



APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Mike McGinn
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Marshall Foster
Planning Director, DPD

Tom Nelson, Chair

Osama Quotah, Vice Chair

Bernie Alonzo

Brodie Bain

Seth Geiser

Laurel Kunkler

Shannon Loew

Martin Regge

Ellen Sollod

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Joan Nieman
Administrative staff

June 20, 2013

Convened 8:00 am

Adjourned 3:00 pm

Projects Reviewed

4755 Fauntleroy Alley Vacation

Jimi Hendrix Park

Center for Wooden Boats

Commissioners Present

Tom Nelson, chair

Osama Quotah, vice chair (arrived 10:45am)

Seth Geiser (arrived 9:45am)

Shannon Loew

Brodie Bain

Bernie Alonzo(excused at 2:00pm)

Ellen Sollod

Commissioners Excused

Debbie Harris

Laurel Kunkler

Martin Regge

Staff Present

Valerie Kinast

Joan Nieman

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9:10am – 11:10am	Project:	4755 Fauntleroy Alley Vacation	
	Phase:	Public Benefit	
	Last Reviewed:	April 18, May 7, May 16, 2013	
	Presenters:	Bill Fuller, Fuller Sears Architects Andy Rasmussen, Weisman Design Group	
	Attendees:	Ann Martin, community member	Linda Mitchell, community member
		Beverly Barnett, SDOT	Mellina White-Cusack, community member
		Chip Nevins, Seattle Parks & Rec.	Michael Barthol, Whole Foods
		Claudia Newman, Attorney BND	Michael Jenkins, Council Central Staff
		Dan Albert, Weisman	Mike Swenson, Transpo Group
		Dan Blohowiak, Fuller Sears	Nancy Woodland, WS Chamber
		Dave Montoure, WS Chamber	Reagan Jackson , UFCW21
		David West, Puget Sound Sage	Robert Smith, Weingarten
		Elena Perez, community member	Samantha Keller, community member
		George Vesely, Weingarten	Dr. Sharon Sutton, UFCW21
		Heather Weiner, community member	Steve Huling, community member
		Jack McCullough, McCullough Hill PS	Steve Johnson, Fuller Sears
		Jeremy Febus, KPFF	Steve Marquardt, UFCW21
		Jessica Clawson, McCullough Hill PS	Steve Orser, Lennar Properties
		Jim Guenther, community member	Steve Sears, Fuller Sears
		Joe Mizrahi, UFCW21	Steve Williamson, UFCW21
		Josh Sutton, YMCA	Tod Rodman, Morgan Junction

Summary of Proposal

The petitioner is proposing to vacate part of the alleys in the block bounded by SW Alaska St, Fauntleroy Way SW, SW Edmunds St and 40th Ave SW in the West Seattle neighborhood. The alley is ‘T’ shaped and both the top of the ‘T’ which is 258 feet long and the northern 200 feet of the base are proposed to be vacated. The southern 275 feet of the existing alley would remain.

With the proposal, the applicant will provide a private east-west alley south of the east-west section of alley that would be vacated. The private alley will be in an easement that allows for vehicular and pedestrian use by the public. The private alley would be wider than the alley being removed.

The proposed development would include two buildings separated by a mid block connection that includes the private alley and the east-west pedestrian connection. Each building is designed to have 5 floors of apartments over ground floor retail (70 feet in height). The proposal includes approximately 66,000 sf of retail and 370 residential units. The design for the building in the north section of the project includes frontage on 40th Ave SW, SW Alaska St and Fauntleroy Way SW and SW Edmonds St includes a drug store on the ground level. The buildings, the private alley and the mid block connection are connected below grade by a parking garage that includes parking for 570 vehicles.

The private alley and mid block pedestrian connection between the two buildings would connect Fauntleroy Way SW, 40th Ave SW and the portion of the alley that is to remain publically owned. The new connection would vary in width from 42 feet at Fauntleroy Way SW to 50 feet at 40th Ave SW. The connection would serve normal alley functions including a loading dock and access to below grade parking. A landscaped pedestrian walk on the south side is proposed. Public access for vehicles and pedestrians would be provided through an easement.

Summary of Presentation

The purpose of this meeting was to review the public benefit of the 4755 Fauntleroy alley vacation proposal for the second time. At the last review on May 2, 2013, the approval for public benefit was denied.

At this review the commission saw a revised design. The designs of the plazas have been reworked. Additional landscaping has been added along the Mason's parking lot in the planting strip along SW 40th St. The public benefit matrix has been completely reworked and clarified. Paving of the Mason's parking lot to solve drainage issues was removed from the proposed public benefit package (the improvements will still be done, just not counted), and the undergrounding has been folded into "enhanced street improvements." The design of the streetscape improvements has been simplified overall and unified by reducing the variety in furnishings, plantings, materials, and the art.

Bill Fuller presented the powerpoint dated June 20, 2013 which can be accessed on the Design Commission website:

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Commission/Project_Review_Meetings/Minutes/default.asp

Andy Rasmussen, the landscape architect, reviewed the project vision and PowerPoint pages 9 through 37.

- Explained the changes in plazas. Added LED lighting, water feature, accent paving and vine maples in Plaza A.
- 40th Ave streetscape changes: art work more linear, expanded 40th with moved sidewalk for more on-street parking, add landscaping to front of Mason's parking lot and left space for Microsoft bus. Completing triangle plan with street- scape plantings. Pulled sidewalk away from building allowed canopies permeable. One large connected space down 40th now. Eliminated elements- now more simplified and refined. Decking choice is black locust from east coast.
- Cross connector: covered, aligned so all sidewalks 8ft. Green wall and mural along connector.
- On Fauntleroy edge: changed artwork. SE corner: changed artwork. Alley: upgrade to full width

Bill Fuller, reviewed elements of the public benefit matrix on page 40 of the PowerPoint.

Summary of Discussion

Commissioners discussed the value of open space amenities along Fauntleroy, given it is a busy street, especially in comparison to 40th St. They talked about the overall level and quality of the amenities in the open space, and whether the art and features were cohesive and contributed to a lively, positive public realm experience. There was agreement that they had developed substantially but still needed some refinement, particularly the art. The gateway was discussed and it was agreed it will still require further work, as recommended at the previous Design Commission review. Again, the crossing from the mid-block connector to the park was considered, and the commissioners agreed it would be most helpful in this location, despite SDOT reservations about placing crosswalks midblock. Another remaining concern was about the viability of the green wall in the midblock connector.

Agency and Public Comments

Beverly Barnett, SDOT: Acknowledged many improvements over time. Very clear presentation of Public Benefit.

SDOT understanding of project has increased. They will be assessing if everything has been resolved.

Chip Nevins, Seattle Parks: The vibrant development across park invigorates area. Financial contribution will get us through public process. He is happy with results.

Written comments were received from Claudia Newman, Anne Martin and Dr. Sharon Sutton.

Claudia Newman: Process could benefit before decision- direct conversations between developer and public. No SEPA review yet. Referred to her letter she submitted to the Commissioners.

Dr. Sharon Sutton: Bravo on rain garden and graphics. Art needs a concept not simplification. Noise mitigation along Fauntleroy needed. Feels Gateway concept and sustainability not fully explained.

David West, Puget Sound Sage: PB requirement allows city to go broader for community. Living wage, jobs and benefits needs negotiation based on Dearborn project. This project is important to neighborhood.

Josh Sutton: works and lives in West Seattle. Supports project with the increased safety. New crosswalk on Alaska huge improvement for the future increased density. PB outline makes him happy.

Anne Martin, resident: Focus of concern is with cross connector. Visual Images did not show large delivery truck, emissions and noise. Loves cross walk. She has submitted written comments.

Steve Huling, resident and well connected in area over time, member of triangle advisory council: Mission has been met with plazas, bike paths etc. The project and increased parking represents less density than zoned. This project eliminates blight and he is in full support of project.

Melina White-Cusack, West Seattle resident: Excited about improvements with cross walk and gym. Park contribution great and park will be appealing. Beautiful place and supportive of project.

Nancy Woodland, resident and West Seattle chamber member: Feels that the chamber has been very engaged with developers and they have done an amazing job responding to public concern. Art elements are now cohesive and each plaza is different –breaks up block. New park idea fantastic. Disappointed not a crosswalk to park but they tried. Favorite two things – buried wires and bike lane.

Tod Rodman: Morgan Junction Association: Concerned about the traffic safety of mid block connector traffic turning right onto Fauntleroy - safety issue.

Dave Montoure, chair of West Seattle chamber: Very excited that project is coming to fruition. Exceeds expectation. As resident the alley vacation is a tremendous benefit.

Elena Perez, resident: What is benefiting residents when there will be parking challenges. The project only benefits retail stores and shoppers. Public alley is public property. Park contribution nice but where is funding coming from? Park maintenance, unless funded, is not reality. Crosswalk is great. Rapid Ride is already full, expects increased transit. Project does not feeling like a benefit.

Samantha Keller: lives two blocks away: Excited something is going in. Landscaping and artwork beautiful but PB package benefits the property owners and retail stores not residents like me. Currently there is increased traffic with Trader Joes. Same thing is going to happen here. Look at how much this design caters to Whole Foods not community. Fauntleroy & Edmonds Street is being left out of design. Encourage to think about community as whole with daily impact.

Commissioner Comments:

BB: In general along 40th solid walls are typically less successful. Activity and liveliness needs to be ensured. Mid block crossing needs to be as comfortable as possible and connect to park. Stronger connection for pedestrian crossing recommended. Concerned about the experience of 40th.

ES: Appreciates art simplification, but might have gone too far. Art elements have a unified corporate quality, no vibrancy, spacing too consistent. Hierarchy of bollard height too consistent.

TN: Agrees. Total investment needs redistribution and focus. Overall coverage seems right.

SL: Feels project has strong continuity and unified concept. PB package for major streets quite successful.

Generally, substantial improvement considering all the edges.

TN: Water feature is a context element not activator but it helps plaza.

BA: White noise generator makes the space more pleasant.

ES: Pass through space rather than hang out space. White noise will help. Not activator for plaza.

SL: Doesn't think gateway will be used as plaza. Suggests exploring using the gateway plaza more functional. Whole Foods entry more successful.

TN: Agrees.

ES: Corner is about aesthetics. Ground plan is about aesthetics for cars.

TN/ES: Concerned about green wall success? Seems planting in that location will not work.

BB: Crosswalk/green wall activation mid block needs to flow and be more attractive.

SG: Deeply annoyed crosswalk to park not included. Response will be to jay walk.

TN: We need to make a recommendation to SDOT.

SG: Remove tree bulbs to prepare for future crosswalk.

SL: Do you have examples of successful green walls?

Doing all we can. We possibly will have to redo design. Will use ferns, bulletproof items, have not developed wall planting. No vines.

ACTION

The Design Commission thanked the project team for the presentation of the Public Benefit package of the 4755 Fauntleroy alley vacation. Commissioners particularly appreciated the Fauntleroy crosswalk, addition of a bike lane, and quality of the 40th Ave streetscape.

Public Benefit is the second of two steps in the Design Commission's vacation review process. Approval of both the Urban Design Merit and Public Benefit package constitute a recommendation to the SDOT Director by the Design Commission to approve the vacation. The ultimate decision to grant the vacation lies with the City Council.

The Public Benefit Package consists of the following items:

- Voluntary building setbacks
- Midblock Pedestrian connector
- Five small plazas
- Green Street improvements in 40th Ave SW along the project site, and landscaping along the Mason's property and on the north side of the street
- Enhanced street improvements along the frontages of the development, including:
- Monetary contribution of \$45,000 toward design of park north of 40th Ave SW
- Improvements to 40th St to facilitate city goal of providing parking at the new park.
- Planning and installation of bike facility along Fautleroy.

The presentation given by the designers provides a reference point for the quality of design and materials that is expected, but the Public Benefit list in these minutes is the document of our decision.

With a vote of six to zero, and one abstention, the Seattle Design Commission approved with conditions the Public Benefit Package of the 4577 Fautleroy alley vacation.

Commissioners D.Harris, L.Kunkler, M.Regge were absent

The approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. If any of the public benefit items are later found to be necessary to meet code or mitigation requirements, or are deemed infeasible or for any other reason cannot be provided as proposed today, the proponent shall consult the Design Commission and provide public benefit commensurate to what is no longer being provided.
2. Provide the art plan for administrative review by the Design Commission when it has been developed.
3. Provide drawings of the gateway element for administrative review when the design has been further developed per commission recommendations. Despite the fact that the gateway is at a loud, busy intersection, it must be a well developed, prominent feature given its central location in the neighborhood.
4. Provide plans for administrative review of the green wall in the through-block connector when they have been refined.

The Commission also has the following recommendations:

1. The Design Commission requests that SDOT reconsider its policy restricting the installation of crosswalks midblock for this project. A crosswalk across 40th midblock would complete the connectivity that is being proposed with the through-block connector. The pedestrian connection was proposed in the West Seattle Urban Design Framework and since then Seattle Parks and Recreation has purchased property for a park just north of 40th. Given this opportunity, and the green street nature of the street, please examine whether an exception to the midblock crosswalk policy might be in order at this location.