



# Seattle Design Commission

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

August 2, 2007

**Greg Nickels**  
*Mayor*

**Karen Kiest**  
*Chair*

**Tasha Atchison**

**Pam Beyette**

**Evan Bourquard**

**Brendan Connolly**

**John Hoffman**

**Mary Johnston**

**Dennis Ryan**

**Darrell Vange**

**Guillermo Romano**  
*Executive Director*

**Layne Cubell**  
*Senior Staff*

### Projects Reviewed

Fire Station 39—Lake City

Fire Stations and Sustainable Design

Mercer Corridor Replacement Project

Commission Business

CityDesign Report

Fire Station 10—Site Tour

Convened: 8:30am

Adjourned: 5:00pm

### Commissioners Present

Karen Kiest, Chair

Tasha Atchison

Pam Beyette

Dennis Ryan

Mary Johnston

John Hoffman

Brendan Connolly

Evan Bourquard

### Staff Present

Guillermo Romano

Layne Cubell

Vivian Chang



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<b>2 August 2007</b>	<b>Project:</b>	<b>Fire Station 39—Lake City</b>
	<b>Phase:</b>	Pre-Design
	<b>Last Reviews:</b>	none
	<b>Presenters:</b>	Frank Coulter, Fleets and Facilities Department Jess Harris, Department of Planning and Development Scott Wolf, Miller Hull
	<b>Attendees:</b>	Linda Colasurdo, Fleets and Facilities Kelly Davidson, Arts and Cultural Affairs Molly Douce, Seattle Fire Department Christina Faine, Fleets and Facilities Department Particia Hopper, Arts and Cultural Affairs Yuki Seda-Kane, Miller/Hull
Time: 1.0 hours		(SDC Ref. #169/RS0609)

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**Action:**

**The Commission thanks the design team for their thoughtful and thorough presentation and unanimously approves the proposed predesign for Fire Station 39 with the following comments:**

- **Commend project team for appropriate level of presentation design and hope that this project will be an inspiration for both artist and design consultants.**
- **Appreciate the emphasis on the east-west orientation to maximize natural daylighting and the creation of successful program relationships.**
- **Show consideration for pedestrian connections and the ensuing civic nature of Lake City.**
- **Support the use of rain gardens and hope the concept is carried forward.**
- **Hope that the consideration of civic and public relationships will serve as a model for other projects.**
- **Encourage and support the creation of the public ROW in the southern portion of the site and continue the dialogue with SDOT, especially regarding the location of street trees.**
- **Appreciate the recessive gasket element and encourage careful consideration of it in both the short and long term vision for the site. Consider the interim presence of a blank 4-hour wall on the east side of the site as well as the permanent routine walls on northern edge of site.**
- **Appreciate the entry and arrival sequence and outdoor spaces.**
- **Encourage strong pursuit of all the LEED points possible.**
- **Encourage the examination of the larger neighborhood context, including 125<sup>th</sup> Avenue and how the project fits with SDOT related improvement projects nearby. Staff at SDOT should look at larger neighborhood streetscape along 125<sup>th</sup> Avenue.**

*Note: Recusal of Commissioner Bourquard as his firm is involved in this project.*

## **Proponent's Presentation**

### *Urban Context*

The public meeting held last Saturday was well-received. The design team is currently in week five of ten in the pre-design process, with schematic design as the next step. Fire station 39 is classified as a Neighborhood 1 station, the smallest of all stations, and is in poor condition, partly because it does not support renovation. Fire Station 39 was rebuilt on site with significant expansion, and the total area (in square feet) is larger than other N-1 stations at 11,000 square feet. The station provides a home base in the event of a major disaster due to 800 square feet of storage of equipment space. The mission of the station is to protect and serve and therefore is a resource for the community and promotes connection for people between the station and the City.

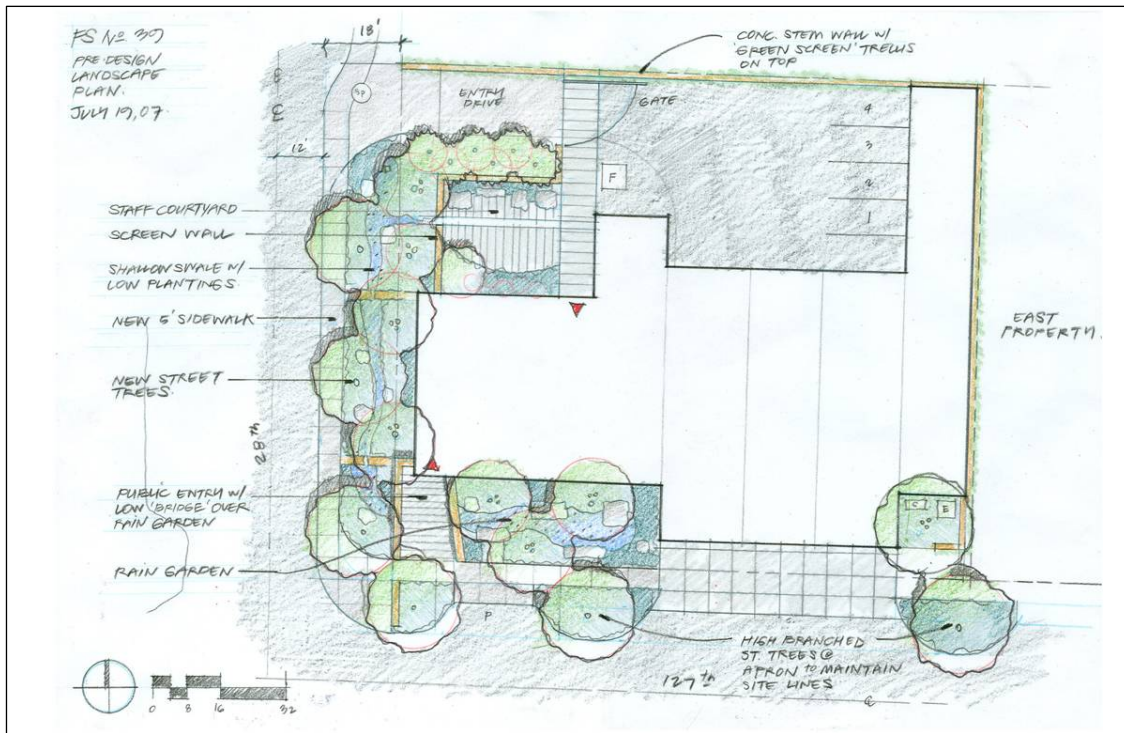
The site is located between 30<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> along 127<sup>th</sup>. The site consists of a food bank in the north, a parking lot in the west, and a building in the southeast corner, and new housing on 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue Northeast, King Arthur's Court and a drive through bank in the west, a car dealership in the south, and a public library in the southwest. There is a dangerous intersection at Northeast 127<sup>th</sup> Street and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue. To the west of the site, fire engines are allowed to leave from Northeast 127<sup>th</sup> Street. There is a civic and neighborhood connection in the nature.

### *Site Plan*

The site plan will address the sidewalk issue by bringing the building to the street; the best alternative is to create a drive through station by allowing a turning radius north of the site. The depth of the apparatus bay is 67 feet deep and the C-165 zone will likely abut the building. The apparatus bay support can be a sound buffer between the two buildings. The building plan includes a beanery, enclosed courtyard, and apparatus bay on the first floor on the ground floor, with a physical training room on the second floor.

The project is slated for a LEED-Silver rating, with the ultimate goal of LEED-Gold. Ways to achieve the Silver rating include creating a rain garden that wraps around the southern and western portions of the building, with shade trees on both sides of the stream. The entry to the station will include a bridge-like element to separate the station from the public but still exudes a welcoming atmosphere. One such public service the station offers is to check people's blood pressure. A concrete stem wall with green screen trellis on top will be built in the rear apron. There is a 60 feet ROW line along 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and the property is 30 feet from the lot line. For better stormwater management, a northbound driving lane can be put in which will eliminate parallel parking lane.

Currently, the design is working with Jack Johnson, landscape architect and Interface, electrical engineering firm. Steven Gossmitt, an artist from California, has been selected last week and he is known for large-scale projects (i.e. bamboo sculptures).



Site Plan for Fire Station 39

### Key Commissioner Questions and Comments

- The Commission appreciates the early introduction of site plan, which seems to be friendly and safe for firefighters. There is an appropriate level of civic engagement.
- The sketch that shows parking depicts four stalls. Why?
  - That sketch was done 3 weeks ago.
  - The most recent idea is to pull the tower back to allow more space for cars.
- Is the west wall setback the same in the landscape sketch?
  - The plan is to push the landscaping into the ROW.
- The courtyard may pose a visibility issue if you are not able to push curb into the building. If you cannot get the ROW, what will you do?
  - In that case, the outdoor space must be compromised. The narrow east-west strip will be maintained, which has not been studied yet, but will be considered later.
- Are there sidewalks around the site?
  - No, they are all unimproved.
- The reality of connecting to the southwest portion of the study area to the civic community center is a long term strategy. You might have better luck with the sidewalk in front of building in the early phase.
  - Yes, but improvements have begun and progress is slowly moving forward.
- Is there an existing lot line so you can move the site 10 feet to the east?
  - No, because we must honor the lot line.

- SDOT would more likely approve landscaping that face the sidewalk which can also get more impact with the rain garden.
  - The sidewalk could meander.
- Volumes of building \_
  - Not at that point
  - Sleeping floors
- Housing is not associated with the building; what are your plans for current tenants?
  - We did look at a co-location project, but the City told us not to look at that for now.
- The future building has many possibilities. For example, the market is ripe for mixed use buildings.
- The function of the site is good, but you should look at solar potential to make an even more sustainable building.
- The drive through is more functional to shorten apron and reduces asphalt.
- What are other sustainable ways to pursue LEED-Silver or Gold?
  - We are planning to incorporate natural ventilation, daylighting into spaces, and stormwater management strategies. We are still planning to use a mechanical system. An eco-charette will happen during schematic design although we are not sure which points will be targeted at this point. We feel that we can easily achieve a Silver rating just from orientation of building and site attributes, and if we are able, we will aim for Gold.
- The tree in the recessive alcove between the fire station and future building does not serve as a welcoming gesture to public.
  - That tree will most likely not be there.
  - There will be street trees along 127<sup>th</sup> Avenue instead.
- What is the relationship between the private yard and neighboring buildings?
  - To provide buffer and separation. The artist can be involved with the design of the private yard, such as constructing gabion walls.

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<b>2 August 2007</b>	<b>Project:</b>	<b>Fire Stations and Sustainable Design</b>
	<b>Phase:</b>	<i>Briefing</i>
	<b>Previous Reviews:</b>	none
	<b>Presenters:</b>	Teresa Rodriguez, Fleets and Facilities Department Lynne Barker, Department of Planning and Development
	<b>Attendees:</b>	David Kunselman, FFD
Time: 1.0 hour		(SDC Ref. #169/RS0609)

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**Action:**

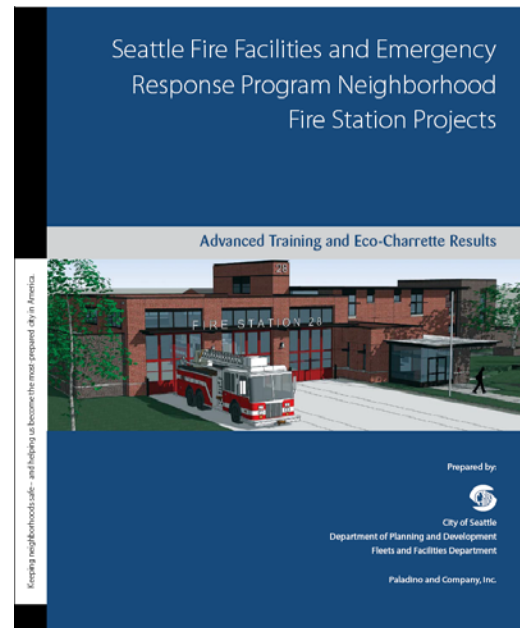
The Commission thanks the team for a thorough presentation on Fire Levy projects and sustainable design and has the following comments:

- Appreciate the training programs convened with FFD project management staff.
- Would like to see more educational elements at fire station sites, especially geared to children and also incorporate that approach into outreach strategies.
- Encourage city administrators to explore, identify, and support funding sources to minimize environmental impacts of fire stations.
- Good to see some directives to help reach goals for projects and address key concepts such as thermal comfort and natural ventilation, as LEED goals sometimes seem too prescribed. Engage in more conversation with design teams to see what might be workable.
- Encourage sharing of ideas that may not be immediately realized and look at strategies that can be implemented over time.

**Proponent's Presentation**

DPD's Green Building Team has been working with FFD since last year on the fire station levy program. Starting next month, Kathleen Petrie will take over for Lynne Barker in coordinating green building initiatives in city capital projects including the fire levy program.

Nationwide, we are seeing a movement to move Silver to Gold certification in both public and private developments. Over 620 cities have signed Mayor's climate control plan since buildings in major cities are biggest producers of CO<sub>2</sub>. Many mayors have indicated funding through federal lot grants as the primary strategy to fight CO<sub>2</sub>. An initial advanced training focused on lessons to be learned on a national level for green fire facilities based on case studies for LEED-New Construction. More than 85 staff members and consulting



Report on Sustainable Fire Station Design

teams showed up. City Green Building also hosted a training session on integrated design process to control costs and offsetting costs of more conventional processes. CityGreen Team has also partnered with Fleets and Facilities to convene an eco-charette, in which attendees identified guiding principles for fire station projects. These were translated into six key concepts and developed into technical briefs. Three briefs have been finished to date: topics include rainwater (which will be turned into a client assistant memo), safe and healthy environment, and energy optimized buildings (including hybrid natural HVAC conditioning scheme and natural lighting). CityGreen Building will also publish case studies of LEED certified projects. Seven are in progress so far, including fire stations. The back page indicates resources for sustainable building design and construction.

CityGreen Building would like to achieve low to no cost sustainable strategies for projects that cannot pursue LEED certification (including buildings greater than 5,000 square feet). Fire Stations have been a challenge due to funding constraints. So far, about half have had eco-charettes and the rest will be held in the next two to three months with the goal to address all areas (i.e. water harvesting, no/low cost strategies). FFD has also been communicating with Department of Finance on topics such as increased energy efficiency and carbon neutral strategies in buildings because emerging technologies are more expensive.

### **Key Commissioner Questions and Comments**

- How can the Commission help enforce sustainable design?
  - The Commission can ask for the LEED checklist.
  - Project teams should review checklist from eco-charettes.
  - Levy for financial investments from various stakeholders, perhaps by signing a letter to support for secured funding.
- How can the Commission encourage sustainable design and at what scale? Are there ways to have groups report after schematic design on their integrated approach, such as the Mayor's climate control protocol and LEED goals?
  - The goal is to encourage sustainable designs that are carbon neutral with efficient energy performance (mayor's climate control protocol).
  - The Commission can ask for the LEED checklist.
- Schedule of technical briefs and schematic design is confusing.
- Commission could be part of group discussion next time.
- Key concepts: highlight public education, especially for children.
- In regards to mechanical systems and HVAC systems, why is not possible to have ceiling windows?
  - Fire fighters have to wear special clothing, and thermal comfort is important; with natural ventilation it is difficult for the building to reach the temperature needed for firefighters to cool down after a call. The existing fire stations have natural ventilation, which does not perform well.
  - Natural lighting requires lots of windows to be open, which poses a security issue. When firefighters have to leave suddenly for a call, there is no time to shut the windows (maybe in apparatus bays).

- Timeframe for firefighters to come back and cool down is also limited in natural ventilation systems.
- Look at the economies of scale in mechanical systems.
  - FFD is looking at Mitsubishi City Multisystem (used in Japan and Europe) which uses high pressure refrigerant, but the bidding process is challenging.



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<b>2 August 2007</b>	<b>Project:</b>	<b>Mercer Corridor Replacement Project</b>
	<b>Phase:</b>	<i>Design Development</i>
	<b>Previous Reviews:</b>	Feb 15, 2007; November 02, 2006; 3 previous since 2004,
	<b>Presenters:</b>	Angela Brady, Seattle Department of Transportation Sarah Durkee, LMN Architects Mark Hinshaw, LMN Architects Mike Kimelberg, LMN Architects Dean Koonts, HBB Landscape Architects Roger Mason, CH2M Hill
	<b>Attendees:</b>	Scott MacColl, City Council Staff Stephanie Pure, Office of Peter Steinbrueck Jeff Bertram, Seattle Department of Transportation Ginny Zimmerman, Seattle Department of Transportation Patricia Hopper, Arts and Cultural Affairs Emelie East, Mayor's Office
Time: 2.0 hours		(SDC Ref. #169/RS0606)

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**Action:**

The Commission thanks SDOT and its project team for their collaborative efforts and thoughtful presentation and recommend that they come back to the Commission for approval of design development with the following comments to consider:

- Recommend the team to bring something in plan view that shows the extent of the improvements in their entirety rather than just Mercer and Valley streets.
- Encourage the team to communicate what themes are driving the design decisions for both streets.
- Also encourage this project to be viewed as a district wide improvement with cohesiveness rather than the sum of parts or individual streets.
- Would like more engineering information to help explain some of the design decisions.
- Appreciate how Valley responds to the park's design and that incorporation.
- See the WSDOT ramp and right of way on Mercer at Fairview as the real gateway to this area, so we encourage additional attention there.
- Recognize that signage is an important part of the project, so we encourage the team to bring those ideas to the next presentation
- Sidewalk widths should be clearly defined
- Traffic signal poles and other significant poles for such things as trolley lines affect design decisions and should be incorporated into the design development plans.
- Incorporate the newly selected artist in the design process
- Get briefing from the team prior to next meeting and the Commission would like to see handouts next time.

## Proponent's Presentation

### *Mercer Corridor Design Update for 60%*

The design team is currently at the 60% design development stage of the design process. The 90% stage will be complete January 2008 and 100% stage will be complete in May 2008. ROW acquisition is the driving factor in terms of speed of progression, which should be done at the end of 2008. Construction should be complete in mid-2011, and this all depends on funding. The team has submitted a RTID



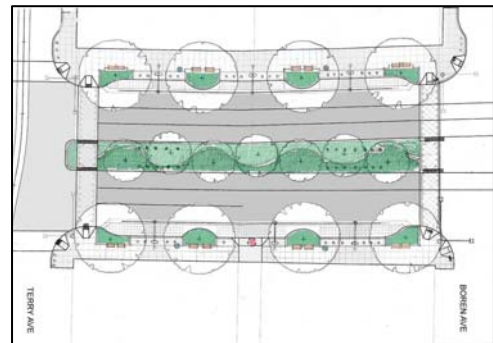
Sketch of Future Mercer Corridor Design

application in which all the funding will be paid for if it passes. There are other funding sources available for construction if that does not come through, such as WSDOT construction mitigation funds for the Viaduct project.

There will be a public process in the form of a community meeting sometime this fall after the 60% design is reviewed and completed. The design team will present this urban design PowerPoint to SLUFAN and other stakeholders after Commission gives recommendations. The team has recently submitted an ordinance to Council for the ROW acquisition process with a briefing scheduled at Transportation Committee for Aug 14 and then a full Council vote. As part of process, the team called and wrote letters to every property owner to notify them of the Council meeting.

The team has met every week for the past eight months and believes all portions of the plan presented today can be implemented. The vision includes seven urban design concepts, which include the central core, gateway into the neighborhood, green fingers and big trees (to calm traffic and visually narrow the street), a wet median (pause points associated with natural systems interpreting ), pervious pavement, night lighting, and animated edges (to blur boundary between public and private realms).

There are three street components for the Mercer Street Boulevard concept including the “green fingers” curb alignment (i.e. horizontal elements spaced for urban thoroughfare, paving materials for district cohesiveness), custom “one-off” light poles (lighting, signage, tactile objects to establish cues for new developments), and a “wet” median.



Site Plan showing “Green Fingers” on Mercer

The section view showing streets between Terry and Mercer displays vertical expressions of all components working together. Special consideration

was given to the placement of urban design and streetscape features in relation to underground utilities. The team set a very prescriptive and predictable system for all of those things to coexist in an integrated manner.

The plan view shows that curb alignments and vertical elements can create order for a two-way Mercer. The “green fingers,” spaced approximately 70 feet on center, shows the spirit of working together with CH2M Hill and appropriate city agencies. Instead of lighting bollards, LED pavers will be used instead. Lighting bollards, LED pavers in amenities zone, soft-cut concrete in lining base will be located half the distance between the green fingers. All of these elements will create signature lighting for Mercer corridor.

The materials palette for Mercer includes special paving for district identity. The paving demarcates different zones for pedestrians and vehicles in subtle ways. Soft cut concrete (3/25”) to give the effect of individual zones and amenity zones over structural soil are two-foot squares. The parking phase has one-foot square patterns. Also, LED lights will be set into pavers in sidewalks. Street furnishings include wooden benches over a steel frame. The design of the pedestrian crosswalks focuses on visibility and not just aesthetics. There will be thermal plastic cast into concrete as ladder stripes, which adds a stronger sense of permanence. There will be 16-inch striping parallel and bars perpendicular to roads with thermal plastic inlaid into the pavement itself. The inlay used will be the whitest possible shade.

Between 60% and 90% design phase, the signal sign bridge will be determined. The city’s review will direct the project team in how to accommodate necessary signage for Fairview and Mercer, including traffic signals, areas between intersections, and the southeast corner of Fairview. The span bridge between the median in the I-5 on-ramp to the median of Mercer at Fairview presents possible opportunity for public art and gateway entry sign. There may also be items elsewhere on the ground level. In addition, custom lighting poles will be integrated with traffic lights. Street name signs are prescriptive and therefore need to be integrated in creative ways. Signage and wayfinding are in progress now. There was a meeting last week to begin charting where all necessary changes should take place. Now is the best time to narrow locations to find other opportunities for art.

#### *Valley Street Design Update for 60%*

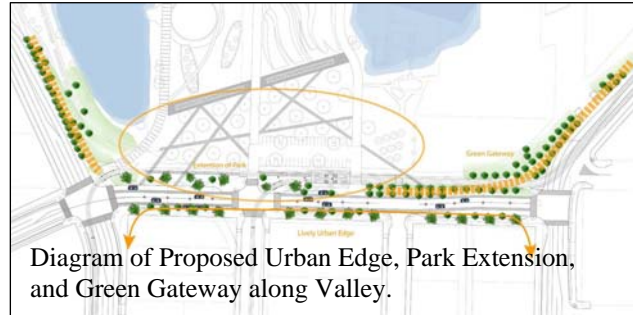
Valley Street will include curbside parking lane trees. There will be movement of water underground, which was thought to be conducive to a porous pavement until it was discovered that diverting water into lake is more polluting. Also, a stepped curb was envisioned initially to create more plaza space. This turned out to be a safety issue, especially for seniors. Now there will be a 12-inch curb top and 4-inch rise. There will be catenary streetlights with a single hanging fixture over the center of the road. This may pose a maintenance challenge due to the fact it is a nonstandard fixture.



Sketch of Future Design for Valley Street

There will be integration of the South Lake Union Park and streetcar. The park street edge of Valley will be framed in green as an extension of the park. The street endings along Fairview and Westlake will present a green gateway, which progresses through the park with existing trees that will be preserved. Also, there will be a bike lane on the north side. There will also be a new concept: rain gardens will line Westlake just north of Valley and there will be a strong line of street trees. A similar pattern will be pursued for both sidewalks using the same geometry and planting pavers throughout.

Valley Street will likely become a lively urban edge along the south, which may include retail shops and residential units. It will become a place where retail services spill out into street and sidewalk due to the very active nature of urban edges. Therefore, it is important to use a little bit more standard technique with an extended geometry that uses the same materials and planting palette. A challenge to the trees is that a water main has been discovered underneath some of the proposed trees in the northeast, so those may need to be relocated. The northwest corner will feature plaza spaces for sidewalk and is an important access point into the park. Terry Avenue will have special pavement, since it is the major entry road into the park. Tree pits that are 12 feet long and six feet wide will use the same palette as the park. Also, in order to create movement from the sidewalk into the park, crushed shells will be used as the surface of the park and also for the “woonerf” tree pits.



The materials palette includes a one by one inch pervious system in the amenity zone for soil trenches. The sidewalk and parking lanes will be treated with standard saw-cut concrete. Black crosswalks made of lithocrete and colored bike lanes are being considered. There are also wooden bench tops. The trash receptacles and bike racks are the same as the park palette.

The vignette of a “woonerf” street is envisioned for Valley with a four inch curb that steps down to the trees, in which two cars can fit between two trees. There are six, six, and eleven parking spaces along the street. There will be a catenary lighting system, which include cable lights (a pendant configuration) and will hang off extended wires. However, Lumex fixtures not made for catenary design.

Further work that needs to be done in order to progress from 60 percent to 90 percent includes: examining catenary street lights, curb ramps and tactile warning strips, further collaboration and integration with South Lake Union Park for plaza area, reassessing tree arrangement due to water main, entrance to park from Terry Avenue which just changed and the team did not want it to be a car entrance, but rather have the sidewalk extend all the way across, and signage and wayfinding.

## Public Comment

- Are there copies of presentation?
  - No, but we can circulate a digital version of the PowerPoint show. The team plans on making this same presentation to interest groups.
- Why are the trees treated differently on Valley Street compared to the ones on Mercer Boulevard?
  - Street cleaning may need to be more relaxed along Mercer and Valley and the team will try to get a more relaxed maintenance in those areas.
  - An elaborate study on turning radius tracking showed that only a fairly small triangular area does not get cleaned by trucks but property owners have already agreed to clean those areas.
- Seashells as ground materials may be washed off and may become hazardous.
  - No, because the crushed shells are bound by polymer.
- Where are the identity cues coming from (i.e. the neighborhood's gritty industrial history, Century 21 nature of Seattle center, or the park's seafarer past)? This includes the light poles to planting palette to color scheme?
  - Generally, concepts relate to function as a sense of arrival and movement according to scale (lights, green fingers create new identity as grand urban boulevard; small features create more authenticity to reflect neighborhood's past (lights and street poles—design emphasis on industrial past). Mercer is the main corridor that connects the neighborhood and other areas (i.e. Seattle Center).
  - Valley Street will go back to being a local street with influence from its specific locale. This is reflected by the green spaces, slower pace, and its connection to the park.
  - Mercer Boulevard is a regional urban boulevard with a bigger role and less localized influences, not to exclude local drivers from industries. The design concept responds to function as the main two-way corridor that connects the neighborhood and serves as an important gateway to South Lake Union since all of the traffic volume will be on this street.
- Is there an arts program update?
  - The panel selected an artist this past Monday and there will be an official announcement soon.
- 60 percent usually means that the project team is in the construction document phase. However, there remains a discrepancy between urban design concepts and materials, etc. and seeing that resolved in drawings forms. Is there a drawing to include Terry, Boren, Fairview, as well as improvements in Valley and Mercer? For example, how far will the plan go up Eastlake and Westlake (i.e. truck turning movement)? Please confirm your progress so the Commission can confirm planning progress. For example, did ROW improvements occur between connecting streets?
  - There are some improvements between landscaping urban design. The Fairview Avenue corridor is part of improvements, as well as to the west along Dexter Avenue. The northern terminus of improvements stretch from 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Westlake to Aloha. There are graphics that show how elements are all integrated. The focus of improvements is on the core.

Roadway improvements will be concentrated on Mercer and Valley. Due to the “green fingers,” free parking for businesses will be taken away.

### **Key Commissioner Questions and Comments**

- There does not seem to be enough global view for this project.
- There are different designs for north-south streets. Also, the design for Valley Street is more realistic than Mercer.
- The final materials, not just possible options, are needed for the Commission to give better design direction.
- Fundamental urban design concepts need to be addressed, such as cohesiveness of street trees on Valley and Mercer.
- Signage is important and should be examined further because it sets the whole tone for the neighborhood.
- Hopefully, the project team can present a more complete package on September 6<sup>th</sup> for review and recommendation that includes engineering details, as needed. The engineers should lead the presentation next time and cover all areas within project scope.
- WSDOT is a partner in this process and the project team should collaborate on ways to make Mercer off-ramps real gateways in order to know how much greenery to purchase.
- One design recommendation is to not have different designs for different streets. Is there a reason that Valley has “woonerf” trees vs. green fingers on Mercer?
- The project team should do some further refinement and editing in order to support a district view. South Lake Union is an emerging neighborhood, and therefore this team is on the leading edge for designing an iconic neighborhood.
- Please show more plan views next time.
- Traffic signals are very important, especially ones at large intersections and need to be part of presentation next time.
- How are buses being treated in this district? Trolley wires currently run along many streets and these need to be incorporated along with proposed new vertical elements.

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**2 August 2007 Project: Commission Business**

**Action Items**

- A. Timesheets
- B. Minutes from 07/19/07/Chang

**Discussion Items**

- C. Major Project Updates/Cubell and Romano
- D. Outside Commitment Updates/All
- E. 2007 Design Awards and Site Tours/Kiest

**Announcements**

- F. Urban Sustainability Forum: Rep. Earl Blumenauer, 8/9 5:30pm
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<b>2 August 2007</b>	<b>Project:</b>	<b>CityDesign Report - Part 1: The Blue Ring</b>
	<b>Phase:</b>	Design Update
	<b>Last Reviews:</b>	August 21, 2003; several previous
	<b>Presenters:</b>	Guillermo Romano, Department of Planning and Development Robert Scully, Department of Planning and Development Jessica Majors, Department of Planning and Development
	<b>Attendees:</b>	None

Time: 1.0 hours

(SDC Ref. #220)

#### **Action:**

The Commission thanks the design team for their presentation of the Blue Ring Open Space Strategy, and related initiatives for the Central Waterfront, Westlake Avenue improvements, South Downtown, and Madison Street Bridge and has the following comments:

- Thank you for taking the time to present a wide variety of concept updates that CityDesign has been working on.
- The Commission is concerned it is not seeing as many projects by CityDesign, especially significant ones that are affecting the public realm.
- The Commission reviews ROW projects, even privately funded ones.
- Encourage CityDesign to balance public and private interests and advocate the Commission's mandate and role, too.
- In regards to Westlake, the Commission would like to help advocate with CityDesign for private oversight of open spaces along this corridor and other locations within center city as an alternative type of open space for public use.
- The Commission encourages CityDesign to look for funding for some catalyst projects, such as Little Saigon, South Downtown, outside traditional ways.
- Encourage CityDesign to interface with neighborhood planning that has been done and is now being re-evaluated as a major new initiative in the City.
- Please come more often because it is exciting to see CityDesign's work; Commission wants play partnership and advocacy role.

#### **Proponent's Presentation**

##### *Blue Ring Strategy*

The Center City is the cultural and economic center of Puget Sound and the densest area with Elliott Bay to the west and Lake Union to the north. Ten neighborhoods make up this area. Well-established neighborhoods include Chinatown/International District, Pioneer Square, Pike/Pine, and Belltown. Emerging neighborhoods include Denny Triangle and South Lake Union. The Olmsted Brothers envisioned a connected system of boulevards and parks mainly in outer neighborhoods of Seattle. The strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is a 100-year vision for a connected system of open spaces in the Center City.



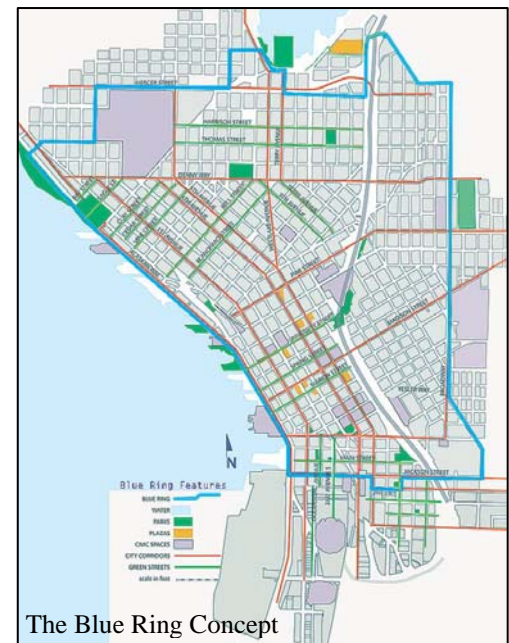
Defining the principles of creating a blue ring are the following: embracing imagination, capitalizing on the opportunities existing in the public realm, creating an awareness of the relationship between the natural and built environment, shifting the paradigm towards using public ROWs to achieve open space (not just parks), utilizing water in placemaking and open space making; understanding that the system will evolve over time, and building it incrementally over next century.

The Blue Ring connects the Center City neighborhoods, links major civic amenities, bridges gaps in the urban fabric, utilizes a variety of water features. The Blue Ring is also a network of connections, such as city corridors, Center City connectors, and green streets (local, quieter, street parks, areas with residential developments). Development concepts and catalyst projects will help to implement this idea.

Urban watersheds in the Center City include three watersheds and promote a sustainable infrastructure with integrated planning. This concept has been further developed by the UW's Open Space 2100 project.

Next steps include developing a public realm plan, as part of the Center City strategy, to include subarea plans and CIP projects. The extended area towards the east, in anticipation of SoundTransit's proposed streetcar line, is an example of how we might piggyback on capital improvement projects. Catalyst projects and sub-area plans may materialize in the form of capital improvement projects. Sustainable infrastructure includes promotion of open space as part of a larger system (Steve Moddenmeyer will come in soon).

Waterfront planning, in context of Blue Ring, focused on east-west connections and assumed that the Viaduct remains. The Nisqually Earthquake changed plans for waterfront pedestrian connections and opened up the possibility of a waterfront without a viaduct. The Waterfront Concept Plan also includes a Rainwater Recycling concept that incorporates green roofs and infrastructure for recycling water.

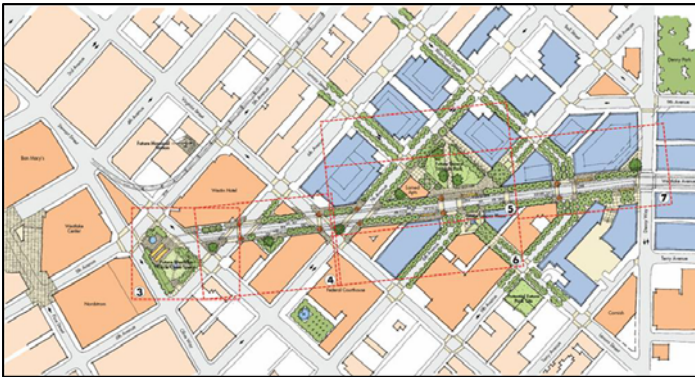


### *Westlake Avenue*

Westlake Avenue in Denny Triangle will likely face intense development in the future. Therefore, CityDesign would like to create a neighborhood "heart" for Denny Triangle as well as improve connections between downtown and South Lake Union. This includes creating opportunities for public open space and having multiple uses for the ROW.

The design concept for Westlake Avenue includes focusing on a Denny Triangle Plaza located on private property and surrounded by new development. Also, Lenora Plaza may

become a reality for Cornish College to have a campus parkway ending in a plaza. The Westlake Avenue Design Concept shows Westlake transit hub public space concepts and Westlake sustainable infrastructure. Planning for the Westlake Transit Hub is currently being scoped by SDOT. CityDesign would like to create space for transit users and coordinate transportation planning and urban design. The concept diagram shows a sense of connection along the Westlake corridor that includes the loading and unloading area fronting Medical-Dental Building, two open spaces around the streetcar terminus and fronting the Westin Hotel, and Monorail tracks which have already been laid. The Westlake Sustainable Infrastructure includes umbrella shaped poles for irrigating street flora and trees. (Design Commissioner's comments: Denny and Westlake now looks like an entrance to someone's private property. Hopefully, CityDesign can guide development of Lenora Plaza and other spaces so that they are amenities that invite public use.) . There are 12 acres owned by Clise Properties that are up for sale. It is not certain how these properties will be developed in the future but CityDesign would still like to pursue the possibility for an open space along Westlake Avenue even if it remains under private ownership.



Westlake Avenue Design Concept



Diagram of Lenora Plaza

### *South Downtown*

A street inventory has been conducted and found that Second Avenue and Washington Street showed potential for residential developments, pedestrian improvements and sustainable infrastructure. More specifically, a swale down 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, a wide ROW with potential to do water features, could possibly be developed. Also, CityDesign is hiring a consultant to help with urban design work for Little Saigon, including the intersection of 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Jackson Street. Funding sources for implementation may come from private developments nearby or City CIP projects for improvements around 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Jackson Street.

### *Madison Street Bridge*

Madison Street Bridge spans approximately 280 feet across Interstate 5, connecting the First Hill neighborhood to the Downtown Commercial Core. It is located near a number of important local amenities, such as the Downtown Public Library, the Washington State Convention Center and Freeway Park. But incomplete sidewalks and a hostile pedestrian

environment create significant barriers between these destinations. In addition, a great deal of redevelopment is occurring in the area surrounding the bridge. Three of the lots directly adjacent to the bridge are undergoing construction, including a new office building proposed for 7<sup>th</sup> & Madison. As density develops on First Hill, the Madison Street Bridge will become an increasingly important link to downtown Seattle. CityDesign has researched ways to enhance this bridge for pedestrians and reconnect the neighborhoods and amenities separated by I-5.

A successful example of pedestrian improvements on an interstate overpass is the 5<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge in Atlanta. Here, the Georgia Department of Transportation tripled the width of the previously existing bridge, providing landscaped open space on either side. This helped to reduce the noise and visual impact of the interstate. The bridge connects Georgia Tech University to Midtown and was completed last November. Another example is the Cap at Union Station in Columbus, Ohio. This development created 27,000 square feet of leasable retail space alongside an interstate overpass, turning air rights above the freeway into usable space, and creating a continuous streetfront connection between the Short North neighborhood and Downtown Columbus.

Potential redesign solutions for the Madison Street Bridge could include the elimination of parking, increase of sidewalk width, provision of spaces for vendors and events, addition of planters and sidewalk furniture, extension of sidewalk connections to Freeway Park, a landscaped buffer from the freeway, and cantilevered view decks. A landscaped or built cap, similar to those in Atlanta or Columbus, would provide additional open space and more permanent structures for vendors or retailers. While enhancing the pedestrian environment along Madison Street Bridge, these improvements could also create an attractive gateway to the city for vehicles traveling northbound on I-5.



### Key Commissioner Questions and Comments

- The Commission would like to have seen plans for Denny and Westlake, as well as Lenora Plaza. Improvements in ROWs need to be reviewed by Commission.
- Incorporate public participation during neighborhood plan.
- Commission would like to provide advocacy role for CityDesign.

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<b>2 August 2007</b>	<b>Project:</b>	<b>Fire Station 10</b>
	<b>Phase:</b>	Site Tour
	<b>Last Reviews:</b>	May 4, 2006; November 17, 2005; several previous
	<b>Presenters:</b>	Justine Kim, Shiels Obletz Johnsen David Kunselman, Fleets and Facilities Department Jon Mihkels, Weinstein AU
	<b>Attendees:</b>	Christina Faine, Fleets and Facilities Department Molly Douce, Seattle Fire Department Ed Weinstein, Weinstein AU Jess Harris, Department of Planning and Development Erin Goecke, Hoffman Construction

Time: 1.5 hours

(SDC Ref. #169/RS0609)

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The Commission and staff from FFD, SFD and DPD toured Fire Station 10 in the afternoon to see the construction progress. Weinstein AU, the project architects, narrated the informative tour. Hoffman Construction coordinated the tour logistics.