

Colman Dock

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Commissioners Present

Brianna Holan, Vice Chair
Rikerrious Geter
Laura Haddad
Mark Johnson
Rick Krochalis
Amalia Leighton
Vinita Sidhu
Elaine Wine

Commissioners Excused

Ben de Rubertis, Chair
Justin Clark

Project Description

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Washington State Ferries (WSF) are proposing to upgrade Colman Dock. Colman Dock is located on Alaskan Way in downtown Seattle. The dock provides ferry services for the WSF fleet serving Seattle, Bremerton, and Bainbridge Island. The facility also provides passenger ferry services for King County's ferry routes to Vashon and West Seattle.

Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) fourth review of the Colman Dock project. At this meeting the SDC reviewed design changes to the design development phase for the project. After the presentation and deliberation, the Commission voted, 8-0, to approve the design changes with several recommendations. The project will be reviewed again during a subcommittee meeting

Recusals and Disclosures

Rick Krochalis disclosed that he had previously worked with WSDOT on this project while working for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

July 18, 2019

9:00 - 10:30 am

Type

CIP

Phase

Design Development

Previous Reviews

[8/4/16](#), [6/4/15](#), [2/6/14](#)

Presenters

Genevieve Rucki
WSDOT

David Yuan
NBBJ

Juliet Vong
HBB Landscape Architecture

Attendees

Brock Bender
WSDOT

Jonathan Bowers
King County Water Taxi

Mike Johnson
SDOT

Ronald Matyjas
WSDOT

Kyler Parris
King County Water Taxi

Summary of Presentation

Genevieve Rucki, of WSDOT Ferries, David Yuan, of NBBJ, and Juliet Vong, of HBB Landscape Architecture, presented the design development phase for the following sections of the Colman Dock project: design refinements to Terminal Building size and entrance location, Columbia Plaza, and Yesler Plaza. The proposed updates include changes to the north and south entrances from Alaskan Way and portions of Columbia and Yesler Plazas. The proposed updates will address improvements to seismic safety, gates at each entrances, and elements that reduce conflict between vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

The updated design for the terminal building reduces the facility by 40 feet on the south end in order to avoid spanning a seismic joint located on the pier. Other design revisions to the terminal building included the removal of the south escalator on the south end of the facility as well as the removal of an elevator on the north end. The updated design also includes the addition of glass panels on the top floor of the south end of the facility to place emphasis on the entry point below. All entry points from Alaskan Way and the Marion St Bridge include recessed gates that will be used lowered during non-hours of operation, from 2-5 am.



Figure 1: View of south end of terminal building

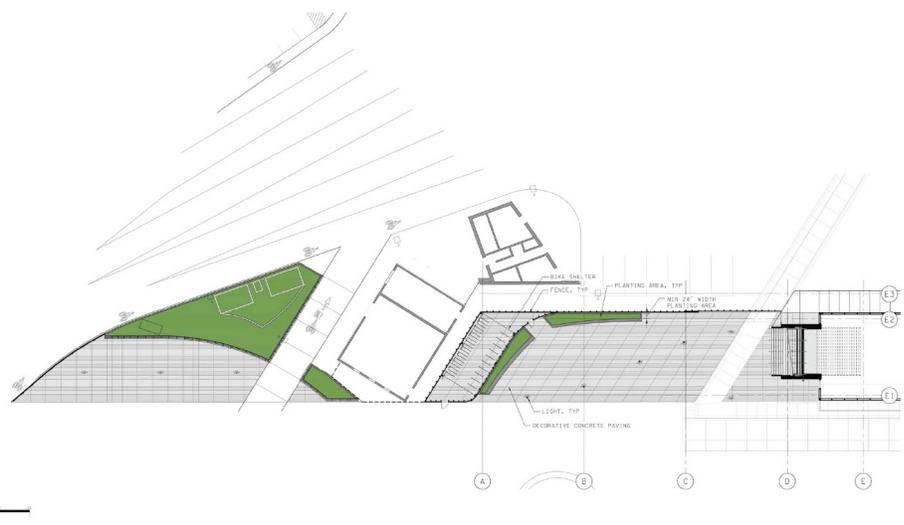


Figure 2: Updated design for Columbia Plaza

Both Yesler Plaza and Columbia Plaza are designed to provide inviting spaces for large gatherings on event days as well as smaller groups on nonevent days. Yesler Plaza has remained largely unchanged through the design process and will include seat walls, landscape planters, electrical utilities, and an open area for food trucks. Columbia Plaza has increased in size due to the shortening of the terminal building and has been updated to include a bike storage facility, landscape planters, and seat walls. The plaza also includes a paving pattern with angles scoring that runs parallel to the seismic joint and is distinguished from the paving patterns on the Waterfront Promenade, located adjacent to the plaza. The proposal also includes metal screening between Columbia Plaza and the ferry queuing area. *See figures 1 & 2 for more detail.*

Agency Comments

Steve Pearce, Office of the Waterfront, mentioned that they have been working for several years with WSDOT on the Colman Dock project and that the process has been both challenging and rewarding and that they have worked closely with the design team to ensure that there is a great urban edge for pedestrians and cyclist moving along the waterfront. Steve Pearce then said that they understand why the building was shortened, but stated that it should still create a strong experience for users entering the facility. Steve Pearce then complimented the project team for updating the design of the terminal building to have a unified expression and adequate transparency with a nice balance of different building materials. Steve Pearce then said that their team has started to focus on this area as a place of access, transition and arrival and that the updated design proposal is reflective of that vision.

Public Comments

None

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Entry building
- Bike storage structure and fencing
- Columbia Plaza concept and program
- Contextual relationship

Entry building (design and access)

The SDC commended the project team for maintaining the building's architectural character and strong street edge along Alaskan Way throughout the design process. Commissioners also appreciated how the integration of glass along the upper level of the south end of the terminal building increased the sense of openness and visibility along that façade. The Commission then commented about the location of the main entry point near the seismic joint and strongly recommended the project team focus on the materiality of the seismic joint, specifically considering pedestrian safety and access when specifying material.

The Commission then discussed issues related to circulation patterns to and within the facility. Commissioners expressed disappointment in the limited advertisement of accessible routes near the entrances and adjacent plazas. Commissioners also expressed disappointment in the project team locating an accessible route so far north from the main entrance. The SDC then commented on circulation between 1st Ave and the terminal building on the Marion Street Bridge. Commissioners are concerned with potential conflicts for pedestrians using the bridge outside of operating hours. The Commission strongly recommended the project team study circulation between 1st Ave and terminal building along the Marion St Bridge and provide information about how circulation will occur when the terminal building is not open.

Bike storage facility and fencing

The SDC agreed with the project team providing two access points for the bike storage facility. The Commission wanted the project team to provide more information about the circulation within the facility, specifically related to visibility for users who choose to use the facility to change. Commissioners also encouraged the project team to provide good visibility into the storage area as well as to consider how users will move within and through the facility.

The SDC then provided comment on the location and materiality of the fencing. Commissioners liked the project team's approach to increasing transparency through the fencing panels as it increases in height, but

encouraged the project team to increase the density of porous holes on the fencing to provide greater visual access to the waterfront.

Columbia Plaza concept and program

The SDC commended the project team for design updates to the paving pattern. Specifically, commissioners appreciated the scale and orientation of the paving, which works well with the paving along the Waterfront Promenade. The Commission also encouraged the project team to consider extending the landscape area along the full extent of the fence to provide an additional layer between the seating and fence. The SDC is concerned with the limited information provided for the proposed location and materiality of the lighting. Commissioners suggested the proposed light poles be located to provide the best lighting experience for pedestrians, whether in a linear or more angular pattern, but did not suggest a specific pattern for the project team. Commissioners also commented that the light poles should provide visual interest during the day time. The Commission recommended the project team further study how lighting can activate the plaza as well as providing a better understanding of how the light poles will function during the day time and nighttime.

The SDC then encouraged the project team to think about seating and activation within the proposed plazas. Commissioners encouraged the project team to increase the width of the planting edge to accommodate more seating options. The Commission then recommended the project team move forward with providing electrical utilities in the Columbia Plaza to support temporary activation and programming.

Contextual relationship

The SDC discussed issues about the integration of the terminal building within the surrounding context. The commission first addressed issues around the proposed access points. Commissioners requested further clarity about how access would function between the publicly accessible areas along the street and the ferry queuing area. Specifically commissioners asked if it would be possible for vehicle passengers already in que for a ferry to move between the queuing area and the plazas along Alaskan Way.

The SDC then asked for more clarity regarding bicycle access. The commission recommended the project team locate bicycle access points where they will provide an easy and intuitive transition from the street and adjacent bicycle facilities. Commissioners then stated that the location of the proposed bicycle access from the cycle track feels awkward and disjointed and recommended the project team provide more information as to where cyclists will actually enter the queuing area enter the queuing area (general and Bainbridge Only) and bike storage from the cycle track. The Commission then questioned whether the bicycle access from the cycle track should only serve as a one way point of ingress for cyclists or if it should be multifunctional, providing a two way multimodal to use to allow for easier access to and from the queuing area. If this cannot be done, commissioners recommended the project team design the cycle path to distinguish it from areas accessible to pedestrians.

The SDC then recommended the project team provide more information on signage and wayfinding. Commissioners also suggested the project team consider incorporating special colors, textures, and patterns on the gates to add visual interest when they are closed, while others cautioned the project team from spending a large portion of the budget designing the gates due to the facility's limited hours of non-operation.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for its presentation on design changes to the design development phase for Colman Dock. Overall, The Commission appreciated the project's retaining a strong street edge along Alaskan Way and maintaining the building's architectural statement throughout the design changes and reduction in building size. Commissioners saw positive changes in the simplification of the Columbia Plaza paving design as well as the integration of seating with planters. The SDC approved, 8-0, the design changes to the design development phase for Colman Dock with the following recommendations, which will be reviewed at a subcommittee meeting:

1. Give attention to materiality of seismic joint
2. Study circulation between 1st Ave and terminal building along the Marion St Bridge; provide information about how circulation will occur when the terminal building is not open
3. Further study how lighting can activate the plazas; Better understand how the poles will function in day time as well as night time

4. Provide electrical utilities in the Columbia Plaza for temporary activation and programming
5. Provide clarity around bike access to the ferry terminal; Provide information as to whether the cyclist entry points can be multifunctional; if entry points cannot be multifunctional provide further distinction to provide clarity for ferry passengers.
6. Prioritize entrance locations for cyclists that are intuitive for users
7. Provide more information on signage and wayfinding