



APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Ed Murray
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Marshall Foster
Planning Director, DPD

Tom Nelson, Chair

Osama Quotah, Vice Chair

Bernie Alonzo

Brodie Bain

Megan Groth

Laurel Kunkler

Shannon Loew

Martin Regge

Ellen Sollod

Ross Tilghman

Michael Jenkins
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January 23, 2014

Convened 8:30 am

Adjourned 4:45 pm

Projects Reviewed

SR 520 – West Approach Bridge North

Waterfront – Main Corridor North of Union St

Pike Place Market Waterfront Entrance Project

Commissioners Present

Tom Nelson, Chair

Osama Quotah, Vice Chair

Bernie Alonzo

Megan Groth

Laurel Kunkler

Shannon Loew

Martin Regge

Ellen Sollod

Ross Tilghman

Commissioners Excused

Brodie Bain

Staff Present

Michael Jenkins

Valerie Kinast

Nicolas Welch

Joan Nieman



January 23, 2014
12:40 – 3:00 pm

Project: Waterfront – Main Corridor North of Union
Phase: Concept Design
Previous reviews: none

Presenters: Steve Pearce SDOT
 Tatiana Choulika James Corner Field Operations
 Andrew Barash CH2M Hill

Attendees: Jeff Benesi Mithun
 Angela Brady SDOT
 Lee Copeland Mithun
 Kathryn Cox-Czosnyka CH2M Hill
 Shane DeWald SDOT
 Mark Ellerbrook FAS
 David Graves Parks and Recreation
 Brook Jacksha Magnusson Klemencic
 Joy Jacobson FAS-ADA Compliance
 Mike Johnson SDOT
 Mark Mariano Schemata Workshop
 Matt Martenson Berger Partnership
 Kate Martin Park My Viaduct
 Hannah McIntosh SDOT
 Guy Michaelson Berger Partnership
 Genna Nashem DON
 Andrew tenBrink James Corner Field Operations

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

Purpose of Review

The purpose of this meeting was to review the concept design of the Main Corridor of the Waterfront North of Union Street. This is a core project of the overall Waterfront Seattle project. The Design Commission, with the Planning Commission, provided input on the overall concept design completed in the summer of 2012, and has begun review of the numerous capital improvement projects it encompasses. The core projects are the smaller projects that will implement the overall waterfront plan. The Main Corridor South of Union Street came to the Commission in November 2013 and the design of Union Street itself in October 2013. The Design Commission will see the Central Public Space zone, which includes the Overlook Walk, Seattle Aquarium and Pier 62/63, on March 6, 2014.

Summary of Proposal

The Main Corridor North of Union St encompasses the area between the Seawall and 1st Ave, from Union St to Battery St. It is made up of four segments: Waterfront, Belltown Bluff, the Belltown X (couplet), and Bell St/Battery Tunnel. It will extend the construction of a new Alaskan Way along the

waterfront. Beneath the Overlook Walk that serves as a pedestrian connection from the Market to the waterfront, Alaskan Way climbs upward as the new Elliott Way; Pine St is extended towards the water and continues as the existing northern segment of Alaskan Way. New pedestrian amenities in Belltown offer views of the city and Elliott Bay, and a proposed plaza responds to community desire for more open space in Belltown. The project intends to connect the Pike Place Market and Belltown to the waterfront while providing quality bicycle infrastructure and accommodating the freight and Port traffic that moves through this area.

Summary of Presentation

Steve Pearce introduced the project. Andrew Barash explained the engineering of road plan, bike paths, and walkways. Tatiana Choulika reviewed the presentation dated January 23, 2014, and available on the [Design Commission website](#). She explained the project area from the perspectives of three users—vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.

The Main Corridor North of Union consists of three zones, each of which presents distinct design challenges.

1. **The Waterfront** includes Alaskan Way, the underpass beneath the Overlook Walk, and the extension of Pine Street. This area will see a confluence of transportation modes and must accommodate vehicular traffic, freight, fire truck access, ferry queuing, bicycles and pedestrians. The removal of the Viaduct leaves a section of ROW where the new Elliott will extend north from Alaskan Way uphill towards Belltown. The design team presented several arrangements of sidewalks, bike lanes, and cycle tracks that must fit within the limited width of Elliott and connect with existing bicycle infrastructure.
2. **Belltown Bluff** extends from the Elliott bridge up to the bluff at Lenora St and through the Blanchard intersection of Elliott and Alaskan, referred to as the Belltown Couplet or the X. The bluff both benefits from and contends with steep topography, which, along with freight demands and traffic headed to the Pike Place Market, constrains road design. The new Elliott Way will have at-grade intersections with Lenora and Blanchard Streets. The existing Lenora Street Bridge and a proposed Blanchard Overlook offer views to the west and south for pedestrians. A 650-foot planted screen is planned along Western between Pine and Lenora.
3. **Bell St + Battery Tunnel** is an area outside the purview of the design team but included as related elements of the overall waterfront concept plan.

The proposal maintains the tideline/slipline motif introduced in previous waterfront projects, not only at the waterfront but along the bluff as well.

Summary of Discussion

The Commission appreciated the complexity of designing and programming such a long stretch of waterfront land and the challenges presented by topography and various transportation modes. That said, the Commission wanted more detail, data, and information for several elements of the proposed design. In particular, the Commissioners wanted more consideration devoted to the identity or thematic concept of the bluff; were concerned about the pedestrian experience at the Blanchard Plaza given the adjacent traffic volumes and noise; and needed more data to evaluate the roadway and transportation design from Pine Street to the X. Ultimately, there was insufficient time to explore each of these issues adequately.

Agency Comments

Joy Jacobson, FAS-ADA, requested the team eventually to explain accessibility throughout this entire area, including how disabled or vision-impaired people will negotiate six lanes of traffic and bike paths.

Public Comments

Kate Martin, Park My Viaduct, wants to preserve the upper deck of the Viaduct for views. Viaduct is a people magnet and will recharge downtown. Unlike the High Line, it will be 50 feet in the air with skylights to create a cathedral-like space below. Road diet on surface roads. Simplify the project. Please show Broad Street connection to waterfront. Truck route importance. Sidewalk on viaduct. Wants to harmonize with plan and preserve viaduct.

Lee Copeland, Mithun, inquired about the emphasis on trucks going southbound. He wondered if they couldn't instead go north of Alaskan. Mike Johnson, SDOT, responded that the Port facility is cruise ship terminal. The proposed design allows trucks to go south on Elliott and turn right on Pine to reach the terminal.

Action

The Design Commission thanked the Waterfront project team for the presentation of the Main Corridor North of Union. While the Commission acknowledged the many constraints and complexities of the project, they believe this important link between the waterfront and upland neighborhoods should not be relegated to function as a canyon that people pass through quickly. Instead, it should receive the careful attention seen with other east–west connections that are part of the Waterfront project. They would like to see stronger, more creative development of the overall concept.

With a **vote of 7 to 2**, the Design Commission approved the concept design of the Waterfront – Main Corridor North of Union with the following recommendations:

1. Strengthen the thematic concept of the bluff and connectors. Provide a concise solution to how the bluff concept functions as an edge to both the city and the waterfront. In all areas under review, it should be understandable how that concept guided design decisions.
2. Further develop such elements as the throw fences and railings to thread more into the concept and stitch the bluff to the waterfront.
3. Consider carefully the approach of extending the tidelines idea up Elliott and onto the bluffs.
4. Further explore the potential for using artifacts and remnants in the new design; the sign bridge on the viaduct and timbers from the Battery Street tunnel for example. Find a timely answer to the question of viability of the Lenora Street Bridge.
5. Further explore and provide additional information on the street configuration, focusing on how the bike and pedestrian experience were considered, and how the quality and amount of open spaces was maximized. Provide data about freight movements, desire lines, etc. on the assumptions used to make decisions. Present decisions about sidewalk width, roadway location, etc. as to their role in the larger “bluff” design concept. The Commissioners generally supported having bike lanes on both sides of Elliott but wanted to see more information before a final recommendation.

6. Further develop the design to make the Belltown X more than just an area to pass through.
7. Improve the uphill Blanchard Street connection to the Blanchard Overlook. Also identify offsite wins that may be provided through other processes to connect visually upwards from the waterfront.

The reasons for the votes against were as follows:

Commissioner Sollod stated there were too many items of concern outstanding and that there had not been enough time to sufficiently evaluate the proposal. This includes the underdeveloped open space design at the "X."

Commissioner Alonzo stated that more information was needed on the open space design. He noted that the design was not at concept design and expressed that a physical model would have been extremely helpful in understanding and assessing a project with such complex topographic conditions.

The Design Commission anticipates reviewing the project again at schematic design.