

City Center Connector

Edward B. Murray
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Director, DPD

Shannon Loew, Chair

Ellen Sollod, Vice Chair

Brodie Bain

Lee Copeland

Thaddeus Egging

Rachel Gleeson

Theo Lim

Martin Regge

John Savo

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Commissioners Present

Shannon Loew, Chair
Ellen Sollod, Vice Chair
Brodie Bain
Lee Copeland
Thaddeus Egging
Rachel Gleeson
Theo Lim
Martin Regge
John Savo
Ross Tilghman

Commissioners Excused

Project Description

The Center City Connector (CCC) is part of the Seattle Streetcar System that will connect the First Hill Streetcar line at Occidental and Jackson to the South Lake Union segment at 5th and Stewart at McGraw Square. This segment will run through Pioneer Square and along First Avenue.

Meeting Summary

The Seattle Design Commission (SDC) received an initial briefing on the CCC in June 2014. On November 5th, 2015, the Commission reviewed the concept design for the CCC. The SDC did not approve the concept design and will need to review the design again before the project moves to the schematic design phase.

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

November 5, 2015

3:00 – 5:00 pm

Type

CIP

Phase

Concept Design

Previous Reviews

N/A

Project Team Present**Ethan Melone**
SDOT**Kara Weaver**
GGN**Tess Shiovone**
GGN**Attendees****Art Brochet**
SDOT**Lloyd Douglas**
Cascade Neighborhood Council**Roland Genick**
Parsons**Gary Johnson**
DPD**Hannah Keyes**
SDOT**Barbara Lee**
SDOT**Catherine Maggio**
SDOT**Kristen Ramirez**
SDOT/OAC**Katia Rios**
GGN**Dave Warner**
Parsons**SDC Staff Present****Michael Jenkins**
Director**Valerie Kinast**
Coordinator**Aaron Hursey**
Planner**Joan Nieman**
Administrative Staff**Summary of Presentation**

Ethan Melone, the project manager for the CCC provided a brief overview about the project scope and future projections. The CCC is a proposed 5.5-mile streetcar line that will connect the existing South Lake Union streetcar line with the First Hill Streetcar line (see figure 1 for more detail). The goal of the proposed CCC is to improve transit mobility through downtown. To accomplish this goal, the CCC will have an exclusive transit way along 1st Ave. as well as a mix of exclusive and shared transit ways along Stewart Street between 1st and 5th Avenue. Because of its location along 1st Avenue, the streetcar line is also designed to provide multi-modal connections with other transportation services such as Washington State Ferries, Sound Transit Light Rail, Amtrak, and King County Metro Buses and Water Taxis.

SDOT has collaborated with The City's Office of Arts & Culture (OAC) to commission an artist to create a public art plan for the downtown segment. As part of the plan, the artist will work with city agencies, private developers, and community organizations who are working on several transit projects within the center city in order to create a cohesive vision for art projects and programming throughout Downtown Seattle.

The project team has separated the streetcar line into three design zones named 1) Stewart Street Rooms, 2) First Avenue Balcony, and 3) Pioneer Square Boulevard (see figure 2). Each zone is designed to integrate with the unique character of the surrounding environment. The Stewart Street Rooms are located along Stewart Street between Westlake and 4th Avenue. The irregular angles of McGraw Square and the Great Sequoia as well as the historic facades of the Time Square building and Macy's Department Store define the rooms along Stewart Street. The 1st Avenue Balcony serves as a promenade, which offers views of the water from every intersection, while Pioneer Square Boulevard includes a variety of building facades, tree canopies, and

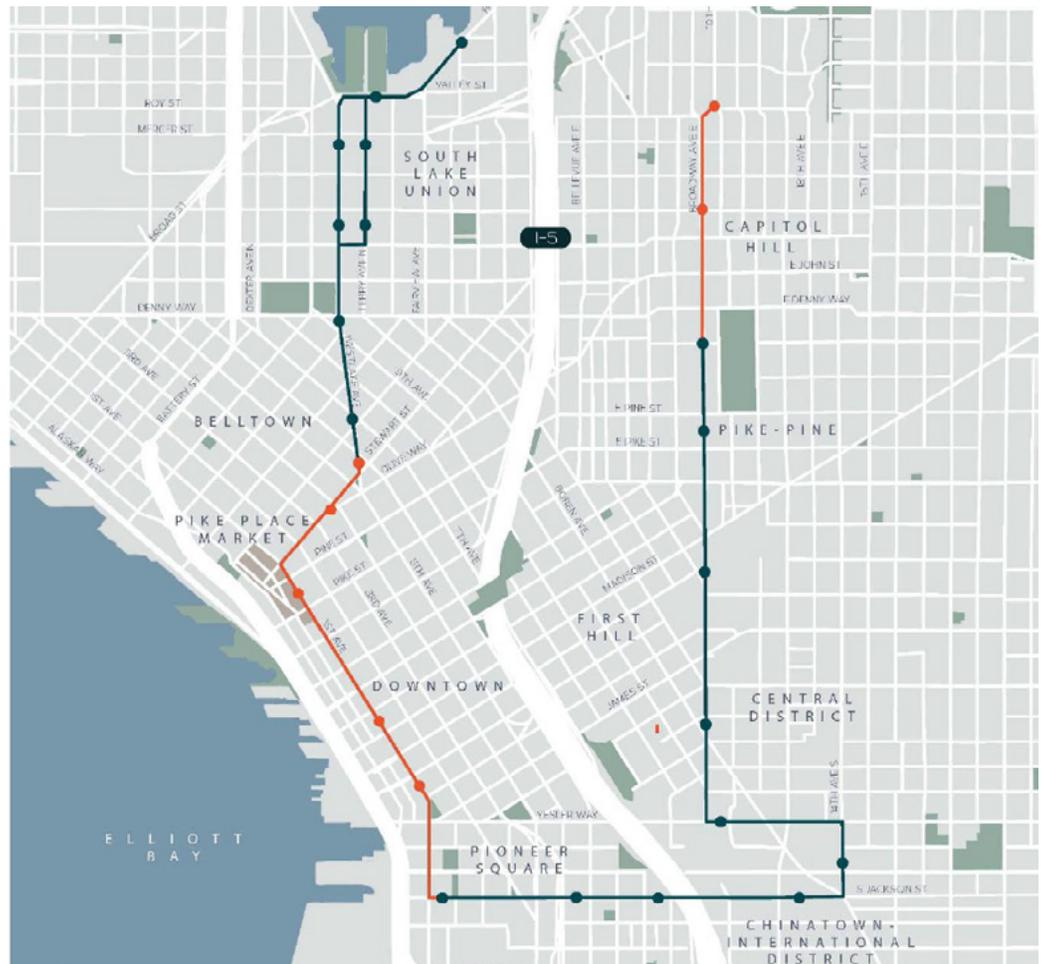


Figure 1: Seattle Streetcar System - proposed streetcar lines highlighted in orange

high volumes of pedestrian traffic. The plan also includes a series of raised intersections along 1st Avenue within the First Avenue Balcony and Pioneer Square Boulevard zones.

The streetcar line will include four stations (see figure 3); one is located at Stewart and 3rd Avenue, which is within the Stewart Street Room zone, while the remaining three are located along 1st Ave. within the First Avenue Balcony zone. Along with creating four new stations, the CCC will connect with the SLU streetcar line at the Westlake and 5th Ave. station as well as the First Hill Streetcar line at the Jackson St. station.

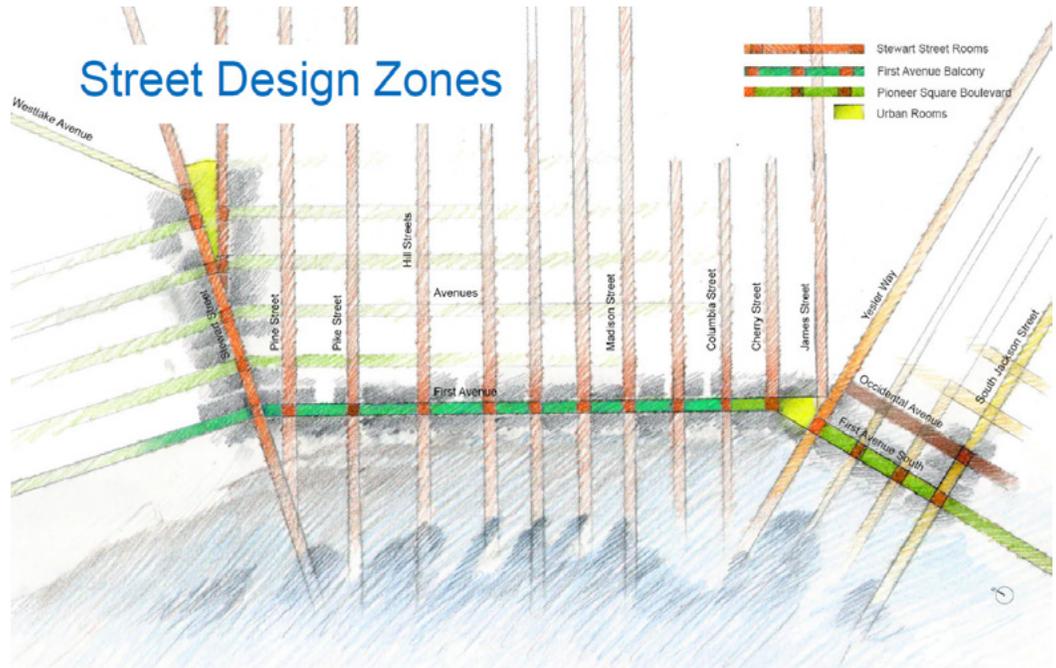


Figure 2: Center City Connector design zones

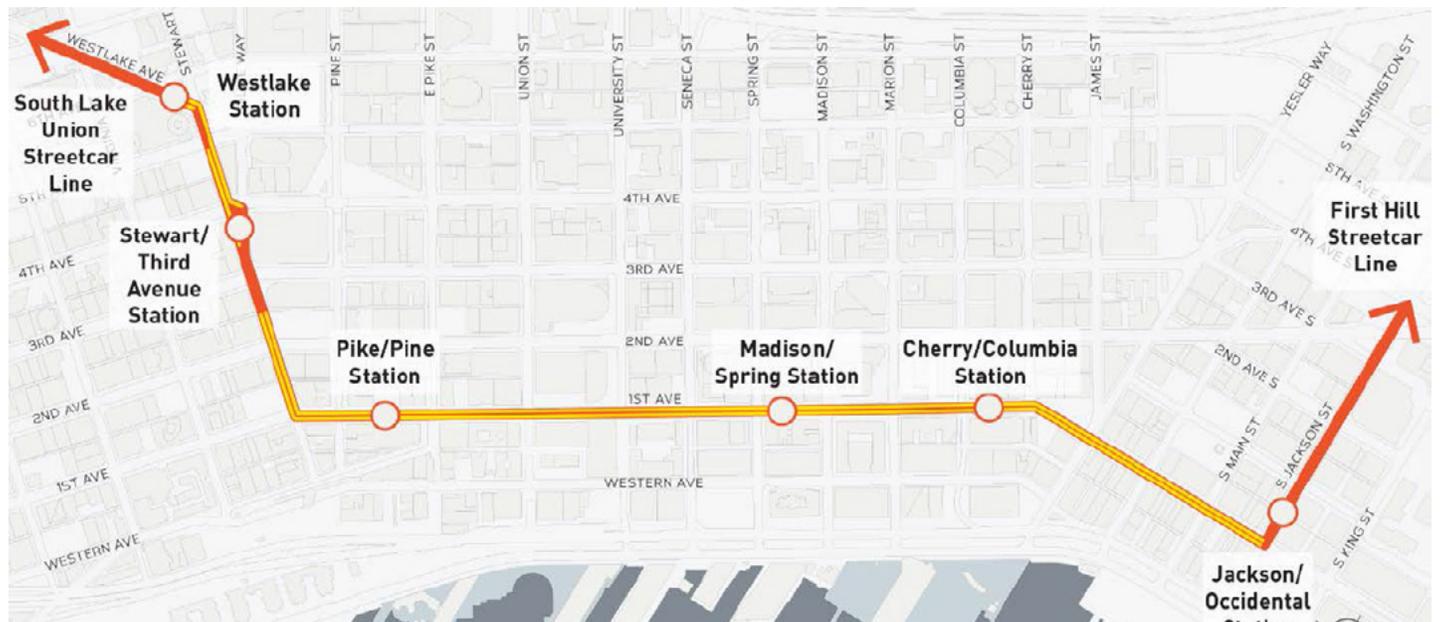


Figure 3: Proposed stations

The Stewart Street Station will include separate boarding platforms for westbound and eastbound trains. Westbound trains will have an exclusive transit way, while eastbound trains will share the transit way with other modes of transportation. The westbound train platform is located in the median along Stewart Street and the eastbound train platform is located south of Stewart Street next to Macy’s Department Store. The platforms will be accessible to pedestrians from the east and west end. Because it is projected to have a five minute headway between trains, the current design proposes neither platform will include transit canopies. The transit way near the Stewart Street Station will be concrete. See figure 4 for more detail.

The stations located along 1st Avenue – Pike/Pine Station, Spring/Madison Station, and Columbia Cherry Station – will be located in the center median of 1st Avenue. Each station will include 50-foot boarding areas, leaning rails, real time signage stand, and will be accessible from the north and south ends. The Spring/Madison and Columbia/Cherry Stations will include tree canopies near the boarding area, while the Pike/Pine Station will not include tree canopies in order to preserve the view into Pike Place Market (see figures 5-7). The exclusive transit way along 1st Ave. between Stewart and Cherry Street will include textured concrete and metal edge delineation, while the raised intersections will include scored

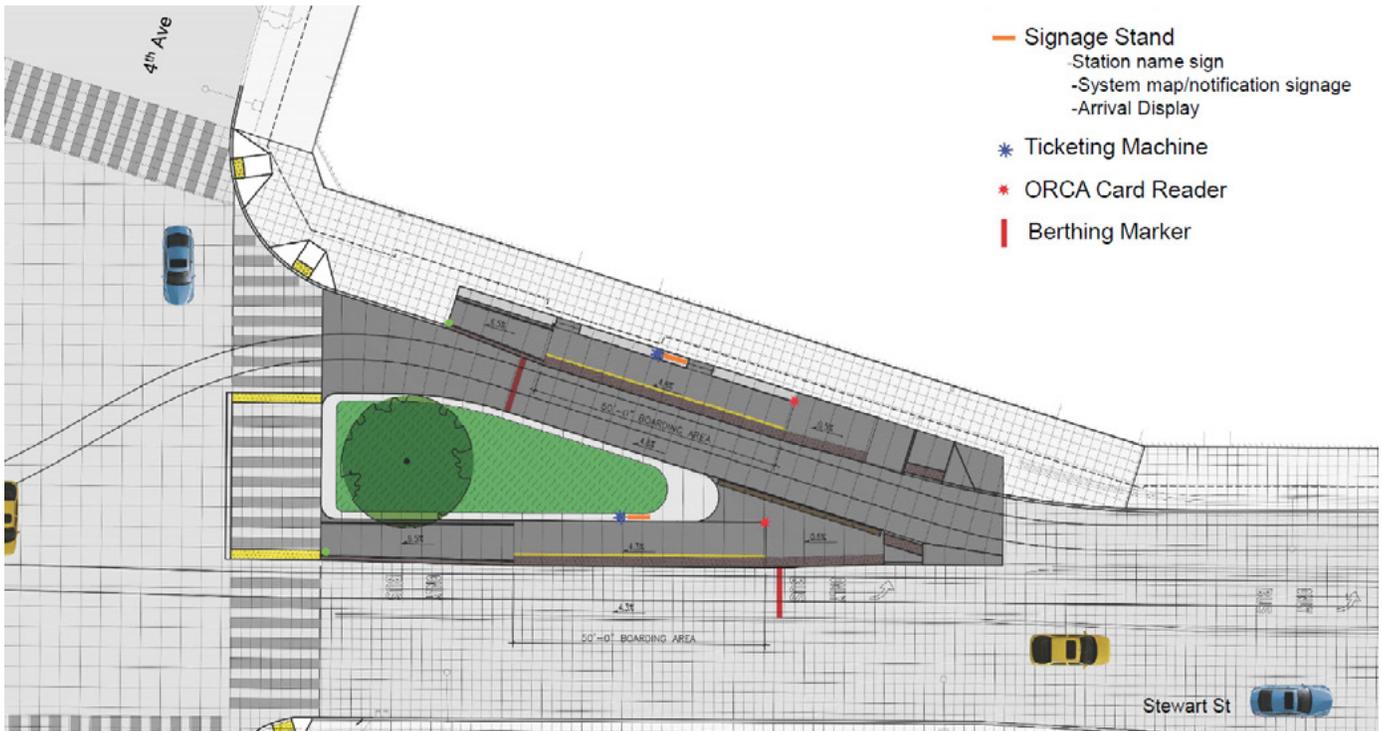


Figure 4: Proposed Stewart St. Station

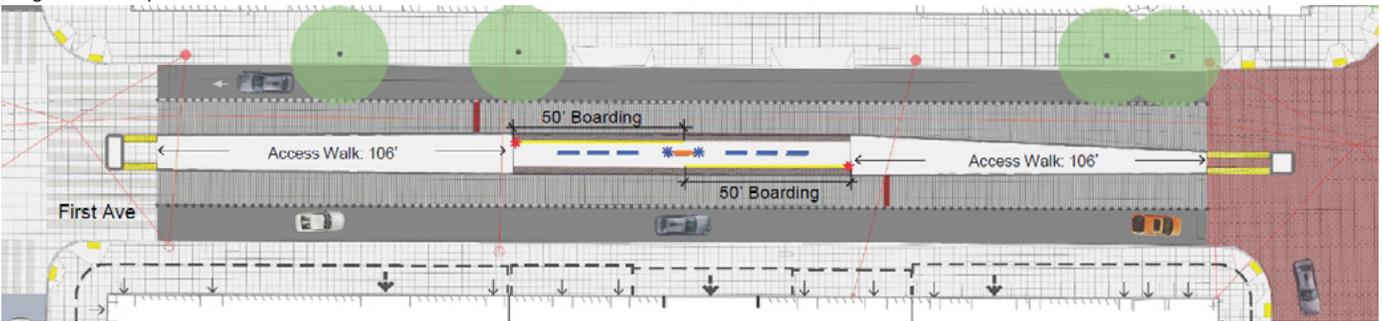


Figure 5: Proposed Pike-Pine St. Station

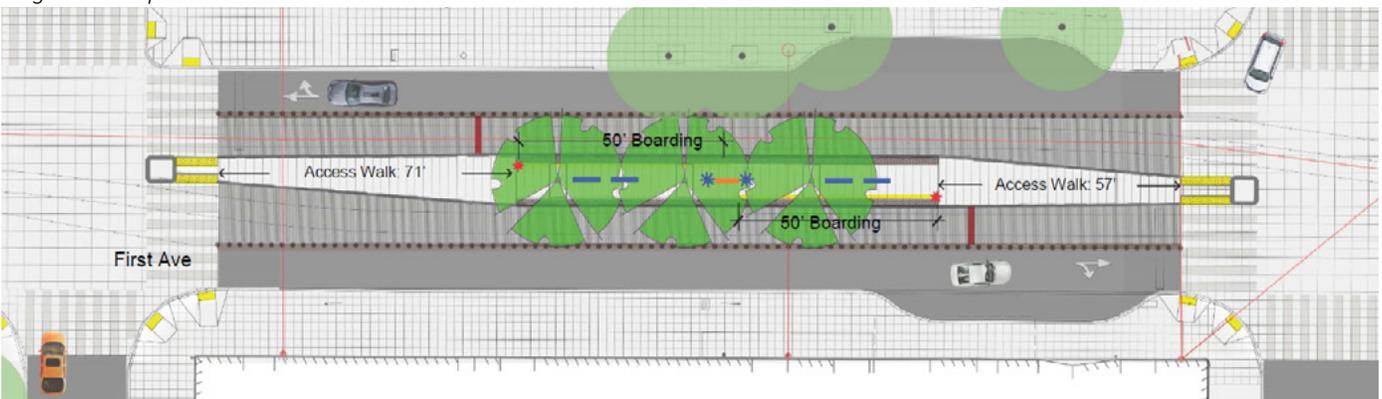


Figure 6: Proposed Madison-Spring St. Station

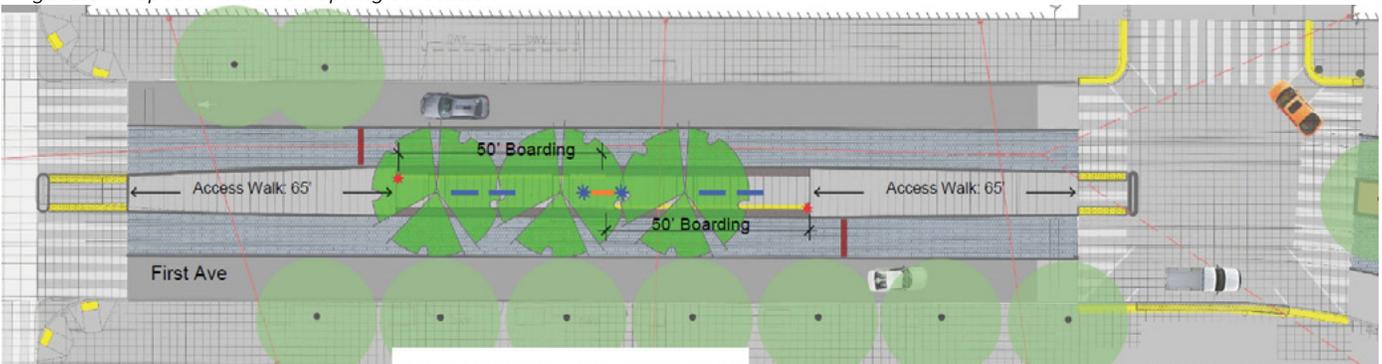


Figure 7: Proposed Cherry-Columbia St. Station

concrete. Unlike other intersections along the corridor, the intersection at Pike Street and 1st Avenue will be reconstructed using brick pavers.

The exclusive transit way along 1st Ave. between Cherry and Jackson Street will include cobble pavers and granite delineation. Material will transition from cobble pavers to concrete at the intersection of 1st Avenue and Jackson Street. Proposed raised intersections will include concrete with lampblacks. See figure 8 for more detail.

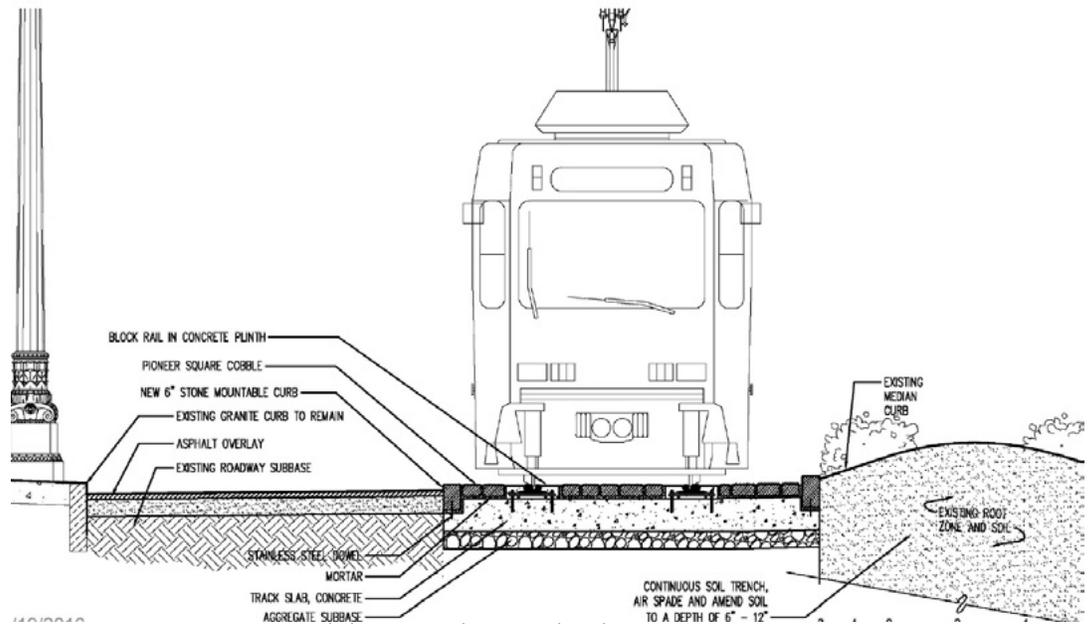


Figure 8: Transitway materials between Cherry and Jackson St.

Agency Comments

None

Public Comments

None

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Vision and integration with other plans
- Overall planning and zones
- Station design
- Materials and details
- Art, sustainability and social equity

Vision and integration

The Commission is concerned with the lack of integration between the CCC and other master plans related to downtown such as SDOT's Pedestrian Master Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, and the 3rd Avenue Transit Corridor Improvement Plan. The SDC is also concerned with the lack of detail regarding the circulation and navigation different users will have through the site. The commission strongly encouraged the project team to better explain how the CCC will integrate with other downtown master plan investments and how users will transition between modes through the corridor.

Overall planning and zones

Commissioners thought the project team was successful in its approach to minimize the appearance of the street car station and tracks within the surrounding urban setting. The SDC encouraged the project team to research how much traffic will be generated from the Pike/Pine Station, which appears to be in isolation compared to the other proposed stations.

Station design

Although the Commission appreciates the overall station design, they recommended the project team include a visible marker at both ends of the station that will be visible at all times, especially along 1st Avenue, which is heavily used by tourists and for inter-modal connections. While not appropriate to include at every station, the Commission recommended that the project team evaluate where station shelters may be needed in order to protect against inclement weather. As part of this evaluation, commissioners encouraged the design team to conduct studies that measure tree canopy coverage and local wind conditions in order to understand how they will influence the station design.

Materials and detail

The Commission appreciated the level of detail regarding paving and station materials as well as the strategic placement of canopy trees throughout the plan. They thought the placement of the materials along 1st Avenue worked well with quietly integrating the project into the surrounding urban setting. The SDC encouraged the design team to provide a detailed understating as to why seating would or would not work at each station.

Art, sustainability, and social equity

The SDC discussed the importance of integrating the downtown art master plan into the corridor. Commissioners appreciated how the intersection design provided handicap access. The SDC encouraged the project team think about the surrounding social use when identifying stations that need transit shelters. In desiring to have a design that will be inviting to everyone, The Commission also recommended the project team understand how trip times, train frequency, station placement, and exclusive transit ways will affect the level of ridership.

Action

The SDC voted 0 to 7 not to approve the concept plans of the Center City Connector.

The Commission thanked the project team for its presentation and work to date. While the Commission supported many of the concept elements (the approach of "quiet integration" for the new streetcar facility, care to details and materials, etc.), it remained concerned about the lack of clarity of urban design integration with other transit, bike and pedestrian planning. While this issue was likely taken into account at earlier stages, it was not clear how it informed many of the urban design choices including roadway materials and platform canopies.

Prior to review of the next phase, the SDC requested the following information be provided:

1. Demonstrate how this project integrates with other transit modes, including the role of urban design to facilitate connections to nearby transit, bus and pedestrian routes.
2. Demonstrate how project designs are influenced by the volume of users and traffic along the route.
3. Evaluate the extent to which mid-block crossings should be incorporated into project designs
4. Demonstrate how this project relates to other transportation planning efforts and their implementation
5. Explain the rationale for the amount and locations of seating integrated with transit stops and the extent to which additional seating should be provided.
6. Demonstrate how the proposed stone materials are sustainably sourced.
7. Continue to explore potential locations for incorporating shelters at stops, including locations such as Jackson and Stewart Street stops where weather conditions can necessitate the need for shelters. Consider very light, minimal solutions to provide shelter.
8. In the absence of shelters, explore alternatives that provide visual cues to mark platform locations.
9. Demonstrate how bicycle safety measures have been implemented into project designs.