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Dennis Ryan

Noria Sato

Guillermo Romano
Executive Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Tom Iurino
Senior Staff

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

December 3, 2009

Convened 1:00 pm
Adjourned 3:30 pm

Projects Reviewed

Westlake Transportation Hub Strategy
Admiral Way Safeway

Commissioners Present

Mary Johnston, Chair
Andrew Barash
Graham Black
Brendan Connolly
John Hoffman
Laurel Kunkler
Julie Parrett
Dennis Ryan
Norie Sato

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Valerie Kinast
Tom Iurino
Tim Trujillo



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December 3, 2009 **Project:** **Admiral Way Safeway**

Phase: Alley Vacation

Last Reviewed: November 5, 2009

Presenters: Bill Fuller, Fuller Sears Architects
Marni Heffron, Heffron Transportation
Sara Corn, Safeway INC.
Andy Rasmussen, Weisman Design Group

Attendees: Dennis Ross, neighbor

Time: 2:21 pm – 3:30 pm

(000/RS0000)

ACTION

The Design Commission thanks the design team for the presentation of the public benefit proposal for the project and for a more detailed explanation of traffic and access plans that was requested. After considering the traffic information the Commission dismissed the concerns it voiced at the previous meeting.

The Commission approves the public benefits package with a seven to two vote.

The public benefit consists of the following:

- A "shared street" running midblock between 42nd Ave SW and California Ave SW containing high quality street furnishings and paving materials. The proposed "shared street" pedestrian crossing is 6 ft. wide x 270 ft. long. The drive is 24 ft. wide x 270 ft. long. The Seasonal Display and Special Events Area is 9 ft. to 15 ft. wide and approx. 2,146 sq. ft.
- Increased building setbacks of 1 ft. to 7 ft. along California Ave SW, 1.5 ft. to 9.5 ft. along 42nd Ave SW, and 4.5 ft. to 11 ft. along SW Lander St. allowing for wider sidewalks.
- Provision of seating walls and benches, and higher quality landscaping and pedestrian street lighting along California Ave SW. Pedestrian lighting will be the same as existing fixtures along California Ave SW.
- A furnished plaza at the corner of California Ave SW and SW Lander St. The plaza will be approximately 22 ft. by 36 ft. with the ground plane approximately 0 to 2 ft. below sidewalk level. The plaza is intended to further activate this corner, where there is an entrance to Hiawatha Park, and to serve as a place where the public can come and sit, meet, etc.
- Signage by the Friends of Seattle Olmsted Parks, in collaboration with Seattle Parks and Recreation Department, on the history of Hiawatha Park that will be mounted along the south façade of the Safeway building. There will be three plaques, approximately 3 ft. wide by 4 ft. tall.

The Commission appreciates the urban qualities created by the project and applauds Safeway's decision to create a more urban retail experience on the site. It notes the multiple entrances along California Ave. SW and large amount of glass proposed along the grocery store sides of the building and understands that this is not the general rule for large stores like this. The design shows sensitivity to its neighborhood setting. Commissioners also commend the placement of the proposed public plaza at the corner of California Ave SW and SW Lander St.

where it can receive optimal sun exposure and is near the entrance to Hiawatha Park. Providing for wider sidewalks along the site is also appreciated, as is the provision of historic plaques to draw attention to the story behind Hiawatha Park. Commissioners appreciate the formalizing of the shared street into a distinct pedestrian feature, through provision of texture on the ground plane, a lack of curbs, and pedestrian level lighting, among other things. In a part of town where the blocks are so long, this is a feature that will likely be welcomed by the community. This project exemplifies the complexity of defining public benefit and discerning if what is proposed meets the scale of what is being given up by the public.

The Commission has the following recommendations:

- Explore how a more expansive and public look and feel of the plaza at California Ave SW and SW Lander St. can be created. Explore solutions to the issue of the grade change that requires people to go down steps into the plaza.
- The Commission would like to see more effort and explanation of how the shared street will work.
- Consider limiting vehicle access to the shared street to reduce conflicts with the pedestrian traffic. Provide green to make the shared street space feel like “breathing room” for the community.
- Investigate the possibility of intermittent public use of the shared street and how different programming such as festivals or seasonal events might be accommodated within that area.
- Consider how bicycle facilities can be integrated into the design.
- Think of the bus connections to the site and how they are integrated into the design.
- Further consider the signage with an eye to the context of the site, and providing clarity not clutter.

NOTE: The two dissenting votes are based on the opinion that the public benefits package as presented is insufficient. The ability of the shared street to function as a public space is questioned because there is no way to close it off, even temporarily, to vehicle traffic.

Project Presentation

The first Design Commission meeting took place on November 5, 2009. Traffic impact concerns were the greatest take-away from that meeting.

Marni Heffron addressed traffic and parking questions:

Land use and size of land use is used as a basis to generate traffic predictions. There is data for five previously redeveloped sites in the Seattle area that is used to help inform the analysis. It is known that doubling the size of a store will not double traffic. Mixed-use development also tends to lower trip numbers as people are more likely to walk or take transit.

There are three types of trips

- Primary
- Pass-by
- Link-diverted

The design team looked at how these trips will affect intersections. The intersection at SW Admiral Way and California Ave SW proved to be the largest issue, but would still operate at an acceptable level of service (better than LOS D) with the project.

Based on counts at the site, the existing store generates about 730 trips during the PM peak hour. This is expected to increase to 1,056 PM peak-hour trips with the expansion and additional uses.

The design team explained how the mixed-use development will work together to allow users to share parking. Reserved parking for residents has been designed into the plan. There is currently enough parking at the site for the development.

What to do about jay-walking across California Ave SW?

- All of the pedestrian access is currently at the north end of the site.
- The relocated entry at the corner of California Ave SW and SW Lander St will eliminate the need to cross mid-block.

How might pedestrians conflict with trucks using the driveway?

- The existing design is not out of the ordinary for any urban intersection/driveway.
- Trucks will utilize the parking lot to back into the loading docks.
- There is to be three trucks per day for Safeway.
- Additionally, Coke, Pepsi, local vendors, etc., will deliver during non-peak use hours– 7 daily deliveries in total.
- Safeway works to assure delivery will take place during non-peak hours.

Additionally, the design team posed that several curb cuts are being eliminated from the site as it currently exists. This implies that there will be consolidation of traffic entering the site as well as fewer obstacles for pedestrians.

The design team provided the Commission with a handout which tabulated quantities of public space that they consider to be a part of the “Public Benefits Package.”

Some of those elements are:

- Service parking to be pervious paving.
- Significant landscaping planned on three sides facing streets.
- Street trees
- Light poles to match neighborhood character along California Ave SW and around site
- Benches
- Trash receptacles
- Green roofs over residential
- Gridded colored access paving along shared street alley. Bollards and textural differentiation to outline the pedestrian/vehicular realms.
- Planters
- Green screen – largely climbing vines
- Continuous strip of landscaping along California Ave SW.
- New access into Starbucks along California Ave SW.
- Compass rosettes at pedestrian crosswalk corners
- Rain gardens
- Friends of Olmstead plaques
- Handicap ramps
- Smaller street trees along SW Lander St due to power lines



Figure 2: Plans and Renderings of public space

Public Comments

Dennis Ross, resident:

Regarding the public benefit, the project compliments the neighborhood plan. The height limit maintains connectivity between the business district, park, and the school.

The 42nd improvements are commendable.

The yellow busses park going south along California Ave SW. This buffers the children from darting into traffic.

The large trucks largely deliver in the late evening when school is not in session.

The rear lot, as exists, is not active nor impacts the school

I approve of the alley vacation.

DPD comment:

The smaller building has been approved by DPD.

SDOT comment:

There is concern. The goal is to have an urban project that fits. The alley vacation is separate. The public benefits that are mentioned are good goals but not necessarily public benefits. Sidewalk access and the new alleyway are questionable "public benefit." California Ave SW is important for the placement of these public benefit elements. Some of the design aspects are not necessarily public benefit. There needs to be public benefit in the initial SDOT assessment.

Commissioners' Comments & Questions

Part of the jaywalking concern was along the shared street.

There would need to be a destination to generate that kind of traffic.

What does the façade along California look like? Is it transparent?

The entire façade is a mixture of masonry and glass. 60% of façade is glass coverage.

How much of the design features is really public benefit?

There is difficulty in dealing with codes and municipal entities. There is little room for accomplishment of things seen as valuable once requirements are met. Designers are looking at project from a holistic view point.

How much pervious surface?

30% is the requirement. This design achieves 36%-37% porous paving. Safeway is committed to LEED.

The shared street is called a shared street, why?

Guillermo used the name in a previous presentation and it stuck. The driveway will look and feel like a pedestrian area due to a lack of curbs. The driveway will be on the same grade as the pedestrian realm.

A lot of public benefit can be in the programming of the space. Urge Safeway to think about the idea of having an autumn festival or other community events. Part of a good retail strategy is to have products spill out of the store. Might be a wonderful strategy.

Do fire codes allow closure of the shared street?

Logistically, trucks need to use route.

What is located near loading docks in the drawings represented by a red triangle?

A planter is planned to be placed to keep pedestrians out of the way of truck loading docks. The design team is attempting to find a way to make the area more comfortable for pedestrians.

Provide publicly accessible plazas, per commission guidelines. In the aggregate, Safeway is providing a very successful project.

Is there an assumption that the whole development is being built as a single development. Is it possible the residential won't occur?

There are two developers, one developer is doing the residential. There will likely be a lag as residential won't take place until the grocery store begins construction.

The Commission looks at public benefit. The plaza at California Ave SW has the ability to be a great public space.

Can you talk about the way finding/signage/identity elements? How do you see it all working?

The location along California Ave SW and across from the Olmsted park helps the project. They feel that they have uncovered this Olmstead park and are highlighting it through plaques and that this is positive. They didn't want to add many new elements, but instead wanted to enhance those strengths that exist already.

The general intention to create an urban store is fantastic and should be applauded. You may want to go back and look at alley being vacated. It is useless. The alley way being created is not a public benefit but has urban design merit.

The public plaza might not feel public as currently designed considering it will be an entrance to the grocery store.

Regarding the shared street, there is no credit factor as to whether it's 100% public benefit. Has a right hand turn out of the parking ramp been considered?

From a circulation standpoint, it would have major drawbacks. You would be shunting traffic toward the residential side of the project site.

We agree that there are areas which are counted as "public benefit" that aren't necessarily. You have the opportunity to really add benefit at the public plaza through good design. Expand the corner design to become more community oriented.

I Feel like direction of shared street is good but maybe the designated pedestrian area is lacking.

One public benefit that hasn't been discussed is the projects interaction with public transit.

Thought of bicycle parking. The plaza design should be oriented in some capacity to relate to the bus stops.

The urban qualities are fantastic. Bicycles have not been considered in this design, particularly in the shared street.

Reflecting upon alley vacations and a need for metrics, this project is a poster child for that.

Public open space has been a benchmark for gauging adequacy. However, the location, exposure, and quality of the space should be considered.