



## APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**Mike McGinn**  
Mayor

**Diane Sugimura**  
Director, DPD

**Marshall Foster**  
Planning Director, DPD

**October 3, 2013**

Convened 8:30 am  
Adjourned 5:00 pm

**Tom Nelson**, Chair

**Osama Quotah**, Vice Chair

**Bernie Alonzo**

**Brodie Bain**

**Megan Groth**

**Debbie Harris**

**Laurel Kunkler**

**Shannon Loew**

**Martin Regge**

**Ellen Sollod**

### Projects Reviewed

Jimi Hendrix Park  
North Transfer Station  
Railroad Way, 1<sup>st</sup> Ave to Occidental

### Commissioners Present

Tom Nelson, Chair  
Osama Quotah, Vice Chair  
Bernie Alonzo(9:30-5:00)  
Megan Groth  
Laurel Kunkler (8:30-1, 3:30-5:00)  
Shannon Loew (10:30-5:00)  
Martin Regge  
Ellen Sollod

### Commissioners Excused

Brodie Bain  
Debbie Harris

**Michael Jenkins**  
Director

**Valerie Kinast**  
Coordinator

**Joan Nieman**  
Administrative staff

### Staff Present

Michael Jenkins  
Valerie Kinast  
Joan Nieman

**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



---

<b>October 3, 2013</b>	<b>Project:</b>	<b>Railroad Way S., Alaskan Way to Occidental (Waterfront)</b>
	<b>Review Type:</b>	CIP
	<b>Phase:</b>	90% Design Development
	<b>Previous Reviews:</b>	4/4/2013 (60% approved)
	<b>Presenters:</b>	Mike Johnson, SDOT Guy Michaelson, Berger Partnership
	<b>Attendees:</b>	Ali Amiri, WSDOT Tom Backer, Safeco Field PFD Jessica Clawson, McCullough Hill, PS Jennie Dorsett, Hudson Group Kelly Knickerbocker, Waterfront Seattle Matt Martenson, Berger Partnership Genna Nashem, DON

---

**3 – 4 pm**

---

#### **Recusals and Disclosures**

There were no recusals or disclosures.

#### **Purpose of Review**

The purpose of this meeting was to review the 90% phase of Railroad Way design for the first time. At the last review on April 4, 2013, the 60% design was approved. This project is being reviewed by the Commission as one of the many Waterfront capital improvement projects. In the past it was reviewed as part of the Tunnel South Portal Area reviews. In May of 2010, the Design Commission gave approval of the concept design by ROMA Architects for Railroad Way as part of their approval of the design guidelines for the viaduct replacement program. Subsequently Seattle Tunnel Partners was selected as the Design Builders of the tunnel project, and James Corner Field Operations was charged with the design of Railroad Way.

#### **Summary of Proposal**

This project is part of the South Access WSDOT project and it is also one of the City capital improvement projects that makes up the Waterfront Seattle project. WSDOT and the City are proposing and funding improvements to the Railroad Way right of way between the intersection of Alaskan Way and S King St and just beyond the intersection of Occidental and S Charles St (S Charles is a proposed new street at this time). The improvements consist of a completely new ground plane with various paving materials and markings, street furniture, vegetation, and lighting. The design will draw from the design palette being used on all the Waterfront Seattle projects. The street will remain functional for existing private adjacent uses, provide access to the future tunnel operations building, and serve pedestrians as they move between downtown, transit, and the stadiums. Historically Railroad Ave was a bridge over the tidal flats. It is in an area of confluence of the tunnel project, waterfront, Pioneer Square, and stadium and industrial areas.

#### **Summary of Presentation**

Mike Johnson of SDOT provided background information on the programs for improvements in the vicinity of Railroad Way. Guy Michaelson with Berger Partnership, presented the powerpoint dated October 3, 2013, which is posted on the Design Commission website:

[http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design\\_Commission/Project\\_Review\\_Meetings/Minutes/default.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Commission/Project_Review_Meetings/Minutes/default.asp)

#### **Summary of Discussion**

The commissioners discussed the extent of complexity of the layering and whether it might be to the detriment of the design. The transition between the Rail Road Way project and the South Portal Building project was considered. Commissioners pondered the quandary of providing continuity of the ground plane across 1<sup>st</sup> Ave S.

and how the termini of the corridor and the eddies are dealt with. Future maintenance and the viability of the plantings were taken into consideration, as was the execution of the palette of paving materials. There was discussion on how important programming was, given the corridor is in the stadium district. Lighting was considered.

### **Agency Comments**

Genna Nashem, Department of Neighborhoods, explained that because some of the work is proposed in the Pioneer Square Historic District, the proponents would also be making an application to the Pioneer Square Preservation Board.

### **Public Comments**

Jessica Clawson, McCullough, Hill PS, spoke representing the 505 Building owned by Hudson Group. She expressed concern about garage access. She questioned whether the proposed concrete aggregate might be slippery. Also, she was requesting that truck turning diagrams be considered. She questioned whether the street would be safe for pedestrians. She explained that the 30 to 40 ft trees planned would block the views of the tenants of the building she was representing. She provided written comments.

### **ACTION**

The Design Commission thanked the team for the presentation of the 90% design of the Railroad Way S project. Commissioners appreciated the further development the design had undergone and the consideration given to their previous comments. They applauded the plans to bring in Universal Design consultants for the overall Waterfront project.

With a vote of 6 to 2 the Design Commission approved the 90% design of the Railroad Way S, Alaskan Way to Occidental, with one condition and a number of recommendations that the team should consider as they further develop the design. Overall, the commission believes that especially for this project, the execution of the design will be of utmost importance.

#### **Condition**

The project should return to the Design Commission for an Administrative Review when the design has been developed to an extent that the curb lines are set and the issue of how vehicles from the portal operations building and private building on the east side of the road will be accessed.

#### **Recommendations**

1. The City and WSDOT should coordinate and find a solution to meshing the hard and soft scape designs of their projects so the line between the two is not apparent. Especially consider how the planting strategies of both projects can be adjusted to better complement each other toward that end.
2. Find a better solution for how the road design crosses 1<sup>st</sup> Ave S. Ending the more precious paving treatments abruptly makes the corridor disjointed. While the commission understands that pedestrian safety is at issue, there are methods for providing cues to keep people moving safely through share space environments. Consider such things as extending materials or particular elements into the more conventional street design areas, for example.
3. More carefully consider the terminus points at either end of and along the corridor. Find solutions such as extending materials or eroding edges, to avoid the cut-out effect. Consider along with this the mixing zone function of these areas. Finding a strong solution and applying it at the ends of the corridor, and perhaps also the 1<sup>st</sup> Ave intersection could strengthen the consistency of the design across the corridor.
4. Be deliberate about where the tidelines treatment ends.
5. Give thought to all of the elements of the street environment, including such standard items as the tactile strips at intersections, and how they work within the design.

6. Be sure that the uplighting of the trees meets Dark Skies standards.
7. Make decisions about operations and maintenance soon, as design decisions being made now will influence the success of the long term quality and performance of the space.
8. Given the use of non-standard materials, consider developing mock ups and plan long term for replacement of components.

The reasons for the votes against approval were as follows:

TN: Enough unresolved issues that it is beyond the scope of an administrative review.

ES: The paving concept, terminus, edges require more analysis and review.