



**Seattle
Design
Commission**

**APPROVED
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
5 December 2002**

Gregory J. Nickels,
Mayor

Donald Royse
Chair

Laura Ballock

Ralph Cipriani

Jack Mackie

Cary Moon

Iain M. Robertson

Nic Rossouw

David Spiker

Sharon E. Sutton

Tory Laughlin Taylor

John Rahaim,
Executive Director

Layne Cubell,
Commission Coordinator

Projects Reviewed

500 Mercer Street
Flexible Live-Work Space
Transportation Discussion

Commissioners Present

Donald Royse, Chair
Jack Mackie, Vice Chair
Laura Ballock
Ralph Cipriani
Cary Moon
Iain M. Robertson
Nic Rossouw
David Spiker
Sharon E. Sutton

Convened: 8:30am

Adjourned: 1:00pm

Staff Present

John Rahaim
Layne Cubell
Brad Gassman
Anna O'Connell



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Construction & Land Use

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5 Dec 2002 Project: **500 Mercer Street**
Phase: Alley Vacation
Previous Reviews: 25 January 2001 (Pre-Petition Alley Vacation Briefing)
Presenters: David Hewitt, Hewitt Architects
Joan Rosenstock, Fleets and Facilities
Attendees: Beverly Barnett, SDOT
Rachel Ben-Shmuel, Ben-Shmuel and Associates
Lyle Bicknell, CityDesign
Michael Jenkins, DCLU
Gerhard Kleinschmidt
Margo Polley, Seattle Center
Marilyn Senour, SDOT
Paul Shema, Hewitt Architects
Alan Winningham

Time: 1.5 hours (SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00210)

Action 1: The Commission thanked the team for coming and providing a clear project update and presentation, and would like to make the following comments and recommendations regarding the appropriateness of the alley vacation.

- **The Design Commission feels that the proposed alley vacation is justified from an urban design perspective;**
- **Mercer is a high-speed street and does not benefit from added curb cuts and its steep topography does not allow safe access to/from the alley;**
- **the alley currently does not provide a connection because the contiguous alleys to the north and south have previously been vacated; and**
- **it uses a blighted site to set the standards for future redevelopment of the area.**

Action 2: The Commission does not feel that the public benefits package was developed enough at this time and would like to also make the following comments and recommendations.

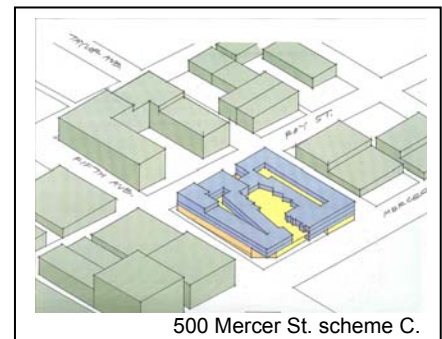
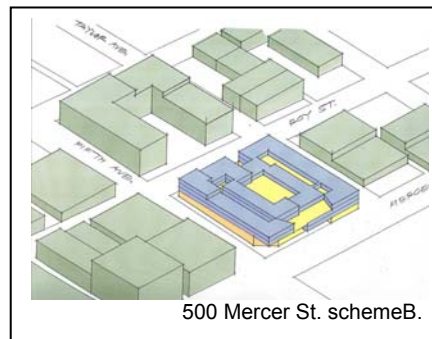
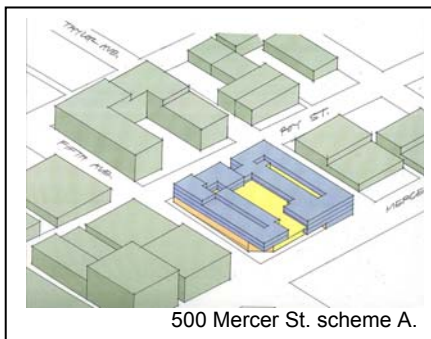
- **The Design Commission would like to see a clear demonstration of how the proposed streetscape design goes beyond SDOT standards when proponents return;**
- **would also like to see how the space created by the wide sidewalks can become a safe social space, with or without the Potlatch Trail, including an analysis of how people move through and occupy the space;**
- **would like a demonstration of how the displacement of alley functions onto Taylor is well handled; and**
- **is looking for long-term public benefits that are above and beyond other requirements.**

The purchase and sale agreement for this property was made about one year ago and they have until June 28th to close. The agreement is conditional, hinging on two requisites: an easement for the Potlatch Trail (but developers can build over or under the trail) and \$550,000 for on- or off-site affordable housing, which City Council will decide. The affordable housing can be condominiums or apartments and they

must sell or rent at a certain percentage below market rate. There are other things that are not currently conditions that Fleets and Facilities would like to see and that the developer will make conditions upon sale, such as an alley vacation to avoid having cars cross the trail.

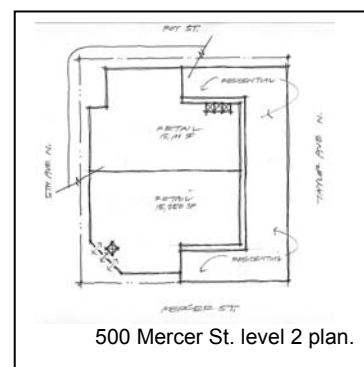
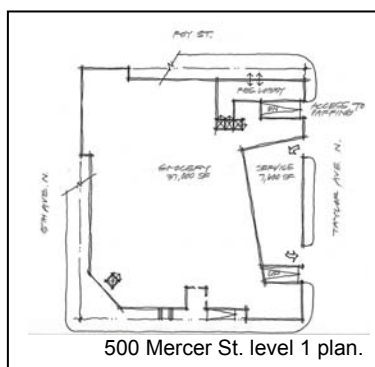
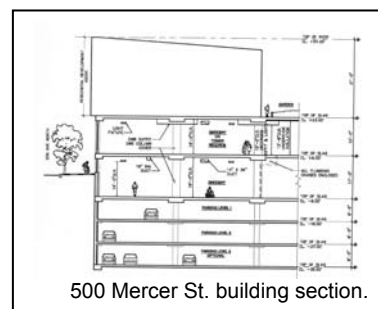
The site is in an interesting, emerging neighborhood with great future potential. Hewitt Architects are also designing the Potlatch Trail, so they are aware of how the trail works and the design concept behind it, which should make the projects work well together. Through the tree inventory, they found that there are some wonderful London plane trees along 5th Ave., which will be kept. Some trees along Roy St. are in poor shape and will be replaced. The site is on the corner of 5th Ave. and Roy St. and diagonally off one corner is a wonderful old building housing Jim’s Autobody, in the other direction is the Seattle Center. The alley is 8-feet wide in one part and 16-feet in another part and is partially vacated on other blocks and is therefore not a full alley. The area of the easement is about 40 percent larger than the area of the alley. The site is rich in topography—if the corner of 5th Ave. and Mercer St. is considered 0 elevation, then the intersection at Taylor Ave. and Mercer St. is -7, Roy St. and Taylor Ave. is -8, and 5th Ave. and Roy St. is +10. Thus, there is 18 feet of slope along Roy St. and 10 feet along 5th Ave., which provides interesting architectural opportunities. The block is zoned as MP340 and this project will be a mixed-use building.

In response to the last presentation, proponents broken down the scale of the building and massed it in response to the alley. It is a broad, generous site in relation to the height of the proposed building, which is two to three stories so that the scale of the building is low and solar access is readily available. Three schemes were looked at for the development: A) center court idea with a couple of circulation routes; B) courtyard within a courtyard with a setback from Mercer St. and a generous face; and C) dynamic courtyard forms. The team chose scheme A as the preferred alternative. The building has two levels of retail and three levels of underground parking. The main ground floor retail entrance is at the corner of Mercer St. and 5th Ave. where there will be a large commercial user, possibly a grocery store. A residential lobby on the ground floor creates transparency onto Roy St. Parking access and services are off of Taylor Ave. The east edge of the site, which faces the community, is wrapped with residential units. The concept for the courtyard is that it is more like a street rather than a passive courtyard. An interior atrium space houses the community amenities and the large glass space provides contrast with the finer-grain residential units. The idea is to have an urban street with a public walkway, and still have gardens for residents.



The site's edges, with the trail in place, are an additional ten feet on two sides and Roy St. will be narrowed for addition of a bike lane. The building is set back on Mercer St. for increased transparency and a broader sidewalk because there is significant pedestrian traffic here. The streetscape will consist of existing and new trees. The service area provides a place for trucks to get off of Taylor St. and is on the residential side of the building. The wall/streetscape to the east will be set apart by having different street trees and with art or by being a green wall to relate it more to the neighboring residential area. If the Potlatch Trail does not happen, there will be curb bulbs at the ends of the existing parking to create a gracious corner. All of the edges, except for the service entry, are transparent to make for a livelier streetscape. In addition, a second row of street trees can be added along Mercer St. to better buffer people from the traffic.

Adjacent to this development are an older stucco apartment building and a hotel. The goals for the building façade are to create rhythms and interest while breaking down the scale of the block. The base is concrete and is setback. The corner at Mercer St. and 5th Ave. is on a bias; the second story comes out over this corner as a prow for overhead protection. A graphic neon element will help make the building fit in with the neighborhood. The transparent community room is a one-story element with a roof deck. Because the street is busy and noisy, the walls will be thick, which creates an opportunity to do something with the window jams; proponents are exploring the idea of making the jams a different color. The roof form responds to the topography of the slope and creates an orthogonal elevation on 5th Ave. The three-story townhouses at the ends emphasize and change the scale at the corners. Two openings at either end are located where the alley once was. Tree plantings respond to the belvedere and these openings.



Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like to know what the walls between the courtyards are like.
 - Proponents stated that they are 2 ft high and there is lighting in that area resembling the street edge. In the interior courtyard, owners/renters of the adjacent units will have outdoor spaces to work with.
- Would like to know if it is a private courtyard.
 - Proponents stated that it is and that the public benefits are the edges.
- Would like to know if the proponents did a nine-block analysis and non-vacation scheme as are generally required in alley vacation reviews.
 - Proponents stated that they did not because the sale of the property is based on the alley being vacated. The alley is 8 ft wide at the southern end, so to make it work as an alley and serve alley functions would be difficult. In addition the idea of crossing the Potlatch Trail and access to Mercer St. created problems with the alley's use.

- Would like to know what the guidance is from other City departments with regard to this exceptional situation.
 - A representative from SDOT stated that there are not different directions as to how to handle a vacation other than the usual system. Therefore, they are looking at this vacation in the same way. Part of the merits of the project is its relation to the larger picture, but the benefits of the project must still stand on their own.
- Is confused because it seems that the decision has already been made.
 - A representative from Fleets and Facilities stated that the City has been involved in the Mercer corridor area for over 40 years now. The direction that has been given was what was in the area plan, which does change over the years. However, they cannot change directions every time the plan is changed, so the time at which the proposal came in is the direction the review of the project is going. There was the assumption that the Potlatch Trail would be built and that is the way the project is headed.
 - A representative from the Seattle Center stated that the Potlatch Trail project is on hold pending a decision on the Viaduct. There will probably be an at-grade connection to Roy St. than an underpass, so the route would be consistent with what you see in this presentation. The theater district plan, along Mercer St., is on hold until 2003, which indicates that this is consistent with that plan.
 - A representative from DCLU stated that at the Design Review Board (DRB) meeting last night this plan was looked at favorably with just a few caveats. The DRB would like to see further development of the belvedere courtyard street scheme so it relates more closely with the trail. They were concerned with the egress and ingress on Taylor St. and encouraged development alternatives that looked at joint access. The DRB urged further development of the corners because the building will establish a theme in that area. They also noted that the fifth elevation is the roof—because of topography, many people will view the building from above.
- Feels that the question should be asked, when you get to the essence of the matter, is the public better served to develop the site with or without the alley? From a transportation perspective, because of the nature of the site as a busy arterial, any time points of conflict can be eliminated, it is better for circulation, movement, and safety. Believes that the other factors should not be disregarded, such as the functions that alleys perform, but, in general, it serves transportation purposes better to develop the site without the alley. Feels that they will not see a better project in two pieces (on either side of the alley) than we see unified as one here. A unified development would be better for the community and feels that the Commission should work with the proponents to make this happen.
- Would like the proponents to list the public benefits they are offering.
 - Proponents stated that the right-of-way as the first segment of trail, affordable housing, elimination of the traffic crossing the trail at Roy St., elimination of traffic access for Mercer St. at alley, and creation of sidewalk amenities and pedestrian and bike zones are the public benefits.
 - Proponents further stated that the agreements with the Department of Housing are for condos and apartments. Essentially, from the condo perspective, they would provide a pool of money (\$691,000) for the City to use on or off site. The community prefers to keep the contribution on site, although it is up to the Department of Housing. The City uses a formula to analyze the unit mix by estimating the given market rate at the time of the project delivery, which came out to about ten units of affordable housing. The

mechanism is in the form of a soft second mortgage designed to provide the City with participation equity in the event that an owner sells within eight years.

- A low- or no-interest loan is available for homeowners. However, there is no distinction between the affordable and market-rate units—the finishes are all the same.
- Would like to know how the housing will stay affordable.
 - Proponents stated that during the eight-year window there is the ability to capture and recapture the appreciation. The goal is to create long-term, permanent housing defined as creating long-term stability; they want to find homeowners who will stay in the units. The hot-button issues are 1) incentivise home ownership for the long term; 2) make sure there is no stigma attached to the affordable housing; and 3) discourage those who are just looking for an economic windfall.
- Would like to know then if in eight years this could all just be affordable housing.
 - Proponents stated that is conceivable, but on a resale basis it is more important to recover money to recycle into the neighborhood than to figure out an impossible situation.
- Would like to know why the proponents think the vacation is a good solution from an urban design perspective.
 - Proponents stated that currently the alley serves as a parking lot. It is 8 ft wide for half the block and if it's set back, it is still only 12 ft wide, barely a sidewalk. Whether or not the Potlatch Trail happens, the surroundings are a neighborhood with high-density urban housing, which will get even denser. Broad sidewalks and benches will benefit the neighborhood, whereas the alley really does not. The wide sidewalks create an edge that is much more conducive to links with the Seattle Center. This plan uses one unified development rather than two developments. The entrance to the alley is difficult because slowing down to turn in from such a high-traffic street is dangerous and there are many accidents here. From a functional standpoint, the alley does not serve the purposes alleys are supposed to serve. In addition, the QFC by the arena gets 50 percent of their trade from pedestrians; because of this high number of patrons on foot, a pedestrian-oriented development is beneficial.
- Would like to know the dimensions of the block.
 - Proponents stated that it is 234 ft by 243 ft and 10 ft off each side is what is developable.
- Would like to know what is on the other side of Mercer St.
 - Proponents stated that it is a small, two-story brick building and a one-story office building.
- In the two-step vacation process, the first part is the rationale to vacate and the second is a question of the in perpetuity benefits this project brings.
- Feels that with the urban design analysis, absence of function of the alley, and the lack of alley to the north and south, the vacation is justified.
- Believes that the Commission does not feel that FlexCar qualifies as a public benefit because it is a privately-held organization with no guarantee that it will stay in business.
 - Proponents stated that they will have FlexCar access/stalls, but it has been deleted from the list of public benefits because it is temporal.

- Would like to know, of the five public benefits, which are provisions of the sale.
 - Proponents stated that the easement to the Potlatch Trail is part of the purchase and sale agreement, but the enhancement of the area is related to the vacation.
- Would like proponents to clarify the public benefits that do not relate to or overlap with the easement.
 - Proponents stated that the development of the space itself, how the 20–24 ft of sidewalk is treated and what it provides, is the benefit. They worked with bike groups, Seattle Center, the Parks Department, and others to determine how to treat the area and create a space that has the right human qualities.
- Feels that it helps if the proponents are specific on wording of the public benefits. Believes that the following were articulated in the presentation, but not clear on the list: 1) creation of important pedestrian connection between Seattle Center and adjacent community and 2) improvement of space in response to the amount of cyclists that use the corridor.
- Believes that there is the implication that the development of the space on all four sides of the block are beyond SDOT and SPU standards. Notes that it is not currently listed as a benefit, but feels that it should be listed and is the strongest public benefit.
 - Proponents stated that the sense of civic scale of the street edge is a good opportunity to tie into Seattle Center. They did not list the development of this space as a benefit because they felt it was subjective. The public benefit at the street edge they did list is access across Mercer St. and Roy St., even if the Potlatch Trail does not happen.
- Believes that the Seattle Center needs a better edge. The adjacent neighborhoods to the north and northwest will get denser and Seattle Center is the edge of downtown. It would be better to be able to go to the adjacent neighborhood for respite without having to go through the Seattle Center. An additional 10 ft could really become a footprint for other development to look to and feels that the project is moving in the right direction.
- Feels that the vacation makes sense for reasons other Commissioners have mentioned, but the benefits are not enough because the trail might not happen and if it doesn't wide sidewalks will not make sense. Believes there needs to be further development of what the space will be like with no trail.
- Agrees in theory, but it is important to remember about the Potlatch Trail, it is not a situation of if you build it, they will come. They're already there and anything to improve the pedestrian connection and mitigate the traffic issues is needed now; it is not triggered by the presence of the trail.
- Agrees and feels that it would be difficult to hold development of the project for something that is unpredictable.
- Feels that further articulation of what happens in the space would make the Commission more confident in the vacation.
- Believes that they need to see an enhanced package of what the public benefits are beyond the provisions of the purchase and sale agreement. Feels that the question of the Potlatch Trail is a red herring, because even without it this is still a positive development.
- Believes that alleys do have a service. For example, on the northwest edge of the nearby Larry's Market there is a hole in the wall on the east side of the building for services; are we now going to make an alley, in some sense, out of the loading area on Taylor St.? Encourages the team to bring in an artist or artists to look at curiosities and solutions that could be generated.
- Feels that increased public safety is a big part, but has not been specifically mentioned. Turning into a 9 ft alley from Mercer St. is extremely dangerous and elimination of this is a public benefit, but has not been articulated.

- Would like to see what happens on Taylor St. side to make sure we are not providing public danger with trucks backing over the sidewalk.
- Feels that this development could be a template for other buildings on Taylor St.
 - Proponents would like to know who they work with on the public benefits package and who they talk to about specific issues related to this. It seems that the project needs two lives—it must meet the standards before and after the Potlatch Trail.
- Would like to see an analysis showing that the design of the space supports circulation.
- Would also like them to look at safety with regard to egress from the parking lot. Would like to know what will happen to Tower Records.
 - Proponents stated that Tower Records has been in that space for 25 years and wants to stay so they will lease a large retail space in the building. The current building is antiquated, has only 9000 ft² of retail space, and they want 15,000–20,000 ft² of sell area. It is their most popular Seattle store and they feel that this is enhanced by proximity to the EMP and other music and arts venues. There will be commercial parking on the first level of the below-ground parking lot for the patrons of the retail/commercial spaces. At the corner, an elevator provides access to Tower Records and the grocery store (or whatever retail goes in there).
- Would like to know if all the traffic to the parking lot is via the ramps off of Taylor St.
 - Proponents stated that it does and they are looking at having one ‘In’ ramp and one ‘Out’ ramp. However, they have discussed with the community having just one ramp for both entering and leaving traffic. They are working on how to address the confusion of where to get into the garage.
 - A representative from DCLU stated that the team must do a traffic study to address the aforementioned issues.

5 Dec 2002 Project: **Flexible Live-Work Space**

Phase: Policy Briefing

Previous Review: none

Presenter: Mark Troxel, DCLU

Attendee: Mike Podowski, DCLU

Time: .75 hours

(SDC Ref. # 221 | DC00292)

Summary: **The Commission thanks the representative from DCLU for coming to discuss the design aspects of this proposed code change at this stage and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.**

- **The Design Commission wholeheartedly supports the task and direction of the flexible live-work space proposal;**
- **suggests that the written policy begin with a statement of intentions up front;**
- **believes that there is a flip side to the occupants' responsibilities that needs to be addressed, which is the interface of the public realm and the adjacent sidewalk/public spaces with these live-work spaces;**
- **urges that DCLU staff pay attention to the neighborhood and contiguous street face, not just uses within the building;**
- **encourages flexible regulations for flexible space;**
- **urges the policymakers involved to start with only regulations that are absolutely necessary and add the fewest possible restrictions/regulations; and**
- **advises DCLU to think in non-prescriptive terms and to keep in mind opportunities for blurred and blended zoning as the policy is further developed.**

“‘Live-work unit’ means a structure or portion of a structure combining a commercial or manufacturing activity that is allowed in the zone with a residential living space for the owner of the commercial or manufacturing business or the owner’s employee, and that person’s household. The resident owner or employee of the business shall be responsible for the business conducted in the live-work unit. The commercial or manufacturing activity conducted in the live-work unit shall take place only subject or a valid business license associated with the premises” –presentation handout.

Currently, a SEPA analysis is being done for this proposal, which would allow live-work units in Seattle. People now can have home-occupation space, but the regulations for this are stringent. For example, there can be no signs and limited deliveries to the premises. There are also artist work spaces, but these are subject to limitations—the person must be a “bona fide working artist” or a “person regularly engaged in the visual, performing, or creative arts.”

The three drivers for this proposal are

1. lack of affordable space for artists;
2. empty storefronts during this economic downturn; and
3. amount of mixed-use development has created concern that Seattle requires more commercial space than the market can bear.

The goal is for this to be flexible enough to allow just about anything that is allowed in that zone. It would benefit the community in providing eyes on the street and creating zero-commuting workplaces.

The construction of such spaces will not be inexpensive. They will be new construction and must meet building code requirements for separating the residential and nonresidential uses and having necessary exits. Thus, this proposal will not fully meet the artists' needs because the properties will be more expensive. One of the concerns is the limited supply of commercial space, about 6 percent of the land, which employs, by some estimates, half the people who work in Seattle. With the residential market as hot as it is, unfettered residential development would erase commercial uses from much of the land that is currently zoned commercial. On the ground, some of the units may look residential, which is a concern. However, one of the objectives is that the resulting street will be adaptable and be functionally capable as a business so that later that space can be used more commercially.

Where the neighborhood plan expressly prohibits single-purpose residential buildings, street-level live-work spaces will also be prohibited. Street-level live-work space is likely to create a quieter streetscape than street-level commercial. The regulations treat street-level live-work units differently than upper-floor live-work units. Those not at street level will be required, like residential uses, to provide a common open space. With regard to other Code requirements, live-work units are to be lumped with nonresidential uses and, for example, will be required to have ADA access and curb cuts that accommodate delivery trucks.

The live-work proposal:

- requires a business license associated with premises;
- allows the household of the owner or employee (up to eight nonrelated, nontransient people) to live in a unit;
- requires one parking space per unit of up to 2500 ft²; if the unit is larger, the number of parking spaces depends on the type of business conducted in the live-work unit;
- requires street-level units to have 13 ft ceilings if they are required of commercial spaces in the zone;
- requires a transparency depth of 30 in. for storefront windows; and
- requires that the nonresidential portion be between the sidewalk and the residential portion to keep the activity oriented toward the street.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like to know why it requires a business license. Artists might not have these, nor would hobbyists.
 - Proponents stated that a business license is only \$15 and a hobbyists can use home-occupation units.
- Points out that a business license affords cheaper, better insurance.
- Feels that the idea is good, but the restrictions are detrimental. Zoning and how commercial and residential space is defined is problematic. Feels that the amount of egregious uses would be relatively small compared to the benefit of loosening up the prescriptions. How would you know what is happening in there? Believes that the point is to create an in-between condition and the restrictions should be eliminated.
 - Proponent stated that in San Francisco they left it wide open and had problems sufficiently severe to inspire citizens' initiative to stop live-work abuses. This ended up being very expensive and they are hoping to prevent this from happening in Seattle.
- Feels that if you look at the most exciting urban places, most are evolved like the neighborhoods in New York. When they became structured, restricted, and put through an administrative process, they lose their bohemian/individual flavor. Suggests that the proponent place a statement before the rules

and regulations that articulates the goals of the policy—serendipitous use. Feels that it is easier to take corrective measures if the philosophy is articulated up front.

- Agrees, but feels it is not as simple as that. Over-regulation has the potential to destroy what you want to do. Where to draw the line is difficult.
- Feels that the policy should allow anything that is not illegal.
- Would like the proponent to think of the commercial and residential zoning as blurred or blended. For example, in Brooklyn, at the ends of the blocks there are live-work units that commercial things can go in to, but people can also live there.
- Has the sense that the Commission agrees with the intent of the policy. However, feels that the public ought to be made aware of the intent—it is hard to see the intent for the regulations. Agrees that a statement of intent should go up front to balance the regulations.
- Would like to clarify whether this only applies to new construction.
 - Proponent stated that space can be converted to live-work space, but the building codes are tough and there are limited ways to convert some buildings/spaces.
- Feels that it is important to allow new construction and conversions of old buildings. Would like to know if the living units will be developed separately from the work space.
 - Proponent stated that the work space is not being developed separately, but there is a separate sleeping area. There are building code work-arounds/alternatives, or ways to combine different uses.
- Stated that lived in a storefront for 12 years and there were no regulations, other than having a separate exit for the living area. There were no regulations for the street and believes that since affordable units are not being provided, the proponent should consider the adjacent street, its type and the character of the neighborhood. Recommends that the number of units in a row be limited so that there is not a blank wall along the street. Feels that individuals benefit from having flexible space and they should have to give something back.
- Would like to know about any requirements for transparency or display.
 - Proponent stated that a percent of the façade has to be transparent.
- Would like to know what locations are being looked at for live-work units.
 - Proponent stated that they are looking at places where the community activity is less intensive and where mixed-use development is happening now.
- Would like to know if Belltown is being considered.
 - Proponent stated that it is, except for on some avenues where certain street-level uses such as entertainment and retail are required.
- Would like to know what is being done about current studio spaces where artists are now supposedly not living.
 - Proponent stated that artist housing advocates are making the effort to educate people regarding things like safety, fire exits, extinguishers, and so on.
- Would like to know if they are encouraging non-street-level live-work units.
 - Proponent stated that that is being encouraged and believes it will be a good chance to have businesses on upper levels and customers will be able to go up to such units. It will

allow more intensive uses in upstairs live-work spaces.

- Feels this is a tricky situation and can think of examples of proposed regulations that would inhibit this. Encourages proponent to think in non-prescriptive ways and create only bottom line regulations. Would like to see the question framed to simplify the problem and allow maximum flexibility in live-work spaces. Believes that even the transparency issue could be a problem and can think of an area in New York that was not developed with transparency, Chelsea, but has been revitalized nonetheless.
 - Proponents stated that the transparency regulation is important to neighboring retail proprietors.
- Would like to know how policy-makers envision people leasing the units. Will it be different than a commercial or residential lease?
 - Proponent stated that it will be quite a bit different from either of those leases. For example, with regard to relocation requirements, state laws such as the Landlord Tenant Act will protect people as if they were just residents, although people will probably not qualify for relocation assistance if evicted for just cause.
- Would like to know how large of business you can have as far as parking requirements.
 - Proponent stated that parking is an issue once a live-work unit exceeds 2500 ft² and will require more than one parking space. One space per unit is a low parking requirement compared with other businesses. When a unit exceeds 2500 ft², it must meet the minimum parking requirement for the most similar use to the business conducted in the unit.
- Believes that there should be no minimum parking standards.
- Encourages flexible regulations for flexible spaces.
- Would like to know if this policy will help facilitate live-work space in alleys like those in Yaletown that are successful and active.
 - Proponent stated that there will likely be some in Belltown, where the neighborhood envisions live-work units on the streets, not the avenues, especially on the steep slopes west of First Ave.
- Alleys in Seattle only need to be 16 feet, which is a habitable route, so assuming the alley is kept as public right-of-way and is not vacated, it could be done

5 Dec 2002 Project: Transportation Discussion

Phase: Staff Briefing

Previous Reviews: 7 November 2002 (Staff Briefing), 3 October 2002 (Staff Briefing), 19 September 2002 (Staff Briefing), 5 September 2002 (Staff Briefing), 15 August 2002 (Staff Briefing), 1 August 2002 (Staff Briefing)

Attendee: Stephanie Stauffer, Seattle Monorail Project

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 219 | DC00231; 169 | DC00242)

Summary: The Commission appreciates being kept up-to-date on the Monorail and Viaduct/Waterfront planning issues. The Design Commission would like guidance from CityDesign staff in finding ways to work cooperatively with all of those involved in these large projects. With regard to the Monorail project, declines the offer to provide comments on design consultant selection through the public review process and would like to reaffirm that they are typically involved in the selection panel for such projects. Regarding the Viaduct/Waterfront, feels that the second option presented by CityDesign, which provides early public involvement in the process, will be most effective.

Monorail

CityDesign is working with SDOT and DCLU on a proposal for their involvement in planning and urban design work on the Monorail. The current proposal is for SDOT to provide the program manager and under the program manager there would be three sub-managers, two from SDOT and one from CityDesign. All four of these people would share space and have additional staff. The responsibilities of the four managers would be full time. One of the sub-managers would be a traffic and engineering person. The role of the CityDesign sub-manager would be urban design and planning work, of which there are three aspects: neighborhood integration or alignment and corridor planning; design review; and urban design work around the stations. Different options and models for the design review process are being examined. The lead design firm for the Monorail is being hired independent of the design-build engineering firm. The Monorail board is making the selection, but they are opening up the submittals to Request for Proposal (RFP) for the public to comment on and welcome input from the Design Commission, too.

Viaduct/Waterfront Planning

Currently, there are four options on the table with regard to the Viaduct:

1. Tunnel with substantial changes to the original plan such as reusing the Battery St. Tunnel;
2. Rebuild the viaduct so it looks essentially the same as the existing one;
3. Build a new, much bigger viaduct structure; and
4. Create a surface street

The different proposals for the public planning process that are being discussed involve varying levels of public input. In one, the public process is reactive and scheduled with later reviews of waterfront plan alternatives. In the second process alternative, the focus of public involvement is early and is used to generate plans. In both cases, a forum or two hosted by the Planning Commission and the Design Commission would be held in the spring.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

Monorail

- Would like to know if the traffic and engineering person would be from SDOT.
 - CityDesign staff said that he/she would be from SDOT.
- States that there was a big discussion with light rail as to the Martin Luther King Jr. Way corridor and would like to know if the urban design and planning person would deal with alignment issues.
 - CityDesign staff stated that that would likely be part of their job.
- Would like to know the relationship between the design of stations and the surrounding areas, and the design of the system.
 - CityDesign staff stated that they do not know.
- Believes that there is a short turn-around time for the Request for Qualifications.
- Is concerned because feels that this does not allow it to be a real public works project with good review. Usually a selection committee is set up and a Commissioner is one member of this panel.
- Is also concerned with this omission. By going on the fast track and pushing it through, the review will be different than on other capital projects.
 - CityDesign staff stated that the Monorail is not a CIP project nor a City project, but is in the right-of-way and that is why it will be reviewed by the Commission.
- Points out that the Commission is usually involved in the process on projects like this and would like to make sure the Commission is involved in this project.
 - A representative from the Seattle Monorail Project stated that she will relay this information to the rest of the staff there. They want it to be an open process, but she does not know the details at this point.
- Would like to know why this project is on such a short time frame.
 - The representative from the Seattle Monorail Project stated that this is because there is pressure to provide it in a timely manner. The role of the lead urban design and architecture firm has not been completely defined yet.
- Would like there to be a discussion early on with the Seattle Monorail Project to clarify the lingering concerns and clear the air.
- Feels that the integration of the line and urban design work should be a function of the City, shared with the Seattle Monorail Project.
- Believes that the City should lead that effort and the Seattle Monorail Project be part of the efforts. Feels that a lesson was learned with the light rail where the project was treated as a development project and they were reacting to things rather than having the project itself change the city.

Viaduct/Waterfront Planning

- Would like to know if the Port has commented on any of the options.

- CityDesign staff stated that they have and their tone, in general, has been positive. The reason they have put Pier 46 and the ferry terminal on the table is because of redevelopment of the Viaduct and the incredible opportunities it presents. CityDesign is not clear if the Port has a strong feeling about one of the alternatives.

5 December 2002 Commission Business

ACTION ITEMS

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. TIMESHEETS
- B. WOODLAND PARK ZOO CONSULTANT SELECTION—
CUBELL
- C. DECEMBER 19TH EVENT PLANNING—CUBELL
- D. ANNUAL RETREAT ON JANUARY 9TH—CUBELL