

**APPROVED**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
March 20, 2008**

**Seattle  
Design  
Commission**

Convened: 8:30am  
Adjourned: 4:30pm

**Greg Nickels**  
*Mayor*

**Karen Kiest**  
*Chair*

**Tasha Atchison**

**Brendan Connolly**

**John Hoffman**

**Mary Johnston**

**Juanita LaFond**

**Dennis Ryan**

**Norie Sato**

**Darrell Vange**

**Darby Watson**

**Guillermo Romano**  
*Executive Director*

**Valerie Kinast**  
*Coordinator*

Projects Reviewed

Urban Mobility Plan  
Fire Station 35 – Crown Hill  
Fire Station 30 – Mount Baker  
Councilmember Richard Conlin  
Capitol Hill Station ST University Link

Design Commissioners Present

Karen Kiest, Chair  
Brendan Connolly  
John Hoffman  
Mary Johnston  
Juanita LaFond  
Dennis Ryan  
Norie Sato  
Darrell Vange  
Darby Watson

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano  
Valerie Kinast  
Tom Iurino  
Ian Macek

Additional Light Rail Review Panel Members

Present for Capitol Hill Station  
Richard Andrews, Arts Commission  
Catherine Hillenbrand, Arts Commission  
Mahlon Clements, Planning Commission  
Kevin McDonald, Planning Commission  
Kirsten Pennington, Planning Commission



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**20 March 2008      Project: Urban Mobility Plan**

**Phase: Briefing**

**Last Reviews:**

**Presenters:** Bob Chandler, SDOT  
Steve Pearce, SDOT  
Ron Posthuma, King County DOT  
Matt Preedy, Washington State DOT

**Attendees:** Denna Cline, Perteet, Inc  
Bob Corwin, AICP  
Robert Hutchinson, Rice Fergus Miller  
Ed Mcmanamna, Rice Fergus Miller  
Steve Sindiony, Perteet, Inc

Time: 1.0 hours

(SR 121/RS02032)

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## **ACTION**

**The Commission thanks the team for the presentation and update and offers the following comments:**

- **Recognize the Urban Mobility Plan is a challenge in that it addresses a wide variety of movement, infrastructure and scheduling issues.**
- **Projects range from new infrastructure construction to program development such as rapid bus service and increased service, changes in driving policy, and tolling.**
- **Appreciate tri-agency cooperation and the interagency working group. It's a refreshing approach to cooperation.**
- **Realize the importance of the six projects, they are all conditioned by the fact that time is of the essence. Understand that the policy of the decision is driven by the 2012 deadline.**
- **Supports the phased analysis of different alternatives and the combination of the various "building blocks" to identify possible scenarios.**
- **Encourage moving forward without delay on the integrated transportation and transit enhancement program**
- **Appreciate the expanded project area to provide a more comprehensive approach.**
- **Encourage taking a regional view that includes growth, housing, demand, mobility choice and travel behavior change to inform future trends.**
- **Reiterates interest and participation in future involvement for the central waterfront resolution.**
- **The DC would like to see future elements of UMP, like the central waterfront planning, how seawall design and replacement is integrated into it, as well as the surface street plan.**
- **Support the tri-agency approach that is not limited to surface street option and appreciate the possibilities.**
- **Appreciates the update on possible funding strategies**

## Proponent's Presentation

### *Project Background*

The Urban Mobility Plan will develop solutions for a surface/transit option for replacing the Viaduct. The first one third of the projects are already underway and are addressing the most severe portions of the viaduct. However, the team does want to move expeditiously on the central waterfront portion as well. Many projects across the state experienced delays this past year, and don't want that to happen with the UMP. Various groups have been set up to facilitate this including a stakeholder advisory committee, an interagency working group and various public engagement sessions. Consultants have also been hired to help with the project. Throughout the process the team is looking at five building block elements: surface streets, transit, I-5 (through-routes), SR 99, and 'other' (policies and management strategies).



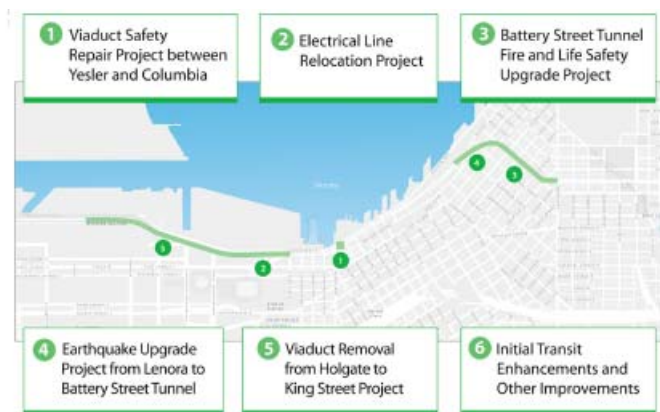
**Figure 1: Project Area Changes**

The Urban Mobility Plan currently has six projects that are moving forward:

1. Viaduct Safety Repair Project
  - Currently under construction
2. Electrical Line Relocation
  - Construction 2008-2009, currently in design
  - South Massachusetts to south King Streets
3. Upgrade Battery St Tunnel
  - 2009-2010, currently in design
  - Upgrade systems: sprinkler pipes, fire alarm system, ventilation, lighting
  - Close two short on/off ramps at southern portal of tunnel to general traffic (remain open for emergency vehicles)
4. Earthquake Upgrade
  - Stabilize viaduct from Lenora to Battery St Tunnel
  - On hold, construction TBD
  - Waiting for waterfront strategy to be completed
5. Viaduct removal from Holgate to King St Project
6. Initial Transit Enhancements Project
  - WSDOT, King County, City of Seattle are lead agencies working on elements with 14 projects in total
  - City
    - Spokane Viaduct: Important to keep freight moving
    - Arterial signal work to expedite movement of traffic on arterials
  - WSDOT
    - Interstate traffic management

- SR 519 improvements
- King County
  - Increased bus service
    - Increase frequency to W Seattle, Ballard, Aurora Corridor
      - Done through Transit Now
    - Information dissemination
    - Bus monitoring including travel times

Early examination assumed the solution to the central waterfront had to replace existing vehicular capacity along the Aurora corridor. The new objectives of the plan include expanding the study area to look at the larger corridor and beyond the movement of vehicles to also include people and goods. The entire transit system will be looked at including surface streets, I-5, and other routes.



**Figure 2: Moving Forward Projects**

Any solution to the Alaskan Way Viaduct will be grounded in the following six guiding principles:

- Improve public safety.
- Provide efficient movement of people and goods.
- Maintain or improve downtown Seattle, regional, the port and state economics.
- Enhance Seattle's waterfront, downtown and adjacent neighborhoods as a place for people.
- Create solutions that are fiscally responsible.
- Improve the health of the environment.

### **Commissioners' Comments**

- Commission is familiar with the south end, and recognizes the central waterfront is the key element. Questions will focus on schedule and timing.
- Is the seawall included in the plan?
  - Yes, each alternative will provide a solution for the seawall.
- How to bring this to the commission in the future, would love to advise you in SR 99, as well as surface street alternatives.
- Appreciate King County being here.
- Appreciate work considering the large challenge and for looking at the entire network for solutions.
- Appreciate the organization of the approach, and how the process will play out given all of the players.
- Regional context is important: Seattle, Tacoma, and Everett. The corridor demand is constantly changing.

- Looking at the 2015 timeframe where things are fairly known, as well as a 2030 timeframe. Including them through the ‘other’ category.
  - Have context as a regional plan that focuses growth on center, as well as Seattle plan focusing on centers. Transportation networks to connect these centers.
  - As density increases, the number of auto-oriented trips decreases. Looking at density growth and what affect this will have on transportation. Also promoting growth along high capacity transit lines.
- How does this factor in with Sound Transit coming online in 2009?
  - As transit alternatives are looked at, Sound Transit projects are included.
- What is the actual timeline for the plan?
  - The final schedule will include a plan in November. The analysis won’t be able to be delivered before then.
- Who will make the final decision?
  - Three executives make a decision, and the legislative branches of those agencies.
  - Citizen Advisory Committee input will not require a consensus
- Are other funding sources being looked at?
  - The City sees other funding sources. Perhaps additional federal funds, regional and local funding, utility money through relocation. \$2.8 billion is not a cap on how much funding is available. How do I-5 improvements fit into the funding or the project?
  - More potential than \$2.8 billion. Tolling is coming for sure on SR-520, and perhaps on I-90, which will provide some monies. Looking at local improvement district for downtown Seattle. Also looking at other sources that can be implemented.
- Are there any housing authority stakeholders involved in the project? Given present trends of people being “priced out” of center city communities, in the future there may be more lower income residents with fewer transportation options living in peripheral and suburban communities. Looking at where those communities live, and their commuting patterns may be an important piece of information to determine movement in the center city and how to support transit use for outlying, perhaps lower income communities in future efforts.
  - There are currently no housing authority stakeholders on the advisory committee, but it would be a good idea to have them.
- Encourage the group to support low- and very low-income housing infrastructure through land use planning to accommodate housing and amenities for a variety of socioeconomic groups in the urban center.

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**20 March 2008**      **Project:** **Fire Station 35: Crown Hill**  
                         **Phase:** Design Development  
**Last Reviews:** 11-15-2007, 7-19-2007  
                         **Presenters:** Andy Ishizaki, Fleets and Facilities Department  
   Bob Hutchinson, Rice Fergus Miller Architecture and Planning  
   Ed McManamna, Rice Fergus Miller Architecture and Planning  
   Sarah O'Neill, Murase Associates  
   Mark Tilbe, Murase Associates  
                         **Attendees:** Dove Alberg, Fleets and Facilities Department  
   Kelly Davidson, Seattle Fire Department  
   Molly Douce, Seattle Fire Department

Time: 1.0 hours (SR 169/RS0605)

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## **ACTION**

**The Commission thanks the team for their presentation and approves design development with a vote of 7-2, and offers the following comments:**

- **Concern about a significant reduction of the building presence, recognizes the challenge of budget and program constraints. But the public perception of the building has radically changed between Schematic Design to Design Development. The architectural expression has been reduced without any elevation relationships.**
- **Recognize art has taken on architectural role, and as a Commission support PAAC recommendation of simplifying and softening the awning portion, revise the size of the upper element and recommends rotating position of art out to the street.**
- **Commission feels signage presented is not sufficient or visible and support integration of signage with the art expression in a more conspicuous design approach.**
- **Support a clarification of the edges of the art component where it meets the ground and the landscape.**
- **Concern that the station currently reads flat and not visible enough. The elements in the vertical plane all reside around roof level, including the heights of the flagpole and art piece.**
- **Support increasing the flagpole height and creating more vertical variations.**
- **The building should not rely on the art piece to achieve design resolution; it should resolve itself to the greatest extent possible.**
- **Concern about corner transition from CMU to metal, support the use of reveals. Also question the transition to metal on the north elevation in texture and plane.**
- **Regret the absence of the green screen at wall of the neighboring building to the north. Feel that this was an important character element in the facility. Encourage consideration of reintegrating this element. Suggest the possible swapping with ground landscaping near the alley to improve parking movement.**

- Concern about parking access and current turning radius and movement.
- Question landscape element at south corner, it should either come out further or be removed.
- Encourage increased transparency of apparatus bay doors to invite public.
- Encourage operable vents and natural cooling to greatest extent possible.
- Encourage the idea of incorporating the CMU deeper in space to created a deeper expression of planes
- Encourage integration of the cistern and art piece.

**Note: Dissenting votes based on opinion that civic presence is lacking in the building, and it has become austere and garage-like.**

## **Proponent's Presentation**

### *Project Background*

The second open house for the new station was held last weekend, over 250 citizens attended. The community is very supportive and excited about project. The team is on track to receive a LEED silver rating.

The new station is being built on the site of the current station. A goal of the project is to make the station more visible in the community, while being sensitive to adjacent residential neighbors. Accessing the property via the alley was not viable due to objections from residents and the cost of alley upgrades needed because of the grade change there. The team wanted to minimize the number of curb-cuts, and was able to do that due to small nature of the station

It was a challenge to make the landscape plan interesting due to the tight nature of the site. However, the team achieved this by keeping it simple. The front trees are being held back to maintain station sightlines. The cistern will be used to drip-irrigate the landscaping. Permeable concrete is used in the parking area, and the sidewalk is delineated with different pavement, as well as different scoring at the entrance.

The design elements of the project have changed. The front façade now consists of only two portals with strong masonry components with connecting membranes, not three portals. Originally a brick veneer was proposed, now looking at a more subtle gesture of ground CMU (color not determined) and banding; signage will be of other materials. It will be a monolithic statement of color, with light identifying the interior uses; in addition, the exterior won't overpower the artwork. The team is looking at jointing of masonry. Most of the glazing of the apparatus bay doors has been eliminated due to Fire Department



**Figure 3: Southwest View of Station**

requirements, but still working to have more glazing included. The north elevation will use the hose tower as a chimney effect, and replace clearstory windows. The west elevation will have a change in the color of metal at the beanery.

The entry point would be the location for the art piece. Weaving a story of nature of fire service, it will be a stand-alone identifier for the building. The team is looking into the possibility of having the cistern be part of the art piece, and is working with the artist on this concept. The exact position of the artwork is still being determined now that it is focused in one area and not scattered as previously presented.



**Figure 4: Art Location**

### **Commissioners' Comments**

- The art has now taken over some of the architectural function of the building such as the awning and signage. Too much going on at the awning, perhaps it should be simpler. Use that money to increase the artwork size to make a larger impact.
- Artwork also incorporates a bench.
- What is the planting where the art is?
  - Red and orange flowers and evergreens
- Signage now incorporated into artwork.
- Concerns the project will be less visible than current station. Color red is only thing drawing you in. Everything is at the relatively same height to roofline.
  - Have talked about adjusting the height of the flagpole.
- Detailing does not take south view into consideration where brick, metal, Support idea of taller flagpole or larger flag.
- Look at materials that support the strong red doors and use those to the stations advantage.
- Pay attention to where the corner and flagpole meet.
  - Masonry walls are 1 ½ feet deep. Pronounced break in material finishes, which is not illustrated in presentation materials.
- Material changing along the beanery may not be necessary when the project is looked at retrospect on west elevation.
- Attention should be paid to how the materials meet.
- The decision to take out monitors and change materials was solely due to budget constraints, not due to the conflicting with the art.
- Encourage monitors
- Disappointed in how the design has resolved itself. The building looks very flat, and now relies on the art piece to do the work.
- 3-portal idea was the strong part; 2-portal does not read in the same manner.
- Encourage CMU beyond planes of the streetfront, increase presence of material so building does not appear flat.
- The art needs to be more prominent. If it needs to play a prominent role, then rotate it to the north rather than oriented to the south. Relationship to architecture needs refinement.
- Encourage idea of including rainspouts and cistern into art.



- Where is the cistern?
  - It will be underground near the parking area.
- There was a green screen on the north perimeter, is it still there?
  - The green screen has been removed due to budgetary reasons and because it was not needed to meet the green factor standards.
- Strongly encourage the green screen incorporation into the project. Was it taken out due to budget concerns?
  - Yes it was.
- Could green patch adjacent to the alley street trees in the parking lot be taken out, and money allocated to green screen? Could improve the parking geometry in the area, too.
- The parking stalls look tight.
- Planting bed to south should come out further or be eliminated.
- There was a comment last time about access to the alley—this is precluded by the landscaping and elevation difference—why?
  - Neighbor opposition to alley access and grade separation.
- Appreciate idea to increase ventilation naturally
- Fire Department decision on apparatus bay doors had profound impacts and dramatically transforms the public presence of building. It goes from being inviting to the public to a defensive pillbox. Transparency it essential.

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**20 March 2008**      **Project:** **Fire Station 30: Mount Baker**  
                         **Phase:** Design Development  
**Last Reviews:** 06-21-2007  
**Presenters:** Eric Aman, Schacht Aslani Architects  
                         David Kunselman, Fleets and Facilities Department  
                         Kenichi Nakano, Nakano Associates  
                         Walter Schacht, Schacht Aslani Architects  
**Attendees:** Dove Alberg, Fleets and Facilities Department  
                         Molly Douce, Seattle Fire Department  
                         Patricia Hopper, Arts and Cultural Affairs  
                         Andy Ishizaki, Fleets and Facilities Department  
                         Peter Law, Schacht Aslani Architects  
                         Sarah O'Neill, Murase Associates  
                         Mark Tilbe, Murase Associates

Time: 1.0 hours

(SR 169/RS0609)

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## **ACTION**

**The Commission thanks the team for their presentation and approves design development with a vote of 8-1, with the following comments:**

- **Design Commission mostly supports the building height, depth and modulation exceptions that require Council approval.**
- **Recognize that there is no formal plan for Mt Baker Blvd, and appreciate the team consulting with Friends of Olmsted.**
- **Applaud sustainability efforts including daylighting, stormwater, and geothermal technologies.**
- **The glass frit pattern might be an opportunity for artist involvement/collaboration, depending on how the artwork develops. Appreciate obscuring any roof top elements and resolving parapet height and depth of the eyebrow.**
- **Appreciate perpendicular metal detailing in project, and thinking to this level of detail in design development.**
- **Encourage the resolution of the front façade including the soffit and number of materials, as well as the window grid, frit work, and transparency. Potential for exploring the positives and negatives of the frit with other elements on the building.**
- **A lot of weight has been put on the art piece, hard to determine design impact without seeing the piece. Appreciates that a location is being proposed, but recommends further analysis, especially looking at whether it is better out along Mt. Baker Blvd. or closer to the building. The use of the word “gateway” in reference to the art should be dropped.**
- **Support push back of entrance panel.**
- **Strongly support standing seam.**

**Note: Dissenting votes due to the extent of the skewing of the building and the art location.**

## Proponent's Presentation

### *Project Background*

The design continues to skew the north and south roof to increase visibility and respond to the sun. The actual floorplan is fairly square and includes community space, but not much public space. The major façade fronting Mt Baker Blvd will be opened up. The design has taken advantage of the opaque doors by having the rest of the façade transparent. The team is using the stairwell and glazing treatments to incorporate signage and may push the entryway front panel back 18 inches to separate from the main panel of doors/stairway/signage. Signage will be incorporated along the eyebrow of the north elevation making it visible when approaching on Mt Baker. At night the “Station 30” signage will stand out, as it will be lit. Parking is accessed from the alley in the back.

The materials include a standing seam product. Due to transverse seams the natural puckering will look intentional. Colors will include the red doors, silver, and dark gray or champagne. The front and back eyebrows will be articulated in the same manner. The infill along the south elevation will be silver corrugated metal. The vent can work with the corrugated elements of the south elevation. The east elevation façade now blends together. There is a concern on how the metal enclosure and other materials will work together, as well as how the eyebrow overhang meets the building on the south elevation.

Because there is no formal landscape plan for Mt. Baker Boulevard the team is meeting with Friends of Olmsted. There is currently a lack of trees in front of the station, which may be due to keeping the view corridor to Franklin HS clear. This has provided an opportunity for the art to be located in the Mt Baker Blvd ROW. The location across the sidewalk creates a natural gateway, expanding the civic environment.



Figure 5: Fire Station 30 Elevations

The landscaping has been formalized. Over 50% is wetlands plantings, so will become informal over time. The planted materials are much closer and the scale compliments the structure.

Due to design elements the team will be asking for exceptions to the land use code including extending the skewing as far as allowed, increasing the building height about five feet, and looking at modulation.

### **Commissioners' Comments**

- Has PAAC seen the piece?
  - No, it is still very early in the process. The artist has been working with the scale to be more pedestrian oriented, but not lose the iconic value.
- Interested in how the art piece is resolved, especially scale.
- Artwork could engage that corner more.
- Gateway is a dangerous word to use
- Important to recognize the realization of the intents of the boulevard. Support the movement of the art piece across the sidewalk.
- How are you meeting the sustainability goals?
  - A cistern and bioswale will be incorporated. Daylighting of interior spaces. Geothermal ground pumps have been approved for heating.
- The roof has no penetration for light.
  - No daylight needs to be taken in by the top. The windows are sufficient to provide the daylighting needed. The challenge with the roof plane is to conceal rooftop apparatus.
- Standing seam metal siding on the sides, is the tabature also seamed or solid?
  - Standing seam will conflict with signage, so it should not be textured. Also need to resolve issues with interior/exterior materials.
- Resolution is dynamic. The fritting pattern can be an opportunity.
- Plan adjustment works well.
- Support skewing of the building, and length changes needed.
- Appreciate the layout of the landscape.
- Appreciate the final look.
- Concern over bank of transparency.
- Support pushing back the entry plane.
- Keep fritting simple as well as envelope materials.
- Dissent due to placement of the art as establishing a gateway. This section of Mt. Baker Blvd. isn't long and the art piece would be in the middle of a short and flat section. To be a gateway should be at the beginning of the curved section.
- Concern over the clarity of the entrance due to skewing. Entry demarcation is lost.

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**20 March 2008      Project: Commission Business**

Time: 0.5 hours

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**Action Items**

- A.    March 6, 2008 Minutes
- Motion by Commissioner Sato, unanimous approval
  - Commissioners LaFond, Ryan and Vange abstained due to absence at meeting.

**Discussion Items**

- B.    Recruitment
- C.    40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- D.    Possibility of South Downtown Action

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**20 March 2008      Project: Councilmember Richard Conlin**

**Phase:** Discussion

**Last Reviews:**

**Presenters:** Councilmember Richard Conlin

**Attendees:**

Time: 1.0 hours

(SR 169/RS)

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### **Proponent's Presentation**

#### *Project Background*

Commissioner Conlin appreciates the work the Design Commission has done, particularly the public outreach projects, such as the SR-520 guidelines. His goal as president is to avoid two things: quickly passing something once it is introduced before input can be taken, and forgetting about something that has been introduced.

He intends to guide the Council to be more methodical and focused this year. Recommendations will not fall into a black hole. When the Council starts working on a project, the public will know what is going on and be kept informed. Upcoming attention includes major revisions to the land use code, working with DPD on how things can function better, and city parks development.

A topic of special interest to Councilmember Conlin is the local food action initiative. This includes the way food is delivered and managed, which involves all elements of the built environment and city infrastructure.

### **Commissioners' Comments**

- Key initiative is the DC 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on the third Thursday in June. The DC would like the event to include celebrating a closed city street. Since transportation and streets take up a majority of the DC's time, it would be appropriate to retake the street, which could also tie into the local food initiative.
  - There is a direct relationship in promoting community gardens in the ROW. Along Beacon Hill, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave NW, Portland Place. One of few opportunities for land that has no other use, but don't want to dedicate it to the built environment. This can fit into the way the DC looks at the ROW.
  - Potential for incorporating food initiative with other groups as well.
- Temporary spaces for farmers markets can be incorporated into parks space throughout the city.
  - Kitchens at community centers can act as community kitchens.
- Are there City efforts to ensure that community gardens are utilized to their full potential? There may be opportunities to get other groups involved in regular caring for the gardens.
  - The Council is looking at places for commercial agriculture in the city by creating commercial agriculture zoning and how it can be incorporated into the city.
- Is there a way to distribute food that cannot be sold in grocery stores without letting it go to waste?

- From a climate change standpoint, about 17% of greenhouse gas emissions come from transport of foods. There are efforts underway but more needs to be done.
- Reviewed SPU's program for waste, how to move the zero waste program forward?
  - On track for completion for what is scheduled for 2008-2009. Currently looking at how to manage Styrofoam and plastic bags. The design of the two transfer stations will need special consideration so they fit with the ideas of sustainability and zero waste.
- Goats have been approved, what's next?
  - People have been taking advantage of this.
- There are programs that landlords can or can't qualify for due to number of multifamily units. Is there way to revise these program qualifications to include more landlords?
  - Send list of programs that underserved landlords would like to be involved in to see where the policy could be changed.
- Housing is a big priority in the city. How can the DC support the city's objectives for urban housing? The DC works at a pedestrian scale and in that realm of the built environment, but is there a more direct way to be involved?
  - Every time a city builds a facility, ask if housing can be incorporated into it. Especially if a rezone is required, there is leverage possible with these projects. The more the question is asked, the more opportunities will arise.
- The Design Commissions 2008 work plan will not include as many parks or fire stations, now that those projects are winding down. There are two light rail stations and station area planning upcoming though. How can the DC support council efforts?
  - There will be some very specific projects that will come up this year, such as the Madison Valley Drainage Project.
- The city investments in the community are realized when one looks at the attendance at community meetings. These buildings are seen as providing a civic presence.
- Neighborhood planning can take cues from the civic investments. How can the DC be involved in the infrastructure portion?
- Projects lose the urban design components due to concern over the zoning and land use codes. How can these concerns be tied to the council projects of zoning and land use code revision? Hope there is a way to incorporate the parks stock in this, which also ties to food initiatives. Community gardens may be a link to restore natural environment.
  - Not just parks space but also the right-of-way should be considered for gardens in a broad sense. Fruit and nut trees for example are a way to include food systems in the ROW.
- The cultural overlay is important in the city, appreciate your support and encourage the council to do more to facilitate this.
- King Street station is a priority for the DC.
  - It is a priority for the Council as well.

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**20 March 2008      Project: Capitol Hill Station ST University Link**

**Phase:** Design Development

**Last Reviews:** 9-20-2007, 8-16-2007

**Presenters:** Greg Ball, Northlink Transit Partners, JV

Ron Endlich, Sound Transit

David Hewitt, Hewitt Architects

Mike Ross, Capitol Hill Station Artist

Barbara Swift, Swift Company LLC

**Attendees:** Debora Ashland, Sound Transit

Ernesto Dominquez, Northlink Transit Partners

Michelle Grinder, Sound Transit

George Hanna, Hewitt Architects

Sarah Hill, Hewitt Architects

Betsy Hunter, Capitol Hill Housing

Mark Jammal, Hewitt Architects

Rich Johnsrud, Sound Transit

Barbara Luecke, Sound Transit Art

Joe Mathieu, SDOT

Christine Scharrer, Hewitt Architects

Allison Maitland Scheetz, Swift Company, LLC

Tina Vlasaty, Office of Economic Development

Ruri Yampolsky, Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs

Time: 1.0 hours

(SR 121/RS02032)

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## **ACTION**

**For the record, the Design Commission is conducting University Link review with representatives of the Arts Commission and Planning Commission in a modified version of the Light Rail Review Panel (LRRP).**

**The LRRP thanks the team for its comprehensive presentation, and approves design development with a vote of 10-4, conditional on seeing the project again.**

**The LRRP recommends conditioned approval of the 60% design development plans and would like the team to return for one more visit. The presentation should focus on character of surface buildings, incorporation of the signage and lighting programs, and responses to the other issues and concerns raised during the presentation.**

**The LRRP offers the following comments:**

- **As TOD opportunities evolve, keep the options open and/or craft the RFP for the inclusion of arts organization spaces as they are currently being priced out of area.**
- **Suggest the TOD RFP materials encourage the development of Nagle as a pedestrian access way at a minimum, or combining parking and service access with a semi-public alley.**



- Wayfinding and signage will be important; would like to see more details at the next review meeting.
- Incorporation of other high traffic transit connectors should be considered in the design.
- Appreciate the widened sidewalks around the station area, responding to both the station needs as well as the active pedestrian nature of Capitol Hill.
- Concern that the station entrances do not have a strong presence on Broadway, especially since two are recessed from Broadway. It will be important for people driving down Broadway to quickly recognize the location of the station entrances. The design guidelines for the TOD projects may be able to help, but the private development should certainly not overshadow the transit station entries.
- Suggest the widening of the openings into South and West Entries.
- Suggest the South Entry may work better if opened to Nagle to address users coming from the south. The sidewalk may also be widened and the street trees shifted away from the entry.
- The materials palette seems reserved and somewhat institutional and may benefit from a more dynamic color scheme.
- Some panel members expressed a concern for the use of warplanes in art piece in the context of a light rail station. While we appreciate the artist's intention of expressing fluid movement and natural forms, the relationship between natural form and a fighter plane as presented is questionable. A solution may be an artist statement prepared for the next presentation to clarify the appropriateness of the art in the station.
- The pedestrian tunnel is another area that could be oppressive, but the design appears to use all the tools available to activate and lighten the space. There may be a way to express the passage from under the street to under the buildings. The segmentation described appears to address some of these issues.
- The station interior and the artwork show a vibrant and engaging character, and it would be good if some of this character could be exported to the surface buildings. Recommends a more engaging and inviting architectural presence in the surface component of the station.

**Note:** Preliminary vote included four dissenting votes based on the character of the surface buildings, the dislike of the art piece, and the unclear relation of the project to the future TOD.

#### **Disclosures:**

Commissioner Watson disclosed her firm is working on the University Station.

Commissioner Sato disclosed that she has a current contract with Sound Transit Central Link.

Commissioner Kiest disclosed that she works with Sound Transit South of the City.

Commissioner Hoffman disclosed that his firm is the on-call consultant for Sound Transit's TOD program.

**Planning Commissioner Kirsten Pennington disclosed that she works for CH2M Hill, which has contracts with Sound Transit. She is not involved with this project for them.**

## **Proponent's Presentation**

### *Project Background*

This project consists of three points where the station is coming to grade. This creates the need to think of the Capitol Hill district and build upon its characteristics. A variety of people inhabit this neighborhood, which always lead the social curve, have high vitality, and are risk taking. The public realm in this area supports this social function and should continue to do so. Previous efforts have created an extraordinary canopy of trees throughout the neighborhood.

The scale of the buildings will have a high degree of presence to the street. The green walls will become signifiers of the stations, as each station incorporates one. A lot of work continues that will save current trees. The stations should offer an important element of spatial form.

Establishing a scale at the North Entry will accommodate the large bus function that currently, and will continue to take place there. The adjacent TOD would share the plaza created at the station. With the eclectic nature of Broadway and Capitol Hill the entrance should be simple and incorporate natural light. The mezzanine level will receive light from the clerestory above.

The South Entry is at Nagle Place and Denny Way. It will be a simple entry that contains the elevator descending directly to the platform. On the south side of Denny a rain garden is proposed that goes down to the station entrance. It is being designed so taller material mark where the rain garden starts and the other side will have low pavement that one can sit on.



North Entry



South Entry



West Entry

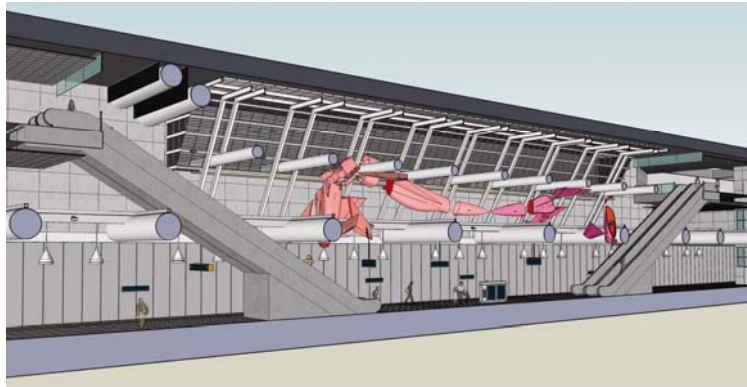
**Figure 6: Entry Elevations**

The West Entry is at Broadway and south of Denny Way. It offers a generous bicycle storage area. A clerestory runs to the rear of the building offering daylight onto the stair and escalator landing.

The simplicity of the entries set users up for the interior of the station. At the mezzanine level one still does not appreciate the full extent of the station.

The art piece will focus on the box portion of the interior of the station. The frequency of the beams limits the sightline from the mezzanine to the platform level. Traveling on escalators through the station is therefore like going through layers of clouds. As one descends through the station the art piece will reveal itself. The challenge is how to use the space, but still keep the general sightline open to see people coming and going. This can be achieved by carefully locating the pieces of the sculpture towards the edges of the volume of space so they don't obstruct the sightline to the opposite end of the platform.

The piece will include two fighter jet planes, deconstructed, hanging above the platform. The parts of the planes will hang separately in an arrangement that lends the piece an organic form drawn from the natural qualities of the city and its surroundings. Warm, soft tones will be used to enhance the sense of flow through space. The art will address deep and complex themes, but is as dynamic, exciting and forward thinking as the neighborhood and city it will be a part of.



**Figure 7: Art piece**

It also looks like there will be funding to engage the 1<sup>st</sup> runner-up artist, Ellen Forney, a Capitol Hill resident and graphic novelist, on the pedestrian tunnel portion of the station.

## **Public Comments**

### **Tina Vlasaty, Seattle OED**

- Early in the station design there was concern that the box structural design may not be substantial enough to incorporate the structural loads of the full zoning potential above. However, after review, it has been determined that it is able to support the current zoning.
- Keeping Nagle Place open will be important. Engage the community in the design process in what elements should be included in the TOD RFP making the station and the TOD help with the revitalization of the area. The work will include streetscape as well.
- Does any possibility exist to incubate artists in the area?

- Performing space, artist housing, farmer's market permanent space are many of the elements that can be engaged by the community through the RFP.
- Is the arts overlay plugged into this process?
  - There is conversation amongst artist groups about an art district overlay for the area. Thinking about zoning regulations and how they would affect different groups.

### **Commissioners' Comments**

- Can you describe the schedule of construction to phasing to opening?
  - Hope to be at 90% design completion by fall. Initial demolition contract awarded this fall with construction for excavation work to take place in 2010 so the station can be completed by 2015 and the U-Link line open in 2016.

### *Above Grade Comments:*

- Where is street level signage in this process?
  - It's at about 60%. Have general locations, as there is a station marker at the north entrance and signs at every entrance per the standard. The stations have more clarity than the images show. Between the three they will be noticed. Wayfinding had been incorporated.
- Does the project meet SDOT sidewalk requirements?
  - Yes
- Is the general pedestrian ROW east of Nagle extension being widened?
  - The sidewalk width on the south side of E. John St. between Broadway Ave. and Nagle Place extension is 20 ft wide. East of Nagle on John it will not be widened. The sidewalk will not be part of this project, but left to TOD development.
- Could colored lighting be used to bring aura of artwork to the surface?
  - White light is used during the day with some down lights to warm the space. The clerestories will have fritted or frosted glass. There are opportunities for both up and down lighting, all of which will be accessible for replacement.
- Much of the streetscape is being done adjacent to where the TOD is located. How do you protect it during the TOD construction?
  - Where the streetscape is being replaced, the design is being assessed to anticipate the impact of future TOD construction.
- Can the team explain the arguments for/against expanding Nagle Place?
  - It is currently shown with a dashed line, could be open to different ways to make it public. There is also a zoning change in this area.
- Is it currently a designated city ROW?
  - Not between Denny and John. Whether the Nagle Place extension will be public or private has not been determined, pending the TOD proposals. The final outcome must address the fact that it will be over the roof of the station box.
- Why reservations?

- To maintain the most flexibility in the TOD until the community has been engaged. Some City staff has said they want to think about development of the entire block and other possibilities, such as developing the TOD across from Cal Anderson Park. Will have a better sense at the end of the year after community engagement.
- Is there a remainder parcel at the west entry to be developed as a TOD?
  - Yes
- There is also an important bus stop near the west entry. Will there be integration among transit services?
  - The building is set back to provide a wider sidewalk at this location but will be looked at further by the design team.
- Commissioners acknowledge that the station is long in the making and will be a catalyst for new development and a changing face for Capitol Hill.
- Commissioners appreciate the larger sidewalks and encourage the TOD proposals follow suit.
- Hope to continue to show Nagle Place extension as dashed line. If not, assumption is that it is a closed alley and the scale is a large box. Supports scale of area and pedestrian connections.
- Worried that the team is trying to do too much with the rain garden on Denny. Concerned about space issues.
  - The team feels there is a reasonable width to incorporate the rain garden and is striving hard to meet the green factor. Green walls are a tool the team is using, but will look at the spatial issues
- Green screens are a great idea. Although they seem applied and not extending the architecture.
- It is not just about the vegetation. Looking at the texture of the block as well, the screen is stainless, then the green over it. Add interest to those walls that serve utilitarian purposes. Also a horizontal green trellis above the sidewalk on north and east side of north entry.
- Fear that green walls are the way to figure out how to comply with the green factor. What is their long term viability? Also adjacent to areas where buildings will be built.
  - There are many extraordinary walls covered with planting material across the world that add to the urban environment. They bring an important element to sites where there isn't much surface space to work with.
- Bring Green Factor into the station design as much as possible.
- Recall images of Westlake entrances, which have the standard pylon. These entrances don't have a strong presence on Broadway, a street that has a strong presence of its own. Make the stations visible to people who are not wise to the ways of the neighborhood. The north station entry is hidden on both Broadway and E. John by the TOD. TOD limits should be thought through.
- The architecture blends in as opposed to standing out.
- If the design of the entrances is relying only on pylons only to get people in, then the design should incorporate them now.
- The circulation works well as a transit station.
- Entries at south and west seem small, it may be better if they could be opened up.

- Small mainly due to security reasons. Can still be explored.
- Bring attitude of below to the surface.
- Need to articulate the language of the entries more clearly.
- Can the station entrances be built over?
  - No, they cannot.
- North Entry: What is the transparency on the north elevation wall?
  - 80% glass
- Appreciate the transparency due to the bus stop location and added visibility.
- South Entry: Everything is tight and a street tree may not be necessary.
- Is there a building between the vent stack and the North Entry?
  - The space is available for incorporation into the TOD build-out.
- It could be an open space.
  - The potential for courtyards off Nagle will be explored as the dialog continues
- What other sustainable design elements will be included?
  - Stormwater, daylighting in above ground areas, energy efficient lighting inside. Everything is made in America and will be local when possible.
- Any consideration for green roofs?
  - Maintenance issue with Sound Transit.
- Pleased to hear of the conservation that has been ongoing concerning the future of Capitol Hill.
- Should be considering the permeability of buildings and that multiple entrances may be more viable in the future. Keep this in mind while determining design guidelines in the area.
- Appreciate the long-term viability in the colors of the materials. Using lighting to play in the space would be good.
- How to support the policing of transit spaces?
  - The police department does have input into the station design.

*Below Grade Comments:*

- How far above the ground are the large braces?
  - 15 feet high and 6.5 feet in diameter.
- Appreciate muscularity of structure.
- What is the floor surface?
  - Tiles. Need to take the sight impaired into account. Have chances for contrast between 'ribs' and art piece.
- What are the sides of the tunnel?
  - Won't see through to the lighting. Will be a balance of materials
- How does the station deal with the noise?
  - The concrete structure above the perforated ceiling panels will be sprayed with acoustical insulation.
- Appreciate the showcase of space and the inclusion of the art in the space.
- Why fighter jets?
  - The jets convey the sense of strength and power, and the peace that happens after war. There is no tension with other types of planes, or

aesthetic interest. The piece gives grace and femininity to the strength and masculinity of the planes.

- Other ways planes penetrate architecture that is not so offensive?
  - Urge great care in emphasizing poetry of forms in people's minds. Notion of destruction is there in the fighter jets, but the entire form after deconstruction of the pieces is holistic. The piece is not meant to convey aggression.
- Will Boeing Jets be used?
  - Interested in finding Boeing jets, in the process of searching for them. Not looking for useable jets, only using the airframe.
- Appreciate the element of tension in the public art, which is scarce these days.
- Fact that it is a fighter jet may stop some people from interpreting it as art.
- Love the idea of the pink muscular object. Could emphasize the nature and poetry side of the piece more.
- Appreciate interpretation of tunnel space as descending through clouds.
- Chosen a provocative art piece. Planes may be appropriate with everything that is going on in area and the neighborhood.
- Concern over violent ramifications of art piece. Appreciate that the art seeks to connect important "Seattle qualities" of nature and technology into this piece, but question the use of a fighter jet as the manifestation of those ideas. Encourage further reflection on this, and preparation of an artist's statement for review next time.
- How will it be suspended?
  - Not sure yet, still exploring the possibilities.
- The pedestrian tunnel could be more direct, but appreciate the entrance on the western side. Perhaps it could be wider.
  - The pedestrian tunnel will be about 200ft long and built in three 45ft sections with a series of landings. The space has been expanded to feel bright.
- There may be a way to express the fact that the tunnel is going under both a building and a street.
- The exterior architecture is not provocative and has no relation to the interior.