



Seattle Design Commission

MEETING OF THE MINUTES

January 18, 2007

Greg Nickels
Mayor

Karen Kiest
Chair

Tasha Atchison

Pam Beyette

Evan Bourquard

Brendan Connolly

John Hoffman

Mary Johnston

Anindita Mitra

Dennis Ryan

Darrell Vange

Guillermo Romano
Executive Director

Layne Cubell
Senior Staff

Projects Reviewed

Seattle Center Long Term Investment Program
Mayor's Office Briefing
Woodland Park Zoo—West Garage
Transportation Projects

Commissioners Present

Karen Kiest, Chair
Pam Beyette
Evan Bourquard
Brendan Connolly
John Hoffman
Mary Johnston
Anindita Mitra
Dennis Ryan
Darrell Vange
Tasha Atchison

Convened: 9:00am
Adjourned: 5:30pm

Staff Present
Guillermo Romano
Layne Cubell
Tom Iurino
Kadie Bell



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18 Jan. 2007 Project: Seattle Center Long Term Investment Program

Phase: Preliminary Design

Previous Reviews: December 21, 2006

Presenters: Robert Nellams, Seattle Center

Shelly Yapp, Seattle Center

Jill Crary, Seattle Center

Dennis Forsyth, SRG Architects

Janet Pelz, Pelz Associates

Attendees: Steve Wright, Friends of the Green

Time: 1.5 hours

(SDC Ref.# 220/RS0611)

Summary: The Commission thanks the team for the insightful and thorough presentation on the Seattle Center Long Term Investment Program and is pleased that the future of the Center is in the hands of a dedicated and passionate design team. The Commission appreciates the team's professional commitment and the invitation they have extended to the Commission to participate in its public process. The Commission makes the following comments, which are organized into four major themes:

- **Additions:** When prompting the public to suggest additions, you should provide them with examples of features from places outside Seattle.
- **Approach:** To best engage the public, the team should use the public's vocabulary and avoid planning and architecture jargon by not forcing participants to translate questions. Use 'what, if' scenarios to engage the public. At public meetings, there should be special attention paid to describing the Center and its many functions through pictures, diagrams, and maps.
- **Awareness:** Focus on the public's awareness of the Center in terms of what is there now and clarify that the future brand is likely to be distinct from its World's Fair origins. The Commission encourages the team to give details of the Center's future plans using a website and to indicate what events are occurring and also consider an on-site information booth to increase general awareness of Center activities and encourage people to use the facilities for more than one purpose.
- **Access:** Use a fundamental design approach of permeability and accessibility. This should be thought of not only at the building scale, but the Center's connection to the region and neighborhoods. Promoting transparency of the edges is a major design goal throughout. Use water as a motive and force to draw people through the site along with art features, kiosks and way-finding. Encourage alternatives to automobiles; transit access should have its own strong image, legibility and branding. The open space network should extend into the neighborhood and draw people to the middle of the Center.

Project Presentation

Seattle Center staff and its design team conducted a briefing of preliminary programmatic concepts and outlined their desire to get feedback and suggestions from the Commission as well as engage them in responding to sample discussion questions to be used at an upcoming series of open houses. The project was last seen December 21, 2006.

The proponents identified ten topics and discussed sample questions in the form of a mock open house. Each commissioner received a packet that included the boards to be displayed at the open houses. A brief review of the Center's mission was discussed followed by a review of suggestions from the previous Commission meeting.



- **Center House Zone**—includes Fun Forest and Mural
The building itself is very opaque and uninviting and not expressive of its purpose. The building should be more transparent. Facilitate flexible inside/outside food service. This building is on the historic registry, which limits the options. The Fun Forest is unique to the city and the existing nostalgia has built momentum. There is a necessity for a space to entertain children—the question is what options are better. For design inspiration, look internationally to obtain new ideas. Use waterscapes to capture attention of children.
- **Memorial Stadium**
There is little need for more facilities like this in the near future. This space should be left open or demolish half. Create an open connection between Fifth Avenue entrance and center of the Center. Possibly an underground transit center and parking with a green top. Building is a block—so work to open. Do it in phases, take wall out and open it, half/half second phase demolish, new facility between garage and Center. School district owning it is problem. Resolve issue of parking, open space would allow theatres to open up. Underground parking with green top. Transfer income to take value from it through partnership, guarantee income through another source—open up for redevelopment
- **Key Arena Zone**—Includes Northwest Rooms
What do you do with this if Sonics leave? The commission asks if it is possible to make it into a public skating rink. Open the west end up more to the community/neighborhood.
- **Theatre District**
The designer's intention is to create a pedestrian friendly strip that would animate the district and promote movement towards the middle of the Center while celebrating the four presents theatre arts. The commission asks if the animated streetscape is what makes a district and recommends adding restaurants to create a district.

Open Space

Fun Forest and Memorial Stadium offer opportunities to add open space; is it worthwhile to look into converting these areas to open space? and if so, for what types of uses?

- Could be used for the Seattle outdoor summer concert series.
- Use all the open space to merge the four zones and create connections
- Create green boulevards to draw patrons to the middle of the Center, possibly through an axis with diagonal lines for circulation.
- It is a mistake to separate buildings and open space into separate conversations; there should be less contrast in interior and exterior in order to make it more inviting.
- Circulation is troubling due to World's Fair. This use has expired and needs to be corrected.

Transportation

- What are some of the needs/improvements necessary to increase access?
- Express busses aside from those during times of major festivals.
Existing infrastructure is overly reliant on personal vehicles. Effort needs to be made to encourage people to get there other ways: bike, walk, extend monorail to key arena.
 - Monorail is a good way to utilize alternative transportation, however it has a tarnished image and is in need of good PR.
 - Utilize the “greenlake effect” by linking up the pedestrian system.
 - It is pivotal to connect to regional community and that connection with create powerful qualitative changes by creating awareness.



Commissioners Questions and Comments

- Edit public meeting materials due to the overwhelming nature; it is difficult for new ideas to develop considering the wide array of activities that currently are offered.
- The whole image of Seattle Center is not as powerful as the sum of its parts. It is not so much about adding more things, but bringing attention to existing activities or subtracting activities to highlight major attractions. Seattle Center should not strive to be all things to all people.
- The focus should be more on transportation. Increase the imagability of how to get there—this will help the image of Seattle Center.
- Use open space to find ways to make the open space more exploratory. Green lawn is great for special events, but underutilized at other times.
- Advertise on websites to link resources and get more information out regarding activities and events.
- Extend Science Center to appeal to more adult science
- Fun Center moved and make it look better, nicer facility
- Talk to people who are patrons of the facilities to utilize the grounds more during their visits. Increase the number of stops for existing patrons. Inquire as to what would draw patrons into other areas.
- Break question down more into mission, “delight” “inspiration.” Potential question: What delights and inspires you about the Center?
- Physical attractions of the Center: rich collection of architectural zingers.

18 Jan. 2007 Project: Mayor's Office Briefing

Phase: Briefing
Presenters: Nathan Torgelson, Department of Finance/Mayor's Office

Time: .5 hours

(SDC Ref.# 220)

Summary: Deputy Mayor Tim Ceis apologizes for his absence; Nathan Torgelson is standing in for him.

The following are items discussed during the briefing:

- Viaduct: The Mayor wants to continue with public vote in March or April. The Commission has previously encouraged the city to unite on a single stance and previously recommended it not be put out for public vote, but understands circumstances have changed. There are several rebuild options; the Commission supports the tunnel and sees merit in the surface street, but does not support a new elevated structure.
- King Street Station, surrounding area and the INS Building: Public meeting scheduled. The City is involved in the RFP process for the INS Building, which is currently owned by the Federal Government and is soon to be released.
- Fort Lawton: The City has received several proposals, homeless housing is the first priority (through HUD funding).
- Streetcar: Seattle streetcar initiative aims to span from First Hill and connect to the Broadway Station and eventually connect to the South Lake Union Streetcar from Fred Hutchinson to University of Washington.
- King County Administration Building: The Mayor will most likely not recommend changing the zoning given the recent downtown rezone and concerns over shadows cast over civic blocks.
- Seattle School District Properties: As part of the 2007 budget, the Council approved \$100,000 to do an analysis on the sites. Also, the Council made a \$5M commitment to Phinney Ridge Neighborhood Center and University Heights to issue bonds in 2008 for acquisition. Any bond issuance would be subject to an additional approval by the Council.
- University District: University of Washington's purchase of Safeco properties presents an opportunity for the City, especially regarding housing redevelopment and creation of a light rail station. Also, review the City zoning for possible changes.
- Northgate: A lease will be signed with a new theater tenant as part of the Thornton Place Project and the development of the senior housing (ERA Living) is moving forward. Construction should start later this year. The City hosted a design charrette in December to look at the proposed public and private investments in the vicinity of the Park and Ride lot at the north of Northgate Way. The Parks Department has just begun looking at the park to be created on the Park and Ride lot site.

18 Jan. 2007 Project: Commission Business

- DISCUSSION ITEMS
- A. Timesheets
 - B. Minutes – no meeting on 1/4/07
 - C. Ethics and Elections Commission Update/W. Barnett (15 mins.)
Wayne Barnett provided an update on the Ethics and Elections Commission regarding recusal and disclosure for Commissioners with a conflict of interest in projects. Barnett encouraged Commissioners to avoid conversing about projects outside the Commission and distributed a brochure on new ethics guidelines. There is now a fine that may be imposed on those who do not comply.
- ANNOUNCEMENTS
- D. Council UDP Committee on 1/10 Debrief/Kiest
 - E. Skybridge Policy Update/Cubell
 - F. DC Outside Commitment Updates/Cubell + All
 - G. Olympic Sculpture Park Opening Weekend, 1/20 – 1/21, 2007
 - H. DC 2007 Annual Retreat, 2/1/07, 9am-4pm, Cedar River Ed Ctr.
 - I. DC/PC UDistrict Wkshp Orientation, Feb/March (TBD)
 - J. City/ULI Speaker Series: Henry Cisneros, 2/15/07, 5:30pm, Bertha Landes Room, City Hall

18 Jan. 2007 Project: Woodland Park Zoo—West Garage

Phase: Construction Documents

Previous Reviews: Oct. 2006, June 2006, March 2006, Jan. 2006

Presenters: Jim Maxwell, Woodland Park Zoo

Paul Diedrich, KPFF

David Hewitt, Hewitt Architects

Kris Snider, Hewitt Architects

Scott Ringgold, DPD

Paul Scheima, KPFF

Kelly Brandon, Kelly Brandon Design

Attendees: Irene Wall, Phinney Ridge Community Council

Time: 2 hours

(SDC Ref.# 221/RS0612)

Disclosures: Commissioner Connolly and Commissioner Vange disclosed prior working relationships with the zoo.

Recusals: Commissioner Mitra has a conflict of interest and recused herself from the presentation.

Action:

The Commission approves the construction document phase of the project with a vote of 8:1 and provides the following comments:

- **The Commission appreciates the design of the building and the building's refinement through architectural details.**
- **The Commission does not recommend changing the floor heights.**
- **The flexibility and elegance of this project is appreciated**
- **The team's response to providing more detailed architectural drawings, plans for wayfinding and overall incorporation of art and more specifics on building materials is appreciated.**
- **Color options should be explored further, as the Commission is not convinced that green metal exterior trim is the right choice for the project.**
- **The Commission suggests incorporating art elements into the storm water strategies and interior oasis.**
- **The green screen modulation on the east and the south side presents an opportunity for art work. It is underdressed and should be explored with the artists.**
- **The Zoo should be encouraged to heavily vegetate the green screen because more green will make it function better.**
- **Encourage the team to continue with West Entry integration, as previously recommended.**

Note: Commissioner Hoffman dissented based on concerns that the architecture did not suit the site.

Project Description

- ARCHITECTURE

The Commission appreciates the construction design presentation of the proposed Zoo parking garage. Proponents presented site plans for the project and addressed the concerns

regarding the articulation on the east side of the structure. A new landscape element has been added at the west as the result of subdividing the existing Northwest parking lot which has been modified to accommodate general parking. A fence shown previously on the west side was called “hostile” and has been removed and garage itself replaces the security fence there to serve dual purposes. The east façade has been altered at the Commission’s request; the elimination of two parking spaces has been proposed to create green screen indentations in the façade for the entire height of the building. The stair has also been relocated to add a sculptural dimension. All floors have pedestrian only zones, which allow for safe travel; floors three and four have additional pedestrian walkways on the periphery, which forms a porch-like viewpoint. The interior of the garage vehicle ramp uses acoustically treated steel and a ribbed surface on the exterior. Plans include using silver aspens that stand against the building’s metal panels at the north to complement and soften that wall.



- **LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT**

Landscape design has been guided by two primary principles: landscape immersion and the breakout of plant zones. The landscape architect is charged with selecting materials while the Zoo will be installing all landscape themselves. Overall, the experience around the edges will designate arrival zones and buffer views of adjacent structures, including the administrative trailers. Ferns will be used to frame the elevations in conjunction with aspens. Seasonal plants have also been used to provide variation annually through flowering.

- **GRAPHIC PROGRAM/SIGNAGE**

Signage represents a continuation of the Zoo branding. Most traffic will be northbound on Phinney. The first signs segregate entrances and non-entrances. The Zoo has assisted with terminology for signs; it was determined that directional descriptors would be used to describe different parking. Adequate signage will warn oversized vehicles. Scale for signs is under traffic sign scale, but remains significant. Signs will be standard, color-coded and not backlit. Pedestrian wayfinding at the garage will be enhanced by an art program; this may involve all hour levels and the plaza. Pedestrian signs and maps inside the Zoo will coordinate with parking signs, these are still in the development stage. The colors are consistent with existing signs.



Public Comments

Scott Ringgold, City of Seattle, Department of Planning and Development

The City has conducted an EIS review which has been challenged and will need to go to the Hearing Examiner and will next review the project MUP and issue a decision.

Irene Wall of the Phinney Ridge Community Council:

- Garage is not necessary; it is the “pig which no amount of green lipstick can conceal or make suitable for locating in a park.” Its capacity could only be reached at peak season and will be underutilized all other times. This has been called an amenity by the Zoo Society, which is very different from a necessity.
- The garage is expensive and cannot be mitigated
- This project is not consistent with single family zoning
- The garage does not promote sustainability, a goal of the Seattle’s comprehensive plan. This garage is contrary to specific policy statements in the comprehensive plan
- The City should do more to encourage other efficient parking options.
- Encourage the Commission to stand by its earlier recommendation for West Entry project integration.

Commissioners Questions and Comments

- How wide are the green screens?
There are two different widths, 5 feet and 8 feet.
- Did you learn anything about steel in incorporating it into this project?
A Vancouver, WA garage proved to be a good value and provided a new opportunity as a way that was disarming and unusual. Changes in codes has recently allowed the use of steel as well as low-cost beam cutting that reduces waste and is recyclable. It is low maintenance also.
- Is the garage nosier with steel?
No, deck slopes down and breaks up the sound along with the beams. There is lower perforation than other materials.
- Was wood added to the façade?
Some wood is still shown at the groundplane on the east façade, it has been removed elsewhere and thicker landscaping will serve to block headlight glare..
- Renderings are great, but I cannot see the wood in these?
It is not shown.
- Are the vines on the green screen all deciduous?
Some are semi-evergreen, only two evergreen vines are found in the northwest, and neither is ideal. There is however a seasonal aspect to the landscape surrounding the building.
- What is the percent for art?
There is not a percent for art, the project is not technically part of the 1% for art program.
- The sign that reads ‘keep right’ that will be on Phinney, does that mean there will be a designated lane?
Yes, there is a lane widening that occurs.
- Signs along Phinney have information, going northbound only, right?
Yes, Sign type V00 is one-sided, but V01 is two-sided and could be seen by southbound traffic.
- Is there signage on the west side of Phinney?
Currently, it is not anticipated that there will be due to property ownership.
- Where is drop-off activity going to occur?

As part of the west entrance development, there will be opportunities for drop-off along with bus stops.

- What is the material used for signs? And the green sign panel?
It is a pressure treated wood with stain. The panel will most likely be polyurethane.
- The automobile is out of scale, which makes the signs look smaller.
- If the signs on the street are 10 X 5, that is large for a neighborhood.
In vehicular standards it is not large; it actually has a smaller impact. A balance achieved between legibility and impact, the goal is 4-6in. letter height minimum. Full-scale mock-ups will be made.
- The signs should not pose any hazard in terms of blind spots.
Yes, exit signs are kept below 4 feet to assist with this.
- Is the font consistent?
The font is Gill Sans and is now being used for exhibits.
- Commendable wayfinding.
- Appreciate the involvement of art and the simple lines with perforation.
- Glad to see the timber gone, beautification of materials is appreciated along with the green screen.
- Should consider color more, possibly rusty steel, which complimented the landscape and not disguising itself—not necessarily that color, but think more about it. Second the comment on color, olive/grey is nice.
- Oasis storm water on the rooftop is commendable.
- Was there any consideration given to adding modulation to the west?
This was intentionally not done to distinguish it and create softness with the landscape.
- Feel comfortable that the green screen on the façade will add depth.
- The circulation on the south side is missing a community element and relies on the overuse of guardrails. There should be a green screen or something volumetric.
The purpose was to provide a look out point/perch and is conspicuous, using a simple mesh exterior.
- One Commissioner announced he is choosing to vote no on this building, as the previous discussions created goals of screening and upholstering which seem to have been abandoned. The building is now being celebrated as an object—which strays from initial design principles. Material is now industrial and is not appropriate to the site. Concerned that previous comments were not fully considered.
- Hiding the building became less feasible, and the team has hidden it as much as possible. The Commission previously guided the team to show more architecture and integrate it with the landscape. The issues now are ones of refinement. If there are corners that are seen, should they be bland or articulated?
- At the last presentation, the Commission requested that the building not be hid by foliage.
- The new donation for the West Entry and penguin exhibit is good news and seems critical in ensuring how the garage works with the rest of the Zoo.
- The edifying opportunities are appreciated and the landscape maintenance will rely on the horticulture team. Also, labeling plants would be great.
- The departure from traditional parking structures is appreciated, and offers more flexibility.
- South entry needs more concentration with art and wayfinding.
- The structure is elegant and materials play off each other—seasonal foliage is nice with the colors.
- Seasonal foliage will offer more environmental integration in the winter.

18 Jan. 2007 Project: Transportation Projects Briefing

Phase: Briefing

Previous Reviews: February 2005

Presenters: Grace Crunican, Director of Seattle Department of Transportation

Attendees: Dawn Schellenberg, SDOT

Time: 1 hour

(SDC Ref.# 169/RS0606)

Summary: The Commission thanks Grace Crunican for taking time to update the Commission on the standing of numerous transportation projects in Seattle.

A variety of projects were discussed for future or ongoing Commission involvement, including the following:

- Fremont Bridge will be mostly complete in May 2007; and fully complete by May/March of 2008. The Maintenance Building may not go forward as originally designed due to lack of funding and the possibility of relocation.
- Bus Rapid Transit currently has two hot corridors: West Seattle & Ballard. One route would run from West Seattle on Fauntleroy onto the West Seattle Bridge and feed onto 3rd Ave. Another would run from Ballard, possibly as north as Crown Hill, and then down 15th and Elliot to feed downtown onto 3rd Ave. Aurora is waiting for grants, which has created slow progress though the template has been set. Support and concerns from downtown properties have been expressed indicating on converting 3rd Avenue turned into transit corridor permanently.
- Center City Projects include the Alaskan Way Surface/Hybrid tunnel option and King Street Station. The State's Expert Review Panel for Alaskan Way wrote a letter to the Governor last fall listing suggestions of items to decrease tunnel costs. The City has altered the original six-lane, stacked tunnel to meet their suggestions and expect almost \$1.2 billion can be saved as a result. The final decision is likely to be up for an advisory public vote in March or April. The King Street Station was purchased from Burlington Northern for \$1.00. Transaction is nearly complete. Seismic retrofit is underway as well as general clean up and clock rework. Completion is projected to take years.
- Northlink light rail should be done by 2018. City as a partner with Sound Transit who will remain the lead agency on that.
- The Downtown Transit Tunnel reopens to busses September 2007 and light rail in 2009. MLK has faced challenges with contractors, SDOT is working with ST to expedited paving. Beacon Hill had encountered some inspection issues. The University Link reached a final design in 2006. The Capital Hill station construction should begin in 2008 and Stadium station will start soon after.
- The First Hill Street Car is included in the Sound Transit 2 package. It includes a connection to the Capital Hill station, as well as a link from Boren to Jackson to link with the Jackson streetcar. This is estimated between \$130-150M and if funding is approved, could be built by 2016. This project will be using the Portland streetcar model.
- Two-way Mercer has \$30M from the Bridging the Gap funding program and it is estimated that \$85M more is needed. Still, SDOT can complete design and begin ROW acquisition into next year.
- SR-520 has an estimated total project cost of \$4-\$5B, but only a portion of that has been committed from the State, so a funding plan is still needed.

- Spokane Street Viaduct is planned to be widened and a ramp for buses and motorists will be added to Fourth Ave., this is a \$145M project. This would most likely have a very industrial look.
- SDOT is also moving fast on the Lander Street project, but may be short on funding, however the County has committed \$10M to bring up to Occidental and Bridging the Gap has \$20M included. The project is critical to freight and bus movement and like Spokane Street, helps mitigate Viaduct replacement construction project.
- The I-90 transit expansion is on the horizon if ST2 funding package gets approved. This would change the middle lanes to transit.