Seattle design Commission

Department of Planning and Development
700 5th Avenue, Suite 2000
PO Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

TEL 206-615-1349
FAX 206-233-7883

APPROVED
MINUTES OF THE MEETING

January 15, 2009

Convened 8:30 am
Adjourned 4:30 pm

Projects Reviewed

SR 519 Phase II Grade Separation
Rapid Ride Passenger Facilities
Conner Homes West Seattle Junction
Madison Valley Stormwater Improvements
Swale on Yale
Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement

Commissioners Present

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

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Valerie Kinast
Tom Iurino
Shannon Glass

Celebrating 40 Years 1968-2008

January 15, 2009

Project: **SR 519 Phase II Grade Separation**

Phase: Design Development
Last Reviewed: September 6, 2007, January 17, 2008
Presenters: Mike Johnson, SDOT
Ryan Lambert, HBB
Susan Ranf, Seattle Mariners
Juliet Vong, HBB
Attendees: Vaughn Bell, SDOT
Katherine Claeys, SDOT
David Sowers, WSDOT
Dave Stegeman, Kiewit Pacific
Gavin Wong, Aecom
Frank Young, Kiewit Pacific

Time: 1 hour (SR 169/RS0606)

ACTION

The Commission thanks the design team for their presentation of the 60%, design development phase and unanimously approves the design, with the following comments:

- **The Commission compliments the design team on addressing previous concerns and simplifying the design elements.**
- **Commissioners emphasize the importance of signage for this project, and look forward to seeing more development of this facet of the design. The commission suggests keeping the signage to a minimum while providing clarity in the wayfinding system, especially for pedestrians approaching along 3rd Avenue, and creating clear decision points for disabled users where pathways diverge to accessible and non-accessible routes.**
- **Eliminate the ramp on 4tha and South Royal Brougham Way as it end on a dead end.**
- **The commission does not see a clear need for the "shortcut" at the corner of 3rd and Royal Brougham, which could pose confusion to disabled users approaching the overpass. We suggest eliminating this element while addressing the clarification of routes**
- **Because of the complexity resulting from the varied ground planes of the design, it would be very helpful to see a model of the plazas. An update to the existing computer rendered flyover would be another way to illustrate the design with more clarity.**
- **There is concern about the fence detail on the east side; in this location it appears busy. Consider reducing or eliminating fencing where not needed; simplify pattern or style.**
- **The Commission has lingering concerns about the orientation of the dogleg stairway. While understanding that the stairway is directed away from the stadium façade for functional reasons, the Commission suggests considering other measures, such as removing the row of trees leading to the elevators, to create a more clear sightlines to the stair landing**
- **Commissioners remain concerned about the lack of continuity of the design elements/language of the east and west plazas, which are part of the same circulation path. The Commission recommends integration of both design intents.**
- **The Commission recommends revisiting the Elevator tower design, as this could be an important element that complements the stairs or as a wayfinding element.**
- **The Commission urges that paving patterns should work in harmony with not only the Safeco architectural elements, but also the angled stair landing, overpass columns and the south**

façade of Qwest stadium. We caution about linking the paving too strongly to one of these elements at the expense of others.

Commissioner Barash recused himself from this project review. Commissioner Sato was absent for this presentation.

Project Presentation

Project Background

There are three elements to the project:

- Intersection at First Avenue and South Atlantic Street, which is currently under construction
- Bridge structure
- A new grade separation connection across railway traffic along S. Royal Brougham Way

The pedestrian facility east of Fourth Avenue was an issue at the last meeting; the City has not been able to deal with it yet, and is not prepared to provide any context at this time.

Schematic Design

The focus area is the overpass over the tracks along S. Royal Brougham Way. There are two large plaza spaces here.

The Context –Sensitive Design Criteria report resulted from many stakeholders. Its big vision is a response to the surrounding environment. It sets specific criteria for urban design features.

Safeco Field/Mariners Context

The Mariners have addressed concerns with the design team. When the Safeco Field was constructed, the context was an industrial area, at the south end of Pioneer Square. The stadium was designed with these industrial features in mind. There are five desired elements for the plaza design:

- Safety
- Attractiveness
- Functional, either as a park or event facility
- Maintainable, easy and low cost
- Complementary to Safeco Field and the stadium district

East Plaza

The design vision for the East Plaza is to create a sense of movement. Design refinement goals included simplifying the circulation, programmable spaces, engaging the space, and allowing art opportunities. The 60 % proposed plan retains swales and considers water function. The central plaza refinements eliminate the stairway variability and include ADA routes. There is a seat wall in the plaza, and simple circulation of the ramp structure. The northwest native plantings provide a buffer along the

edges; there is a minimalist, low, low maintenance plant palette within the spaces, which contrast with the edges and enhance wayfinding.

The under bridge paving is textured, to add interest under the bridge structure. Up to 200 people can move through these spaces at once, so there are spaces for them to rest. The stairways are simplified, with possibilities for seat walls.

West Plaza

The design refinements in the West Plaza are rooted in the industrial context, and consider the boldness of the space, and the experience of people going to the ballpark. Referencing other stadiums' paving and plaza spaces, it was determined that when theses space is activated, there are so many people that the paving is inconspicuous. This suggests the architecture is dominant, and the paving should be simple.

The design refinements goals include responding to the classic industrial architecture, defining the space, and identifying the pedestrian and vehicle conflicts. The lighting is viewed a critical piece. Since the existing architecture provides a vertical element, the focus was placed on the ground plane, the space as one whole space, rather than a series of spaces. The entry space is highlighted, and there is a visual cue that there are cars and pedestrians in the same space. The column configuration is still being evaluated for visibility and CPTED considerations. The goal is to make it light, open, and visible. There are bollards to separate pedestrian and vehicle zones, while allowing for visibility and emergency access. The columns reflect the stadium architecture, and the paving patterns create high contrast. There is still flexibility for art; the simplification of the ground plane allows a canvas for future public art.

Schedule

The design is in a mid review stage. The design team will return to the Design Commission in February 19, 2009.

Commissioners' Comments and Questions

Can you define the route for pedestrians?

Third Avenue is a dead end at S. Royal Brougham Way. Many pedestrians walk along Third or Fourth Avenues. There is a bypass for ADA access. There are bicycle lanes on the roadway structure. Pedestrians will walk along S. Royal Brougham Way and down the ramp.

People will be trickling in before games, but waves of people will leave the game.

On the black and white perspective drawing, a fence is shown between Third and Fourth Avenues; what is going on there?

There is no sidewalk; it is a vertical face to move people up and over the ramp.

Is the ADA path slope graded 5% the whole way?

Yes, and one section will require an 8.3% graded slope.

What is the proposal for the ADA access from the south approach?

The proposal splits them off from the bioswale.

How much higher is the top of the bypass over the lower grade?

Above the rail track, 23.5 feet retained height is required; it is roughly at 28 to 30 feet, not including the railings.

This is such a complex form; a model would be great.

Are there lighting standards on the East Plaza?

It will be lit, but the specifics are yet to be determined.

Would like to see refinements in the signage at the next presentation, for vehicle, pedestrian, and ADA routes.

The goal is to make those as intuitive as possible.

The fence seems busy and overwhelming; perhaps some variety in widths or pattern would help.

Complement the design team on addressing the concerns from the last view, and presenting it efficiently.

Are the dark areas on the plan a paving pattern?

Yes.

Will the trees be in shade?

Not necessarily.

The existing trees on the south side are London plane trees, which have been there for ten years.

There could be more simplification in the directionality and wayfinding of the ramp and sidewalk on the East Plaza. The programmable space is a dead end.

The descending stairs in the West Plaza focuses on the elevator; suggest flaring out the stairs at the base.

There are issues identified since the ballpark was built; the main concern of the Mariners is the queuing distance from the stairs to the ticket booth.

Not sure the trees on the north side of Safeco Field help the wayfinding

The access point near the stairs in the West Plaza seems like a tight space; suggest enlarging or eliminating it.

In the East Plaza, it is intuitive to cut through the swale area.

In order to make the ramp structure work, the grade is being raised.

Appreciate the design team's willingness to simplify and use a bold gesture. Both plazas have improved since the last review.

Last time there was a concern about the consistency between the plazas, which still exists; there is a chamfered, linear geometry on one side, and curvilinear geometry on the other. Encourage more curvilinear geometry on the east side.

Have concerns about the paving alignments; suggest the design team thinks more holistically about unifying the paving pattern to reflect Quest Field, Safeco Field, and the stairs.

The physical design of the stair and elevator should be reviewed at 90 % design

The façade and base treatment will match the stadium façade, and the elevator structure is predominantly steel and glass, replicating the steel trusses and solid foundation of the stadium.

Would like to see the architect at the next review meeting.

January 15, 2009	**Project:**	**King County Metro Rapid Ride Passenger Facilities**
	Phase:	Design Development
	Last Reviewed:	August 7, 2008
	Presenters:	David Hewitt, Hewitt Architects Inc. Eugene Kucej, Hewitt Architects Inc.
	Attendees:	Tim Boesch, Wilbur Smith Associates Karen Rosenzweig, King County Metro Transit Paul Roybul, King County Metro Transit Michael Solheim, SDOT
Time: 1 hour		(SR121/RS02032)

ACTION

The Commission would like to thank the design team for their clear presentation of the Rapid Ride Passenger Shelters, and unanimously approves the design development phase, with the following comments:

- **The Commission recognizes the positive, elegant, sophisticated design for the shelters and notes that the design has advanced well since the last review.**
- **The Commissioners ask that the team explore the sizing of the purlins in relation to the other proposed elements. They seem somewhat understated.**
- **The sign pylon design works well in an open context, but may contribute to visual clutter and be too much of an obstruction in others. The Commission asks that the team explore variations on the fundamental pylon theme to enable installations to adapt to their settings. The Commission generally recommends the urban design principal of less-is-more in adding fixtures to the urban street environment. However, customization of the pylons would be a possibility here, perhaps with the help of an artist to add some site specificity or whimsy to this element.**
- **The Commission appreciates and supports the kit of parts approach to the shelters and accompanying elements, realizing that there are over 100 settings where the shelters will be located. Commissioners support consulting with business and property owners with storefronts in proximity to the RapidRide stops when considering how shelters can be adapted to exisiting awnings, store fronts, lean rails, etc.**
- **The design team is encouraged to continue to provide iconic consistency in the design by using strongly identifiable elements, as proposed. Be flexible in determining which parts are appropriate for each location.**

Project Presentation

Project Background and Context

Rapid Ride is a new service that will be offered by King County Metro, in the Bellevue/Redmond, West Seattle, Ballard, and Aurora corridors. The service will be operated in higher frequencies than the bus service, with greater reliability but at the same fare. The facilities along the corridors will replace existing bus stops, at about half mile spacings. Shelters and other passenger facilities will be replaced as well.

Project Examples

In Ballard and West Seattle, on California Ave, the shelter fits into the context.

There is a flat panel over the station sign in the back, with recessed lights to illuminate the area. On the front of the shelter, there is a general illuminated light. The design team is also working on ambient lighting, though birds are an issue. The goal is to provide ambient ceiling light in that will not create a nuisance.

Commissioners' Comments and Questions

Will the buses match the color of the shelters?

Yes; it is a general upgrade of the vehicles as well.

Do not understand the gutter.

To prevent rain dripping on waiting passengers, the considered idea breaks down the scale of roof. Water will flow down through one of the legs of the supports.

Is it steel or aluminum channel?

Steel.

Does the standard King County Metro red light conflict with RapidRide's red markers?

No.

The real time sign is a great addition; suggest not having it higher than necessary in order to read it comfortably

It needs to have a seven-foot clearance from the bottom of the sign.

A little bit worried about steel as material and the light-colored paint; it will rust if scratched.

After meeting with the maintenance staff, a solution rose that incorporates stainless steel crews on the back side of the major steel components, for demounting easily. There will be an entire removable strip from the columns for access. The gutters will be galvanized for ease of maintenance.

On the base, is there a jig to lie over the sidewalk and place mount brackets?

The full-sized shelters will have new footings; the medium-sized shelters will use existing footings. The unresolved issues are exact configurations, footing details, and illumination.

System wide question about integration of bike commuters: is there an aggressive strategy for bike lockers?

There will be where there is space available on the rights–of-way. The best provision is standard bicycle hoops. Bicycle racks will be used for overflow, in the event the bus bicycle racks are full. It is important to provide as many amenities as possible, but in many cases the right-of-way is the main constraint.

Complement overall design; it is very nice and elegant.

Concerned about tapered purlin on roof for water capture; perhaps create one on both the front and back.

Thrown off by the pylons; glad to here they are removable, for areas such as West Seattle where the streetscape is crowded and there may be a conflict with overhangs.

Hoping that they will be something familiar and an identifying element. It is a good point to have them site-specific, interchangeable, and more than one shape.

Commend the elegant and sophisticated street furniture that are very well thought out.

How many stops will be elaborated?

About 115.

It depends on the number of boardings at stops. Smaller standard stops will have a bench and marker; the stations will have the full complement. Intermediated ones, with 50-100 boardings per day will be smaller, scaled down versions. Trash receptacles will only be placed at sheltered stops.

The customization of the pylons is important. Even the shape of the red blade could add an element of whimsy.

Has there been any discussion with business owners about integrating the back of the shelters or benches into awnings? This would allow for duplication without sidewalk clutter.

That is an excellent point. Working on designs with property owners has not been started yet. A kit of parts contains freestanding benches and leaning rails that can be integrated into the face of buildings, and would be used as described.

The strength of this scheme is the "kit of parts" idea.

January 15, 2009

Project: **Conner Homes West Seattle Junction**

Phase: **Public benefit review of an** underground alley vacation
Last Reviewed: August 7, 2008
Presenters: Peter Greaves, Weber Thompson
Joseph Hines, Weber Thompson
Attendees: Beverly Barnett, SDOT
Michael Dorcy, DPD
Scott Evan, Thomas Rengstorf Associates
Nate French, RISD
Gabe Hanson, Weber Thompson
James Miller, Conner Homes
Tracy Record, West Seattle Blog
Tom Rengstorf, Thomas Rengstorf Associates

Time: 1.75 hours (170)

ACTION

The Commission thanks the design team for their presentation of the Conner Homes West Seattle Junction subterranean alley vacation. In a four to five vote the Commission voted not to approve the public benefit package of the project and asks that the following items be addressed:

The public realm impacted by or created by this project include 1) the public streets, 2) nodes where entries or transitions to other passages or spaces occur, 3) the through block passages, 4) the alley.

The public streets

- **The Commission would like the design team to focus more resources and energy on the public open space along the streets. It is more probable that the greatest pedestrian volumes will occur in the public right of way on Alaska and California streets than on the alley and through block passages.**
- **A balance must be achieved between the function of the garage entrance on 42nd Avenue SW and the pedestrian streetscape and safety. The entrance should be as narrow as permitted, the sidewalk should read as continuous and care should be taken to make the pedestrian experience on 42nd Avenue SW as pleasant as possible.**
- **The width of the sidewalks along the streets, especially in light of these being transit oriented streets in the hub of a lively neighborhood, should be appropriate to the volume of pedestrians and the capacity to support retail activities within the sidewalk. The project designers are encouraged to:**
    - **Examine successful streets in Seattle that provide for a lively street life, with retail activities extending into the sidewalk. Apply those characteristics and dimensions to this project.**
    - **Coordinate sidewalk/streetscape design with the Rapid Ride facilities being developed by King County Metro. These shelters, waiting areas and information signs should be considered as design influences to this project.**

Nodes

- **The Commissioners appreciate the idea of creating nodes and asks the designer to consider strengthening the nodes. The nodes should be legible as clear gateways or portals from one public area to another. Common wayfinding elements installed at each of the nodes will give clarity to the pedestrian ways as a comprehensive network.**

Midblock passages

- **The Commission is concerned about the efficacy of the midblock passages and clarity of wayfinding. It asks the designers to think about how the message is imparted that the passageways continue on to the next street and do not just end at the alley. Perhaps art and/or signage offer a solution.**
- **Please refine the solutions proposed along the midblock passages to create congruence of design of the site and the property that abuts it. Clarify the differing character of the east and west midblock passages and the themes that are proposed there.**
- **The Commissioners point out that there is much potential in the midblock passages because they are removed from the street. They encourage the team to refine the design with this in mind. Consider placing the furniture and other elements in a way that takes advantage of this otherness to create spaces instead of just encouraging people to move through.**

Alley

The fact that the project borders both sides of the alley for only a portion of the alley poses a unique design challenge. The design must both tie into the segment where functions, pedestrian amenities and other features can not be controlled by the project proponents, and rise to the potential for setting a positive precedent for later development. To this end, clarity of the wayfinding system is crucial.

- **Commissioners understand that in West Seattle many alleys serve an unusual function, including being host to business entrances and encouraging pedestrian activity. At the same time there is residual concern about finding a balance in what is a working alley and also a pedestrian environment.**

Project Presentation

Project Background and Context

The area is 2900 square feet, the alley between the parcel on the corner of SW Alaska Street and California Avenue SW, and SW Alaska Street and 42nd Avenue SW. The reason for the vacation is to minimize excavation depth for the parking garage. The ground level retail experience is optimized on both street fronts and the mid block connection, in keeping with the 1999 West Seattle plan. The vehicular and pedestrian access between the buildings will be maintained.

The residential level will be on top of the retail podium, stepped back to create an alley at mid block. As discussed at the last review, the Green Factor requirements are met on the east building, including all of the ground level and street front. On the west building, the requirements are exceeded.

The design refinements, based on the last review, focus on

- Increased sidewalk width on California Avenue SW and SW Alaska Street
- Eddies and nodes for opportunities to step out of pedestrian flow
- Site lines from the mid block pedestrian pass toward the loading dock of the east building
- Duplication of accessible ADA ramps between the alley and 42nd Avenue SW
- Marking the continuation of the pedestrian portion of the alley from the point of intersection from California Avenue SW and SW Alaska Street
- Continuity of the pedestrian experience at sidewalk and mid block connections
- Depth of residential entries on California Avenue SW

Increased Sidewalk Width

Because of the property depth, the residential portion is set back on SW Alaska Street and California Avenue SW. The sidewalk width is increased, and there are islands of permeable paving between the street trees. The building cannot be shifted to the south because the proposed residential portion is fifteen feet from the property line.

However, the east building has been shifted one-and-a-half feet to the south to increase the north end sidewalk width. Most of this building is moved back from the property line on 42nd Avenue SW to allow the extra sidewalk width.

Eddies and Nodes

On all of the retail frontages, the columns are set back one foot from the property lines. Storefront glazing is set back one foot, and the doors set back another two feet. This allows crenellated edge and allows opportunities to step away from the sidewalk flow. There are recessed corners, as hollows with eighteen foot height to the soffit. There is a similar node at the middle of the alley, and the node at the top and bottom of the alley connection from 42nd Avenue SW.

Loading Dock

The loading dock is shifted thirty feet to the north. There is storefront glazing for both building's amenity spaces (exercise room, club room, and leasing space) to further activate the pedestrian experience in the alley.

Duplicate Handicap Ramp

The duplicate handicap ramp has been eliminated, following conversations with Harbor Properties. The plan uses their ramp on the other side of the property line to accommodate ADA passage. Planting bed take up the slope differential, including planted trees and steps to the sidewalk level.

Pedestrian Access to SW Alaska Street

There is differentiation in the pavement patterns, extending from the crosswalk in the alley to SW Alaska Street. The paving concept is similar to a basket weave, without overpowering the City of Seattle standard paving. It is envisioned as series of "runners" – warm color runs east west, with exposed aggregate. A darkened concrete border runs from north to south to connect those pieces. A similar move has been used to create "shadows" of building lines. There is an existing tow-by-two paving grid. Together, these define the pedestrian realm. The goal was to do something more playful than City of Seattle standard paving, without standing out as an anomaly in the neighborhood.

Activation of Retail Connection

On the corner, where the alley abuts SW Alaska Street, the area is recessed six feet. There are additional areas of continuous storefront glazing and entries mid block on California Avenue SW. The storefront wraps around the 42nd Avenue SW corner. Seventy-seven feet of storefront glazing marks the amenities for the residential apartments.

Recess at residential entry on California Avenue SW

A portion of the retail is at the one story level, in order to knit into the existing retail on California Avenue SW.

Area Calculations

The overall area calculation results in a 2,900 square foot subterranean alley vacation, which adds 6,450 square feet of public benefit space.

The area of landscape on the south side of the mid block pedestrian connection adds 670 square feet. The relative area calculation of the feature paving totals 8,150 square feet. The series of paving works together to create a collage. There is also a drainable joint in the alley, such as a grass strip. There is a series of four-foot benches, bollards to mark corners and edges of the pedestrian path along the alley, bike racks, trash bins and ash urns. There are glass and steel overhead canopies, and a crank-out fabric awning. The storefront line is continuous on the sidewalk sides of the project, along California Avenue SW and 42nd Avenue SW.

Public Comments

Beverly Barnett, SDOT

This is clearly a thoughtful and responsive design. However, SDOT is concerned that there is a lot of work to make the mid block crossing and alley, since it is a working alley. It is problematic that the mid block crossing is a disjointed alley connection; from one block to another the pass-through is not visible. SDOT is looking for a more signature element or gateway project. There is concern about other users and developments along the block.

Michael Dorcy, DPD

From the design review process, this has to go back to the Board. There have been significant changes. DPD recognizes that this alley will remain busy and must retain alley functions. Code requires access from the alley. Access from 42nd Avenue SE will require a design review or departure. The board's willingness to grant that departure will depend on the corner building on California Avenue SW.

Commissioners' Comments and Questions

The presentation is incredibly thorough and clear, with great graphics.

Is alley two-way or one-way?

Two-way.

There could be a lot of traffic in the alley that could conflict with pedestrians?

There is a differentiated pedestrian path outside of the designated twenty-foot alley width.

Are you aware of the rapid transit concepts for California Avenue SW?

Not aware of it yet. While there has been discussion that SW Alaska Street would be corridor, it has not progressed beyond street trees.

The benches along California Avenue SW look like they run perpendicular to street; it is not clear who will use those. Is there a bus stop?

Trying to create room between the planters to move out of pedestrian flow, or step out of parked car.

It seems like there is too much going on there; every notch has a trashcan or bench, which too much furniture for such a busy street.

On the corner, there seems to be a conflict of scale, bulk, and height. Would like the board to comment on whether energy should be focused on outside corners, or interior walkways.

Encourage opening up the corner as much as possible, for people waiting to cross; also reconcile the basket weave concept. It is an important spot in relation to the street.

Wonder about the discontinuity in the alley; for instance, the distance on 42nd Avenue SW and the alley. Could be something of interest at that end, besides a sign. Afraid that paving alone will not make it clear.

Tried to do that with marker and bollards and paving differentiation.

How high are the adjacent buildings?

One-story retail bases are eighteen-nineteen feet; and there are six residential stories above that. The majority of the retail on California Avenue SW is one- or two-story, with height varying fifteen to thirty-five feet.

Appreciate the landscape, but wonder how vibrant it will be.

The strategy employed is a stronger landscape at the midblock; along the north-south connection, it is possible to take in the building more to allow more generous planting.

It is thirty percent wider than the standard alley width

An interesting and important façade is the residential amenity along the mid block cut; its design as a beacon and marker will be important

That hollow is below the podium, and is lit behind the green element. It is a balancing act between the pedestrians and creating an interesting environment.

Wonder if that cutout could signal that the corner is a turning point

There is a screening element there. The design team can look at how to make that ninety degree bend stronger.

Might look at the Museum of Modern Art in Stockholm.

The marker might be an architectural element, such as an awning, to understand something is happening there. The mid block connection is readable is site plan, but it is not yet clear from the pedestrian experience.

Are the locations of the public benefits serving the project, or the public realm? Given the fact that the public realm is more important on the right-of-way, it is inside out. The street sidewalk widths on those rights-of-ways are not commensurate with the arterials. The augmentation of the alley at the expense of the wider sidewalks on the public streets is the wrong choice. The public benefits are good, but misplaced.

Recommend a series of canopies that wrap around corner retail space. Would be nice to have secondary retail entries on retail sides.

There is a grade change there and the thirteen-foot minimum is rapidly approaching.

There is a tradition of alley life in West Seattle. Understand the concerns about wayfinding, but believe that the residents will understand what is going on. Look at these spaces as alternative eddies. Believe that variety of experience is a good thing, and is not necessarily detrimental to street life.

Like the connection from California Avenue SW. Recommend echoing that theme to create a sense that the path continues, with some kind of visual cues.

Would like to see the pass through as more space-like than street-like. Consider how the benches are aligned or how to include sculptural elements.

Want to encourage options, depending on what retail is there, rather than dictating one option. The same level of detail and energy goes into both the alley and California Avenue SW. Considering how the alley functions like Post Alley or Alley 24.

Perhaps the alley arcade is where the variety or counterbalance can come in.

At each end of the alley there is a portal, with skeletal remnants of that portal in the alley, and opportunities for planting vines.

The setbacks on SW Alaska Street and California Avenue SW are not a problem; do not see how the width can be increased

More emphasis has been placed on the bollards in order to provide access to the future park.

Think that the public will get the most benefit on California Avenue SW, SW Alaska Street, and 42nd Avenue SW.

There might be opportunities in the ramp to join other circulation routes. The ramp is long and narrow. Perhaps there could be a series of fewer steps, with landings or sitting spaces.

Wonder if the ramp could have more sophistication, such as carved spaces for seating.

One issue with that is meeting the Green Factor requirements.

One of the listed public benefits is exceeding standard landscape requirements.

That applies to the east building.

Recommends coordinating with the Rapid Ride program.

January 15, 2009 **Project:** **Commission Business**

Time: .5 hour

- **Timesheets**
- **Retreat review, agenda, and work plan**
- **Viaduct follow-up on graphics**
- **Approved minutes and actions procedures**
- **Commission calendar**

January 15, 2009

Project: **Madison Valley Stormwater Improvements**

Phase: Design Development
Last Reviewed: September 18, 2008; November 6, 2008
Presenters: Brent Middleswart, SPU
Peter Nelson, Karen Kiest Landscape Architects
Attendees: Nate French, RISD
Celia Kennedy, SPU
Ruri Yampolski, Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs

Time: .75 hour (169/RS0607)

ACTION

The Commission thanks the design team for their presentation of the Madison Valley Stormwater Improvements project, and unanimously approves the design development phase with the following comments:

- **Although the Commission appreciates the clear presentation, there is information that would have been helpful as well as expected at this stage of design development, such as specifics on the lighting, and plant material type (and a plant list), and how they are depicted (shape, leafiness—dense or lacy, for example) and height. This will be useful for public meetings and help clarify the design for the public as well as for us.**
- **Commissioners applaud the simple and easy to understand elements. The metaphor of the dry creek is clearly used.**
- **The Commission appreciates the idea of not installing traditional play equipment and instead providing possibilities for informal children's play, such as the boulders placed in sand.**
- **Please consider placing the boulders only on the southeast side of the path to strengthen the order of the design.**
- **Commissioners appreciate the move to make the open lawn area larger, and wrapping it around so that it receives more sun exposure. We appreciate how the lawn could be used in different ways, including as amphitheater seating, rolling down the hill, sledding, which this openness allows.**
- **The Commission asks the design team to make refinements to how the stream bed terminates at the cage end.**
- **There is some reserve among Commissioners regarding the squarish shape of the gabion overlook element and how the path and the overlook meets the gabions.**
- **Consider limiting the number of surface types used for the paths, while retaining opportunities for surprises or special moments that artists might contribute towards. We appreciate simplifying the stone to a single type, whether as boulders, cut or as gabions.**
- **Consider maintenance when selecting the plant materials.**

Project Presentation

Project Update

The larger project is planned in two phases: the expansion of the 30th Avenue and East John Street detention facility, which will undergo construction next summer; and the pipe conveyance to the Washington Park Arboretum. This is a critical area for flooding and sewage backups. There will be three meetings with the Design Commission this spring and summer for the pipe conveyance phase.

Design Update

The southwest corner of the site has been retained as an entry. A ramp leads to a walk that transverses the entire site as the main form of circulation. A secondary circulation follows the creek walk. The walk has been lowered to thirty inches in order to retain views. It is constructed of gabions and decking. The gabions allow water to flow through in a storm event. The central plaza is comprised of concrete with a special finish. The marsh will have plantings which signify a stream.

Granite is being considered as a common material throughout the site, in gravel, concrete, and boulders. The stone garden is an area that will allow for children's play, comprised of sand and boulders. The hillside features granite risers, possibly recycled granite curbs from SDOT. The plaza is comprised of concrete with a special finish, with seating provided by boulders. It is considered as the central gathering spot during good weather, with cut granite benches.

There are boulders along the dry streambed. The secondary walk has been widened to eight feet. It overlooks the lawn, and terminates in an overlook space.

The planting palette is mostly native trees, vine maples, and hemlocks along the edge to buffer the edge of the park from the neighbors. One continuous horizontal board cedar fence is envisioned for the edge.

One way to reveal the function of the site is thinking of the rolling lawn as "steps" of contours. One potential idea for the artist is to reveal that function. So far, the educational aspect of the design is not explicit, though there are signs explaining the function of the site.

Public Comments

Ruri Yampolski, Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs

A call for an artist has been issued, with a goal of selecting one by March 2009. The budget for the art is $170,000.

Commissioners' Comments and Questions

Can you clarify the surface materials?

Granite, concrete with oyster shell finishes, quarter inch gravel on the path along the creek, and gravel for the maintenance access.

Are there existing street trees?

The purple leaf plums are gone.

What tree species are being considered? For further reference, it is helpful to include a plant list.

Oregon ash, black birch, *Amelanchier alnifolia*, red maples, ornamental pears.

It seems that Amelanchiers may create a barrier in the low areas; a low-growing plant may be preferable to preserve a sense of openness.

The rectangle of the central overlook seems out of place, rather than tied into the forms of the rest of the project. It seems like an abrupt change from the gabion decking.

It is intended as a central counterpoint from the naturalized forms.

The gabion decking is very elegant, and the geometric form slams into it.

Encourage more, rather than less, continuity. Reserve special paving treatments for nodes.

The simplicity of the design is great, and its response to our comments.

Is the rockery on the east side a standard rockery, or gabions?

It is a low, standard rockery or granite curbing.

Will the benches be nice spots for sitting and lingering, rather than a narrow perch?

Like the change from the amorphous overlooks to the different form.

The intersection between the walkway and the form of the node needs some resolution.

Have there been any more public meetings?

No, but there is one scheduled January 28, 2009.

Consider lighting and CPTED concerns. Will maintenance be done by SPU?

Yes.

Complement incorporating the boulders instead of playground equipment. Might be good to place them on the southeast side. Question the shape of the open area on the south side; perhaps the ying-yang shape needs to change.

Might look at how the path emerges from that point, so that the shape makes sense in relation to both of the paths.

The dry creek bed starts abruptly on one end, and seems to die. Perhaps the planting could carry through that area, or the dry creek bed stone could be carried through the plaza.

Appreciate the open, rolling lawn, which could be used as an impromptu amphitheater.

The elements are there, in the right relationship to each other; our comments have to do with the relationships between materials, and how the paths meet the nodes.

Will be great to see what the artist might do; the simplicity of the design will allow those elements to come together.

January 15, 2009	**Project:**	**Swale on Yale**
	Phase:	Schematic Design
	Last Reviewed:	**November 2, 2006**
	Presenters:	Tracy Tacket, SPU
		Chris Woelfel, SPU
	Attendees:	Vaughn Bell, SDOT
		Rachel Ben-Shmuel, Vulcan Inc.
		Matt Emmet, KPFF
		Larry Flack, Runberg Architecture Group
		Nate French, RISD
		Paul Fuesel, KPG
		Masako Lo, SPU
		Brandon Morgan, Vulcan Inc.
		Brian Runberg, Runberg Architecture Group
Time: 1 hour		(169)

ACTION

The Commission thanks SPU for their energetic and positive presentation of the Swale on Yale, and unanimously approves the concept design direction, with the following comments:

- **The Commission appreciates the City's continued effort to tackle such large-scale projects to enhance our local resources, such as Lake Union.**
- **Commissioners recognize that this regional water quality facility will have a strong visual impact on the city and community.**
- **They applaud the fact that the partnership was formed and pursued with the abutting property owners, Vulcan.**
- **The Commission is glad to see SPU considering using low impact development techniques and facility design that is more adapted to an urban environment.**
- **Encourage designers to find a reasonable approach to safety and not over respond when making decisions about handrails and street furnishings. "Be safe aware but not safe driven."**
- **Consider the potential for story telling about the swales, including during the proposed phased construction, for both the greater public and the community. Be creative in how the story is expressed, avoiding standard storyboards and perhaps drawing the project artist into the undertaking. The story of this site holds the potential of having a catalytic effect on other low impact developments.**
- **The Commission sees the bridges over the swales as more than pedestrian crossings but also as opportunities to gather and educate.**
- **Commissioners ask the team to please not sacrifice all street furnishings in the design of the right-of-way. They encourage them to consider a toolkit of site furnishings that can facilitate variety and also continuity.**
- **Encourage the participation of the project artist early on and comprehensively.**

Project Presentation

Project Agenda

The project area will treat runoff from Capitol Hill. Currently, the drainage in South Lake Union goes to a sewage treatment plan. SPU wants its water quality investments to have a large impact. There is a pipe running through

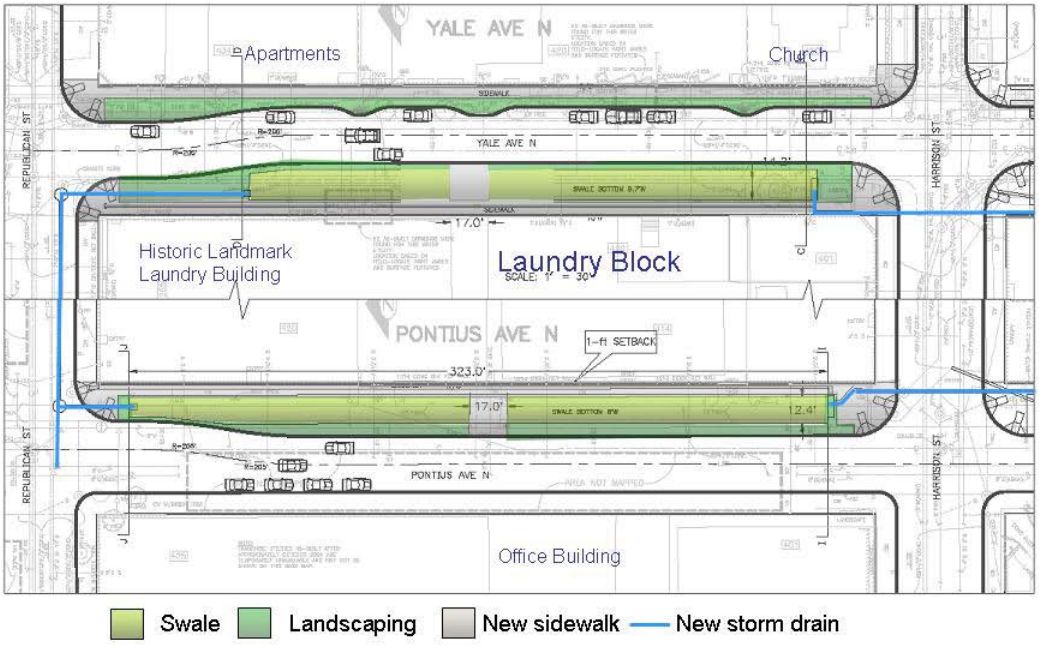
the project area. With natural drainage systems, the location and topography is important. The partnership with Vulcan has allowed the project to be built in a different way.

The project goals include:

- Treat the equivalent of 150 acres of Capitol Hill
- Remove two-and-a-half dump trucks of sediment and pollution from reaching Lake Union each year
- Provide cost effective water quality treatment
- Create more green space and a pedestrian-friendly streetscape

The neighborhood is bounded by I-5, John Street, and Republican Street. A neighborhood landmark is the REI flagship store. The context includes the Cascade Park and P-Patch. One side of the street is lined in warehouses, and the swale rolls into the Blume-Yale woonerf project.

Swale on Yale: North Block 5/2/07



Swale Function

Runoff from Capitol Hill is diverted into a pre-treatment unit that filters out trash. The swale cross-section features the sidewalk and handrail. The swale is approximately ten to thirteen feet wide, sunken one-to-two feet, filled with amended soil, and planted.

Because of the tight space of the urban areas, the swale might be constructed of tight-edged vertical walls, like examples in Portland, Oregon and Sweden.

The project is being developed with support from Vulcan, which is sharing right-of-way improvement costs. SDOT is contributing to the roadway, parking, planting areas and sidewalks design development.

Project Context and Design

The project will be phased. The first phase, a pipe, is planned for construction this summer. (Note: Recently, SPU decided to postpone construction of this phase until 2010.) The swales are constructed as one of the final steps of

Vulcan's redevelopment. The right-of-way improvements will occur at the tail end of construction. There have been negotiations with Vulcan to ensure the swales will be built at the right time.

Public Comments

Brandon Morgan, Vulcan

Block 10 will have a residential feel. The retail is aggregated around the east-west streets, such as Harrison Street or Thomas Street. There is an opportunity for a small retail space facing the park on Blocks 10 and 11. Vulcan would like to have a stronger retail presence on the corners and side streets, and allow the residential on the longer axes. Perhaps there should be more retail presence on the Alley 24 and REI block. There is some concern about loss of parking, but with smaller scale retail, it should be fine. Underground parking should compensate the loss of surface parking.

The project team has a similar mindset about the design having interpretive signage and public artwork as the Commission.

Rachel Ben-Shmuel, Vulcan Inc.

It is a significant element in the cascade neighborhood. It is simple, but also an experiment in such a tight urban area. Vulcan definitely wants people to understand what is going on.

Commissioners' Comments and Questions

Is the swale is reconstituted every five years?

There are checkpoints along the swale. There is annual maintenance at key points of buildup. The swales may undergo major maintenance every 20 years or so, at which time vegetation and soil would be removed, and then replanted.

Will water elements be incorporated into the streetscape?

That is being explored, also as artistic elements.

How is mid-block access being dealt with?

In many developments in South Lake Union, there are mid-block crossings. There are bridges, which make it look more interesting as well.

In a retail district, street parking and wide sidewalks are necessary. There are constrained sidewalk dimensions and loss of parking. Will the ground floor retail be compromised?

Does the design count on foot traffic retail, or will the majority come from outside the neighborhood?

It is unknown whether or not the neighborhood wants to be a retail location. The neighborhood is not interested in another larger retailer like REI; they prefer smaller-scale neighborhood retail. The sidewalk widths will be six to eight feet wide, which corresponds to many sidewalks in the neighborhood.

Are there driveway curb cuts across the swale?

No. The driveways are located on east-west streets.

At the cross streets, the pipe continues underneath the street?

Yes.

What is the display of the project to the public?

That is starting to be explored. There will be signage, and will be worked on in the next few months.

Are street trees lost on the swale side?

Currently, there are no existing street trees to be lost. Latest designs show that existing street trees on the other side of the street will be untouched. Trees will not be planted on the swale side because they will not grow well in very wet soil, and the roots would be confined by the swale lining.

The mid-block bridges are crucial to the success of the project. They should be opportunities for gathering spots, as places, and not just crossings.

The story is so rich; a lot of signage and words can be too much. Images and artists interpretations can provide a richer way of doing that.

Designs from different cities have been referenced to reinforce that point.

The bridges may be art opportunities.

It would be exciting for the public to witness the construction process, such as a webcam, to understand it is part of an exciting project, rather than another construction inconvenience.

There could be online information from both Vulcan and SPU websites

What other cities were referenced for examples?

Portland, Oregon has some really exciting swales, as well as Copenhagen, Denmark. In the Portland swales, the clean swale edge is notable.

A kit of parts for curbs, benches, handrails, etc. might start a vocabulary.

Are there any curb cuts on the sidewalks? Only the water coming from the pipes will be treated?

No, it is designed to treat water flowing from Capitol Hill.

All sorts of green aspects will be considered.

Concerned about the handrails; it is important to maintain safety, without feeling constrained.

SPU is very concerned about making the space feel too small and is open to ideas besides handrails.

Will SDOT representatives be at the charrette? Next time it would be helpful to have a representative from SDOT.

January 15, 2009

Project: **Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement**

Phase: Briefing
Last Reviewed: November 20, 2003, June 17, 2004, January 6, 2005, April 7, 2005, May 5, 2005, June 2, 2005, September 15, 2005, November 2, 2006, June 15, 2006, April 19, 2007; August 21, 2008
Presenters: Steve Pearce, SDOT
Mike Rigsby, WSDOT
Attendees: Vaughn Bell, SDOT
Nate French, RISD

Time: 1 hour (228)

SUMMARY

The Commission thanks the SDOT and WSDOT teams for their briefing on the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement project, and has with the following comments:

- **Immediate concerns that the Design Commission has are with regards to the portals, vent structures, and waterfront access. Attention should be given to these aspects of the project so that the urban experience is enriched and not compromised.**
- **The synergy that was created in the design of the South End Viaduct project is exemplary and offers insights for the design approach that could be taken with the central waterfront segment of the viaduct.**
- **Commissioners ask that the project team not neglect to look broadly for solutions when replacing the waterfront seawall. Pay attention to coordinating the open space and street design with the seawall design. Be sure that the interface between the water and the built environment is dealt with sensitively. The Commission further recommends incorporating strategies like those used when developing the Olympic Sculpture Park, including the idea of restoring beach areas in places.**
- **The Commission is appreciative that the past year of viaduct discussion has lead to good ideas for I-5, and hopes that these ideas will be drawn upon in the future.**
- **Commissioners encourage the project team to continue considering the implications of the many transit improvement projects that are planned in the city and region on the viaduct.**
- **Please consider the larger urban design and other design implications overall to the area when looking at the specifics of the project. The Commission is available for consultation, to conduct workshops to help with a broader visioning approach, and with the specific details of the entire project that will have a huge impact on the city and region. Please involve us in subsequent phases of design.**

Presentation

The agreed upon alternative is the bored hybrid tunnel. The function of SR 99 is being replaced with the tunnel. There was a great concern for the future of the waterfront. The bored tunnel allows for less traffic on the waterfront. There is also concern about maintaining the integrity of the transit system in moving people and goods. With the surface alternatives, there was degradation in travel time. Another decision factor was how to build it without greatly disrupting the city. The bored tunnel provides a solution to build without disrupting the waterfront, and thereby minimizes the significant impacts of the other options. The fourth factor, which weighed heavily in the selection, was the ability to maintain traffic during construction.

One caveat is that the Governor plans for a 2012 Viaduct removal. This alternative provides the opportunity to keep the Viaduct in service during bored tunnel construction. The tradeoff is that the Viaduct may be removed after 2012.

The team is comfortable with having found a way to reduce cost enough that the cost of the single bore tunnel feasible. There is a cost savings with the fifty-four-foot diameter single bore tunnel. It is a very well understood approach to tunneling, and much less risky than a cut and cover tunnel on the waterfront. There has been success with this approach, and the risks are well understood.

The major component is the bored tunnel, which starts at South Royal Brougham Way, goes under First Avenue, and reconnects at Denny Way. Several streets will be reconnected, including John, Thomas, and Harrison Streets. There are two lanes in each direction, stacked in a single bore. There are no midtown exits from this tunnel.

Access to Ballard and Interbay is addressed primarily through the Alaskan Way surface street, toward Elliot and Western Avenues. The second option is to exit from a two –way Mercer Street. Other options are to continue across the Aurora Bridge, exiting at 39th Avenue.

Another project component is the seawall replacement between Washington and Pine Streets. The seawall replacement between Pine and Broad Streets is planned as a future phase. The Holgate and King project on the south end is moving forward.

Other project components include the widening of the Spokane Street viaduct, which is fully funded. The First Avenue streetcar will ultimately reach 23rd Avenue and Jackson Street. There is $15 million operating revenue per year for new transit, primarily in the southwest-northwest corridors. Metro's Rapid Ride service will be improved. There is restructuring of trolley routes and transit priority lanes on north Aurora, the south end, and the center of downtown.

The four-lane surface street is paired with the bored tunnel. The concept is a four-lane boulevard with seventy-to eighty feet of open space on the waterfront. It is undecided whether or not a streetcar will run here.

The block with the Battery Street Tunnel has opportunities to reclaim open space. The Battery Street Tunnel will be abandoned with this scheme. The idea is to reconnect streets along Aurora.

Project Timeline

There will be two years of design and environmental review, five years of tunnel construction, and two more years of construction, which involve tearing down the viaduct and reconstructing the waterfront.

Cost

There is a total cost of $4.24 billion. The State of Washington is responsible for $2.82 billion, King County is responsible for $190 million, the City of Seattle $930 million, and the Port of Seattle $300 million. The State money is accounted for. A lot of the City funding will be from new sources. There will be a variety of federal sources, including a federal stimulus package.

Summary

One of the benefits is the creation of more than 10,000 jobs over the next 10 years. The project also accounts for a 40 percent growth in the region by 2030. It also helps balance the transportation needs of the future. It also maintains access to the port, creates a world-class waterfront that add to the region's economic vitality, and keeps the region moving during construction.

Commissioners' Comments and Questions

Will there be an eight-foot emergency travel lane?

Yes.

The Columbia and Marion Streets access points are lost; where will the now go?

None of the alternatives featured the mid-town ramps. There are exits in the area between South Royal Brougham Way and King Street, and opportunities north of Yesler Way, including Columbia, Marion, and Madison Streets.

Will the zone between the Port buildings and Quest Field have the six- to eight-foot land configuration?

Yes.

What is the timeline for the seawall replacement construction?

That has yet to be determined. There are windows of opportunity to construct it in chunks, such as when the salmon are migrating.

What happens with the emergency exits?

Those details will be worked out. The concept is an emergency stairwell to the upper deck every 600 feet. Many of the areas outside the roadway will be utilized for tunnel assistance.

Hope the collaborative effort and synergy stays and blossoms.

As the Rapid Ride and other connections are strengthened, the neighborhoods should be reminded that there are investments.

When this project started, there were numbers based on trips; is it the same market? As it moves along, it would be important to keep an eye on the traffic numbers moving forward.

A lot of traffic modeling was studied for this project. In this tunnel, 75% of the trips do not have a destination or origin in the center city, so it is serving longer distance trips. Access to downtown is handled on its edges. Travel patterns are not expected to change.

Are the I-5 improvements still going on?

I-5 was evaluated for the existing solutions and hybrid scenarios. A lot of good ideas for I-5 came out of this process. There is a proposal to put together a separate process and funding for I-5 improvements.

$4.2 billion is impressive, including the transit and seawall replacement; the package should be emphasized. The total system realized in 2015, including the streetcars and light rail, moves toward an integrated system.

Very excited that Seattle is getting a waterfront. Who will oversee the seawall? There are opportunities for something besides a vertical seawall.

It is ultimately the responsibility of SDOT. There is possibility for the City of Seattle, Parks and Recreation Department, and SPU working together. There should be large amount of interest and a public design process, including a role for the Design Commission to engage in an interactive way. The Commission played a key role in helping SDOT work through design issues on this alternative. SDOT is excited about the possibilities. Opening up the waterfront offers opportunities for the project that were not considered before.

As graphic materials are developed, bicycle commuters would appreciate lanes, or some kind of consideration.