

1101 8th Ave Alley Vacation

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John Savo, Vice Chair

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Commissioners Present

Ross Tilghman, Chair
Lee Copeland
Thaddeus Egging
Laura Haddad
Brianna Holan
Jescelle Major

Commissioners Excused

John Savo, Vice Chair
Ben de Rubertis
Rachel Gleeson
Rick Krochalis

Project Description

Lennar Multifamily Communities is proposing to vacate an alley in the block bounded by 8th Ave, Seneca St, Hubbell Pl, and Spring St. The vacation proposal includes the development of two high-rise residential towers with ground level retail, restaurant, office, and residential space. The proposed alley vacation would allow for the combination of loading, storage, service facilities, and parking below grade. Specific elements of the project proposal include:

- Two high-rise buildings, 300 ft. in height, abutting Spring St, Hubbell and 8th Avenue
- 42 ft. wide pedestrian passage, including a one-way truck access for Town Hall
- Publicly accessible open space, terraces, plazas, and seating areas
- Approximately 387 stalls of below grade parking
- Drop-off and pick-up zones along Spring St; and
- Connections to adjacent Freeway Park and Town Hall property

The property is located within a study area included in the First Hill Public Realm Action Plan.

Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) second review of the proposed alley vacation. The purpose of this meeting was to review the Urban Design Merit and Public Benefit proposals. After the presentation and discussion, the SDC voted, 6-0, to approve the Urban Design Merit phase of the 1101 8th Ave Alley Vacation with several recommendations. The SDC did not take an action on the Public Benefit proposal. The SDC provided the project team with recommendations to address prior to the next review on Public Benefit.

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

May 4, 2017**1:00 – 3:30 pm****Type**

Alley Vacation

Phase

Urban Design Merit & Public Benefit

Previous Reviews[3/2/2017](#)**Presenters****Kelty Mckinnon**

PFS Studios

Erik Mott

Perkins + Will

Daria Supp

Perkins + Will

Attendees**Beverly Barnett**

SDOT

Jim Erickson

FHIA

Wier Harman

Town Hall Seattle

Brad Hinthorne

Perkins + Will

Doug Holtom

FHIA

Alex Hudson

FHIA

Jack McCullough

McCullough Hill Leary, PS

Emily Minor

McCullough Hill Leary, PS

Clint Pehrson

Town Hall Seattle

Chris Rogers

Point 32

Dan Shieder

LMC/Lennar

Jeff Schramm

TENW

Mike Weller

Point 32

Summary of Presentation: Urban Design Merit

Eric Mott and Daria Supp, of Perkins + Will, presented the urban design merit proposal for the 1101 8th Ave Alley Vacation. Eric Mott provided an overview of the project proposal, including design updates, site context, and outreach. The project team then focused on addressing the following recommendations provided during the March 2, 2017 SDC meeting:

1. Confirm that the relocation of utilities will not create long-term maintenance issues for Town Hall.
2. Provide a wayfinding plan that includes publicly accessible and ADA routes through the project site
3. Provide greater distinction between pedestrian and loading areas near the Town Hall property
4. Provide a massing study for existing and proposed projects occurring on the surrounding blocks
5. Minimize landscaping edges between on-site programmed spaces

To accommodate the project proposal, electrical utilities will be redirected to Hubbell Place at the midblock and existing telecommunication utilities will terminate north of the proposed tower location. Both relocations will not create long-term maintenance issues for the adjacent property owner.

The proposed design includes accessible entrances throughout the site. The proposed plaza is accessible from Seneca St, Spring St, and 8th Ave. An accessible route is provided through the site to 8th Ave, which includes access to a public elevator. Wayfinding signs will be placed at key locations throughout the site. The loading area between the public plaza and Town Hall Seattle will be used daily by small trucks to deliver supplies. See *figure 1* for more detail. The loading area will also be frequently used to load and unload event equipment. To provide a greater distinction between the pedestrian and loading areas, bollards have been placed on

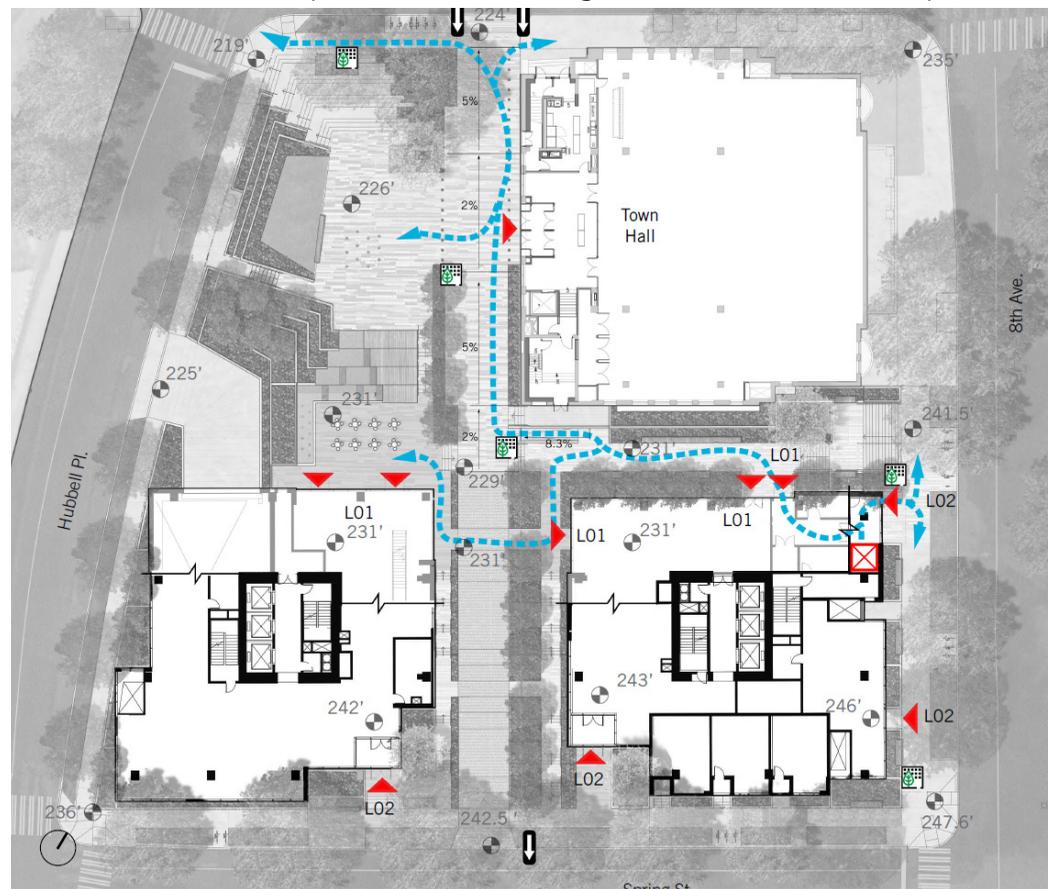


Figure 1. Accessibility and wayfinding



Figure 2. Landscape edges between the plaza, woonerf, and restaurant terrace

the west and eastern edge of the loading area. A narrow planting strip also provides a buffer between the loading area and southwest façade of the Town Hall Seattle building.

The project team provided a massing study to show how the proposed development will fit in with the surrounding context.

Proposed landscaping will be used to screen residential entrances and service areas along Hubbell Place. Landscaping was reduced in specific areas to increase visibility, connectivity, and programable space within the plaza, woonerf, and other interior pathways (see *figure 2*).

Agency Comments

Beverly Barnett, SDOT, mentioned that when there are two property owners involved in the alley vacation process SDOT wants to make sure both property owners are treated equally. Ms. Barnett stated it will be important that both owners will have their interest protected. Ms. Barnett then stated that both parties' interest would be protected through an easement agreement, which would ensure utilities and service access and loading are protected.

Public Comments

Weir Harman, Town Hall Seattle, stated that the Town Hall Seattle organization is in favor of the alley vacation in concept. Mr. Harman then stated their full support is contingent upon reaching an agreement upon several issues. Weir Harman then mentioned they are having ongoing positive conversations with the applicant. Mr. Harman then commented that the organization's preference is against the landscaped area proposed along the west façade of Town Hall near the service and loading area, which could interfere with potential access to the new entrance. Weir Harman mentioned that he is optimistic both property owners are headed towards creating solutions that will benefit the First Hill Neighborhood. Mr. Harman then stated how important the loading and service area is to the operations of Town Hall.

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Circulation
- Utilities
- Light, air, and open space
- Urban form

Circulation

The SDC commended the project team for their responsiveness to previous concerns about circulation. Specifically, commissioners agreed accessibility and wayfinding measures have improved since the last review. The SDC recommended the project use the necessary design treatments to ensure private vehicles will not attempt to access the woonerf and loading area. Commissioners also stressed the importance of clearly identifying the elevator location along the ADA accessible route.

Utilities

The SDC agreed the proposed utility strategy would not have long term negative impacts on surrounding properties.

Light, Air, and open space

The SDC agreed the proposed design scheme preserved views to the Town Hall property. Commissioners appreciated the location and design of the proposed open space. Specifically, commissioners appreciated the proposed landscape and hardscape treatments. The commission agreed the proposed design provided a nice integration of public and private uses.

Urban form

The SDC thought positively of the urban form created by the proposed building. Commissioners appreciated that the proposed towers do not take away from the pedestrian realm.

Action: Urban Design Merit

The SDC thanked the project team for presenting the Urban Design Merit proposal for the 1101 8th Ave Alley Vacation. Overall, commissioners appreciated how the project team addressed design issues. The SDC voted, 6-0, to approve the Urban Design Merit phase for the 1001 8th Ave Alley Vacation with the following recommendations:

1. Clearly identify the accessibility route and public elevator
2. Use design treatments to ensure private vehicles will not attempt to access the woonerf and loading area

Summary of Presentation: Public Benefit

Kelty Mckinnon, of PFS Studios, presented the public benefit package for the 1101 8th Ave Alley Vacation proposal. The public benefit package included the following elements:

- Open space
- Special paving
- Planting
- Water Feature
- Enhanced seating
- Lighting
- Town Hall Seattle funding

Open space

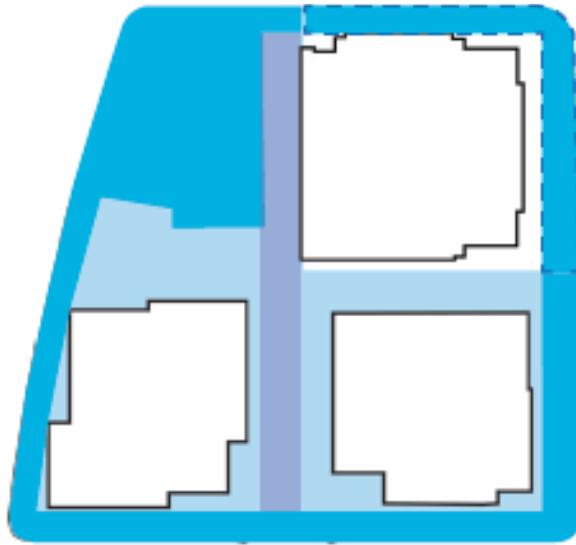
The public benefit package includes a publicly accessible plaza at the southeast corner of the Seneca St and Hubbell Pl. intersection. The plaza provides a visual and physical connection between Freeway Park, Downtown, and the First Hill Neighborhood. The plaza includes landscape terraces, open lawn, plantings, seating, and splash pad. The design also includes paving, landscaping, and other hardscape materials that are used throughout the site, visually integrating the plaza with other programmable elements such as the woonerf, residential amenity space, and restaurant patio. The proposed plaza was designed to facilitate a variety of program. See *figure 3 for more detail*.

Special paving

Special paving include concrete unites, natural stone, and stamped concrete pavers are proposed at the restaurant terrace, stair terraces, woonerf, as well as along 8th Ave and Spring St to help further integrate programmable elements throughout the site. See *figure 4 for more detail*.

Plantings and sustainability

Proposed plantings include a variety of native plants and small trees throughout the project site. Several larger street trees are proposed along 8th Ave, Spring St, and Hubbell Pl. The proposal also includes the preservation of existing



- Open Space for Public Benefits
- Open Space for Residential Amenity, Restaurant
- Woonerf
- Funding for Town Hall Sidewalk



Figure 3. Open space considered for public benefit (above) and landscape plan (below)

trees at the perimeter of the site along Seneca St, Spring St, and 8th Ave. Bio filtration planters are located on 8th Ave, Spring St, Hubbell Pl., Woonerf, and accessible pathway. See figure 4 for more detail.

Water Feature

The proposed plaza includes a splash pad and cascading water terrace. See figure 4 for more detail.

Enhanced seating

Wood seating, wood top benches, and moveable tables and chairs are provided in the public plaza, along the accessible route between the woonerf and 8th Ave, as well as along 8th Ave. and Hubbell Pl.

Lighting

The proposed lighting plan include handrail lighting, tree uplighting, bollard lighting, bench lighting, and recessed wall lighting throughout the site.

Town Hall Seattle funding

The public benefit package includes funding for a standard cast-in-place (CIP) sidewalk along 8th Ave in front of Town Hall Seattle.

Agency Comments

Beverly Barnett, SDOT, stated she appreciated the project team establishing a vision of what kind of public benefits they wanted to accomplish on the site. Beverly Barnett then mentioned the proposed open space between Town Hall Seattle and Freeway Park creates a great opportunity to bridge the two existing spaces. Ms. Barnett stated that the proposed plaza has the potential to be something special in a growing neighborhood and requested further information as to how people will move through and use the space. Ms. Barnett then mentioned that the signals on Seneca and Hubbell are temporarily maintained.

Public Comments

Weir Harman, Town Hall Seattle, clarified that Town Hall Seattle does not have a position on the amount or form of public benefit that is to be expected of the project team. Mr. Harman then stated that he believes if there are any other requirements needed to satisfy public benefit then they should be directed to the Town Hall Seattle renovations. Weir Harman mentioned Town Hall Seattle is an adjacent property owner, designated city landmark, cultural organization with community access, and is in the early stages of a \$27 million project to renovate the facility.

Chris Rogers, Point 32, mentioned that the proposed landscape strip on the west side of the Town Hall Seattle facility is a concern as pedestrians make their way along the south side of the building from 8th Ave. He stated that landscaping would require the removal of the historic balustrade and cast iron gate and that they will need to work more with the design team. He concluded by stating they are excited with the location of the open space.



Figure 4. Public benefit elements: paving (top), planting (middle), and water features (bottom)

Alex Hudson, FHIA, stated that the First Hill Neighborhood is growing rapidly and is expecting a 45% population increase within the next four years. Ms. Hudson mentioned that any project that can provide a greater amount of open space is desperately needed and that community members are appreciative to this project for implementing their obligation in a way that meets a long-standing community need. Ms. Hudson stressed the use and prominent visibility of public signage so people feel they are invited to enter the open space. Ms. Hudson also stressed that the character of the First Hill Neighborhood should be reflected in the design and availability of seating, tables, artwork, lighting, programming, and entrances. Alex Hudson then mentioned that FHIA requested the reduction of square footage near the splash area in order to create a larger walkable area for all people. Ms. Hudson suggested that any additional public benefit requirements be directed to improving the Hubbell and Seneca intersection, which has been identified as an important safety improvement connection for community members.

Jim Erickson, Freeway Park Association, Reminded the audience that Freeway Park Association was awarded a grant through the neighborhood street fund and that SDOT is working to improve all seven entrances to freeway park. Mr. Erickson mentioned that one entrance, located at the intersection of 8th and Seneca, is inadequately signed and will be fixed by SDOT. Mr. Erickson then stated that it would be a logical time to also address improvements at the intersection of 8th Ave and Seneca.

Clint Pehrson, Architect, mentioned that this project completes this area of the First Hill Neighborhood. Mr. Pehrson has several concerns with the proposed design. Mr. Pehrson stated that 8th Ave has tremendous promise as an urban street and that this project will set several precedents for the design of 8th Ave. Clint Pehrson mentioned that the design is missing pedestrian canopies to create shelter along 8th Ave. Mr. Pehrson is also concerned with the lack of programming near the intersection of Spring St. and Hubbell enliven that corner, which is an arrival point to the First Hill Neighborhood.

Summary of Discussion

The commission organized it's discussion around the following issues:

- Adequacy of the public benefit package
- Public benefit element – special pavement
- Planting
- Seating
- Water feature
- Lighting
- Open space

Adequacy of the public benefit package

The SDC acknowledged the adequacy of the public benefit package. Specifically, commissioners commended the project team for the placement and design of the public plaza and the relationship it will have with surrounding uses. Commissioners agreed the additional open space improvements throughout the site will better serve the First Hill Neighborhood. Commissioners encouraged the project team to make sure all of the proposed public benefit elements are well integrated. The SDC also recommended the team provide further information about it's community outreach strategy so to better understand who the public space is serving.

Public benefit element – special pavement

The SDC questioned the inclusion of special pavement as a public benefit element. Commissioners requested the project team return with information as to why this should be considered as a public benefit element.

Planting

The SDC acknowledged the quality of the landscape plan throughout the project site. Commissioners recommended the project team specify trees with a higher caliper for installation. The commission also recommended the design team replace the proposed dogwood trees with a higher limbed tree.

Enhanced seating

The SDC requested the project team return with information explaining why this should be considered as a public benefit element.

Water feature

The SDC had conflicting comments about the proposed water jet feature. Several commissioners questioned the

water feature and suggested replacing it with other programming. The commission recommended the design team ensure the water feature feels like it is publicly accessible.

Lighting

The SDC feels the project team missed an opportunity by not including up lighting along the west façade of Town Hall Seattle. Commissioners recommended the design proposal include utilities to allow for future lighting near the west façade of Town Hall.

Open Space

The SDC recommended the project team provided clarity as to what open spaces are being considered for public benefit.

Action: Public Benefit

The SDC thanked the project team for presenting the Public Benefit proposal for the 1101 8th Ave Alley Vacation. At this meeting the SDC did not take an action on the Public Benefit proposal. The SDC provided the project team with the following recommendations to address prior to the next review on Public Benefit:

1. Provide additional information about the public outreach process
2. Provide clarity as to what open spaces are being considered for public benefit.
3. Provide information explaining why special paving should be considered a public benefit
4. Provide information explaining why the enhanced seating, in its proposed location, should be considered a public benefit
5. Consider specifying trees with a high caliper
6. Consider replacing the proposed dogwood trees with a higher limbed tree
7. Consider inclusion of necessary utilities to allow for future lighting possibilities near the west façade of Town Hall