes to amphitheater, a multipurpose area, etc. As the pro-parks levy idea starts firming up, the Commission hopes there is some provision for the implementation of new parks for underserved sectors of the city, perhaps related to future growth, or potential development.

The New Parks Superintendent Tim Gallagher has been a great addition to the City. He has expressed interest in extending the parks levy as a continued funding mechanism for the parks system. Parks and open space have proved to build a sense of community, improve the health of the community they serve and provide different alternatives for recreation and neighborhood character. The Bike Plan and Pedestrian Plan should be part of the parks agenda.

Councilmember Rasmussen invited the Design Commission to support the Council Resolution related to the Parks Levy in June once the proposal has been created. The City Council encourages the Commission to continue providing the City with its valuable advice and professional opinion.

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**17 April 2008**      **Project: Rainier Vista at University of Washington**

**Phase:** Concept Design

**Last Reviews:**

**Presenters:** Kristine Kenney, University of Washington

**Attendees:** Rebecca Herzfeld, City Council Central Staff

Martha Lester, City Council Central Staff

Councilmember Tom Rasmussen

Time: 1.0 hour

(SR169 /RS0613)

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## **ACTION**

**The Design Commission thanks the team for the briefing and unanimously supports the project with the following comments:**

- **The Commission feels this concept provides a strong foundation for preserving the power of the Vista.**
- **The concept presented is a superior solution to solving various connections (ST, UW communities, UW Hospital) as well as enhancing the Vista itself.**
- **Concerns that without a funding and implementation strategy, the concept faces many difficulties in keeping to the Sound Transit schedule requirements.**
- **The concept resolves many of the issues and concerns the Commission had at the December briefing on the University of Washington light rail station by Sound Transit. The goal of protecting the vista and simplifying it has been achieved.**
- **Appreciates the ongoing interaction with Sound Transit.**
- **Encourage the team to reassess the phasing and move Phase III, the Montlake Triangle, higher on the list.**
- **Concern over the funding challenge and donor base. Encourage expanding donor base to include other partners in the Phase III portion of the project.**

**Disclosures: Commissioner Watson’s firm is working on the University of Washington Transit Station. Commissioner Johnston and Commissioner Ryan both work at the University of Washington.**

## **Project Presentation**

### *Project Background*

The Rainier Vista at the University of Washington is a cherished, major open space. The perimeters extend from Red Square to the intersection of Pacific Street and Montlake Boulevard, encompassing all the open space between the buildings that frame the vista. The plan for the transformation of the vista was created due to the changes that are happening in the area. The goals of the project are to wrap the following concepts together: Sustainability, Identity, Accessibility, and Scale. The vista is made up of many different parts and pieces. The overall goal was to simplify and reinforce the buffer. The concept includes reinforcing the center and the vista, while bringing functionality into the



landscape. There is no funding in place, but a concept that has been broken into four phases that will be presented to potential donors for financial support.

*Phase I: Donor Garden*

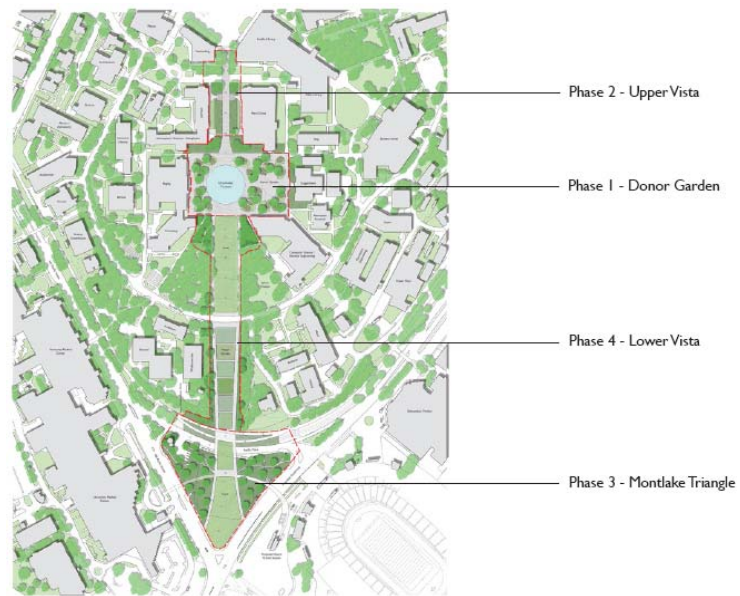
The scale of the fountain dominates this space and the surrounding landscape does not contribute to setting the fountain into the context.. This is the only level area along the vista, and the plan proposes creating a garden landscape with taller canopy trees to provide scale and an plaza area that could be used for University events.

*Phase II: Upper Vista*

This includes the area between Mary Gates and Johnson Halls. Here the lawn and shrub areas along the buildings would be switched. This provides an elevated lawn area where people-watching can take place and puts the texture of shrub planting and additional seating directly adjacent to where people are walking.

*Phase III: Montlake Triangle.*

The University is working closely with Sound Transit on the needs for the pedestrian bridge. This plan lowers Pacific Place and slightly raises the end of the Vista to provide a grade separated crossing for pedestrians. A spur of the Burke-Gilman Trail would follow the alignment of Pacific Place to ensure the mandated separated crossing. This plan re-integrates the triangle into the overall landscape of the campus and makes it an active hub of pedestrian activity.



**Figure 2: Rainier Vista Phasing Plan**

*Phase IV: Lower Vista*

This lawn area is currently used for active and passive recreation and would likely remain in some form. However, the southern portion is proposed to be used as a rain garden that will provide additional seating and create a memorable gateway to the University.

The plan proposes collecting stormwater runoff all along the vista. Roof water would be collected and stored in the cisterns within Drumheller Fountain. Runoff from Stevens Way would be collected in a series of raingardens that would filter out pollutants and then stored in a cistern under the raingardens.

This information was submitted by the presenter after the meeting for clarification:

Schedule for a possible Sound Transit pedestrian bridge redesign to accommodate a U of W approved and funded Rainer Vista master plan.

Before Bid:

Sound Transit will need direction from the U of W before the end of the 3rd quarter of 2009. This allows the bridge to be redesigned prior to Issue for Bid. This requires remobilization of the design team. This allows the Issue for Bid documents to contain the redesigned bridge.

Before construction and after Notice to Proceed:

Sound Transit will need direction from the U of W before the end of 2011. This allows the design team to delete and reissue drawings to the bridge contractor for re-pricing and construction. This is a change order to an existing contract at this point in time. Again, this requires remobilization of the design team.

### **Public Comments**

Suggest collaboration to Councilmember Drago. The City Council has the final decision on the Sound Transit skybridge. If the Council wants to see this possibility, it will need to be worked out how to structure the decision amongst all parties.

### **Commissioners' Comments**

- Is there an update on the UW collaboration with Sound Transit?
  - The Sound Transit team has given a timeframe on when the design of their bridge can be altered. When UW has committed to the lowering of Pacific Place, then it would be clear the bridge could be changed.
- How would the grades work?
  - Sound Transit requires 25' from top of structure to elevation of road (including Montlake and Pacific Place)
- What is the node?
  - An elevator that goes to a Sound Transit proposed bus stop at the tip of the triangle.
- What is the status of this plan?
  - This plan has gone through a UW steering committee and various other University review committees. It is being packaged into a marketing report to present to donors. It isn't something that needs to go before the Regents at this time.
- An assessment of pedestrian traffic flow needs to be conducted on where pedestrians will want to go and how they will get there. The station will change things dramatically over time. The functional demands are not being addressed by any of the plans.

- Sound Transit has done studies on users, but only as far as who will arrive at the station. This plan focuses on the entire vista and how to enhance it, not just on the Montlake Triangle. How people disperse will need to be addressed. This plan does allow people to freely choose where to go.
- Appreciate the effort to pay someone to come in with a strong vision.
- Montlake Triangle should be the first priority. Unifying King County, Sound Transit, and the University. This should be moved to Phase I.
  - The phasing was built around what donors would want to see, and centered on the fountain. It was a way to segment out manageable sized projects. The Montlake Triangle is the most expensive portion and is beyond what is expected from donor contributions. It should be a combined effort amongst the agencies.
- Much of this is in the city ROW.
- This bridge option respects the vista more.
- How do people go to the health science center?
  - They would go over the bridge to the triangle and across the triangle to the existing pedestrian crossing. In the future, if funding was available, the plan shows a potential pedestrian bridge, mirroring the bridge from the station.
- It is important and doable to find donors to fund Phase III first. It is a crucial piece of the overall project.
  - There are two different timelines. UW could commit today and the bridge could be redesigned to go out in the first bid package. The second timeline would be to design the bridge as is, but the plan would be shelved before it would be bid, so there is an option to have the bridge redesigned. Have about two years, potentially a little more, to make a decision.
- The vision should be bigger. It should resolve other transportation issues such as bus stops and traffic flow as well as pedestrians and bicycles.
  - This portion is only conceptual. Focusing on the entire vista.
- This should be a joint study tied into other efforts.
- Appreciate graceful arc of the bridge.
- There will be a lot of at-grade surface crossings of Montlake with the amount of parking near the station with both plans.
- Concern over aesthetic of the water retention area of the vista.
  - Good example at Wellesley College, the newly created Alumnae Valley design by the same consultant, Michael VanValkenburgh Associates.
- The challenge will be how to make this a successful inter-modal area.
- This component solves some of the issues that were seen in the Sound Transit skybridge. This proposal makes sense out of the triangle.

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**17 April 2008**      **Project: Commission Business**

Time: 0.5 hours

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**Action Items**      A.    April 3, 2008 Minutes  
                             B.    Submit Timesheets

**Discussion Items**    C.    40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Planning  
                             D.    Recruitment

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**17 April 2008**      **Project: Blume Yale Campus Woonerf and Swale**

**Phase:** Street Use Permit

**Last Reviews:**

**Presenters:** Barry Aaronson, NBBJ  
Melanie Davis, SvR Design Company  
Kate Diamond, NBBJ  
Nick McDaniel, NBBJ

**Attendees:** Tom Bendeak, The Blume Company  
Bruce Blume, The Blume Company  
Greg Blume, The Blume Company  
Michael Dorcy, DPD  
Ethan Kushner, NBBJ  
Brice Maryman, SvR Design Company  
Tara Raymond, The Blume Company  
Peg Staeheli, SvR Design Company  
Bradley Wilburn, DPD

Time: 1.0 hours

(SR 170/RS0606)

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## **ACTION**

**The Design Commission thanks the team for their presentation and approves the proposed street use permit with a vote of 9-1 and offers the following comments:**

- **The Commission would like the team to provide more refinement of the dimensions, traffic flow and engineering elements of the street dimensions and the travel lanes, as well as the design of the public ROW.**
- **Commend the team on challenging the typical Seattle sidewalk specifications and engaging SDOT in exploring such alternatives.**
- **The environmental aspects set a new standard in the public ROW. However, some of the richness and diversity may reduce the public character of sidewalks and spaces.**
- **Concern about the 26 ft street section, appreciate that it slows traffic but defer the evaluation to SDOT.**
- **Encourage the team to ensure that the sidewalk dimensions and public spaces are adequate for comfortable pedestrian flow.**
- **Suggest the north end of woonerf have more public elements and focus so it clearly becomes the terminus for the street and is more inviting.**
- **Encourage additional activation of the Pontius Street edge, perhaps by adding parking along the building façade with no entrances.**
- **Consider simplifying the woonerf design. There may be too much going on from a design perspective.**
- **Simplification may make the street look more public, which could be achieved by having some of the elements match City standards occurring in the neighborhood.**
- **The swale in the south block may need periodic crossings rather than a continuous swale.**

- Encourage using light fixtures from the neighborhood rather than creating a complicated lighting plan.
- Encourage merging elements from the two parts of the campus for more continuity of public space.
- Explore public art as way to enliven the end of the woonerf.

**Dissenting vote based on the opinion that the sidewalks are too narrow.**

### **Proponent’s Presentation**

#### *Project Background*

Yale Ave dead-ends north of Mercer Street at the Interstate-5 onramps. The project proposes turning this dead end into a public amenity that would serve cars, pedestrians, and the environment by creating a woonerf, as well as continuing the swales on Yale Ave and Pontius Ave between Republican and Mercer.

A woonerf is a public plaza that mixes vehicles and pedestrians, popular in The Netherlands and Scandinavia. Currently, the only woonerf in Seattle is located at the Four Seasons. The design team has envisioned a space rich with greenery and retail proceeding to a public overlook at the end of Yale. The overlook has the potential to become a quite respite for the neighborhood and is a terminus to the retail core starting at the south end of Yale at REI and Alley 24. Within the plaza will be a series of runnels and bioswales that filter the runoff from the buildings and the plaza.



**Figure 3: Yale Ave Woonerf**

As vehicles enter the street they will rise up to signalize movement into the pedestrian space. The rise will also need to accommodate accessibility requirements. The plaza will feel public through element detailing, lighting etc. Surface changes will indicate what zones one is coming into. Seating will be provided for restaurant patrons as well as others. Stormwater requirements will be met while also using pedestrian friendly detailing. The geometry of buildings and street will tie together to denote a public space. The elevation slopes downward as one heads north, so the entrance area will be flattened to create the plaza. The treatment at the dead end will be a lush environment of the same plantings used in the stormwater area. Commission support as a public benefit is appreciated. The team is working with SDOT on the turnaround and with SPU on garbage collection.

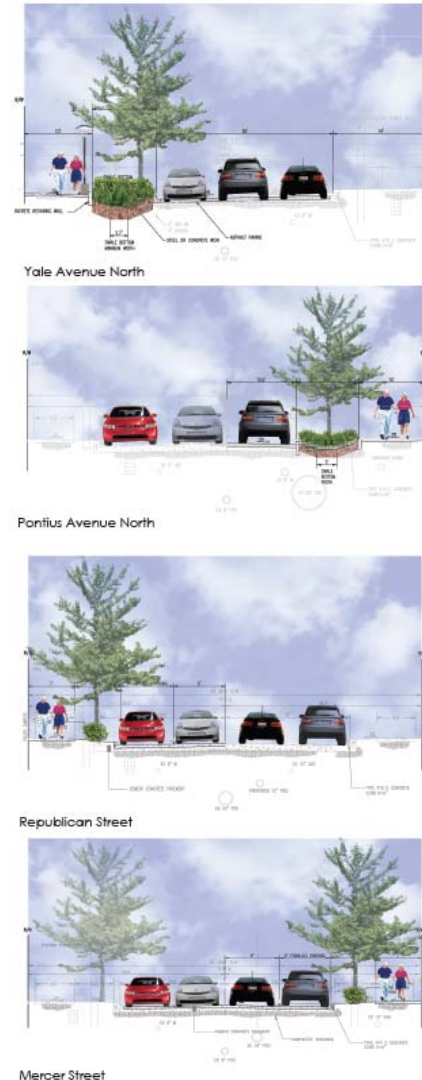
The City of Seattle’s *Swale on Yale* project is part of the overall infrastructure investment to filter stormwater runoff coming from Capitol Hill/First Hill. The project proposes continuing the swale north along Yale and Pontius for the block between Republican St and Mercer St. The project would maintain the same roadway width as the *Swale on Yale*,

thus eliminating on-street parking along Yale and Pontius. The swale creates a wider green zone and a pedestrian buffer. The swales would be filtering runoff from the surrounding streets, the Yale Campus site and the Yale Campus rooftops. The process is unusual for the City of Seattle, so Design Commission support is appreciated. The runnels are formed into the hard surface area and will have a steel cover that is ADA compliant. Puyallup has used this method which has proven to work well. The stormwater planters will also function as seating.

Standard street sections will need to be amended by taking out one lane of parking for stormwater planters along Yale and Pontius. The 26 ft ROW will allow two traffic lanes. It is an unusual width, so the team is working with SDOT to resolve the issues. Standup vertical elements and bollards are also proposed, and the team is in discussion with SDOT.

Although there is a zoning advantage for mixed use, the client would rather not include residential. The courtyard at the center of the full block development will include a quasi public plaza.

A brick industrial building is currently located on the site that has no architectural or historic value, so it will be removed. Ground floor retail doesn't always work, which is shown by the vacant retail space in the apartment building on Pontius. Therefore, the project focuses its retail on Yale. The primary entrances will be internal to site. The project is looking to achieve LEED Gold. Some of the techniques being explored are external solar shading and stormwater treatment. Lighting will be used to create a sense of place at night that will be both connective and celebratory. The swale, in combination with the *Swale on Yale* and the plazas and parks creates a whole zone in the city dedicated to clean water for lakes and streams.



**Figure 4: Swale street sections**

**Public Comments**

Michael Dorcy, DPD

- Both sites have gone through the design process and have been seen by the Design Review Board (DRB) for early guidance. The projects will be going back for recommendation meetings on May 7<sup>th</sup>. DRB is generally pleased and likely will be when they see the project again. The North and South Campuses are separate projects but are being seen at the same time.

Can the team speak on what SDOT has to say about the project?

- The runnels and stormwater planters used as seating are issues. There are concerns because the project is varying from SDOT standards. A maintenance agreement is important as is coordinating with the fire department. The loss of on-street parking is also an issue. SDOT is generally supportive, but the team needs to work out the details of safety issues like curbs and trip hazards. SDOT hasn't supported or denied the 26 ft street width.
- The team has spoken with the fire department who will be satisfied if the changes SDOT is bringing up are addressed. Materials will be looked at for accessibility issues and maintenance concerns. Tammy Fredericks is the SDOT reviewer and Leo Kaarrekoski is the main contact.

### **Commissioners' Comments**

- Concern over lane widths.
  - The existing face of curb to face of curb on Yale Ave N is 26 ft wide, and will not change. The traffic lanes are 9 ft with an 8 ft parking lane. There will be a 14 ft sidewalk and planter area. The traffic area on Pontius Ave N has two 11 ft lanes and one 10.5 ft lane.
- The widths are tight, more residential. There will be loading at the end of Yale which will need a wider lane.
- How is this project matching the *Swale on Yale*?
  - Yale Ave takes the water from the full width of the street into the swale. Only half of the street's water will go into the swale on Pontius. Between Mercer and Republican.
- Why does the road slightly swerve at Yale and Republican?
  - Not sure, that is the proposal from SPU on the road configuration.
  - The *Swale on Yale* project is taking water from Capitol Hill, unlike this one which is only taking water from the surrounding streets and buildings. The *Swale on Yale* will have narrower sidewalks.
- Why not continue the woonerf treatment to the block to the south?
  - The proposed woonerf is located in an area where Blume owns both sides of the block. This is not the case to the south. In addition, there is more traffic south due to the parking located in the buildings on either side. Mercer will be dead-ended at Fairview as part of the two-way Mercer project and will be much quieter.
- Why are Tulip trees proposed?
  - Still need to talk to Bill Ames at SDOT about them. There are no street trees now so the difference will be great.
- Look at 33<sup>rd</sup> Ave and see what they do to the sidewalk. Although they are good with water.
- How are pedestrians protected from vehicles in the woonerf?
  - Not fully segregated because the paving is at the same grade level. Traffic will be slowed (by runnels and other things) so they are co-mingling with pedestrians in different ways. There are also tactile stripes that warn pedestrians they are entering a vehicular area.
- Will the future tenants see the narrower lanes as an advantage? It seems very tight.



- There are two 9 ft lanes and an 8 ft parking lane. Smaller but there have been many conversations about this width and we do want to slow traffic along this block, as planned in block to south of this where City is doing the *Swale on Yale* project.
- This is a residential area but the team is proposing an office building. The parking and loading entrances are placed at the end of the woonerf so the tenant vehicles are going through the woonerf area.
- How many people are driving through here? Is there a pedestrian hierarchy? Are sidewalks scaled to pedestrian flows? How are pedestrians getting to their destination?
  - A study was conducted at the beginning. Pedestrians are coming up Republican and Mercer. This project gives multiple circulation possibilities and addresses how pedestrians walk to and through the project, not just the woonerf.
- Will the woonerf feel public? A lot of design attention has been at the front area with street furniture and blending people, traffic and water, but it disappears toward the end next to the freeway. Need to resolve end issue.
- With the closure of Mercer and added development in the neighborhood, Republican will have increased use by cars.
  - Republican has a 40 ft ROW with 12 ft lanes.
- The presentation has conflicting information.
  - The team is responding to this issue.
- With the removal of parking and the exclusion of retail on Pontius, there are no entrances to the building creating a loss of activity. Greening is nice but will the space be safe?
- Parking goes with informal users. Parking could animate certain areas of the project.
- Using *Swale on Yale* before it's been tested.
- Simplify the design of the woonerf and encourage the continuity of pedestrian space. The Barney Rubble is very loose and not related to building style.
- Why is this project adding an alley when other projects are vacating them?
  - Proposed for loading.
- The alley looks like it might not be refined enough to look private. No attention has been paid to the alley. There needs to be a balance of what's going on in the woonerf and what in the private alley.
- Laud sustainable goals, but focusing on some things too much at cost of pedestrian environment.
- The Commission has seen a lot of the Mercer project and worked to keep the lighting cohesive. It could be carried through this project too. Look adjacent to the site and in SLU to see what type of lighting is being used and what could work in this project.
- It may be better to reduce the elements that need to be maintained in order to reach a maintenance agreement. A variety of fixtures and materials could make this more difficult. Great sites, fortunate place to do this.
- Applaud company for looking at ROW as shared space for pedestrians.

- Don't think woonerf will read as public because of the materials that are related to the private buildings. The street is a dead end and will mostly be used by tenants.
- Don't see dumbing it down so it doesn't look too nice.
- Should look at materials and simplification to get a more public feel. Look at public lexicon, such as dimensions of paving and such, without dumbing it down.
- Since the woonerf is an extension of what's going on to the south, draw some elements up into this project.
  - There are retail uses that show clear terminus of the street and read as public.
- Retail area is not a public use; would someone who isn't spending money feel like entering the woonerf space?
- Elements such as more common street pavements, carrying things up from the south, street lighting not just building lighting, adding a public art element, and signage can be combined to create a rich Yale Street.
- Have any traffic issues or any other issues come up with the owners of the buildings to the east?
  - They're taller and uphill from site. No issues have been brought up.

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17 April 2008

**Project:** West Seattle Wayfinding System

**Phase:** Briefing

**Last Reviews:**

**Presenters:**

Rebecca Deehr, Feet First

Charles Redmond, Morgan Community Association

Seth Schromen-Wawrin, Feet First

**Attendees:**

Christine Alar, SDOT

Virginia Coffman, SDOT

Time: 1.0 hours

(SR 220/RS)

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## **ACTION**

The Design Commission thanks the team for the briefing on the West Seattle Wayfinding System and offers the following comments:

- **Supports the project and the outstanding community involvement effort involved.**
- **Looks forward to seeing this pilot project and others like it throughout the city.**
- **Appreciates clarification of the intent of creating/accommodating overall connectivity of trail system. Encourage defining some trail system pieces so one is not overwhelmed by the entire network of pathways.**
- **The Commission reviews kiosks in ROW but will not look at each one.**
- **Encourages thought on hierarchy of information with respect to map, kiosk and small markers, and perhaps achieve the simplest design and wayfinding elements and build from that as needed.**
- **Encourages the team to keep it simple and try to find the fewest elements that will work to communicate the most important information.**
- **When looking at specific locations consider the bulk of kiosks, sightline impacts, and other street elements that would be impacted by introduction of a new kiosk.**
- **Encourages working with SDOT on locating signs.**
- **Consider including the east side of Duwamish on the map to aid orientation.**
- **Include topography lines on maps rather than other means of showing elevation change.**
- **Consider limiting the amount of quickly ‘dateable’ information on the kiosks and how that will look with fading, how to swap out old maps, etc. Try not to rely too heavily on the Adopt-a-Kiosk program for maintenance.**

## **Proponent’s Presentation**

### *Project Background*

The goal of the wayfinding project is to link the large and diverse number of commercial areas in West Seattle. Through a community process 23 sites have been identified for wayfinding stations to connect the 88 miles of streets, trails, stairways, shorelines where people get around on foot. The team wants to implement wayfinding now so people can navigate and feel safe.

“West Seattle Trails” Neighborhoods on Foot map was created by Feet First through a Department of Neighborhoods (DON) Small and Simple grant. It identifies restrooms and community highlights and resources, beside trails and kiosks. The map also shows stairways and has other elevation information, which is important in West Seattle due to the hills. The map will be the major component of the kiosks.

Signs will function as trail and destination markers along the network. They will be located at trail intersections, confusing turns and along long trails. Blades will guide users to trail direction and direct users to nearby destinations. The proposal uses SDOT’s downtown design for language consistency and maintenance ease.

Wayfinding kiosks will be located throughout West Seattle. They will be located at important community resources and trail intersections. They will be created through the community process. The development will be phased with one pilot kiosk and ten kiosks in 2008-2009. In 2010 additional funding will be sought for the other 12 kiosks in the system (for a total of 23 kiosks West Seattle-wide). The prototype kiosk will inform the series of kiosks that will be located West Seattle-wide. The design process will be informed by City entities, consultants and the community. The prototype kiosk has a map, information specific to the area, trail highlights, a bulletin board, map container and artwork.

The wayfinding signs will be maintained by SDOT by adopting their design. No annual fees or permits are necessary. The kiosks will be prepared to resist weathering, use and vandalism. An Adopt-a-Kiosk program will be instituted to provide maintenance and the caretaker will be responsible for sign maintenance and cleaning, permitting, and monitoring the bulletin board.

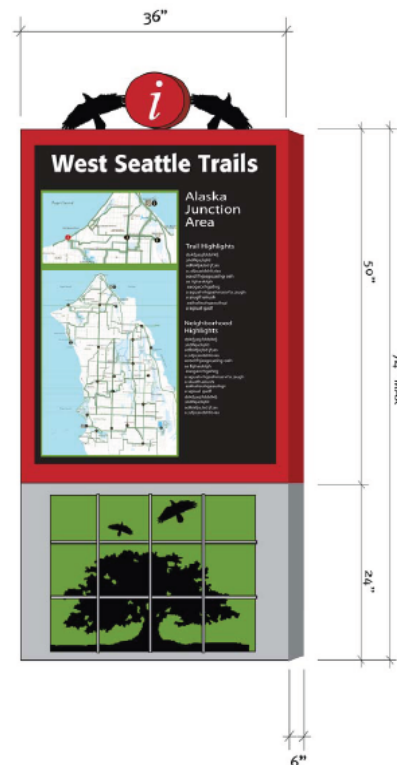


Figure 5: Prototype kiosk

### Commissioners’ Comments

- The Design Commission must review all kiosks in the ROW. Appreciate that prototypes are from zoo, downtown etc. so good you have recognized that those are different settings, you are in neighborhoods. Doing legwork for Pedestrian Master Plan.
- Is this a map of trail systems or is it more local. Maybe tie together and give them names like “Beach Loop” “Ridge Walk” to make me want to go out and see something because I don’t know the area.
- Number of signs seems very high for size of area.
  - A survey led to communities with set of walks. Didn’t identify certain walks but rather couplets. Identified mileage of various routes between two points. Neighborhood charrettes will name trails.

- 88 miles, SDOT has standard that every ¼ mile or less at confusing areas. Idea will go back to community so may be reduced.
- People who live in the neighborhood know where they're going, outsiders don't. Don't need more signposts. Should encourage SDOT to let you use existing posts. The goal is that people won't need a map. More simple signs. Map something bigger, not detail. Simple things enacted more quickly and that will guide later. Should use real topography lines, not another way.
- This is a great project. Keep it simple. Try to find the fewest elements that will work to ease the construction, maintenance and readability.
- When locating the kiosk think of their bulk and pedestrian movement around them.
  - Did talk to Metro, and each neighborhood group would be involved in deciding the kiosk location.
- The maps are confusing by not showing the east edge of Duwamish.
- \$4500 for each kiosk and \$500 for installation. Just under \$100,000 for ten kiosks and 60 wayfinding signs.
- The community involvement is staggering!
- Don't rely on adopt a kiosk to update information. Good reaching out to other neighborhoods.

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**17 April 2008**      **Project: Street and Alley Vacation Process**

**Phase: Briefing**

**Last Reviews:**

**Presenters:** Beverly Barnett, SDOT

**Attendees:**

Time: 1.0 hours

(SR 169/RS)

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## **ACTION**

**The Design Commission thanks Beverly for the discussion on policies, current issues and procedures with the street and alley vacation process, and the Commissioners look forward to this being an annual occurrence. They also offered the following comments:**

- **The Commission appreciates that in its advisory role to the City Beverly steps back from the deliberations to give the Commission time and space to do its work. The Commission will notify Beverly on cases where pre-meeting briefings would be helpful.**
- **In street and alley vacations every case is unique. On the other hand, every street and alley space provides public value and benefits measured in any number of ways (light, access, scale, views, wildlife corridors, etc.); in its evaluation, the Commission should include the potential impacts of vacations on the overall distribution of building mass, building orientation, and urban form.**
- **The Commission affirms its charge in vacation cases to seek a balance between the impacts and the provisions to compensate the public for those impacts.**
- **The Commission's role is to make recommendations on street and alley vacations to the Council. In some cases it can be helpful for the Commission to provide testimony at Council deliberations.**
- **The Commission reiterated the need for sufficient background data and maps to assess the cumulative impacts of proposed vacations.**
- **Since the early 1980s, when the City's street and alley vacation policies and procedures were developed, the bar has steadily risen. Diligent review and consideration is critical to the future overall quality of the city.**

Beverly Barnett with SDOT came to speak to the Design Commission about the Street and Alley Vacation Process.

Currently, the Design Commission review starts with little information and no traffic analysis. Would the Commissioners like more comments or a separate meeting to express more of her thoughts on a project? Beverly stated that she tries not speak to many of her or the City staff's comments when the Design Commission is reviewing projects to give Commissioners a chance to ask their own questions.

There are various projects currently seeking vacations such as the third alley vacation from Vulcan, and the Highland Drive project. People come to talk to SDOT very early and it looks like the Greyhound site and the Conner Homes project may be coming to see the Design Commission soon.

### **Commissioners' Comments**

- If it is a subterranean vacation does it need to go through full alley vacation process with public benefits?
  - Yes, it is the same process. Public benefit balance requires a smaller public benefit because the impact to the ROW is less. First United Methodist Church has parking constraints, so they may seek a below grade vacation to bump out underground parking.
- The amount of public benefit is toughest part to get right.
- Big projects with a big benefit are the easiest. But in Highland Dr. ROW is very steep, so what is its value? Or benefit can be something completely different like a cash amount for something offsite. There is no consistency and no accountability.
- It's up to the proponent to present their approach. We do set precedence between us. We aren't a judicial body we are not calculating something out here. We're not asking, what's most I can get out of them; it's what the best is for it.
- Can't help it if project proponents come walking out with the feeling there's no consistency.
  - An important starting point is that every bit of ROW has its own value. Drainage, habitat, connectivity, and other values. The Commission and Council have been consistent and the bar has slowly risen. In early 1980s policies were created to provide consistency. Asked then, if it is possible to provide a formula and it didn't work. Individual circumstances affect our review. The discussion around the Block 101 project was very good.
- Relationship to other alleys and open spaces was not clear.
- When the Commission does vacations it is changing the mass of buildings. There is less air, less modulation, and facades with less interest.
  - The Commission doesn't want to have overlap with the DRBs but those are issues you should be addressing.
  - The Urban Exchange project was the first in SLU that changed the building orientation to from N-S to E-W. This was a big shift from the strong N-S orientation of the street system and bulk of buildings. Now so many have started orientating themselves this way it is impacting the neighborhood. Bulk, scale and building orientation are important things the DC should be looking at.
- Enso is using the street, should this have been reviewed by the Design Commission?
  - Yes.
- Once we do our thing, what does the Council do? Still wrestle with it, or just move it through quickly?
  - The DC has a very big impact on the decision. Commissioners should attend the Council hearings on vacations.

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**17 April 2008**      **Project: Greenwood Avenue North Improvements**

**Phase:** Briefing

**Last Reviews:**

**Presenters:** Michael Ward, SDOT

**Attendees:** Esther Chinn, SDOT

Darren Murata, WHPacific

Terrence Paananen, WHPacific

Time: 1.0 hours

(SR 169/RS)

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## **ACTION**

**The Commission thanks the team for the briefing on the Greenwood Avenue North Street Improvements and offers the following comments:**

- **The Commission strongly encourages the City to underground utilities in this corridor as part of this project.**
- **Recommend incorporating area behind the sidewalk into the design rather than leaving it to private property use. For example, showing it as part of the sidewalk or public use in plans, unless it is necessary in specific instances for private access and maneuvering.**
- **Promote use of street-use permits to clearly communicate ownership between city and private owners.**
- **Recommend expanding landscape areas to connect tree pit areas where parking is preclude to strengthen pedestrian character.**
- **Encourages showing utilities in cross-section details to help inform design decisions.**
- **Support on-street parking in off-peak hours in areas where parking vehicles can be achieved (i.e. west side of street).**
- **Generally not happy with the cross-section as a prototype for further projects moving north.**

### **Proponent's Presentation**

#### *Project Background*

The project is located on Greenwood Ave N between N 105<sup>th</sup> and N 112<sup>th</sup> Streets. The project plans include widening the roadway from four-lanes to five-lanes along with curb, gutter, sidewalks and street landscaping. Signal and street improvements are included as well as storm system improvements, all of which will enhance pedestrian safety and transit access.

The team came before the Commission about two years ago when they just started on the project. Funding is based on a plan with parking on either side. The team amended the roadway section taking out the two parking lanes. In order to calm traffic, medians were added. Greenwood Ave N is one of the seven corridors where transit service is being targeted for improvements, and many measures are meant to contribute to this. Undergrounding has now been decided which has also affected the project.



Private projects along Greenwood Ave N require one space per unit, so on street parking will be used. Many units are being added so parking is a big concern. Neighbors are concerned that the residents along Greenwood will park on the side streets. Consequently, the team conceded some space (4.5 ft.) behind the sidewalk to allow for residential projects along Greenwood to provide parking. Due to narrow lot widths, there are not many possibilities for on street parking due to the number of driveways. New projects, mainly along west side of the road, must park from alley. The team is also working on parking issues with current businesses located along the project.

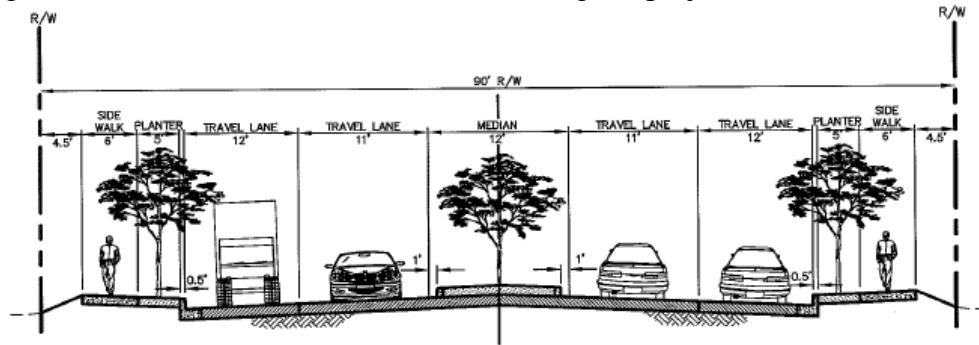


Figure 6: Greenwood Ave N street section

### Commissioners' Comments

- Will property owners have an easement to use the 4.5 ft at edge of ROW?
  - Can't necessarily park there but have more room for maneuvering so they don't have to back out.
- If someone redevelops, does that area go toward sidewalk?
  - Yes.
- Can you take this as template and use it north?
  - Yes, big projects like this aren't done often. Grant writers can use it very early on when asking for Federal funds.
- Respect that public involvement was done but have to decide where to spend money. Rather see two blocks done right, than same money spread out over a larger area.
  - Undergrounding has recently come up and is costly. This may cause a redesign. On a \$7.8 million job it would require \$4 to \$5 million more.
- Businesses have a hardship, but concerned about the 4.5 ft. There may be an expectation that people can drive car on it in perpetuity. The team needs to draw in the sidewalk to edge of ROW. It is a very modest Pedestrian Zone with no bike lanes.
  - Site runs parallel to interurban trail, so no bike lane was provided, especially given heavily used nature of street.
- 4 ft. tree pits are not consistent for a street that doesn't have parking along it. It is not safe for pedestrians. There should be connected tree pits.
- Plans should show utilities.
- Don't give away backside of sidewalk.
- 4.5 ft probably requires an annual street use permit from property owners, so there are costs.
- Does the speed and reliability project go up to 85<sup>th</sup>? Is there a signal system?

- Yes. Signal priority system is in the works, but not for a couple of years.
- Might need to physically connect signals so if undergrounding is going on should coordinate the two. Work with Metro to find solutions now.
- Priority conflict between speed and reliability and parking needs, so should support off-peak parking.
  - Discussed with Grace and informed Mayor, speed and reliability and parking people in SDOT are at odds, and came up with this solution.
- Wouldn't approve as prototype, 4.5 ft could be used for one of functions not being served such as sidewalk, bike path, utilities, etc.