



**Seattle  
Design  
Commission**

**APPROVED**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**19 June 2003**

Gregory J. Nickels,  
*Mayor*

Donald Royse  
*Chair*

Laura Ballock

Ralph Cipriani

Jack Mackie

Cary Moon

Iain M. Robertson

Nic Rossouw

David Spiker

Sharon E. Sutton

Tory Laughlin Taylor

John Rahaim,  
*Executive Director*

Layne Cubell,  
*Commission Coordinator*

Projects Reviewed

Comprehensive Plan Update  
Waterfront Forum Planning  
South Lake Union Park  
Street Design Element  
Southwest Library Expansion

Convened: 8:30am

Adjourned: 3:30pm

Commissioners Present

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

Staff Present

John Rahaim  
Layne Cubell  
Brad Gassman  
Anna O'Connell



Department of Design,  
Construction & Land Use

700 5th Avenue, Suite 2000  
Seattle, WA 98104-5070  
phone 206/233-7911  
fax 206/386-4039

---

**19 June 2003 Project: Comprehensive Plan Update**

Phase: Briefing

Previous Reviews: None

Presenters: Tom Hauger, Dept. of Design, Construction, and Land Use  
Lish Whitson, Dept. of Design, Construction, and Land Use

Attendee: Alec Fiskens, Office of Policy and Management

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00309)

**Summary: The Commission thanks the team for coming and looks forward to working with the team in the future on further revisions and updates.**

- **The Design Commission understands the political constraints, but encourages the team to push the boundaries of the Comprehensive Plan;**
- **suggests that proponents emphasize sustainability throughout the document and, in that light, reconsider the single family zones and look for innovative ways to incorporate more density;**
- **encourages the team to also emphasize transportation systems, look at water as the most significant land use, and consider using the Plan as a tool for advocacy and outreach; and**
- **is eager to work with the Planning Commission to help staff assess what parts of the Comprehensive Plan are working and what are not.**

The Comprehensive Plan was written in response to the state Growth Management Act of 1990. This requires the City to plan 20 years into the future by addressing issues such as transportation, housing, and utilities. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan must be consistent with other city plans and policies including neighborhood plans, levies, departmental action plans, and land use regulations. Current planning framework includes the Washington State Growth Management Act, which is a multi-county planning policies; King County county-wide planning policies; and City of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, which must be consistent with county and multi-county plans in terms of transportation planning. The Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1994 after a four-year planning process. It outlines how the city would accommodate growth over the next 20 years. The mayor at the time did not want zoning changes with the new plan, so those creating it looked for places that could accommodate growth without zoning changes.

Themes in the Comprehensive Plan include:

- Sustainability: increased growth and density within the city so that rural areas can remain rural
- Focused growth: concentrate growth in areas where there existing services are accessible and available, including transit services
- Provide resources: provide resources to areas that are seeing growth

The plan also names three different village types to address how much and what kind of growth will happen in what areas. Urban villages are those where there will be the most growth and include areas such as First Hill, Capitol Hill, Northgate, and Uptown (Lower Queen Anne). In addition, there are hub urban villages that are expected to see both commercial and residential growth, manufacturing and industrials centers, and residential urban villages that are primarily intended to accommodate multi-family growth. The ten primary elements that the Comprehensive plan addresses are land use, transportation, housing, capital facilities, utilities, economic development, neighborhood planning, human development, cultural resources, and the environment. Capital improvements are a key element because planners want to be sure that investments are made where they want to see growth.

The City has had to change to move toward the goals of the plan. When the plan was first adopted, it laid out growth targets: from 1994–2014, Seattle was meant to accommodate 140,000 new jobs and 60,000 new households. These numbers are city-wide targets and most of the growth was allocated to urban villages, with less of the growth projected for suburban and residential villages. Since the plan was adopted, the city has been monitoring the project by using 30 indicators to help see if the landscape in the city is moving toward the plan's expectations. Overall, Seattle has moved toward the goal in household numbers and jobs are ahead of target in that they hit about 50% in 2001. Dept. of Design, Construction, and Land Use (DCLU) is doing a more in-depth analysis in five urban villages to look closely at neighborhood growth since the adoption of both the Comprehensive Plan and neighborhood plans. The state requires an update on the Comprehensive Plan by the end of 2004; this update must extend the horizon of the plan by ten years (2024) and incorporate new growth targets, which are 50,000 new jobs and 90,000 new households. Most of the growth will go where the zoning allows for density.

Transportation and land use are really the heart of the Comprehensive Plan update. The goal in the transportation element of the plan has been to set a high bar for reduction in single occupancy vehicle use; currently this goal has not been met, either because it was set unrealistically high or because not enough has been done to encourage public and alternative transportation. The update will see fundamental changes in the transportation part of the plan. What exists in the plan says a lot of the right things and lays out a system of identifying street types and designating pedestrian priority transit, but existing policies do not work well with each other and with these goals. In addition, the update will make distinctions with regard to geography and village type, i.e., congestion will be tolerated to some degree in urban centers.

Seattle Dept. of Transportation (SDOT) is currently working on an update of the Transportation Strategic Plan (TSP). DCLU is working with SDOT so that the two documents work together; the Comprehensive Plan sets the priorities of the TSP.

The Comprehensive Plan is titled "Toward a Sustainable Seattle" to emphasize that they are working to ensure investments in the city are sustainable and the communities created by concentration of growth are sustainable. DCLU is working with other city departments including the Office of Housing and the Office of Economic Development. The steps for updating the plan include the staff writing a resolution to present to City Council that outlines the scope of the amendments. Public process, which begins this fall, is meant to engage and educate more people on the Comprehensive Plan and to hear from people how the document can be more useful. The resolution will get to Council in late summer or early fall of 2004.

The Design Commission can help by providing policy guidance with particular attention to land use and transportation policies such as street vacations. The Comprehensive Plan can help define where vacations may or may not be appropriate. In addition, the Commission can help enhance the relationship between the growth strategy and capital projects; other than the ProParks levy, it is difficult to find places where decisions for capital projects match urban center locations. In looking at capital projects, the Commission can ask how the location and project itself fit the overall growth goals and smaller neighborhood goals, and match the neighborhood itself.

### **Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Would like to know if the urban villages were created without zoning changes and if there has been any reconsideration of zoning changes.
  - Proponents stated that they have been done without zoning changes. Zoning in these areas already had the capacity to accept the target growth projections for numbers of jobs and people.

- Would like to know, on a continuum of innovation to maintenance, where the plan is.
  - Proponents stated that it is more about maintenance and they have found that the fundamental vision of the plan is working for the most part, but what it needs is fine tuning. For example, capital projects need to be better tied to expenditures.
- Feels that the team is going in the right direction in terms of the Comprehensive Plan, but would like to know how they are doing in the larger picture, especially with transportation.
  - Proponents stated that when the plan was first adopted, the City had public meetings to shape the vision for the future. The Plan is a good reflection of the people of Seattle, but transportation does still have a long way to go.
- Feels that in the big picture, the Plan is commendable. Initially, the urban village designations were logical and addressed the realities of politics rather than being extremely innovative. Believes that this is not as far as the Plan could go and suggests the team question the validity of protecting all the single family areas. No place of this size and expected growth has this low of density this close to the city core and feels that it works against diversity and housing affordability.
- Would like to know how the light rail and monorail fit in and whether their presence suggests modifying zoning.
  - Proponents stated that when the Comprehensive Plan was being written, there was the assumption that the light rail would happen in a certain alignment, which is essentially the one that was voted on. City-wide growth is concentrated in urban centers and areas are linked by access to transit.
  - The monorail has not been accounted for and DCLU is just staffing for the project. The team will keep the monorail in mind and account for it as they redo the Comprehensive Plan.
- Would like to know if the current initiatives in South Lake Union are contrary to the Comprehensive Plan.
  - Proponents stated that when the Plan was first being written, they looked at designating the South Lake Union and Seattle Center area as an urban center, but the Commons Plan was underway and the future of whether or not that would be adopted was uncertain. The growth targets for South Lake Union are set very low, but to connect the area with some kind of transit system makes sense.
- Appreciates what the team is doing and points out that the largest land use on the map is water. Feels that until water is looked at as a fundamental land use, the Plan cannot be sustainable. The effects of what we do on land to the water is the key to sustainability.
- Suggests that the team take the sections at the end of the Plan—Environment and Sustainability—and put them in the front.
  - Proponents stated that that was a good idea and they will make sustainability a more prominent theme.
- Suggests proponents look at the environment and sustainability in a more three-dimensional way because those concepts are infused in so many parts of the plan such as transportation and housing. Lately, the Commission has seen many projects with sustainable infrastructure types and would like to know what kinds of conversations the team is having with other city agencies.
  - Proponents stated that they are talking to the Office of Sustainability and Environment

(OSE) and Seattle Public Utilities (SPU). They are working with SPU to set more definable sustainability goals and with OSE to make sustainability a more prominent theme.

- Feels that the Comprehensive Plan is a planner's plan that directs city departments rather than a guide for citizens. Suggests team do something more innovative and assertive and have more specific strategies to fix things that are moving in the wrong direction.
  - Proponents stated that they struggled with the plan when it was first written because when the City addresses something specifically, they are committing themselves to seeing it through and the City is reluctant to make such commitments. They would like to be more specific and directive, but would find themselves in trouble if they do not deliver. Proponents further stated that that is why they need to work with other city departments to make sure plans are consistent.

---

**19 June 2003** Project: **Waterfront Forum Planning**

Phase: Staff Briefing

Time: 0.5 hours

(SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00289)

**Summary:** The Commission discussed the upcoming Waterfront Forum, which they and the Planning Commission are sponsoring. Thursday evening will consist of the welcome, a presentation of background information, and an interactive exercise. Saturday will be the keynote speech and a panel discussion.

---

**19 June 2003 Project: South Lake Union Park**

Phase: Schematic Design

Previous Reviews: 6 March 2003 (Schematic Design), 19 December 2002 (Conceptual Design), 2 August 2001 (Design Development), 21 June 2001 (Predesign), 18 May 2000 (Scope Briefing/Update), 7 February 2000 (Briefing), 20 August 1998 (Briefing), 2 April 1998 (Briefing)

Presenters: Steven Wright, Parks and Recreation  
 Marcel Wilson, Hargreaves Associates  
 Steven Bull, Mithun

Attendees: Michael Shiosaki, Parks and Recreation  
 Phyllis Lamphere, Seattle Parks Foundation

Time: 1.5 hours (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00051)

**Action:** The Commission thanks the team for the great presentation and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- **The Design Commission applauds the simple and provocative design and feels that it can serve as an example for other Parks and Recreation design projects;**
- **applauds the range of techniques being used to create an energetic and fun space;**
- **supports the simplicity and flexibility of the architectural elements and palette of materials;**
- **strongly encourages the team to refine the conceptual framework for the park to help relate the park to its physical and cultural context, better define the structural forms and materials, and let the framework serve as a strategic tool for the future so people understand how the park works and how changes can be incorporated into the diagram;**
- **urges the proponents to make this park a model for sustainability and, at the very least, commit to using best practices, but would like the team to make this a pilot project for the Parks and Recreation Department's sustainability checklist and encourages the team to look at the sustainable landscape assessment model recently reviewed by the Commission;**
- **encourages proponents to be strategic in project phasing decisions and make a place that people will fall in love with in the initial phases; and**
- **recommends approval of schematic design with seven in favor and three opposed.**

The design team has had three public meetings and a public open house between November 2002 and May 2003; there will be a public meeting and presentation to the Parks Board on June 26. The scheme presented today will show the canal, the only element the team is unsure will be in the final design because extra money would need to be raised and they must test the underlying soils' contamination levels. Because the park design shown today exceeds the allotted ProParks funding, the Parks Foundation is going to help fundraise and they need to determine what they will be able to fund with these efforts; in addition, the design team must show how the park can be developed in phases. Currently, the design team has come up with a palette of materials, the beginning architectural character, plans for site access, and possible phasing scenarios.



Aerial View from Armory 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

plaza steps down to put people at the water's edge. These areas will have a simple, durable materials palette to complement the design.

There were three alternatives; since then, they have had a successful phase one. The team has looked at the work that will relate to the surrounding projects; the parking lots on Fairview Ave. and Valley St. will

be an important part of the design because it connects the grove of trees and an exhibition area with a fountain. The area to the north, and a wetland that collects and treats water that enters the park is reference to the maritime theme. The grove of trees will provide dappled light. The

The area north of the canal, on the west side of waterway 3, will be the new center of the park. Here, there will be a model boat pond and boardwalks that support a lot of activity; it is also the quickest way to the water's edge from Valley St. Seasonal plantings will be balanced with lawn and ship forms break up and partition the views. The interior use of the armory is yet to be determined; there is support for using the roof of the building. The surrounding plaza is for events and performances, and will also provide fire access. To the west is a meandering path in addition to more direct circulation paths that are in the shade. A walkway over the stormwater wetland allows people to experience this space. The bridge over waterway 3 is anchored to the west side



South Lake Union Park plan

while lightly touching the east side. Materials in these areas are the beach itself, simple paving, trees, and plants that express seasonality. The furnishing vocabulary, such as the lighting and seating, will express the maritime heritage of the site and the importance of craftsmanship in maritime disciplines.

The architectural vocabulary of the park will respond to its context such as the armory and Center for Wooden Boats. Potential common elements of the architecture include the shed, which harkens back to traditional maritime forms and craftsmanship, in which buildings express the characteristics of boats in shapes and construction techniques. The pavilion, on the other hand, relates mostly with the armory and potentially the related new buildings so there is an opportunity to create something modern and very different. The bridge vocabulary, particularly over waterway 3, is very light but anchored on the west side.

Through the public process, the team has focused people's attention on the types and ranges of things that could happen in this new park. Emphasis on access has been via Terry Ave, however the primary access



will be on Valley St. from which there will be a drop off for the armory. Buses do not enter the site; South Lake Union Park is not for large vehicles. Conservative estimates figured that the gross event capacity for the park is about 11,000 for events such as the Tall Ships and about 13,000 during the Fourth of July. In addition, smaller scale community events such as the Skills Festival can also be easily accommodated.

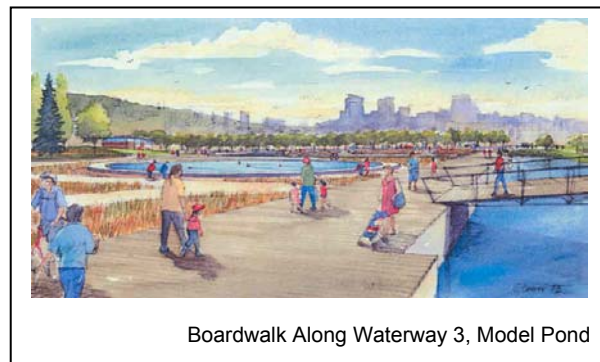
There are a number of alternatives for the phasing of park construction:

- \$3.5 million phase one
  - includes the pedestrian bridge, seasonal plantings, model boat pond, boardwalk, and the steps down to the water
- alternative phase one (about \$3 million)
  - does not include the pedestrian bridge (that will happen at a later phase under this plan); includes the model boat pond, landscape of an area to the side of the armory, some parking
- phase two
  - assuming the alternative phase one, it includes the pedestrian bridge, the canal, and the grove
- phase three
  - includes the west side of the park
- phase four
  - grove will be completed as development to the south and east progress
- phase five
  - includes the landscape of the area right around the armory itself

### **Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Would like to know if the team got a sense of where Vulcan was headed.

- Proponents stated that they all agreed that coordination was important and would be part of the next phase of developing the park. Vulcan is just in concept development now, but they did



Boardwalk Along Waterway 3, Model Pond

look at how development will relate to urban design issues such as the streetcar stop. In terms of coordination, they are emphasizing the east-west connections and the importance of Fairview Ave. feeling like it is an extension of the park. Proponents told Vulcan that their first priority is to provide access to the water. They also discussed that waterway 4 must remain vibrant and Vulcan's development needs to respect the character of the Center for Wooden Boats. There is a pinch between the welcome building and the canal because they must leave room for the Center for Wooden Boats and the Maritime Heritage Center to expand.

- Would like to know why the area around the armory is in the last phase.
  - Proponents stated that everybody agrees that the armory is important to the success of the project and what they are showing should not imply that nothing is being done. Parks is doing a physical analysis of the building and it may be used as a rental/accommodation space. However, the team is unsure what the program will be for the final project, so they

- are not sure in what phase it will be developed and what the armory and its surroundings will require.
- Proponents stated that they are meeting regularly with the Center for Wooden Boats and have discussed whether access to the water is viable with the ramp down to the water or with a fourth bridge up and over located within the dock system. The Center for Wooden Boats can live with the separation of the usable/rental boats and the boats that are being worked on.
- Notes that the seasonal planting area is large and would like to know what is meant by seasonal plantings.
  - Proponents stated that the lawn and pond will not be very usable for a good part of the year, so seasonal plantings will provide interest and express variety. Proponents further stated that the lawn can be mown to be used in high-capacity events.
- Would like to know where the prevailing winds are coming from and how strong they are.
  - Proponents stated that they come from the northwest and the location of the model pond was determined by that. While some spaces are open, others on the west side are more intimate and protected.
- Would like to know if, in the grove, the canopy of trees will be closed or if the trees will be placed so that their canopies are separate/individual.
  - Proponents stated that they will choose a species that has an open branching system, so that it will be a loose structure. The trees will be more individual with space in between, as total coverage is not the right thing for this space.
- Would like to know what the large, conceptual idea is behind all of the pieces of the plan; would like the central, unifying concept clarified.
  - Proponents stated that providing access to and experience with the water is the primary goal, in addition to providing different types of experiences with water.
- Notes that proponents showed different palettes and diagrams and would like proponents to discuss the park more in terms of the different social activities and uses.
  - Proponents stated they were given a program to start and research indicated that many things would happen onsite that cannot be foreseen. Thus, the park must be open, flexible, and durable and this affects the materials palette for the park. The lawn will be engineered to withstand crowds and the grove will have gravel underneath. The seasonal planting is a reaction to people's desire to see a change in seasons.
- Feels that the scheme is too general and that if the site is too flexible it will not work.
  - Proponents stated that, in their experience designing spaces like this, it is most important that it is built to last and endure being loved. This project is enormously important for the future of Seattle and it will be used 24 hours a day. The park is divided into quadrants and the west side will accommodate more passive activities than the east side, while the area to the north of the canal will accommodate different uses than south of the canal.
- Appreciates proponents' description of the architectural vocabulary and feels that they are headed in the right direction. Seattle has a strong lobby for off-leash areas and would like to know if that is specifically excluded from this park, particularly as the South Lake Union area becomes more residential.

- Proponents stated that this park is not on the table for an off-leash area and all Seattle parks allow dogs on a leash. Nearby, the future I-5 open space will have an off-leash area.
- Is concerned about the phasing being in honored in 50–100 years and feel that Parks and Recreation must embed this in the master plan to make sure that it happens; the total plan needs to be honored and given full stewardship.
  - Proponents stated that they are now developing a supplemental EIS and in the scoping process are using the entire park design as the basis for permitting. This will essentially embed the design and people in the future will not be able to deviate far from it.
- Applauds the simple and provocative design and concept of giving people the experience of water and providing access to the water. Feels that this can serve as an example in the future. Because of this focus on water, would like to know if this will be a pesticide-free park.
  - Proponents stated that they are not sure of whether this will be a pesticide-free park, but they are setting sustainability standards, using the sustainability checklist, and working with the Office of Sustainability and Environment. South Lake Union Park will be the test case and they will focus on using sustainable materials, stormwater drainage, etc.
- Would like to know if the perched wetlands will provide salmon habitat.
  - Proponents stated that, for the canal itself, it is more about now to not create predator habitat rather than how to create salmon habitat. To do this, the team must not create a lot of shade, so having the terraces float is not the best solution because it creates predator habitat. The stormwater wetland in the northwest corner will treat water from the parking lot and the hope is that they will be able to create a wetland edge for salmon.
- Hopes that, over time, the original plans can be adhered to, especially with the edge conditions; supports the edges as they are drawn—without railings and barriers.
  - Proponents think that they can do it because the way it is zoned is for water-dependent uses and these uses happen on about 80 percent of the water's edges. They must provide a roll-off guard, but that should be all.
- Feels that a shortcoming of the planning process for the long-range is that input is all from current residents and stakeholders. As the city and neighborhood grows, there will be more pressure for public/open spaces and would like there to be enough flexibility to accommodate a different demographic than what is there today.
- Likes the overall simplicity and approach. Feels that the architectural vocabulary for the new pavilion is more effective and urges proponents to keep the maritime references to the details such as railings.
- Feels that proponents chose good images as inspirations for the architecture of the site and likes the simplicity and functionality the working waterfront.
- Would like to see a strong conceptual framework, separate from the function of the site that incorporates historic references. Feels that this will help tie in forms and express the history of the site.
  - Proponents stated that others have pushed on the same point. From the beginning, there have been exhibit/interpretive designers on the team who are skilled at the ethereal and physical middle ground. They have done a quick study of the site's stories and their work will be part of phase one.

- Urges proponents to be strategic in how they define phase one so that people love the space; this will also make it easier for fundraising in the future.
- Would like to know about the art plan in phase one.
  - Proponents stated that Peter Richards has been contracted to do the work and he is currently doing research. They are waiting for Parks and Recreation to get to the point where they know what pieces of the art are in phase one.
- Would like to know if there is a way to get phase one linked with the edges.
  - Proponents stated that there is discussion of at least getting phase one to the front door of the armory.
- Suggests that this could be a potential pilot project to test the LEED-based site assessment system that was presented to the Commission at the last meeting.
- Would like to know what is happening with the southwest edge.
  - Proponents stated that it needs to be stronger and is where the streetcar stop will be. It will be a simple, plaza-like space and they will keep the view. SDOT is still working out the details of how that corner will work.
- Would like to know whether the studies done so far indicate if the channel is possible and if there are more studies that need to be done. Would also like to know what the schedule is for when this will be known and if there are other equally important factors such as funding. .
  - Proponents stated that there are two issues: How bad is it? and How much money do we have? They should know how bad contamination is this week and several agencies including Department of Ecology and Fisheries will need to sign off on it.
- Feels that a phasing goal is to get people to the water, and wonders if proponents could begin with the perimeters of the park like along Valley St. and the water because the site is currently unwalkable. .
  - Proponents stated that they will consider that; it is a question of how to make people love the edges.

#### **Key Visitor Comments and Concerns**

- A representative from Seattle Parks Foundation stated that they will weigh in heavily on the phasing of the park and they feel that the success of the park depends strongly on the phasing. It is important to make it a beloved place and attract the public so that it meets the challenge of time.

**19 June 2003 Commission Business**

**ACTION ITEMS**

A. TIMESHEETS

B. MINUTES FROM 6 JUNE 2003—APPROVED

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

C. QUARTERLY UPDATE—DOCKINS

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

D. PARKS PROJECT MANAGERS MEETING—JULY 8, 1:30–2:30PM

E. CENTRAL WATERFRONT FORUM—JUNE 26, 6–9PM AND JUNE 28,  
8:30AM–12:30PM, BELL HARBOR CONFERENCE CENTER

F. SEATTLE ARCHITECTURAL FOUNDATION—LIVELY  
STREETS FORUM: JUNE 24, 5:30–7:30PM, DOME ROOM

---

**19 June 2003 Project: Street Design Element Discussion**

Phase: Briefing

Previous Reviews: None

Presenters: Lyle Bicknell, CityDesign

Mike Johnson, Seattle Dept. of Transportation

Shane Dewald, Seattle Dept. of Transportation

Attendee: Barbara Gray, Seattle Dept. of Transportation

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00308)

**Summary: The Commission thanked the proponents for coming and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.**

- **The Commission notes that all transportation projects begin and end with the individual pedestrian experience and supports the preeminence of the pedestrian in these environments;**
- **notes that Washington State Dept. of Transportation practices context-sensitive design and supports such practices in Seattle's urban neighborhoods;**
- **supports maintenance of Seattle arterial and local roadway standards as they abut state routes;**
- **supports the creation of a local SDOT standard for warning sensor tiles because they meet the ADA requirements, make use of local materials, and are financially responsible; and**
- **suggests that CityDesign create guidelines for paving standards and return to the Commission for a longer discussion of those.**

There are new ADA standards and State regulations that necessitate changes in Seattle standard sidewalk design. The truncated dome detectable warning system that was used on wheelchair ramps went into moratorium a while ago because some felt it caused more disruption for people in wheelchairs to get over curb ramps. In 2001, a study was done on detectable warning systems and it found that truncated dome is the most effective surface. In April 2001, FHWA began to require cities to put in detectable warnings on wheelchair ramps. The question now is the color of these systems. The first two feet of the ramp has to be detectable surface and it must be 70 percent contrast (light on dark or dark on light) or warning yellow. The Access Board is publishing a new right-of-way document with this information; the document went out for comments last July and the final document will be done this coming January. The State of Washington adopted the standard of safety yellow as the ramp, but Seattle has a large inventory of ramps and to adhere to this we would need to paint almost 20,000 ramps. SDOT does not want to use the safety yellow and would like to use cast-in-place concrete or concrete colored with pigment so all that would need to be done for maintenance would be pressure washing. They chose white as an alternative contrasting color, which would also mean that the ramps would need to be darkened to provide the appropriate contrast. The State did not accept the white, so the team provided a technical reason to use white. Mutual Materials, a local manufacturer, stated that they can create a white concrete because they can use a white aggregate, however they cannot get a yellow aggregate. In addition, other manufacturers would also be able to provide this so there would not be a single source, which would reduce costs. They have contacted the state to seek concurrence with FHWA. The ramps with the polymer tiles could essentially be put in once and just power washed to maintain them.

The State is also looking at large-scale roadway issues. Trees of a certain size are considered fixed objects; anything larger than 4 inches in diameter is a fixed object and the State has put local jurisdictions in the position of defending putting things in the street. The Commission should be aware of these changes so that they are concurrent with the city's direction. The City standards should not be reinterpreted because of the State. A new study said that there were more fatalities where there are fixed objects, but did not say why. The City informally adopted a three-foot offset for fixed objects, but the State does not want any trees in central medians and on roads that are 35 mph and under. And, if there is no curb, the State says the clear zone must be 10 feet. If a roadway is 40 mph or over, a different clear zone applies.

### **Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Would like to know how the Commission can help.
  - Proponents stated that they can provide an urban design perspective on color choice because ADA did not define color or contrast. The State has a transportation law that there should be state-wide uniformity, but this Seattle-specific solution supports local materials and sustainable industry.
- Supports the idea of the City of Seattle using its own material and color.
- Supports bringing local industry and would like to know why proponents are suggesting white on black versus black on white.
  - Proponents stated that if they went to black, there is not the contrast they need other than the band of curb.
- Supports SDOT have its own standard tiles because it uses local materials and is physically responsible.
- Wonders if the issue with state-wide standards is a balance or trade-off between overall consistency for recipients of the system. Can see that yellow is garish and wishes neighborhoods were as sensitive to other elements. Suggests proponents look at the big picture before they reject the color.
- Feels that in urban areas pedestrians should be the preeminent concern, not the driver.
  - Proponents stated that there are not studies showing numbers for pedestrian safety; the money is put to vehicle studies.
- Supports SDOT's move toward context-sensitive design.
  - Proponents stated that the state still looks at safety and context-sensitive design addresses safety and aesthetics.
- Would like to see more local, city-level control because the community is the primary role in determining the balance of safety.
- Feels that the State has a history of practicing context-sensitive design.
  - Proponents stated that the context in Seattle is different; it is not an open environment, but an urban one.
- Believes that pedestrians should be part of the context.
- With regard to elements in the sidewalks, private development of plazas that run to the curb makes

people concerned that the public realm is being given up. Feels that the challenge is to make public-private edges permeable without sacrificing public space.

- Noted that the Commission has seen requests for variances and as long as they look like they will create a space that is truly a public enhancement, the Commission supports them.
- Feels that any naming of property should remain on that property, but does not want to indicate that anything different such as a variation in materials makes something private. The public realm does not have to be bland.
- Suggests that proponents develop simple, clear principles that relate to street elements and the issue of public/private and the Commission can review and endorse these.



**19 June 2003 Project: Southwest Library Expansion**

Phase: Schematic Design

Previous Reviews: 16 January 2003 (Scope Briefing)

Presenters: Justine Kim, Seattle Public Library

Rick Sundberg, Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects

Attendees: Matthew Stannard, Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects

Olivier Landa, Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 221 | DC00099)

**Action:** The Commission thanks the team for their presentation and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- The Commission appreciates the sensitive design approach to adding onto the existing building's form and character, particularly in the sectional treatment;
- suggests that the team continue to examine the canopy height and detail design;
- suggests a closer look at the type of tree to be used in the parking area under the end of the canopy;
- supports minimizing the parking on site and essentially maintaining the existing parking count;
- enthusiastically supports the architectural direction of the addition;
- recommends closer examination of a more direct entrance on 35<sup>th</sup> Ave.;
- supports the sustainable design aspects of the project; and
- recommends approval of schematic design.

**Note:** Commissioner Cipriani recused himself from this project review.

This project is on budget at this point and the design team recently had a community open house and received primarily positive feedback; the concern that some voiced was the lack of additional parking with the addition/renovation. Artist Katherine Kerr has been chosen for the project. The existing Southwest Library is located at 35<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Henderson St. and was built in 1962. While there is a bus stop across the street, the community feels that buses do not run often enough. The team is talking with SDOT about widening 35<sup>th</sup> Ave. for a drop-off zone and about putting two-hour parking along Henderson St.

The current building has a lot of glass/transparency, which the community likes. The team has done studies to try and match the program to the budget. They looked at putting in structured parking, but the community felt that was a safety issue. Thus, the team is planning to restripe the parking lot and will gain three spaces. With the addition to the library, three-quarters of the original building is being kept and a major challenge is to get enough of the footprint on the first floor for the library program.

With the new addition, the trees along 35<sup>th</sup> will be retained and a steel frame arcade will be put in from the south end at the loading dock to the north corner. Patrons will drive under the arcade to enter the parking lot from 35<sup>th</sup> Ave. The entrance to the building itself is a two-story vestibule. The children's area at the front of the library has large bay windows and a large, open staircase wraps up to the second floor. The upper floor is a U-shaped plan and contains a multipurpose room, staff break room, staff bathroom, and the office. The multipurpose room can accommodate up to 90 people and can be used independently,

when the library is closed. The staff break room has windows to allow natural light. The new design retains the loading dock off of 35<sup>th</sup> Ave.

Much of the existing building is subsumed into the new building/addition. A new sloped roof is being added on top of the existing one because the scale of the two-story addition dwarfed the one-story existing. The goal is for the building to appear singular, so the team is knitting together the stand-alone pieces. The team is keeping and creating as much transparency as they can; the building will be made of steel frame. The covered walkway, or arcade, has an opening in the top at one end where there is currently a crabapple tree that the team hopes to retain. The ramp at the front door 14–18 inches high.

In looking at the building sectionally, there is a clerestory surrounding the entire roof except for the mechanical to bring in natural light. Metal overhands also work as gutters. The center part of the building is quite open, but on the sides, where there are the two-story pieces, a variety of more intimate spaces are created. The exterior materials are primarily translucent glass and metal; in addition, the community's other favorite library is the one in Burien, which is colorful, so that will also serve as an example for the design team.

### **Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Would like to know if the team is keeping the entire existing roof.
  - Proponents stated that, for the most part, they are except for the center part.
- Would like to know how proponents determined the plane and scale of the arcade and is concerned that its size might dissipate the intimacy of the space.
  - Proponents stated that it relates to the façade of the building and is 22 feet high, but might explore some more to make sure that it does not overwhelm the scale of the street.
- Likes the idea of a large scale with a baseline and the complexity of the spaces. Is concerned that cars parked on 35<sup>th</sup> Ave. by the arcade and building will be a distraction from the clarity.
  - Proponents stated that they would consider that. They further stated that they have not begun working with the landscape architects yet who may be able to buffer this.
- Suggests the team explore putting the door on 35<sup>th</sup> Ave. and penetrate the last section of wall.
- Would like to know what elevation you would enter at if the entry was on 35<sup>th</sup> Ave.
  - Proponents stated that it would not be at the same grade, but slightly lower.
- Likes the rhythm of the lines and encourages the team to keep the desire for long lines. Also encourages them to think about the social spaces on the way into the building and the view from the north to mitigate the view of cars. Appreciates what the team has done with the old building and feels that the street presence of the library is elegant.
- Feels that, when looking at the building elevation from the parking lot, the small triangle of roof of old building is awkward; feels that the point where the new and old come together is very important. However, likes that the new reframes the existing and feels that the design reconceives the suburban building, making it more urban with a civic street presence. Would like to know why proponents did not follow the roofline of the building in the arcade.
  - Proponents stated that the angled arcade did not look convincing in sections; when you got out to the end of the arcade it looked weak.

- Believes that the rendering showing the canopy with a continuous line is strong and feels that if it were sloped at the roof angle it would weaken it.
- Would like to know if the existing tree in the canopy area is a crab and whether it is tall enough to come up through the top of the arcade. Feels that if it is just underneath the arcade the scale would be awkward; suggests that, if that is the case, the team might need to take out the tree and put in a bigger type. Also feels that perhaps the pedestrian sidewalk could be carried through and would like to know how many people walk along 35<sup>th</sup> Ave. and whether the tree would block them.
  - Proponents stated that people come from all over and there is not one main route. The tree is low-limbed, so it does not invite people to sit under it; they will have an arborist look at it and determine how it can be shaped.
- Would like to know if some of the existing trees are in a raised planter. Feels that the arcade, as you move away from the building and over towards the tree, will be read as part of the building itself or more as an individual piece of sculpture.
  - Proponents stated that they see the arcade as its own entity, but have not thought about it as a piece of art. They do not want it to get too detached from the building.
- Believes that, even without the tree, the arcade is strong.
  - Proponents stated that at first they were not sure if they would keep the tree, but the neighborhood residents want it to be retained.
- Is not concerned with the height of the arcade because of the street trees that are there.
- Suggests that timber bamboo might be a good alternative if proponents have to get rid of the tree.
- Encourages proponents to further explore the relationship of where the existing building meets the addition and would like to know how the space is being filled out to the south.
  - Proponents stated that the addition doubles the size of the library and two-thirds of the program is on the main floor.
  - Proponents stated that, to the south, the surroundings are smaller scale and in the library this part will be the quiet/study room.
- Would like to know if proponents are considering skylights.
  - Proponents stated that there are skylights in the original, but they are unsure if they are keeping them. They would rather use the clerestories for daylighting.
- Would like to know how proponents are addressing sustainability.
  - Proponents stated that this is not a LEED project, but they are approaching the sustainability aspects as such. They are keeping 75 percent of the old building, designing for natural ventilation, and selecting sustainable materials. If they can do a raised floor, they will so that the slab cools off at night. The existing building being retained is being reglazed and reinsulated. The team has not had daylighting studies performed yet, but plan to.
- Would like to know what the exterior materials along 35<sup>th</sup> Ave. are.
  - Proponents stated that most of the building is steel frame with an aluminum wall system. The panels will be solid in some places and translucent in others. A series of panels in the building will read differently depending on the function they are enclosing.

- Would like to know who did the existing bronze sculpture and where that will be put.
  - Proponents stated that the artist is Charles Smith and that the sculpture is now by the elevator shaft, but they do not like it there and would like to mount it on a bent steel plate by the book drops in front.
- Likes the scale of the building on the street and would like to know what kind of development is to the south of the building.
  - Proponents stated that it is primarily multifamily residential development.