|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | DRAFT MEETING MINUTES |
| **Bruce A. Harrell**Mayor**Rico Quirindongo**Director, OPCD**Kevin O’Neill,** Chair**Phoebe Bogert****Kate Clark****Ray Gastil****Ben Gist****Brian Markham****Shirin Masoudi****Zubin Rao****Molly Spetalnick,** Vice Chair**Caitlin Truong****Michael Jenkins**Director**Valerie Kinast**Strategic Advisor**Windy Bandekar**Planner**Robin Magonegil**Administrative Staff | July 17, 2025Convened – 10:30 amAdjourned – 4:00 pmProjects Reviewed Commission BusinessSeattle Center – Thomas Street ImprovementsSite Visits – potential station locations for Ballard Light RailCommissioners Present Phoebe Bogert (virtually, morning only)Kate ClarkRay Gastil Brian MarkhamShirin Masoudi (morning only)Kevin O’NeillZubin Rao**Commissioners Excused**Molly SpetalnickBen GistCaitlin TruongStaff PresentMichael JenkinsValerie KinastWindy BandekarRobin Magonegil |
|  |
| Office of Planning and Community Development600 4th Avenue, Floor 5PO Box 94788Seattle, WA 98124-4019**TEL** 206-615-1349**FAX**  206-233-7883seattle.gov/designcommission |

**Commission Business (10:30 – 11:00 am)**

The Commission discussed the items on the agenda and had a project briefing.

**Seattle Center – Thomas Street corridor (11:00 – 12:30)**

The Commission received a presentation on a proposed upgrade to Seattle Center Thomas Street corridor. Seattle Center, in partnership with GGN Landscape Architecture, has developed a proposal to redesign the Thomas Street corridor from 2nd Avenue to 5th Avenue within the Seattle Center campus. This segment of Thomas Street currently serves as the busiest pedestrian corridor on campus and the primary point of entry for many visitors. This is the Commission’s first review.

The project coordinates with several concurrent Seattle Center projects including the Monorail Station ADA improvements, the Thomas Street Retail Site RFP, and planned remodels at Seattle Children's Theatre and MOPOP. Several of the retail spaces along the corridor require updating. The Armory Plaza that fronts along this segment have issues with accessibility.

The proposal includes streetscape improvements, accessibility upgrades, stormwater management infrastructure, tree preservation where feasible, and spaces designed to accommodate both daily pedestrian traffic and event programming.

The following people presented:

* Julia Levitt, Seattle Center
* Robert Leykam, Seattle Center
* Shannon Nicol, GGN
* Luke McQuillin, GGN
* Jianjun Li, GGN

The following people attended:

* David Kunselman, Seattle Center
* Mark Ostrow

The Commission voted 7 to 0 in favor of this phase of design. The Commission made the following recommendations:

1. The commission emphasized the need for **coordination with Seattle Department of Transportation**, particularly regarding the proposed **scramble intersections** at 5th and 2nd Avenue entrances. The commission advocated for scramble intersections to demarcate entry into the pedestrian zone and create a clear transition from one zone to another.
2. The commission identified the need for clear **wayfinding** that addresses pedestrian, bicycle, and monorail users, particularly given Thomas Street's role as part of a larger corridor and the confusion about bicycle access through the campus. The recommendation emphasizes creating explicit direction for different user types.
3. The commission raised concerns about nighttime safety and activation, noting that Seattle gets dark early in winter and the space could feel unsafe when outdoor activities aren't happening and with closed sight lines. The recommendation calls for **lighting** that goes beyond basic illumination to support social activation.
4. The commission raised questions about color continuity throughout the corridor, how different zones would be demarcated graphically, and the potential for incorporating artwork while maintaining the herringbone pattern's functionality. The recommendation seeks **clarity on how visual cues** will guide users through different spaces.
5. Define pedestrian flow hierarchy and corresponding design treatment - study which **intersections and nodes** truly serve important pedestrian functions versus those that are legacy infrastructure and develop a streamlined design approach that emphasizes key gathering spaces while allowing continuous street treatment where appropriate.

**Site Visits – Ballard Light Rail extension 1:00 – 4:00 pm**

The commission visited 2 potential station locations along the Ballard Light Rail extension. The purpose of the visits was for commissioners to familiarize themselves on the station locations and the land use and transportation context at and near each station location. The locations that were visited are:

* 2:00 pm – Meet in front of McDonalds at corner of 14th Ave NW & Market
* 3:00 pm – Meet in front of Red Mill Burgers at 17th and W Dravus

The following people attended:

* Erik Rundell, SDOT
* David Kunselman, Seattle Center