



## APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**Mike McGinn**  
Mayor

**Diane Sugimura**  
Director, DPD

**Marshall Foster**  
Planning Director, DPD

**Julie Bassuk**  
Chair

**Mary Fialko**

**Laurel Kunkler**

**Shannon Loew**

**Tom Nelson**

**Julie Parrett**

**Osama Quotah**

**Norie Sato**

**Donald Vehige**

**Debbie Harris**

**Valerie Kinast**  
Coordinator

**Tom Iurino**  
Senior Staff

**July 5, 2012**

Convened 8:00am  
Adjourned 4:30pm

### Projects Reviewed

Block 93 Alley Vacation  
SR520 I-5 to Medina  
Mapes Creek Restoration

### Commissioners Present

Julie Parrett, Chair  
Shannon Loew  
Osama Quotah  
Debbie Harris  
Laurel Kunkler  
Tom Nelson  
Norie Sato  
Mary Fialko  
Don Vehige

### Commissioners Excused

Julie Bassuk

### Staff Present

Valerie Kinast



**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



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**July 5, 2012**

**Project:** **Block 93 Alley Vacation**

**Phase:** Alley Vacation

**Last Reviewed:** Jun 21, 2012

**Presenters:** Sharon Colman, Vulcan  
Dan Simpson, ZGF  
Allyn Stellmacher, ZGF  
Kris Snider, Hewitt

**Attendees:** Matthew Curry, South Lake Union Chamber of Commerce  
Phil Fujii, Vulcan  
Greg Bell, Vulcan

**Time:** 8:45am-11:55am

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### Summary of Project Presentation

The design team presented Vulcan’s plans to develop two six-story buildings on the block bordered by Mercer, 9<sup>th</sup> Ave., Westlake Ave., and Republican St. To enable this building configuration, Vulcan sought to vacate the northern section of the alley that ran parallel to 9th Ave N and Westlake Ave N just south of Mercer, and to dedicate a new leg of alley extending east to Westlake Ave.

The team presented its revised designs and asked the commission to approve the project’s urban design merit, the first of two steps in the alley vacation process. The team noted the development proposal with the vacation cost more to build, and achieved no additional FAR. The team presented the streetscape character surrounding the property. Mercer, a second level pedestrian route, was landscaped to balance the fact the street lacked a median, and to tie into other landscaping and green elements on adjacent blocks. The eastern corner of the building on Mercer would be designed for retail use, with access from Mercer. The character of Republican was predominantly trees, Westlake was hardscape, and 9<sup>th</sup> was green and pedestrian-oriented, featuring rain gardens, low vegetation and seating. The team also explained the building’s service access, the location of the building entries – most were on the Westlake or the interior pedestrian galleria. The interior galleria was 40 feet wide, featuring pathways, plantings, water features and weather protection over the center. The team will be selecting an artist to help develop the space.

The team also introduced its public benefit package which included: voluntary building setbacks to provide larger public open spaces (approximately 20,000 sq ft) a reduction in building scale; streetscape amenities such as sidewalk replacement, street tree upgrades, and overhead weather protection; elimination of automobile access to Mercer; reduction in curb cuts; streetcar station; sustainable features such as LEED Gold; bicycle amenities including an area dedicated to the future bike-share program and undergrounding of utilities along 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue North.

#### Department Comments

SDOT had strong reservations about the commission approving the public benefit package, because the commission was doing its review earlier than usually done in the full vacation review process, specifically before SDOT received input from the circulation of the petition to city departments

### SUMMARY (by Parrett)

**The Seattle Design Commission approved, by a vote of 6-2, the project’s urban design merit, the first step of a two step process in seeking an alley vacation. The approval was contingent on the completion of the Design**

Review Board's and the city's review, and that there would be no significant design changes. The commission made the following recommendations:

- Provide more porosity at 9<sup>th</sup> and Mercer for future, other tenants. Allow for a future connection for other, future tenants into the building from the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> and Mercer.
- Consider more green plantings and setbacks to Mercer from 9<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Vehige voted no because the strategy to re-knit the project back into the urban fabric was not a good solution.

Commissioner Harris voted no because of a concern that the mid-block connection would pull activity from 9<sup>th</sup>, Mercer and Republican. There appeared to be minimal proposed areas along 9<sup>th</sup>, Mercer and Republican that would attract pedestrians or provide non-motorized amenities. She agreed that the traffic concerns about access to Mercer were valid.

The Seattle Design Commission did not vote on the project's public benefit package, as there was insufficient design detail regarding the proposed public benefits. The commission anticipated approval at a future review contingent upon the team adopting the following recommendations and providing sufficient design detail for review by the Commission:

#### Streetscape amenities

- Enhance the benefits in the street ROWs. The voluntary setback, undergrounding of utilities and greenway could be a public benefit if it was "programmed" for more interactive uses. The building façade and setbacks need to work together. The sidewalk replacement or alley re-paving was not a public benefit but a requirement since the project would include shoring. Reducing the curb cuts was not a public benefit.

#### Bicycle amenities

- Develop and present the bike station in more detail. Show how bikes merge to and from the station and the on-street bike lane. Provide detail for the placement of the facilities. Coordinate with King County to determine if this would be in their system of bike share stations and provide confidence that the bike amenities will remain a part of the project and streetscape with future tenants.

#### Streetcar station

- Further study and develop details for the proposed improvements to the streetcar station. Moving the stop into the building could increase waiting times for the streetcar as disabled pedestrians would have further to walk to get on the streetcar. Perhaps incorporate the station into the building but also leave a seating area on the sidewalk at the stop.

#### Undergrounding utilities

- Include the undergrounding of utilities as a public benefit.

#### Sustainable features

- Develop a strategy for sustainability and integrate it into the project, rather than a series of "isolated" features. Verify whether sustainability items are voluntary or required. Move the sustainable features and make them more overt and coupled with education and the public interaction with the building. Provide more detail for the sustainable features that are to be counted toward public benefit: plant palettes, types of materials and displays, etc. Please look at art nearby related to sustainability.

#### Public open space

- Make the Galleria feel public and not private. Specifically, make the center of the mid-block crossing more public looking; also make it more memorable, either through event programming or art. Study more fully the micro-restaurants and how they would draw people in. Consider making transparent the view through to Mercer Street. Study the circulation patterns of 1,800 employees to see how they may affect the placement of objects and the layout of the mid-block crossing.

#### Artwork

- **Look at other adjacent projects artwork for inspiration and information including Mercer Street; be aware of the other artworks in the area so new artworks can be a dynamic addition. Look at the potential of using artworks that use high technology or technology related to the work of the tenant (if applicable), especially in the “covered” area.**