



APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Ed Murray
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Marshall Foster
Planning Director, DPD

Tom Nelson, Chair

Osama Quotah, Vice Chair

Bernie Alonzo

Brodie Bain

Lee Copeland

Megan Groth

Laurel Kunkler

Shannon Loew

Martin Regge

Ellen Sollod

Ross Tilghman

Michael Jenkins
Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

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Planner

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March 6, 2014

Convened 8:30 am

Adjourned 5:00 pm

Projects Reviewed

Northgate Station Light Rail Review Panel
Waterfront – Central Public Open Space

Commissioners Present

Osama Quotah, Vice Chair (arrived at 12:00 pm)

Bernie Alonzo (arrived at 12:00 pm)

Megan Groth

Laurel Kunkler (excused at 1:00 pm)

Martin Regge (excused at 3:45 pm)

Ellen Sollod

Ross Tilghman

Non-Voting Commissioners Present

Lee Copeland

Commissioners Excused

Tom Nelson, Chair

Shannon Loew

Brodie Bain

Staff Present

Michael Jenkins (excused at 12:30 pm)

Valerie Kinast

Nicolas Welch

Joan Nieman



March 6, 2014
1:15 – 5:00 pm

Project: **Waterfront – Central Public Open Space**
Phase: Concept Design
Previous reviews: n/a

Presenters: Tatiana Chouluka James Corner Field Operations
Steve Pearce SDOT
Andrew Barash CH2M Hill

Attendees: Laura Becker Office of Arts & Culture
Ethan Bernau Shiels Obletz Johnsen
Kevin Geiger SDOT
David Graves Seattle Parks and Recreation
Joy Jacobson FAS-ADA
Mark Mariano Schemata Workshop
Matt Martenson Berger Partnership
Guy Michaelson Berger Partnership
Norie Sato Sato Services
Terri Simmons FAS-ADA
Nathan Torgelson Parks
Andrew tenBrink James Corner Field Operations

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

Purpose of Review

The purpose of this meeting was to review the concept design of the Waterfront Central Public Open Space. This is a core project of the broader Waterfront Seattle redevelopment. Together, the Design and Planning Commissions provided input on the overall concept design completed in the summer of 2012. Since then, the Design Commission has begun review of the numerous capital projects that comprise the overall plan, including the Railroad Way S, the Main Corridor both north and south of Union St, and Union St itself, as well as the PC-1 site at Pike Place Market and Colman Dock, both partner projects of the broader Waterfront redevelopment effort, and the Seawall.

Summary of Proposal

The Waterfront Seattle team is proposing to develop as the Central Public Open Space the zone that encompasses Waterfront Park, the area in front of the entrance to the Seattle Aquarium, and Pier 62/63. At 8.8 acres, the Central Public Open Space is the largest contiguous open space proposed in the waterfront redevelopment and consists of three elements:

1. A reconstructed Pier 62/63 and the Pool Barge
2. Aquarium Plaza
3. Union St Pier

The Overlook Walk is a related element of and directly connected to this project but was not included in this review. Instead, it will come to the full Commission in June.

Pier 62/63 is intended to have two primary components. The pier itself has seating and kiosks and is designed as a flex space (71,000 sf) that can accommodate various programming elements such as outdoor movies, concerts, or simply sitting by the water. A floating pool barge (21,000 sf) and dock would be attached by gangway to the pier and programmed for “water’s edge” activities like swimming and boating. The barge includes three pools and would likely be taken off-site during winter months; the dock would be present year-round. The proposed design slightly realigns the footprint of the pier to be more inviting to pedestrians and align directly with the Overlook Walk.

Aquarium Plaza (78,000 sf), adjacent to and just south of Pier 62/63 and directly in front of the Seattle Aquarium, is designed with children in mind and includes a prominent interactive play structure. At the east side of the plaza, movable tables and chairs are proposed for a café that would be located in Building C under the Overlook Walk.

Located between the Aquarium and the Great Wheel is Union St Pier (44,000 sf), currently Waterfront Park. Compared to Pier 62/63, Union St Pier is intended to be a more specifically designed and programmed space that includes three interactive water features. These features can be disabled seasonally, according to weather, or to accommodate impromptu dry programming, but unlike Pier 62/63 it’s not intended for events with extensive setup or infrastructure like concerts.

Summary of Presentation

Steve Pearce updated the Commission on the status of related Waterfront Seattle projects and introduced the components of the Central Public Open Spaces that comprise today’s presentation. Mr. Pearce referred to the Waterfront Program Document and the public meetings and outreach that informed its creation.

Tatiana Chouluka expressed excitement about presenting this component of the waterfront redevelopment and praised the work her team as done to assemble the project. Ms. Chouluka gave the presentation dated March 6, 2014, and available on the [Design Commission website](#).

Ms. Chouluka began with an overview of how the Central Public Open Space fits into the broader waterfront redevelopment context; relates to three prominent civic spaces in Seattle Aquarium, Pike Place Market, and Seattle Art Museum; and connects to east–west streets in the downtown core. She then discussed the materiality for the site, which takes inspiration from the maritime culture and rockery of Puget Sound. Paving integrates these materials with the tideline/slipline motif present throughout the waterfront. This organizing element is intended to lead pedestrians to the waterfront and orient their views. She noted that the “Bay to Bluff” concept is found throughout the Sound and informs the planting palette for the waterfront.

The presentation was organized from north to south, beginning with contextual images of the proposed design for Overlook Walk. Ms. Chouluka stated that Pier 62/63 will be completely rebuilt. Its proposed design includes seating, kiosks, and a connection to the Pool Barge. Ms. Chouluka explained the grade, lighting concept, and program elements for this space.

For Aquarium Plaza, Ms. Chouluka explained the seating and play elements designed with young Aquarium visitors in mind. Intended as a space for families, Aquarium Plaza includes a prominent interactive play structure. Planters continue at a 12’ rhythm similar to the rest of the waterfront

promenade. The planting in this area will be distinct from the “bluff” planting at the Overlook Walk and is conceived as a rich backshore palette that buffers pedestrian from the noise and traffic on Alaskan Way.

Lastly, Ms. Chouluka discussed Union St Pier, which is currently Waterfront Park. This space offers a direct connection to Union St, another core component of the waterfront redevelopment. Ms. Chouluka described a three-part water feature planned for Union St Pier.

Summary of Discussion

The Commissioners were pleased with the level of detail in the proposed design and excited about the prospect of such a large, contiguous open space on the Central Waterfront. The Commission acknowledged the public outreach that had informed and led to the creation of a programming framework in July 2013. Nevertheless, programming was a point of concern for the Commissioners, who felt an overall concept diagram that considered the waterfront as a single destination would be useful in evaluation and, eventually, promoting the program for the space. Similarly, the Commission discussed the degree to which seasonality and weather are incorporated in the overall program. While this question has come up frequently in waterfront presentations, the Commission believed that was for good reason and that this element merited further refinement.

Another issue discussed at length was the extent to which the piers are distinguished from land. The Commission values the contrast the current wooden piers provide with the pavement on land and encouraged the design team to preserve this character to the extent possible in the reconstruction of Pier 62/63 and Union St Pier. The inclusion of planters and trees and extension of the tideline/slipline motif onto Union St Pier seem to depart from that character in the Commission’s eyes.

Lastly, the Commission sought further clarification of the plug-and-play approach not only for the kiosk on Pier 62/63 but for the overall kiosk plan along the waterfront. There was interest in the viability of the kiosk’s modular units, and the Commission discussed how to create a successful space even on non-program days, during the off-season, and in inclement weather.

Agency Comments

Terri Simmons, FAS-ADA, appreciated the attention paid to accessibility. She referred to the benches on Pier 62/63, where she would like to see zones or gaps that allow for companion seating. She stated that there should be places for everyone to pause, not just able-bodied users.

Public Comments

none

Action

The Design Commission thanked the Waterfront Seattle design team for the presentation of the concept design of the Central Public Open Space. The Commission particularly appreciated the quality of design, the level of detail, and the amount of work represented in the proposed design. There is a lot of energy and excitement around this, and the Commission is happy to see the project moving forward.

With a **vote of 4-1**, the Design Commission approved the concept design of Pier 62/63, Aquarium Plaza, and Union St Plaza, which together make up the Central Public Open Spaces, with the following recommendations:

Overall concept

1. Consider producing an overall concept diagram for the waterfront as a single destination and think holistically about year-round programming and activities.
2. Consider climate to a greater degree. Show which edges can be inhabited with overhangs and covered spaces. Incorporate seasonality and weather into the program and consider what happens on non-program days. Overall, the Commission likes the use of complementary spaces—active and passive.
3. Articulate more distinctly the difference between terra firma and pier, through either paving or planting.

Pier 62/63 and Pool Barge

4. Explore adjusting the orientation of Overlook Walk towards Aquarium Plaza given the activity that space will have as opposed to its current pronounced orientation towards Pier 62/63 and views to the water.
5. Further develop the seating concept for Pier 62/63, with particular attention to how it responds to the edge, its relationship to the water, and accessibility. Strive to preserve the “quiet” atmosphere Pier 62/63 currently offers and consider the experience of being alone on the pier.
6. Refine some of the details for Pier 62/63. Develop a stronger architectural articulation for the kiosks and simplify the overall kiosk plan. Expand the sustainability program, and consider taking the idea of a fish-cleaning table further. Refine the detailing of the bench and railings, and strive to preserve the pier-like character of this space.

Aquarium Plaza

7. Pursue closer integration with the Seattle Aquarium, whether through sustainability, synergy with water, or physical connection to its space.

Union St Plaza

8. Simplify the water features.
9. Reconsider the alignment of the kiosk and the rocky seating edge in the center of the Union St axis. Consider how this functions as the terminus of Union St.
10. Develop the authenticity of this space as a pier (i.e., as opposed to terra firm) and incorporate the history of this site as the start of the Alaskan Gold Rush.

The reasons for the votes against were as follows:

Commissioner Sollod stated that there are many concerns that the Commission has and that I have about how the design is articulated. It is an unacceptable level of disagreement, and therefore I am not comfortable voting in favor.