

**Seattle
Design
Commission**

**Approved
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
2 November 2006**

Greg Nickels
Mayor

Karen Kiest
Chair

Tasha Atchison

Pam Beyette

Evan Bourquard

Brendan Connolly

John Hoffman

Mary Johnston

Anindita Mitra

Dennis Ryan

Darrell Vange

Guillermo Romano
Executive Director

Layne Cubell
Senior Staff

Projects Reviewed

Mercer Corridor Replacement Project
Ship Canal Bike Trail Extension
Capitol Hill Water Quality Improvement Project
New Rainier Vista – 31st Ave S.
Big Projects/Upcoming Projects
Alaskan Way Viaduct/Seawall Replacement

Convened: 9:00am

Adjourned: 6:00pm

Commissioners Present

Karen Kiest, Chair
Pam Beyette
Evan Bourquard
Brendan Connolly
Mary Johnston
Dennis Ryan
Darrell Vange
Tasha Atchison
Anindita Mitra

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Layne Cubell
Tom Iurino
Heather Nelson



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02 Nov. 2006 Project: Mercer Corridor Replacement Project

Previous Reviews: January 5, 2006; March 15, 2006; June 1, 2006; July 6, 2006

Phase: Design Update

Presenters: Eric Tweit, Seattle Department of Transportation
Angela Brady, Seattle Department of Transportation
Mark Hinshaw, LMN Architects

Attendees: Lyle Bicknell, DPD
Phil Fujii, Vulcan, Inc
Dean Koonts, Hough, Beck and Baird Inc.

Time: 1 ½ hours (SDC Ref. # 169)RS0606)

Action: The Commission thanks SDOT and the team for the update and reinforces their earlier approval subject to the following suggestions.

- **The Commission appreciates the stakeholders' commitment and would recommend that they also come and present their recommendations in the future.**
- **The Commission notes there is also an opportunity to take a more systemic view of the drainage system for this project and the larger SLU area and urges the team to look at ROW areas for possible swale treatments.**
- **The new streetcar is also an important element of this project's pedestrian experience, and the Commission suggests pursuing more cohesive inclusion of that element.**
- **The Commission would like to see a more detailed response to their earlier comments from last year, specifically the integration of art, storm-water treatment and signage and way-finding potentials.**
- **The Commission urges SDOT to reconsider the changes proposed for Westlake Avenue at the 9th Street intersection. Consider keeping the intersection as it is currently to maintain the prominence and alignment of Westlake Avenue in the area. Signage should be adequate in directing truck traffic to 9th Avenue as desired by SDOT.**
- **The Commission appreciates the pedestrian crossings at all intersections and asks that way-finding be elegant and system-wide. The Commission urges SDOT to consider the importance of bike connections particularly on Westlake and Dexter, accommodating on-street bicycling where there are gaps in the larger bike trail network.**
- **The Commission has some doubts about the one lane each direction option on Valley Street.**
- **The Commission urges the team to look for ways to continue the**

connection to Capitol Hill via Republican Ave.

- **The Commission looks forward to future project updates as design work continues.**

The Commission has seen this project 4 times previously, as it is tied in to other transportation infrastructure projects. Angie Brady is taking over the project and is briefing the Commission on updates. The Commission has long been supportive of the 2 way project, and is enthusiastic of LMNs participation in urban design issues. This is Design Update II.

Proponent's Presentation:

The design hasn't advanced much from 1 year ago. The team is currently working on EA. The team would like to take this opportunity to address the last comments from the Commission, and also to update the plans that include Mercer and a partially lowered Aurora. The aim of this project is connecting these two neighborhoods and improve connections to Viaduct during infrastructure changes downtown. The team recognizes Mercer's function as a regional connector, it is also an area that's becoming a mixed used neighborhood, with housing and employment opportunities. SDOT wants to make the Mercer Corridor serve the neighborhood as well. Valley Street becomes a two way street in this process to complement the new South Lake Union park, integrating the park with the neighborhood. The team introduces the proposal of a partially lowered Aurora, this includes widening Mercer on the north, and converting to a two directional, three lane system (from one way existing). There will also be modifications to Valley Street, narrowing from 5 lanes to two lanes, and adding bike lanes. SDOT is focused on connecting cyclists from Fairview down to Dexter. There will also be improvements to Westlake Ave. The project is currently in the design phase. Ch2MHill is the consultant. Construction is scheduled to start in the third quarter of 2008. The budget is \$100-120 million, including \$30 million for acquisition.

There will be an interim connection (hook) to Broad Street until the lowered Aurora is built. Westlake to the south will be converted at the same time as the new street car line is being built. This area ultimately will be redeveloped, and this will help with the funding of this project. Mercer and Roy will have two lanes in the theater district. The general plan incorporates existing streetcar plans, and can incorporate any additions in a new plan. Lowered aurora project would include crossing Thomas Street so the streetcar could run on those. That is the option currently.

Two conceptual approaches were shown a year ago, one with a more green emphasis, another with a more cultural emphasis. The direction from the Commission was to lean toward the cultural end but infuse with green. What we have now is a blending of those two. It will be a grand urban boulevard with a planted median with points along it, either at the bull-nose end or at the nodes, with a vertical dramatic expression. It will also include public art or artfully done street elements/furnishings, to be experienced as a punctuation point between major scale trees in the median. Not shown in the concept drawings are the, details about turning and ramps, this is just a presentation of the big conceptual ideas. Another element is the left over right of way, with the idea to supplement whatever the city does with this with a major scale landscape design. There is concern about maintenance budget for this piece. Other city precedents exist using ROW improvements to fund such park space, but this will be a whole new discussion. An esplanade has been proposed along Valley Street, allowing the South Lake Union Park to drift down and embrace part of the street. This team

is coordinating with the park design team, and is interested in bringing the park down into the street, creating a softer edge rather than just imposing a street treatment. Something large in scale is required at the pivot point, which deserves to be treated other than a standard 90 degree intersection. Similarly, urban design features along Westlake Ave N, which has dramatic views across lake, should be celebrated and enhanced. From Westlake the view will be open. Terry has its own guidelines. Other opportunities exist on other side streets and are yet to be explored.

The project proposes bringing traffic from Westlake to 9th, increasing access for trucks. Westlake has more street frontage, retail and pedestrians, thus directing freight traffic to 9th is desirable. From the north, all traffic would turn left onto Mercer to I-5. There will be two area parks, one at Westlake and Terry and the other at the streetcar station. In terms of an urban design approach, the streetcar facility should be positioned as a major event, and should have presence, almost like a pergola feature, and will include a plaza. Station may or may not be above ground. Some are advocating for on-street parking at this site, how it will be designed is still in question, but SDOT has assumed that this will happen. Pedestrian safety concerns will need to be addressed. There is advocacy for continuing the backdoor to Capital Hill via Republican Ave. This remains in the design with ultimate approval needed from WASHDOT, but SDOT thinks they can make the case for keeping it.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- How do all the stakeholders interface on this project?
 - Vulcan, PR, South Lake Union, Queen Anne and Interbay neighborhoods, freight mobility, Fred Hutchinson, Gates Foundation HQ, all major stakeholders in this area and have signed a letter of recommendation for this project, agreeing that a lowered Aurora is really critical. This has been an excellent community process, getting consensus from many constituents. Comfort has been achieved from both freight and bike concerns.
- Concern about broader traffic implications from one way streets coupled back to two way systems.
 - With a lowered Aurora spreads traffic out. System capacity will increase with both plans. The design makes overall circulation more efficient. There are signals at two intersections.
- Commission would like to keep the guiding light of David Spiker on this project and continue to study the Republican overpass to Capital Hill.
- Looking forward to more detail. Commission also seeing the “Swale on Yale” today. Are we capturing any of the water in the landscape design of this project? It seems like an opportunity. We should take a more systemic approach.
 - SDOT and SPU are looking for opportunities to use green areas for drainage. Conditions are different in this part of South Lake Union. All goes to combined flow. This is different from Capital Hill. SPU wants to keep with that system.
- At this juncture, if anything it looks like it’s lost some of the vim, maybe because we’re segueing into work. What’s making it hard is that the streetcar is important, the pedestrian nature is falling out of this. Re-enhance all those items of green and

get streetcar to figure in more prominently.

- This presentation seems a rehash and even loss of detail from the December presentation. Looking forward to more detail, including storm-water treatment and art.
 - Intent is there to go into more detail, just haven't moved forward on those elements yet.
- The intermixing of vegetation is working well. This is a subtle thing, bringing the landscape into the north part of the valley. Is there a way to extend it across the valley to make it feel like a park? Having big problem conceptually with Westlake and 9th, cognitively, to have that turn will move the city backwards. These are concave turns, can't see why they can't take the turn to Westlake. Urge the team to go back to what the earlier design showed; there is more merit to keeping a street a street.
- Maintaining pedestrian crossing on all the streets is a very positive move forward. For the grid network to work, with an increase in capacity, way-finding and signs to direct people to the different neighborhoods will be critical, and should be elegant and clear.
- Bicycling should be an emphasis on Eastlake and Dexter. Perhaps consider using the Alki model, having bicycles on safe side of street or widening pedestrian lanes. Alignment of grid: trolley on Westlake between Valley and Mercer streets. Coming southbound trucks turn onto Westlake, conflict with streetcar.
- Allowing for a movement lane (fast and slower lane) to accommodate for pedestrians ambling around the park should be considered.
- Would like to see presentation from stakeholders group.
- What is the SDOT art plan,
 - Anne Stevens, applying her work to this process.
 - Purpose of this presentation was to bring new commissioners up to speed. Not much change from last presentation.

19 Oct. 2006 Project: Ship Canal Bike Trail Extension

Previous Reviews: January 5, 2006; March 15, 2006; June 1, 2006; July 6, 2006

Phase: Design Development

Presenters: Stuart Goldsmith, SDOT

Peter Lagerwey, SDOT

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 221|RS0612)

Action: The Commission unanimously approved this project at 90% design development, but would appreciate the opportunity for a few Commissioners to look at construction drawings to follow up on some design details.

- The Commission commends SDOT for its continued work in connecting the missing trail links in the city and would like to applaud their persistence, patience and efforts to partner with adjacent property owners.
- The Commission is thrilled that funding is now in place for this particular segment and phase.
- The Commission suggests that as the team progresses, they pay more attention to how design materials are selected and how the trail is constructed.
- The Commission has some concerns about the section at the Ballard Bridge, noting that way-finding in this area is especially important, but generally applauds the efforts of the team to provide signage that connects this and other trails.

This extension of the Ship Canal Bicycle Trail represents the last cycling link to downtown from Redmond. The project is fairly far along in design development. This is the first time for the DC to see.

Proponent's Presentation:

The team gave a brief overview of the Urban Trails plan, representing Seattle as an hourglass, with major trails converging from all parts; the Interurban, Burke Gilman, Chief Sealth, and Duwamish trails. All are currently under construction and renovation. 3 major trail projects are going to bid next year, of which this is one, the Ship Canal trail. The property acquisition is complete, now moving to build the trails. Doing bicycle master plan (Tulle Design Group is the consultant). The City is also completing a new Seattle Bicycle Master Plan. A public meeting was held in August, 460 people signed in. There is an incredible amount of interest in this project. Two more public meetings are upcoming, in Ballard and at Rainier Community Center. The theme: connectivity. The team wants to make a connected system of urban villages, including bike infrastructure, lanes, bike blvds, etc.

Putting the Ship Canal in context: this includes the area of the north end of the Burke Gilman to the south ship canal. Near SPU, the current trail ends (at Fremont bridge). The project will take trails that end now and extend them further to the west to the bike lanes at Magnolia and downtown. This connection is the single most important in the city if you're simply looking at numbers, will get more people bicycling more often. This represents a good connection from the Burke Gilman to downtown, SPU, Discovery Park; the connectivity element here is incredible.

Phase one opened in 1996 from the Fremont bridge to 6th ave west. What made this possible is the railroad line, abandoned in 1994, had acquired the property to 6th ave. The team is not yet ready to start phase 2 because of the tricky railroad alignment. At 6th this becomes an industrial marine corridor. The team is working with adjacent property owners and most importantly with the railroad in building the trail with an active rail line. Where to cross the tracks was an issue struggled with for years. This is very much a utilitarian piece of trail to get you to downtown, the connecting piece to downtown. The real critical issue was getting people across an active railroad track. It is very lightly active, with one small business shipping frozen fish, slow speed traffic. A location was finally found location that would work. Normally a 12ft trail is standard. At this site, there is an easement from the storage facility at the curve. The project has been getting the right of way. It is a very constrained segment. The material will be standard asphalt path, some areas will have shoulder, most will just have fence. Railroad referred to connection in Tacoma, z-crossing, forces you to look both ways and take note of what's going on, extremely good visibility makes this very safe.

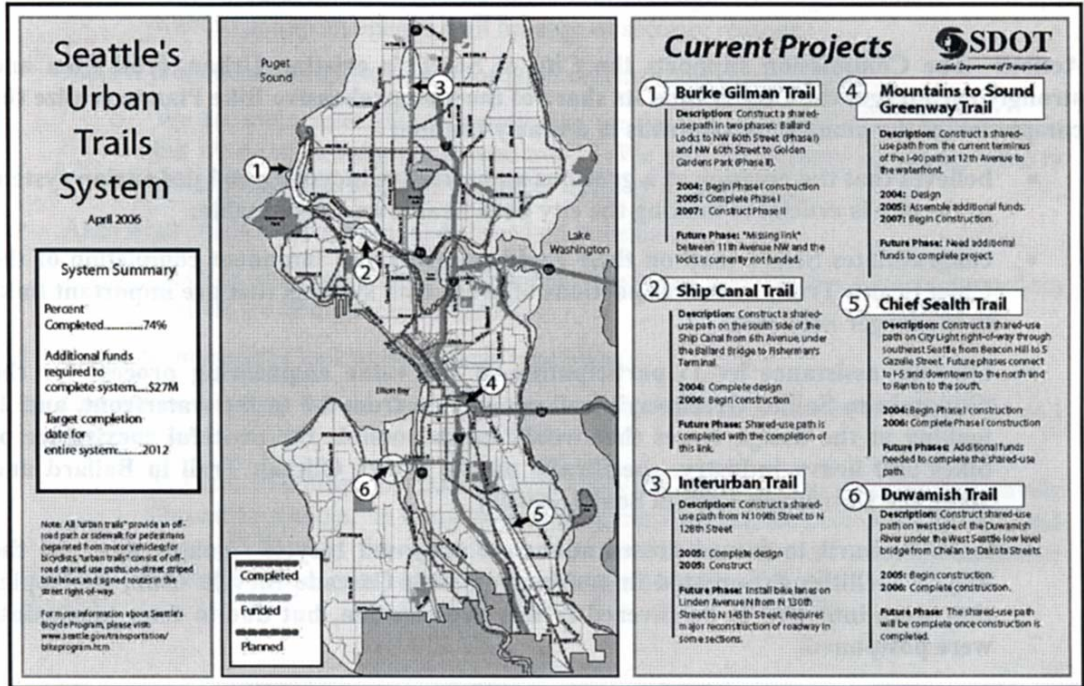
The project is complex, with three parts to construction. A private waterline needs to be relocated, and there is a need to move tracks 10' to north and locate some waterlines underground. The waterline project will start next year, then the railroad will come in and realign the tracks, then we can build the trail. Total construction will take from 12-15 months.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- DC recognizes the good work, gave commendation to mayor last year.
- Dangerous bike connection: Nickerson and 15th.
 - There are alternate ways to get under the Ballard Bridge, one can turn right, stay on sidewalk or loop down and get east or west on the trail. One can also walk down the steps if you choose.
- Use of indicator versus barrier fence is appreciated.
 - There is only one train per hour. One other safety concern is addressed as the bike path crosses over single track so you don't have threat of two tracks.
- The sidewalks on the Ballard Bridge are too narrow to accommodate two way bike traffic.
 - The short term answer requires signing so people don't go the wrong way on the Ballard Bridge. Going northbound you'll have to go up 19th, then get on the Ballard Bridge. Longer term a more systemic solution is needed. 2500 written comments have come in related to the Seattle Bicycle Master Plan. Ballard Bridge is one of highest issues. One comment at the recent bicycle master planning meeting was to build a new non-motorized bridge, monorail

for bikes. This bridge is recognized as one of the big barriers for bicyclists in the city. A possible funding mechanism for this project would be ProParks, 2000 parks levy, federal enhancement grants, and some local matching funds.

- Is 13th the main access point for big landowners in area?
 - Yes. Will have stop signs on trail to accommodate that traffic. Visibility is very good which is critical.
- Access to local businesses?
 - Ewing street, half paved access road, no drainage, very messy area, several different driveways to access Foss Maritime. Most of businesses are on north side of the railroad tracks.
- Want to do plaques in future showing the history of the area from gritty urban waterfront. This is actually a strength, Consider bringing visibility to maritime uses, people tending to their boats, etc.
- How does this relate to the missing link on the Burke Gilman?
 - Serves a slightly different source. Access is via the Fremont Bridge or from Magnolia. Water is barrier, makes a separate trail system. The missing link is still on the books. These are two completely separate projects. The more trails you build, the most you encourage cyclists, so there is a cumulative, integrating effect. This issue is almost in the sphere of cultural wars and change. The team has met with all adjacent property owners, and the dynamic has worked really well. Queen Anne community council, Magnolia and all the businesses met and no one had a problem with building the trail. This is not a political project.
- Consider using this as an example of successful negotiation for businesses on Puget Sound. It's clear it really comes down to individuals and personal relationships.
 - Yes, this got the momentum going. Access issues are not a big deal here.
- Question about ambient lighting.
 - Railroad is requiring enhanced lighting. .
- Landscape elements. Way to expand z turn to incorporate more landscape element or landscape elements. Should look like it has integrity, not just a chain link fence.
 - The team doesn't want to create pretty green park through industrial area because the messaging is wrong. Basic quality of bike trails is to be very standard.
- Will we see again?
 - We will bring construction drawings. Come look at them. (comment – I thought the entire Commission did not want to see them and that one to three commissioners might want to review them with SDOT staff)
- DC would love to see more of what it looks like on the ground.



19 Oct. 2006 Project: Capitol Hill Water Quality Improvement Project

Phase: Concept Design

Previous Review: September 07, 2006

Presenters: Shaunie Cochran, SPU
Lo Masako, SPU
Eric Tweit, SDOT
Chris Woelfel, SPU
Tracy Tackett, SPU

Attendees: Beverly Barnett, SDOT
Lyle Bicknell, DPD
Kelly Davidson, Arts
Kris Effertz, COS-OED/OPM
Scott Kemp, DPD
Brandon Morgan, Vulcan
Mara Rogers, SPU
Rachel Ben-Shmuel, Vulcan

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 170)

Action: The Commission approves the concept development presentation by the SPU team and appreciates the enthusiasm for this creative and innovative approach to storm-water treatment.

- The Commission commends the team for working with the adjacent developer (Vulcan) at this early stage of development, looks forward to seeing further development and design and finds that this project has broad design implications.
- The Commission would like to understand more about the way the swale works in order to comment more fully on design, and would like more background on where the water is coming from and going, perhaps through diagrams or sections.
- The Commission is concerned about the design of the streetscape as a whole and suggests consolidating the green swale on one side of the street only.
- They also expressed interest in seeing a more urban response rather than a suburban approach, a harder edge on the street side and perhaps the pedestrian side, as well.
- The Commission finds that real opportunities exist in treating the crossings and bridges as design elements, such as grates over the swale, and also as education and art opportunities.

- **Concern was expressed about the long term goals for the streetscape and where entries might be, noting that if there is less retail and more residential development this would be less of an issue.**
- **The Commission suggests taking another look at the width of the sidewalk, and looking at larger issues of on-street parking, and potential use of grates over the swale to maximize pedestrian space.**

Informally called the “Swale on Yale” this project ties in with SPU’s SEA Streets projects begun in Broadview in North Seattle and the new mixed use development at Highpoint in West Seattle. This project is primarily concerned with water quality treatment of Capital Hill’s runoff, and ROW improvements. This is the Commission’s first opportunity to review this project. This project is in early design phase.

Proponent’s Presentation:

This is a low impact development program, an exciting project with a huge water quality benefit. The design will be the first to bring natural drainage projects from the suburbs into the city. Swale treatments in general have the added benefit of creating public space while restoring water, improving water quality, protecting aquatic wildlife, and protecting creek channels. This particular project is only focused on water quality, not interested in soaking water into the ground. There are four precedents for this project in Seattle, at Broadview, Pinehurst and Venema (currently in design, also at Thornton Creek) and at Highpoint mixed use development in West Seattle. The intent is to build a regional water quality treatment facility and green infrastructure to provide retro-fit treatment for up to 240 acres of Capital Hill. The design facility is to meet department of ecology and city standards. The end result will create more green space and a pedestrian friendly streetscape.

The area covers 400-500 acres that drain into the lake. It’s context is within the Cascade Neighborhood, which contains an Orthodox church, the Cascade P-patch, REI, commercial buildings and new retail and residential development. The project is located on ROW adjacent to REI and Cascade Park, between Pontius, Harrison and Yale Streets. Vulcan owns the property. The project would build a swale in ROW and add sidewalks as well. This is part of a mixed use development in an area zones for 55-75 ‘ tall light- use development of condos and retail.

The swale will have the effect of pollution removal. It first passes through an underground pretreatment vault; then slow water velocities filter pollutants through dense vegetation. Swales that are flat bottomed increase efficiencies with grasses at the bottom to filter sediment from runoff. There is a direct relationship of the swales to Cascade Park as well, which is designed with a runoff feature.

Water quality benefits:

- Removes an estimated 43 tons of TSS annually.
- Treats up to 240 acres of extra-dirty runoff.
- Cost effective at \$7 kg/TSS (about half the price of other planned water quality projects).

- Innovative urban design allows greater flexibility in future state storm water permits.
- Rate payer equity – benefits commercial rate payers.

Key design features:

- 18' wide, with extra wide sunken planting strip.
- One lane parking. Two way traffic. What gives in the plan is one lane of parking, and shrinking the sidewalks a bit to accommodate, from 10' wide down to 6'. Need developers to voluntarily set back three feet from development line to allow wider sidewalks.
- Green-space to connect REI and slated Green Streets on either side.
- Inspiration from other cities: Sweden, gravel trenches or a place to step down and enjoy space.

Public partnership:

- SDOT – roadway design, parking, planting areas and sidewalks.
- DPD – coordination with adjacent development.
- Mayor's office – support of sustainability projects.

Public private partnership.

- Shared construction costs.
- Shared maintenance.
- Shared vision of sustainability.

Public outreach – very early in process.

- Planning for open house in January. L
- Loss of parking is a huge issue, business owners are concerned about impacts.

Schedule: go/no go decision in winter 2006/07. Design 2007. Construction late 2008-09 (timed with redevelopment). Estimating construction at \$6 million, and maintenance at \$20K.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Question about the location. Why two streets?
 - Swale can only accommodate so much water. It needs to be close to a storm-drain. We don't want to pump storm-water up to treat it, instead we want to tease back to a catch pipe further uphill, and intercept some of the water. In a small storm, the water all goes into the swale and is treated, in a big storm it stays underground in pipes which is good, as it keeps the pollution underground. There will be four individual swale along Pontius and Yale adjacent to cascade park and new Vulcan development area s. The resonance time through the swale is determined by a combination of length, slope and depth of the water. Gravity allows water to come to this site.
- Is there a benefit in scaling down to get more parking in?

- There is possible parking lost, for instance the diagonal street parking goes away. 30 diagonal spots existing might turn out to be 12 after the swales. There could be a loss of 48 altogether. There may be an opportunity for new parking in the school zone. Can recoup another 10 spaces. Think they will lose 38 spots. Vulcan encouraged SPU to leave as many parking spaces as possible part around retail. Whatever parking we can keep helps us. Cascade park has water feature designed as water pickup, possibility to extend and incorporate swale with west side park? Block north, storm-drain is on opposite side so designed to keep continuity with other swale, also traffic consideration. Don't want people in the swale, so better not to connect with the park.
- Can you tell us how the swale works? Will these be hazardous soils?
 - There is a diversion pipe 2 blocks to the south with flow splitters. Water goes in at the head of each block and leaves system at end of each block. The existing line is 72". The depth of water will be between 4-6" deep. The depth of the swale is 2' deep.
 - In terms of major maintenance: the sedimentation vault will decrease maintenance from smaller in-swale maintenance. The larger systems will need at least annual maintenance. There are low control weirs at spots along the swales, requiring shoveling every 5 years. Every 20 years the freeboard goes away, and one must remove all plants and soil and bring back to the original grade.
- Where are the pedestrian crossings?
 - There will be an open graded bridging structure that allows vegetation to grow under it. Work will proceed iteratively with the building developers. For the cost benefit of water treating, the size of the swale must be 11' wide. Cost benefit breakpoint happens at leaving 3' space from development. The fallback is to put a vault under Cascade Park. ROW here is not a huge space.
- Consider this an opportunity to understand the rules of what a swale looks like, then look at the possibilities for design. Another streetscape form could be developed that allows generous trees in swale.
- Urge you to look at taking away the 4' planting strip on the opposite side and giving more space to grow big trees in the swale, considering plants that will work in swale conditions. Consider the quality of the pedestrian space at the end of the process. Skinny little trees are not desirable. Consolidate green-space to widen the sidewalks and make this a more viable public space. This is a unique street form.
- Can you also consider this a more urban concept, thinking of it perhaps as more canal-like. Don't want the swale to be a ribbon of green sludge. The slope is neither safe nor friendly. Consider making things more vertical, with the sidewalk on the shrub-side of the street.

- It depends on how deep it is how much slope you need. 3 to 1 is the safety standard for recoverable car-flipping.
- There is something about this that looks like highway ditch. In this tight corridor it is clearly a real value. Install a railing with the sidewalk, think of overlooking the Seine. This could be a phenomenal thing in our urban setting, with bridges crossing over the swale, and a possibility for nodes that allow users to hover over the plantings/water and an educational opportunity to tell people about the functionality of the swale. Consider designated lookout points.
- Concern about 4 blocks on N-S alignment, appropriate adjacent use has been affected, probably won't be retail with a 6 foot sidewalk.
- Look at the bigger picture, and the impacts of these decisions for appropriate land-use for this area. This is a great opportunity since development and this project are working together at the same time. Private design impact fees integrated with process.
- We complement SPU on diving in with inspirational design charettes and other ways of achieving the same kinds of objectives. We encourage looking at other opportunities in South Lake Union in relation to the 1-5 corridor. We're not really looking at design yet. Appreciate comment about lost parking, is there a way to do some sort of grate-work for cars, to make the swale go under parking?
- This will be an additional pedestrian corridor, use some extra space to consolidate the structure. Use this as an opportunity to do something really tremendous and different, but make sure all players are conversing about the issues. This will be primarily for residential use. In the southeastern segment is Pemco's parking garage, office or retail presence, but the other three sides are mostly residential. The sidewalk inboard next to building limits to certain crossing points. Consider these in the design.
- Push to design a streetscape that is functional for current and future use. Find an 6-8' sidewalk solution, so that it's replicable in other areas where we don't have so much control, i.e. in a retrofit rather than new development. We are inspired by the work in the charrette. Make this a celebratory piece for this neighborhood. Hopefully will treat its own water someday.
- Will the arts office have an involvement?
 - There is a possibility to get some 1% for art.
- Vulcan and art?
 - Not committed yet, will have the conversation.
- Bridges over swales are opportunities for integration, junction for people, art experience.

- Is there adjacency with green streets? An aesthetic if not functional continuity should be pursued.
- How is this paid for?
 - Paid for with drainage rate payers. City-wide rate according to how much impervious surface we own.



Natural Drainage Changes the Use and Look of the Street

These two photos, taken from the same location in SPU's Broadview Green Grid natural drainage project, demonstrate the kind of changes made to the right-of-way when installing a natural drainage system. The bottom photo shows a swale prior to the development of landscaping.



A landscaped swale and adjacent sidewalk on the SEA Street project.



19 Oct. 2006 Project: **New Rainier Vista – 31st Avenue South**

Phase: Street and Alley Vacations Follow Up

Previous Review: June 15, 2006

Presenter: Jess Harris, DPD
 Kim Lokan, Tonklin Hoyne Lokan
 Ed Rose, SHA
 Peg Staeheli, SVR
 Tom Wolkan, Wolkan Architects

Attendees: Beverly Barnett, SDOT
 Jeff Boone, Weinstein A/U
 Tammy Federick, SDOT
 Daniel Johnson, Boys & Girls Club CEO/President
 Kristin Kildall, SVR
 Chester Weir, Weinstein A/U

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 169/RS0606)

Action: **The Commission did not support the public benefit package proposed by the team. This is the second time the Commission has seen this proposal which revisits a network of street/alley vacations previously approved by Council in 2003. The Commission continues to be supportive of the Boys & Girls Club, but in reviewing the public benefits package it does not find it to be adequate, as currently proposed.**

- **The Commission has specific concerns with lack of East-West permeability of edges for pedestrians, finds the southern portion of the trail with a 10' public easement too small and convoluted and also expressed concern about security issues with the open space at the southeast.**
- **The Commission asked the team to look again at pedestrian circulation especially the trail from North to South at the East of the Boys & Girls Club which doesn't have enough intention or energy to be a comfortable link for commuters. An alternate scheme would be improving the existing connection along MLK.**
- **Another East to West link would also be seen as a positive as would fully expanding the existing pedestrian link across the parking lot.**
- **In regards to open space, what had previously been proposed as a publicly accessible open space has now been converted into a private playfield, which the Commission does not see as a public amenity.**
- **The Commission finds the ballfield fence height to still be an issue, but applauds bringing the fence down from 20' to 8', and wonders if a 4' fence could also function to keep the balls in and appear more like a public space.**
- **The Commission argues that the glass portal through the buildings**

along MLK Way does not constitute a public benefit, and suggests eliminating the glass portal, and instead consolidating the buildings and moving the gap to the South, adding a real pedestrian connection or walkway here.

- **The Commission appreciates the team making the Northern parking lot more publicly friendly by edging with plants rather than fencing.**
- **All in all, the Commission feels the public benefit package proposed is not adequate and suggests taking another stab at strengthening pedestrian connections and showing different ways to play up the site.**

Commission Chair Karen Keist recused herself for this presentation and Commissioner Darrell Vange stood in as acting chair. This is the team's 2nd visit, the last was in June. This is a street vacation application with 2 steps:

1. Evaluate street configuration from urban design perspective. Last time we considered this and the DC approved.
2. The second step is approving public benefit. We did not approve this at the June meeting and are looking forward to your presentation today.

Proponent's Presentation:

A context map shows the existing plats. This is a 65 acre site, which is one of three Hope 6 projects that New Holly is involved in, developing public housing garden communities. It is located at MLK and Alaska St., at the junction of the Edmonds/Columbia City light rail station. It includes 935 mixed income housing units, and several mixed use building, including 40K square feet of retail. 14 acres of parks and open space, and the 40K square foot Boys and Girls Club. All are designed along New Urbanist principals; with pedestrian paths, neighborhood parks, and a walk-able community. The site is anchored by MLK. There is a lower density around the periphery at the north end and a higher density at the south end: Boys and Girls Club, mixed use are and the light rail station. The major walkway is along the MLK spine. There is a light rail station 14' sidewalk provision.

Timeline:

1999 Hope 6 grant was awarded.

2003 subdivision plat approval.

2004 SHA/city study-analysis for KROC grant.

2005 Kroc grant application unsuccessful. Phase 1 streets/utilities and housing.

2006 – starting housing development.

Phase one is in the southeast quadrant, west of MLK. On the east side of the SE quadrant, to the immediate north of Oregon are bungalows, which will be demolished in the Phase 2 site.

The approved subdivision plat of 2003 has a number of mixed use buildings. 31st Ave S. is a cul de sac street, with no access to Alaska. With improvements that the team is making with previous comments from the DC, the plan has much better access, and a much easier pedestrian path. 62K square feet of right of way alley west of 31st is notated in the site plan as additional park space of about one acre. The park on the Westside is connected to the other parks via pedestrian paths. The public ROW is not a part of the street ROW, but connects to the northern park towards the greenbelt. The same pattern is happening on the eastside and there is a change in the park location to emphasize that.

The parks are of varying sizes, with different programs to accommodate different age groups. There is a large playfield, and smaller parks and children's play areas. The DC comments on connectivity were useful. The team is looking at the light rail station and at street connections at the corner of Boys and Girls Club. Existing trees have been retained, according to concern in the neighborhood: ponderosa pine, oak trees, Robina pseudoacacia, Betula papyrifera. Fast growing, short-lived birches are a contrast for a mix of ages in the plantings. The history of the median was a significant achievement and is anchored with a tree. The plan and grading were worked around an older ponderosa pine.

The art plan includes a theme of labyrinth forms, tree seed forms, and storytelling from phase 1. There is integration with ROW in small-scale labyrinth forms and whirligigs from phase 1. At the Boys & Girls Club there is artwork along the playfield fencing. The labyrinth is a cross-cultural symbol, used here in the plantings, hillsides, rock-forms, art and grading. The artist's intent is to integrate and knit together phase one with phase two.

The pedestrian connections and access are through private property (PUDA - Seattle Housing Authority). This is along the long building on MLK, which is a mixed use SHA building. A view portal and view corridor from MLK looks through this building to the playfield and parks. 10 public pedestrian easements through the site connect pedestrians to the community park and playfield (this easement abuts the school district site). Baseball and soccer field are for kids 12 and under. Large open space, worked the fence to draw you in, smallest neck was 18' then opens up. Another connection is located in the for sale residential corridor. This has a raised crosswalk. The labyrinth at the north end allows kids to play while other kids are on the playfield. There is a landscaped hedge rather than a fence, allowing permeability. The playfield has an 8' fence except in the backfield areas. The for sale area has a fence on one edge, and is open on the other edge. Access is between the Boys and Girls Club and mixed use building, looking east from MLK. The mixed use building has a view portal looking east from MLK, with the central portion of building remaining as open as possible, with 13' height on the first commercial floor, and others at 9'. The intent is to open up as much as possible to have view. Crossings are 35' across (N-S) and 30' deep with a glass enclosed bridge connecting three levels between two wings of building. Have seating areas within this area. There will also be access between mixed use building and school district site looking north from Alaskan Way. This is a private drive with public access. There is a raised crosswalk, bringing you into the park site. This has been opened about 10' from the original presentation, and is a gravel pedestrian path about 1000' long. Townhouses on Oregon, tend to be three stories high.

The public benefit is identified as the pedestrian access to the Sound Transit station, through the Boys and Girls Club facility, between mixed use building. There is also access from Alaska St. to open space, and from Renton Ave to a pedestrian trail. Public art is integrated into the user experience. The expanded Boys and Girls Club facility is a proposed LEED rated building, with an enlarged field for youth sports, as well as offering additional youth

activity space and a community meeting room.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Question section through the farthest south edge of building. Is this a vehicular path?
 - No. This is a green view portal and plaza, not vehicular. The walk is adjacent to the building, none are adjacent to the playfield. MLK will be a lively pedestrian environment, and pedestrians are encouraged to use this. Surface parking with landscape area is located between the field fence and the curb. Pedestrian easement and park are on the north, on the south there is a view corridor.
- Why aren't you calling it a public use space? There is a fence around the playfield. Is the playfield restricted?
 - Yes, it is controlled access through the Boys and Girls Club. Access is on the north side.
- Describe the labyrinth: theme running throughout the park.
 - On north will be a full scale labyrinth that people can walk through, then the form is deconstructed throughout the space. Labyrinth seeds are used as a template to draw the labyrinth, and a surface treatment out of boulders, 12-18", is set in landscape. On the south, native clumping grasses are used to define the circular shape of a labyrinth, in other areas, a paved surface is used.
- Previous Boys and Girls Club site. How will this be disposed with new concept.
 - Now this will be ground related and apartment housing with programmed park space.
- Have we lost the park space in the Boys and Girls Club playfield?
 - This is still a major part of the open space system, has not been touched, and is not part of the recreation field. The flow of direct access through Boys and Girls Club is funneled out to MLK, the other flow is meandering through the open space.
- What is the direct access, and what is the character of that space? Important that this be treated as a real public space, not a private space. Is access exterior or interior?
 - The user has the ability to go across the site. The Boys and Girls Club access is exterior, 24 hours/day. A canopy leads people to the entries. There is an alteration to plat, which is in the early stages of getting comments back.
- Is public benefit no.5 satisfied by a major playfield which is access controlled?
 - This is part of the judgement that the Commission will decide. The Boys & Girls Club is a public agency. Look at the whole package of general public accessibility and other public access spaces on site to decide the public benefit.
- We appreciate that the trail connections are responsive to the Commission's previous comments.

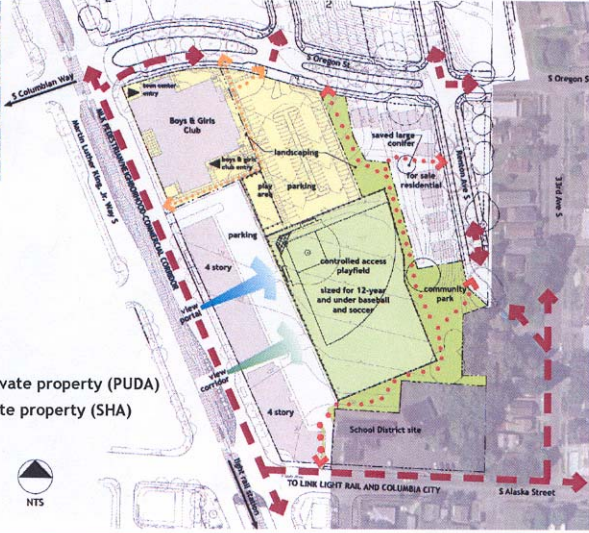
- Describe the character of the mixed use buildings on the MLK side.
 - We have a commitment to that being the primary pedestrian access. There is infrastructure to achieve this including a mix of businesses, envisioning a design treatment to make the area attractive by offering amenities for pedestrians, trees, street furniture, and other features adjacent to businesses. There is a commitment from Starbucks at this site as a keystone retail draw, and inquiries from other primary retailers. We are in discussion with a developer for that corner. There are specific ideas for types of retail we want to see for this mixed use development, we are being very selective. Look at the Othello building and at New Holly for an idea of the direction we are taking: UPS, Starbucks, etc.
- Concerned about the view corridor. Can they really see in? Is there pedestrian permeability and what is the public feel and character of the open spaces? We thank the team for ways to get the pedestrian through the site, and as a pedestrian I can see myself moving through the site, but in some areas it feels a little scary. If I were to put water in any part of the site, what route would the water take down through the site? That's how pedestrians move.
- Concerned about the pedestrian path due east of playfield. A recommendation: bring the trail through the parking lot and playfield and make it more public. It would feel much safer. Otherwise, people will cut through to get to the light rail station.
- Not convinced that this is adequate open space east of the playfield, and the leftover spaces don't really add up. The spaces seem impenetrable. Make it feel safer and more open. There is an opportunity for leveraging open space more than you are already doing. The big concern is the fence between the playfield and the open space. Is there a different way to demarcate this space? A lower fence would be better.
 - It's been lowered from 16-20', now it's 8'.
- Break down the wall! An 8' fence will not keep people out at night. A 4' fence would make us all psychologically feel more comfortable. The shape of circulation, a compromise on the building and parking would make this a more successful pedestrian link. As it is, circulation is through the parking lot. PUDA needs to be more successful public space.
- Appreciate the positive east west connection. A strong north south connection has been achieved with this presentation.
- The space behind playfield may prove a real security issue.
- SHA mixed use building portal will not be a view corridor.

Pedestrian Connections



Legend

- Boys & Girls Club site
- Park
- Boys and Girls Club playfield
- Buildings
- Major pedestrian links
- Pedestrian access through private property (PUDA)
- Pedestrian trail through private property (SHA)
- Property line
- Fence
- Trees



Site Plan

- Rainier Vista Boys & Girls Club
- Rainier Vista Teen Center
- 1.6 acre Boys & Girls Club playfield
- 37,000 SF public park
- 1000 LF pedestrian trail



19 Oct. 2006 Project: Alaskan Way Viaduct/Seawall Replacement

Phase: Design Update

Previous Review: none

Presenters: Dennis Haskell, Parson Brinckerhoff
 Rachelle Hein, WSDOT
 Ron Paananen, WSDOT
 Steve Pearce, SDOT

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 169/RS0606)

Summary: The Commission appreciates that this quarterly update covered lots of ground, starting with a general overview for new Commissioners and finds that the team is clearly responding to many concerns and exploring several options, which the Commission appreciates.

- The Commission can see why the tunnel is the preferred alternative and appreciates seeing the visual simulation video, but notes that there is no simulation of views from downtown looking out to the waterfront which would be one of most significant benefits.
- Some concern was expressed about the elevated structure in regard to noise, and that the current elevated scheme does not show an “apples to apples” comparison with the tunnel by including the cost of the seawall’s replacement.
- The Commission acknowledges the necessity of the 5 vent and portal structures with the tunnel option and urges the team to see the monumental design opportunities they present.
- Finally, the Commission appreciates the significant contribution the project makes to the city’s future open space design intentions and looks forward to hearing about a final decision on the project from the Governor by year end.

Proponent’s Presentation:

The first proposal is for a cut and cover, stacked tunnel next to the sea wall. The stacked configuration gives more room for utilities. Utilities relocation cost would be immense. Alaskan Way cut and cover plan leaves 70’ public space next to the water. An elevated option at Madison Street, with 3 lanes like existing, 50% wider than current viaduct to meet WASHDOT’s current design standards, and seismic requirement; a 100 year earthquake requirement to design to.

Sea wall structure: Untreated wood piles in current structure are being eaten by wood bores and are held together more by gravity and inertia than anything else at this point. Solution: tunnel wall provides new sea wall, injecting concrete grout into the wall to stabilize. EIS includes looking at a lowered Aurora, improving circulation in the South Lake Union area.

The sea wall needs to be replaced, and funding revolves around core project which defers construction of north sea-wall to be built as funds become available. The Viaduct is the most pressing existing safety concern. Seneca and Columbia connections could still be maintained.

The first animation is of the tunnel alternative under Elliott and Western. The mainline goes under Elliott and Western in this scenario whereas today you go over it. This is a much improved design. Cost estimates are at \$4.5 billion, only for the core project, not including the lowered Aurora or sea wall. Pike Place Market lid is open to the West. There would be no Seneca exit. The Lenora pedestrian bridge would be revived. The entrance is lowered 15-20' and comes up to meet the existing tunnel. Improved for full height clearance for trucks to 16'. An onramp from Denny Way eliminates weave. The existing Battery Street tunnel is substandard for ventilation, and will be brought up to code. The roof structure over the Battery Street tunnel can become a green public space. A pedestrian walkway on the lid connects with Lenora street pedestrian bridge.

The second animation shows the elevated structure alternative. The Commission is speechless. Consideration is given about noise mitigation, with treatments on the bottom of upper deck. The team has not talked about noise panels, translucent panels have ventilation issues and are expensive. Smooth decks will be used underneath and new technology is available that could be used to mitigate the noise. This is a big topic, will spend time on this consideration if the elevated option is chosen. Performance for the sea wall for an elevated viaduct different is quite different from the tunnel option. Tunnel sea wall is completely new whereas elevated viaduct will be a rebuilt wall.

Reviewing the panel findings finds the project fundamentally sound and achievable. A decision is needed to avoid the high costs of delay. The funding plan provides enough for the core project. Some sources may be optimistic. Cost estimates are generally sound. The Governor's request to WSDOT is to reevaluate cost estimates, develop plan for implementing the expert review-panel's recommendations, and work with financing partner to establish a path forward.

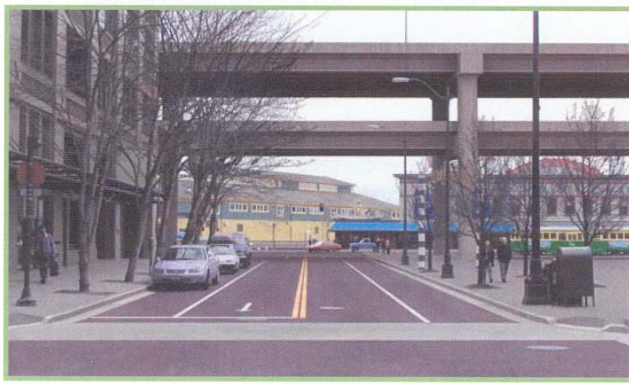
Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Embrace iconic elements.
 - In the event an elevated option is chosen, how does the DC weigh in on design?
- Criteria for evaluating should be about connectivity between downtown and the waterfront. Is there a stacked structure similar to existing viaduct that allows for more connectivity?
 - The short answer is yes, a steel structure, or different structure type with 200' between columns is possible, but there are issues with steel and sea salt, also steel is noisier.
- Thanks for responding to the public's questions about the closure of the viaduct.

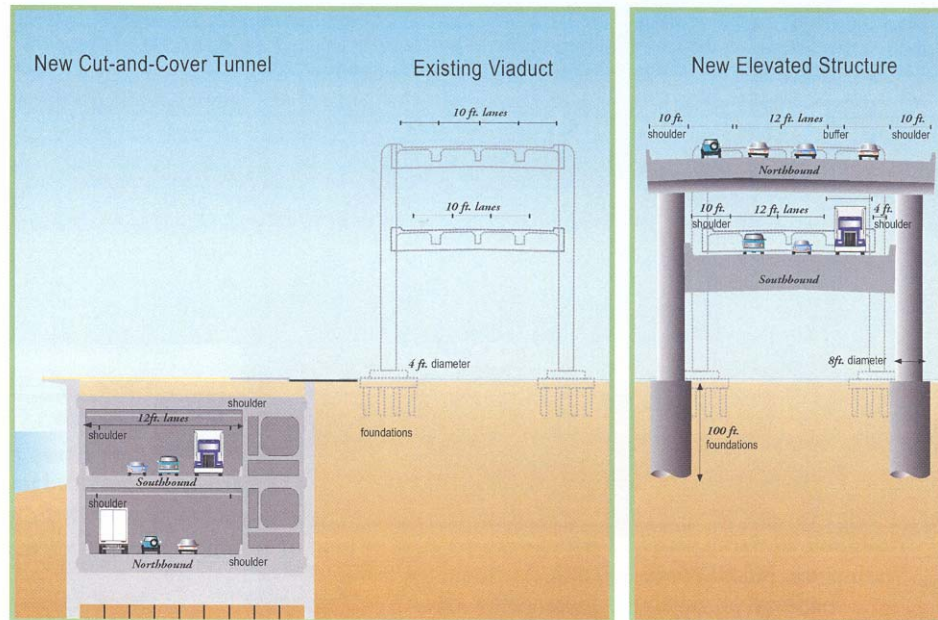
- Seeing the lid even in it's engineering black and white one can get a sense of what it would be like if that was realized. The public wants the public space. The team is responding to the Seattle process, not a victim of it.
- What are the next steps?
 - We are waiting for what the governor decides at the end of November. Don't know if this will be a clear directive or caveated. People should be lobbying the governor. She's been hearing from freight groups who want to keep the corridor open. There are 4000 truck trips per day. That interest is beating on Gregoire right now. Urban design groups should lobby her. Lids are not the issue, the park doesn't add significantly to costs.
- What do we gain economically by doing this project?
 - Economic benefits should be seen in the light of the value of open space. The biggest numbers are related to additional tourism and revival of the waterfront. A conservative estimate is an additional 1% of annual tourism.
- The future of the city and region is way beyond what happens on the waterfront. Decision power is always about looking at individual costs of projects, not an inclusive vision.
- We would like to see a perspective looking from downtown to the waterfront.
 - Stills (simulations) are in EIS and are available looking East West without the viaduct.



Alaskan Way at University Street with the Tunnel



Alaskan Way at University Street with the Elevated Structure



Alternatives shown at Madison Street with the existing viaduct shaded in the background. In this location, there is a fourth lane to accommodate the Seneca Street off-ramp for the Elevated Structure.