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Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Shannon Loew, Chair

Ellen Sollod, Vice Chair

Brodie Bain

Lee Copeland

Thaddeus Egging

Rachel Gleeson

Grant Hromas

Martin Regge

John Savo

Ross Tilghman

Michael Jenkins
Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Nicolas Welch
Planner

Joan Nieman
Administrative Staff

**Department of Planning
and Development**
700 5th Avenue, Suite 2000
PO Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

TEL 206-615-1349
FAX 206-233-7883
seattle.gov/dpd

Commissioners Present

Shannon Loew, Chair
Brodie Bain
Lee Copeland
Rachel Gleeson
Grant Hromas
Martin Regge

Commissioners Excused

Ellen Sollod, Vice Chair
Thaddeus Egging
John Savo
Ross Tilghman

Project Description

The petitioner proposes to vacate Occidental Ave S between S Massachusetts St and S Holgate St in the SoDo neighborhood to facilitate development of a 750,000-square-foot, 18,000-20,000-seat multi-purpose arena for NBA basketball, NHL hockey, other sporting events, concerts, and shows.

The project site is bounded by S Massachusetts St to the north, 1st Ave S to the west, S Holgate St to the south, and the BNSF Railway right-of-way to the east. The vacation of Occidental Ave S would increase the developable area of the project site by roughly 17.5%. The proposed development includes a plaza space at the northwest corner of the site and widened sidewalks along 1st Ave S and S Holgate.

Meeting Summary

This was the first time the Design Commission saw a preview of the petitioner's proposed public benefit package. Previous presentations included summary information on the proposed public benefits. Because of the scope and complexity of the project and proposed street vacation, coupled with the City's ongoing review of mitigation required for permitting of the Arena, the petitioner did not request an action on the proposed public benefit package. Until the City determines the mitigation required, the Commission could not make a final determination about public benefit. The Commission only provided direction to the petitioner to guide the continued development of the public benefit package.

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

June 18, 2015

9:00 – 11:00 am

Type Street Vacation

Phase Public Benefit

Location Full block bounded by S Massachusetts St, 1st Ave S, S Holgate St, and the BNSF Railway right-of-way

Previous Reviews

[12/6/12](#), [1/17/13](#), [4/4/13](#), [5/2/13](#),
[11/7/13](#), [4/16/15](#), [5/21/15](#)

Project Team Present

Mark Brands

Site Workshop

Cale Doornbos

HOK

Anton Foss

HOK

Brook Jacksha

Magnusson Klemencic Associates

Jack McCullough

McCullough Hill Leary, PS

Zach Mednelsohn

Magnusson Klemencic Associates

Attendees

Tom Backer

Washington State Major League Baseball Stadium Public Facilities District

Beverly Barnett

SDOT

Lynn Claudon

Lynn Claudon Consulting

Chris Eaves

SDOT

Dan Eder

Council Central Staff

Mike Fleming

resident

Melody McCutcheon

Hillis Clark Martin & Peterson, P.S.

Garry Papers

DPD

Norie Sato

Sato Services

John Shaw

DPD

Bryan Stevens

DPD

Mike Swenson

Transpo Group

Lish Whitson

Council Central Staff

Ruri Yampolsky

Office of Arts & Culture

Summary of Presentation

Jack McCullough introduced the presentation, which is available on the [Design Commission website](#). Mr. McCullough said that the project team is working with DPD and SDOT regarding mitigation requirements for the project. According to Mr. McCullough, the petitioner cannot define its public benefit proposal until those discussions are completed. Mr. McCullough stated that, for the same reason, it is not possible for the Design Commission to reach conclusions regarding public benefit at this briefing.

As shown in Figure 1, Mark Brands summarized the proposed public benefit items in two categories: 1) on-site and frontage improvements and 2) off-site improvements:



Figure 1. Proposed public benefit package

Mr. Brands explained that the petitioner is in the process of working with the City to identify the scope of required mitigation and the extent to which the proposed public benefit items are not needed for project mitigation. He then described each public benefit item in detail.

According to Mr. Brands, active uses would surround the proposed plaza at the corner of 1st Ave S and S Massachusetts St, shown in Figure 2. The presenta-



Figure 2. Plaza at the northwest corner of the site

tion included several images of potential activities that could be programmed in the plaza, including food trucks or basketball games.

Mr. Brands described the S Massachusetts St right-of-way dedicated and shared-use street proposal as an extension of the plaza. He noted that the proposal aligns with the Stadium District Study Street Concept Plan.

Finally, Mr. Brands briefly described the remaining public benefit items. He said the petitioner is still developing these items and intends to bring more information on each to the next review.

Agency Comments

Beverly Barnett stated that SDOT is actively engaged in determining the appropriate mitigation program for the proposed Arena. She said that mitigation is critical for the City Council to be assured that the project will function well. Ms. Barnett also reiterated that the petitioner cannot “double count” proposed public benefit items and mitigation. According to Ms. Barnett, several of the items shown are likely to be mitigation. She is eager to see more information about the proposed lighting and wayfinding in order to determine if it goes beyond the requirements for ensuring event attendees can safely go to and from the Arena.

Garry Papers reminded the Commission that the project has gone through five meetings with the Downtown Design Review Board (DRB) and will have at least one more Recommendation meeting. According to Mr. Papers, the proposed plaza design as shown in the presentation materials is consistent with what the DRB saw at their last review. Mr. Papers said additional enhancements, such as seating and water features, would be logical to integrate into the next review. He recounted feedback from the DRB that the generous sidewalk and year-round club on 1st Ave S were desirable and important project elements in order to energize the sidewalk on non-event days. Lastly, Mr. Papers noted that the DRB has approximately five or six items for refinement on the plaza design.

Chris Eaves stated that SDOT has been working to understand operations on S Holgate St given its role in both Arena operations and SoDo freight movements. Mr. Eaves reported that initial meetings with the petitioner have gone well. According to Mr. Eaves, SDOT will likely require that the proposed pedestrian and bicycle bridge in the S Holgate St right-of-way be open 24 hours a day and seven days a week as mitigation.

Ruri Yampolsky thanked the petitioner for including public art as a public benefit. She stated that a building of this significance should include art, regardless of whether it is a public benefit item. Ms. Yampolsky requested to be engaged in the process of reviewing the proposal as it develops.

Public Comments

Melody McCutcheon stated that the petitioner proposes to convert S Massachusetts St as extension of its plaza on game days. She referred to slide 20 of the presentation, which shows S Massachusetts St closed for a farmers market. According to Ms. McCutcheon, S Massachusetts St needs to remain open for vehicle traffic at all times. She said that the Arena cannot vacate Occidental Ave S and close S Massachusetts St, as these two roads provide the only access to the Safeco garage. Ms. McCutcheon said that, while event scheduling coordination works well for parking, she could not see how coordination could allow for closure of S Massachusetts St. Ms. McCutcheon asked the Commission to support that S Massachusetts St must remain open for vehicle traffic.

Mike Fleming said that, since there are only roughly 80 Mariners home games each year, he believes farmers markets could occur on weekend days when no event is scheduled. He stated that currently there is a lot of inactivity in the area. Mr. Fleming said he hoped the Mariners would become a partner in, rather than opposing, the Arena project.

Summary of Discussion

Because the petitioner did not seek a vote on the public benefit package at this review, the Commission provided direction on the proposed public benefit items and steps the petitioner should pursue to enhance those items. Using the Council’s policies on street and alley vacations, the Commission evaluated each of the proposed public benefit items. The discussion focused on:

1. The merits of the proposed public benefit item
2. Whether the proposed public benefit item should be modified or enhanced to increase the likelihood that the Commission would recognize it as public benefit
3. The public items that lacked merit and should be removed

Action

The Design Commission thanked the project team for providing a briefing on the proposed public benefit package for the petition to vacate Occidental Ave S between S Holgate St and S Massachusetts St. The Commission provided guidance on the public benefit items described in Figure 3:

1. Plaza

- Develop a programming plan that emphasizes events not related to Arena function or program on non-Arena event days
- Engage a third-party entity to operate programming events.
- Endeavor to make the plaza a regional destination.
- Provide a better understanding of how the plaza design supports non-Arena events.

2. S Massachusetts St right-of-way dedication and shared street

- Coordinate all proposed circulation and programming with all parties that use or require access to S Massachusetts St.
- The Commission was generally supportive of the dedication and shared street concept.

3. Public art plan

- If the petitioner seeks approval of a public art plan now, as opposed to specific art pieces, develop a plan that establishes
 - a. the vision for the role of art,
 - b. how the vision will be implemented, and
 - c. what type of art would implement the vision.
- Work with the Office of Arts and Culture and King County's 4Culture to develop the public art plan.
- Explore opportunities to use artwork as a network throughout the site and vicinity.
- Select an artist early in order to ensure meaningful integration into the project and site design.
- Consider integration of artwork into the proposed S Holgate St pedestrian and bicycle bridge.

4. Bicycle connections

- Provide additional information about the specific infrastructure and treatments proposed to support bicycle connections between the Arena and other locations along the Central Waterfront, SoDo, and locations identified in the Bicycle Master Plan.
- Clarify how the proposal relates to the adopted Bicycle Master Plan.
- Explain how the proposed on- and off-site improvements go beyond what would otherwise be required.

5. Off-site lighting and wayfinding

- Explain in more detail where wayfinding would occur, what destination it would identify, and whom it would serve, independent of any requirements to enhance transit connections or required mitigation.
- Consider opportunities to integrate artwork into any proposed lighting and wayfinding.
- Explore other opportunities beyond required mitigation for improving the pedestrian realm in the vicinity of the Arena.

6. Living machine

- The living machine could be recognized as public benefit if it exceeds the requirements for sustainability established in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (Ordinance 123979).
- Explore how the living machine can operate not just for the Arena but also at a district scale.
- Make the function of the living function visible and ensure it has a full-cycle educational component. This should occur not only at its particular location but also throughout the building. Include education at both the point of use (e.g., toilet) and end of cycle (i.e., where clean water is available thanks to the living machine).

- The living machine notwithstanding, address the fundamental problem that we use potable water to convey waste. Carefully consider fixtures and other opportunities for water conservation. The petitioner should not use the living machine only to improve standard poor practice for water usage.
7. **1st Ave S and S Holgate St enhanced right-of-way improvements**
- For these items to be considered public benefits, the Commission must understand what mitigation is required and the extent to which these improvements go beyond those requirements to serve the public.
 - Continue to study the appropriate width for the 1st Ave S sidewalk. Ensure the sidewalk is not so wide that it feels barren and detracts from the pedestrian experience during non-event times.
 - The Commission is concerned that 24 feet is too wide for the sidewalk on the north side of S Holgate St, unless required for mitigation.
 - The landscaping, though elegant, appears modest in terms of what would qualify as a public benefit feature. Quantify the extent to which the landscaping exceeds code and mitigation requirements.
 - 1st Ave S right-of-way improvements in the block north of the project site could qualify as public benefits if they exceed mitigation requirements.
8. **S Holgate St improvements and pedestrian bridge**
- If the bridge is not required to be open 24 hours a day and 7 days a week for mitigation, it is eligible for public benefit.
9. **SoDo Transportation Infrastructure Fund contributions**
- The Commission is skeptical that this fund contribution could be considered public benefit given it is a clear requirement of the aforementioned MOU.

PUBLIC BENEFIT	DESCRIPTION	CODE REQUIRED	MITIGATION	PROPOSED BENEFIT
1 Publicly Accessible Open Space	Flexible publicly accessible plaza open space			33,750 sf
	Tree canopy			10 trees
	Outdoor public seating			700 lf (450+ seats)
	Connections to restrooms			1
	Water / gas connections for food trucks and public events			Multiple
	Demontable basketball hoops			2
2 S Massachusetts St ROW Dedication	Drinking fountains			2
	Dedication of private property to public ROW			3,000 sf
3 S Massachusetts St Shared Use Street	Curbless street w/ concrete paving			16,800 sf
	Curb alignment and curb bulb-outs at intersection			2
	Tree canopy			14 trees
4 1st Ave S Enhanced ROW Improvements	Outdoor public seating			220 lf (145+ seats)
	Additional sidewalk & planting			9,000 sf
	Outdoor public seating			350 lf (230+ seats)
5 S Holgate St Enhanced ROW Improvements	Bike racks			14
	Additional sidewalk & planting			4,700 sf
	Outdoor public seating			300 lf (200+ seats)
6 Public Art Plan	Bike racks			6
	Public Art Plan developed by an artist. Opportunities include but are not limited to the plaza open space, 1st Ave S, S Holgate Street, and the proposed pedestrian bridge.			1
7 Living Machine & Water Re-use	On-site water treatment (Living Machine)			1
	Interpretive / educational signage			1
	Water capture and re-use water			1
8 S Holgate St Improvements & Pedestrian Bridge	Publicly accessible pedestrian bridge from west of 3rd Ave to East of Occidental		Events	10,320 sf 860 lf
	S Holgate Street Row Improvements			1,200 lf
9 Bike Connections	Bike connection from Waterfront Trail to Arena site			1,700 lf
	Bike connection from Arena site to S Holgate Ramp at 8th Ave S			2,600 lf
10 Off-site Lighting and Wayfinding	Lighting (as required) & wayfinding: (1st Ave S, south of site, to Lander Street); (1st Ave S, north of site, to Edgar Martinez Dr.); (STL Stadium Station to new stair at Edgar Martinez Dr.); (STL SODO Station to 1st Ave S); (1st Ave S to Lander St)			TBD
	Wayfinding: 1st Ave S, north of site, to Pioneer Square			TBD
	Streetscape Improvements: West side of Occidental Ave S, north to Edgar Martinez Dr.			TBD
11 SODO Transportation Infrastructure Fund Contribution	Contribution toward transportation infrastructure not required for mitigation			\$40 million

Figure 3. Proposed public benefit schedule