



**Seattle  
Design  
Commission**

**APPROVED**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**May 15, 2008**

Convened: 8:30am  
Adjourned: 3:30pm

**Greg Nickels** Projects Reviewed  
*Mayor* Freeway Park  
**Karen Kiest** Seattle Center Skate Park  
*Chair* Block 101 Alley Vacation  
**Tasha Atchison** Capitol Hill Park  
**Brendan Connolly** John and Summit Park

**John Hoffman** Design Commissioners Present  
**Mary Johnston** Darrell Vange, Acting Chair  
**Juanita LaFond** Tasha Atchison  
**Dennis Ryan** Brendan Connolly  
**Norie Sato** John Hoffman  
**Darrell Vange** Juanita LaFond  
**Darby Watson** Dennis Ryan  
**Guillermo Romano** Darby Watson

**Guillermo Romano**  
*Executive Director*

**Valerie Kinast**  
*Coordinator*

Staff Present  
Guillermo Romano  
Valerie Kinast  
Tom Iurino  
Ian Macek



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<b>15 May 2008</b>	<b>Project:</b> Seattle Center Skate Park
	<b>Phase:</b> Concept Design
	<b>Last Reviews:</b> 11-01-2007
	<b>Presenters:</b> Jill Crary, Seattle Center Kathleen McLaughlin, Seattle Center Mark van der Zalm, VDZ & Assoc, Inc.
	<b>Attendees:</b> Sandra Choy, Weinstein AU Patricia Hopper, Arts & Cultural Affairs

Time: 1.0 hours

(SR169 /RS0611)

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## ACTION

**The Design Commission thanks the team for their presentation, and unanimously approves the proposed schematic design direction with the following recommendations:**

- Appreciate the emphasis on creating an active entry node and consideration of the surrounding edges, the activity and context, including the design opportunities beyond the scope boundary and integration with Fischer Pavilion.
- Recognize the stakeholder desire to blend the design concept elements, but encourage you to maintain clarity of concept as you move forward with design.
- Strong encouragement to maintain the bold approach to push the design envelope, while not forgetting who their primary clients (skate boarders) are.
- Support incorporation of the existing canopy to provide weather protected viewing space to the park to promote intergenerational comfort and activity.
- Continue to consider clarity and wayfinding of comfort resources for users.
- First and foremost the project should work as an urban skatepark – other considerations, although important should be considered as secondary if skatability of the park is compromised.
- Support integration of art into the park design.
- Appreciate the incorporation of appropriate and energy efficient lighting for the plaza to create a safe space, even if not skatable.

**Recusals: Commissioner LaFond and Commissioner Watson**

### Project Presentation

#### *Project Background*

The 5<sup>th</sup> Ave parking lot was the old skatepark location. Last summer City Council chose the Seattle Center Pavilion site at Thomas and 2<sup>nd</sup>, which was identified in the preliminary draft of Seattle Center Century 21 Master Plan as a possible future site. Neither the Council nor SPAC (Seattle Park and Recreation Skateboard Park Advisory Committee) wanted the suggested temporary site.

Perri Lynch has been chosen as the artist for the project and will be part of the design team weaving her ideas into the park. The existing cross-axis through access at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Thomas make this an important intersection. The site is also at an interesting highpoint in elevation.

Due to the controversial aspects of the project a stakeholder group was convened. Its Stakeholder team includes Seattle Center staff, SPAC (Seattle Parks and Recreation Skatepark Advisory Committee), Skate Like a Girl, the nearby Sacred Heart Church, the Seattle Children's Theater, Seattle Center workgroups, the project architect and representatives from the four major Seattle Center festivals. The final design will be completed in July. The project will be a tricky demolition, with the completion of the park scheduled for the end of June 2009.

There has been a move from old school style of transition/bowl skateboarding, which is space intensive, to street/skate plaza skating. Street style creates the need to create authentic urban terrain in an urban plaza, hence reducing the impact of inappropriate skating in other areas. These plazas can be a place for public art, multipurpose events, and can use a diversity of materials.

The site chosen is a high profile location with landmarks that give a great context. The skatepark will be looked at nationally because it is the first downtown plaza in the US. The prominent location also acts as an entry to Seattle Center. The project will open up the corner and make it an asset to the entire campus. It will be treated as a welcoming entry, making it safe and not intimidating for both skaters and non-skaters. Integrated materials, and incorporated functional artwork are priorities, as well as screening so the park is respectful of adjacent neighbors.

There are still various ways that the park design can go. Commonalities exist between the three concepts: grade changes, London Plane trees along borders, entry at the corner where there would be no elevation change, and respecting the back of the house operations of Key Arena. The design will integrate entry elements, admissions booth, necessary mechanical vents and ATM, to coordinate with the skatepark.

Three design directions were shown to the public for feedback.

1. Urban plaza vocabulary with stairs, ramps, and other urban elements.



**Figure 3: Skatepark Concepts**

2. Dynamic angular pieces and sharp elements. Canopies tie in with Fisher Pavilion.
3. Throwback to transition style skateboarding with an updated twist and urban feel.

After public comment the team decided that a blending of concepts one and three would be appropriate. The design will stay away from grey concrete and will use a number of materials that add color and are skateable. The team is also looking at how to infuse the design with art that is indicative of Seattle.

### **Commissioners' Comments**

- Can you speak more about the existing canopy?
  - It is a relic from 1962 and is a cast concrete form that is a freestanding element. The canopy provides weather protection and viewing and helps to define the space. The design will have edges that are less skateable to promote people to get close.
- SC is a place for innovation. Be new, bold, and adventurous. Is blending the concepts taking away the boldness of the design?
  - Softening some of the big statements and combining with the rectilinear elements of the other concept will keep the design fresh and bold. An exciting flow can be created by integrating the curvilinear form with the rectilinear elements.
- First and foremost it must work as a skatepark. The design needs to push the skateboarder's envelope as well as plan for future recreation needs.
  - A skateable art piece will definitely be incorporated into the park.
- Support keeping existing canopy. Are restrooms/water/facilities nearby?
  - Located adjacent to the park, and a drinking fountain will be added.
- Are there safety Issues?
  - By moving the park onto campus there will be more 'eyes on the park.'
- Are there less accidents or do patrons just not sue?
  - Skating has a lower accident rate than soccer or football. Many injuries are minor or go unreported. The passion of the skateboard community is great that they appreciate the park and the consequences that come with skating.
- Does the plaza have to be at grade, or can varying grades be added?
  - Existing grades will be used to add element changes to avoid tall walls. There will be a grade change in all three options between the zero grade plaza and the ends.
- Appreciate the objectives of bringing in the vertical design elements of Fisher Pavilion into the space.
- Encourage looking at the maintenance implications of the material choices for the project.
- Appreciate having artist Perri Lynch involved in the project.
- How will the space be lit?
  - The plaza is not intended to be skatable at night, and would require a large amount of lighting if it were. The plan is to light the space for safety, but not to promote skating. Part of the art program can look at lighting. Using solar and LED lights wherever possible, because can't use integrated stormwater due to slab construction.