



APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Mike McGinn
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Marshall Foster
Planning Director, DPD

Julie Bassuk
Chair

Seth Geiser

Laurel Kunkler

Shannon Loew

Tom Nelson

Julie Parrett

Osama Quotah

Ellen Sollod

Debbie Harris

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Tom Iurino
Senior Staff

February 7, 2013

Convened 8:30am
Adjourned 4:30pm

Projects Reviewed

North Transfer Station Street Vacation
Westin Building Skybridge

Commissioners Present

Julie Bassuk, Chair
Julie Parrett (excused 8:30am-10:00am)
Seth Geiser
Debbie Harris (excused 8:30am-8:45am)
Lolly Kunkler
Tom Nelson
Osama Quotah (excused 1:30pm-4:30pm)
Ellen Sollod

Unconfirmed Commissioners Present

Martin Regge

Commissioners Excused

Shannon Loew

Staff Present

Valerie Kinast
Tom Iurino



**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



February 7, 2013

Project: North Transfer Station Street Vacation
Phase: Street Vacation Public Benefit
Last Reviewed: Nov 15, 2012; Jun 16, 2011; Dec 2, 2010
Presenters: Tim Croll, SPU
Dean Koonts, HBB

Attendees: Beverly Barnett, SDOT
Hui Yang, SPU
Jeff Neuner, SPU
Josh Campbell, Seattle Public Utilities
Kelly Pajek, Arts and Cultural Affairs
Pierce McVay, Mahlum
Roxanne Glick, Community Member
Sandra Mallory, Office of Sustainability and Environment
Vince Lyons, Wallingford Community Council

Time: 10:30am-12:00pm

Summary of Project Presentation

The proposed vacation is the portion of Carr Place N. located between N. 34th Street and N. 35th Street in the neighborhoods of Fremont and Wallingford, containing approximately 11,035-SF.

The existing North Transfer Station at 1350 N. 34th St. is over 50 years old and is becoming more unreliable and unable to meet all recycling needs as it ages. SPU is replacing the existing transfer station and is requesting the vacation of Carr Place N. right-of-way for better site access, traffic flow, and programming. SPU acquired the lot on the east side of Carr Place N.; the entire area between the existing station and the property to the east would be combined to maximize utility of space. SPU also acquired another lot immediately to the north of the lot on the east side of Carr Pl.; that property will be used primarily for public benefit.

The new transfer station features improvements to the current function, including recycling and reuse drop-off areas separated from disposal areas, allowing easier access for recycling. Along the north edge and east edges of the site, the station is set back from the property line, providing room for open space and plantings and preserving the view corridor from Ashworth Ave N.

The City Council approved an agreement that Seattle Public Utilities reached with the Wallingford and Fremont Community Councils which detailed some of the project's design, such as the setbacks and elements of the open space design.

The portion of Carr Place N that is proposed to be vacated is restricted to one-way travel heading north into the Wallingford neighborhood. It is bordered on both sides by the project site. Carr Place North's traffic volume did not exceed 13 vehicles in one hour and the alley contains no drainage or wastewater infrastructure. Under the current design proposal a view shed is retained through the vacated street. Seattle City Light utilities and a water distribution main will also be relocated as part of the project.

The concept for the design of open spaces is called Twine with a Twist. The public benefit package includes: a **public viewing gallery** of the tipping building, located in the admin/crew building, to educate visitors and schoolchildren about solid waste management and recycling; **landscaped curb bulbs and a suspended crosswalk sign** constructed for the crosswalk on the east and west sides of the intersection of N. 34th St. and Woodlawn Ave. N.; one set of curb bulbs and a crosswalk constructed to cross N. 35th St. west of Woodlawn Ave. N.; **32,000 sq. ft. of park-like, publically accessible area** in the eastern setback of the recycling building with including a multi-sport court, seating, play lawn, Olmstedian walk, fitness stations, and gathering area in southeastern corner; **14,500 sq. ft. of park-like, publically accessible area** in the residentially zoned lot north of N. 35th St. at Woodlawn which includes a children’s play area with a netted climbing play structure, play features integrated into the topography, climbable rocks and logs, picnic tables and lawn; **a 10,000 sq. ft. park-like publically accessible area** with the 20 ft. landscaped setback area north of the transfer station along N. 35th St. which includes static fitness and parkour elements.

The commission’s discussion centered on: the amount of benefit offered and whether the design or elements should be simplified; the need for more study and better quality of the site’s edges and the experience it creates for the pedestrian; the lack of detail in the proposed planting palette and potential materials; the lack of experiential or character studies of the public benefit spaces; the need for further study of signage needs and pedestrian flow within the site; the opportunities for education in the viewing room and elsewhere on the site; and whether it was possible to approve the public benefit package now given the lack of many of the design details.

AGENCY AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

Beverly Barnett, SDOT, commented that the public benefit package looks good and is balanced. The design includes generous buffering and the team worked well with the community. City Council will be satisfied. The street design details are normally handled during the street design process.

Kelly Pajek, Arts and Cultural Affairs, noted the artist, Jean Shinn, just signed a contract last week. She is known for reuse of materials. The art she develops will go through the PAAC.

Vince Lyons, community member and former City of Seattle Design Review program manager, commented that working with SPU was a positive experience, and the community benefit proposed is tremendous. The process of programming and designing the community benefit brought the community closer together.

SUMMARY (by Kunkler)

The Seattle Design Commission voted 5-3 to recommend approval of the public benefit package of the North Transfer Station vacation of Carr Ave. N. between N. 34th St. and N. 35th St., with the condition that development and open space design be reviewed at 30%, 60% and 90% design and the applicant incorporate the recommendations listed below. The Commission normally reviews open space public benefit elements when they have been more developed. The recommendations lay out expectations to assure the project will achieve an adequate level of public benefit.

Public benefit package:

- Viewing Room – Construct a viewing gallery of the tipping building, located in the administration building, to educate visitors and schoolchildren about solid waste management and recycling.
- Enhanced Pedestrian Street Crossings – Design and construct four curb bulbs and a suspended crosswalk sign on the east and west sides of the intersection of N 34th and Woodlawn, and two curb bulbs and a crosswalk over N35th St, west of Woodlawn Ave N.
- East Buffer Open Space – Design, install, and maintain an approximately 32,000 sq ft, publically accessible, park-like area in the 65 ft buffer of the transfer station building along Woodlawn Ave N. . Elements of the

open space include a multi-sport court, seating, play lawn, Olmstedian building public access walk, fitness stations and gathering area in the southeastern corner.

- Public Park-like Open Space north of N 35th St, between Carr Pl N and Woodlawn Ave N. - Design, install, and potentially maintain an approximately 14,500 sq ft area that will include a lawn, picnic tables, climbable rocks and logs, a children's climbing play structure, and play features integrated into the natural topography.
- North Buffer Open Space – Design, construct, and maintain a publically accessible, approximately 10,000 sq ft, park-like area in the 20 ft building setback along N 35th St. that will include static fitness/parkour elements.

Recommendations:

- **Look for opportunities and whittle down the elements in the open spaces and simplify the design during the design process; such refinement need not affect the agreement made with the public regarding the park's elements or features. For example, use a bench also as a parkour element.**
- **Investigate opportunities to more seamlessly connect the recycling building's roof with the adjacent public use area and landscape.**
- **Study the edges of the site and ensure they are pedestrian friendly; the proposed 10 foot wall along Woodlawn Ave N. is not pedestrian friendly.**
- **Study the interaction of pedestrians and vehicles where they intersect. Include transparency on the west side of the recycling building near the sidewalk. Develop signage to help pedestrians navigate the site.**
- **Study how the active and passive spaces are overlaid, especially within the buffer along N. 35th St. Also, further study the gathering space at Woodlawn and N. 34th St.; getting the best design for this space in such a prominent location is critical.**
- **Research and provide design precedents for both the materials and the experiential quality of the spaces. Establish a basis of design quality for the public benefit and track it. Make sure it is not value engineered out. Concerned that given the enormous amount of benefit, quality will suffer.**
- **Further develop the features of the education room. Expand the idea of learning beyond the education room; enable people to learn without entering the room. Consider expressing some of the education message in the public realm.**
- **Further develop the sustainability strategy. Encompass the whole project; do not limit sustainability to the landscape and the public benefit.**
- **Maximize artist involvement in the entire project's design, not just for the design of the public benefit.**

Commissioners Quotah, Nelson and Parrett voted no because while they had high expectations for the project and the design, there was not enough detail in the design to properly evaluate it.