

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
Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Nicolas Welch
Planner

Joan Nieman
Administrative Staff

February 6, 2014

Convened 8:30 am

Adjourned 3:30 pm

Projects Reviewed

North Transfer Station

Colman Dock

Commissioners Present

Tom Nelson, Chair

Osama Quotah, Vice Chair

Bernie Alonzo (arrived 11:40 am)

Megan Groth

Laurel Kunkler

Shannon Loew (excused 9:30– 11:30 am)

Martin Regge

Ellen Sollod

Ross Tilghman

Commissioners Excused

Brodie Bain

Staff Present

Michael Jenkins

Valerie Kinast

Nicolas Welch

Joan Nieman

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February 6, 2014
1:30 – 3:30 pm

Project: Colman Dock
Phase: Concept Design
Previous reviews: 4/7/05; 8/3/06; 6/7/07

Presenters:

Genevieve Rucki	WSDOT
David Yuan	NBBJ
Randy Benedict	NBBJ
Burt Miller	WSDOT
Steve Pearce	SDOT

Attendees:

Larry Ahearn	FAS/CDCM
Mike Bell	Mortenson Construction
Marilyn Brockman	Bassetti Architects
Carlos Inclan	NBBJ
Joy Jacobson	FAS/ADA
Justin McCaffree	EnviroIssues
Ben Perkowski	DPD
Mark Scott	WSDOT
Terri Simmons	FAS/ADA
Marsha Tolon	WSDOT
Ed Weinstein	Weinstein AU

Recusals and Disclosures

Martin Regge was formerly employed with NBBJ and is currently working on collaborative projects with NBBJ. Tom Nelson’s employer, Mithun, has worked on the broader redevelopment of the Central Waterfront.

Purpose of Review

The purpose of this meeting was to review the concept design of the redevelopment of Colman Dock, located at the south of end the waterfront near Marion St. The Commission is reviewing this as a “partner project” of the broader Waterfront redevelopment effort. This review focuses specifically on the new entry and terminal buildings.

Summary of Proposal

WSDOT is planning to redevelop Colman Dock, the largest terminal in the Washington State Ferries system, due to deteriorating wood pilings, seismic concerns, overcrowding in the walk-on terminal, and conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. The proposed design will reorient the terminal north–south with the goal of improving passenger boarding; construct an entry building with ground-floor retail and potential future expansion south along Alaskan Way; and provide above-grade walkways that aim to increase pedestrian connectivity throughout the site.

Summary of Presentation

Genevieve Rucki introduced the presentation, which is dated February 6, 2014, and is available on the [Design Commission website](#). Ms. Rucki provided some history of the Colman Dock redevelopment and background on the Washington State Ferry system. Ms. Rucki described the impetus for the project: age, seismic deficiency, and safety/operational inefficiencies due to the facility's layout. An overview of the proposed project followed, which includes the replacement and reconfiguration of the dock and terminal buildings. Ms. Rucki noted the goal of improving pedestrian connectivity and providing environmental benefits. There will be coordination with the rest of the waterfront redevelopment, and anticipated project completion is 2021.

Mark Scott, WSDOT Facilities Architect, oriented the Commissioners to the site, current conditions and existing facilities, and the rationale for reorienting the terminal building.

David Yuan gave an overview of the program components and introduced the physical model. He described the terminal building as the "front door" for people arriving to Seattle via ferry. Likewise the proposed entry building is intended to greet visitors arriving from the city. Mr. Yuan noted areas where future (currently unfunded) retail space is planned. He echoed Ms. Rucki's comments about the team's intention to connect to and integrate with the broader waterfront project. Randy Benedict presented digital renderings for the proposed terminal and entry buildings.

Summary of Discussion

The Commission recognized the challenge of redeveloping an overwater transportation hub while maintaining continuous operations and appreciated that budgetary pressures only exacerbated those constraints. That said, the Commissioners were unsatisfied with the proposed design and program. They encouraged a more iconic style of architecture Colman Dock's location on the waterfront; suggested that WSDOT retain a development consultant to consider more creatively how retail can activate and support financially the site; and demonstrate greater integration with the broader waterfront redevelopment plan.

Agency Comments

none

Public Comments

none

Action

The Design Commission thanked Washington State Ferries and their consultants for the presentation of the Colman Dock Multimodal Terminal concept design. The Commission appreciated the clear presentation. The chair stated that the Commission is clearly passionate about this valuable piece of the city. The Commissioners see it as an important catalyzing component of the waterfront redevelopment effort in which they have been actively engaged. The chair stressed that the critical comments made in the review were predicated on the value they place on this project in the overall waterfront scheme. They want it to be an exemplary project for the city.

With a **vote of 0 to 9**, the Design Commission denied approval of the concept design for Colman Dock Multimodal Terminal. The Commissioners provided the recommendations listed below, and at the end

of the section are the individual reasons Commissioners gave for their votes against the project. The Commission anticipates reviewing the project again before it reaches 60% design.

Recommendations

Overall Concept Diagram

1. Rethink the proportion of the segment of the project that connects the entry building to the terminal in relation to the rest of the design.
2. Consider how the buildings can integrate better along Alaskan Way, with and without the retail component planned for a later phase. There is need for a strong program along that edge. Explore the potential of expanding circulation and how retail might come forth and activate that edge. (Recommendations below on the architecture elaborate on this.)
3. Connect beyond the site to future development and future waterfront projects. Especially think of opportunities for ferry customers to access the beach planned just south of the facility.
4. Consider how the ferry terminal can be a very vibrant place, including beyond the entry piece.
5. Engage a development consultant soon to evaluate the possibilities for co-development. The opportunities for revenue generating partnerships should be explored now because they may synergize with terminal redevelopment.

Architectural Expression

1. Consider how the architecture can become more expressive, taking into account the terminal's role as a node of arrival and departure in the city
2. Think about how people walking through, waiting in cars, visiting the retail, walking past etc. will engage with the buildings.
3. Explore ways to make the Marion St Bridge element bold.
4. Strengthen the organizing gesture of drawing the Marion St Bridge axis through the site. Extend it further, employ the thoughtful use of transparency, and provide a clear, strong diagram of how this axis works its way through the buildings.
5. Given that the concept plan diagram is compelling, consider how it could help organize the buildings—both interior and exterior—to capture views and guide how people occupy this area.

Sustainability

1. Seek opportunities to integrate a larger story of sustainability into the design and programming of the site.
2. In formulating the sustainability strategy, take care to consider the terminal's role as a transportation hub and its position at the edge of the waterfront.

The reasons for the votes against were as follows:

MR: All the bones are in place. There is great evidence that the team is thinking in the right manner and trying to leverage the location of Colman Dock relative to the surrounding city fabric and pending waterfront redevelopment. Additional significant opportunities exist beyond just a car/passenger ferry terminal and additional consideration for other complementary programs and features should be explored before moving forward with the current design.

- RT: There are too many unknowns. Design is starkly functional but needs to live up to its role as a gateway. Budget pressures and programmatic issues have obviously driven the thinking one way and it's time to step back and reevaluate.
- BA: There are fundamental questions about the *parti* and the arrangement is too unresolved. This is not just an opportunity to be a gateway to the city but an example that can raise the level of design for state transportation systems. It's not just about Seattle's waterfront, but all the state ferry terminals. They're all so starkly functional. We've seen the bar raised in airports and other transportation service designs.
- TN: I agree with all of what has been stated by the other Commissioners and would add the following: If we were just reviewing the programmatic resolution, that's been well researched and there are a lot of good ideas there. But beyond that, there is not enough developed for 30% design approval.
- OQ: The program is developed but the clarity of the concept is not strong enough. It's important to the Design Commission that this be a distinctive gateway building, but also how it engages the waterfront as a whole. An earlier diagram showed the length of the waterfront and seawall projects—it's a huge area and it's important we get this right.
- LK: In agreement with all that's been said.
- MG: The future of the city is being designed now. Seattle is becoming a more open, sustainable, and design-oriented city. This design and strategy are not compelling enough
- ES: Developing this as a single-function facility is not in keeping with current thinking. The relationship between the functions of the various parts is unresolved. The waiting area for cars is not taken beyond simply a parking lot. There appear to be no connections for people waiting in their cars to go to areas beyond the dock. The architecture of the building is incredibly generic and not specific enough. There is a rich story to be told in its place. The Waterfront Seattle project has used grids and repetition, and this is a real opportunity to be a unique piece. The ferry terminal can be a real attractor and make a statement.
- SL: This project site is prominent enough (and will only be more so with the redevelopment of the waterfront) to warrant a more considered urban and civic strategy, particularly along Alaskan Way. The opportunity is so great that WSDOT should leverage a co-development partnership strategy to ensure the design is commensurate with the overall vision for the waterfront and alleviate WSDOT from having to be urban designers and focus on their core competencies of creating efficient and safe ferry operations.