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Julie Bassuk
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Graham Black

Malika Kirkling

Laurel Kunkler

Tom Nelson

Julie Parrett

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APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

May 5, 2011

Convened 10:30 am
Adjourned 2:00 pm

Projects Reviewed

Alaskan Way Viaduct Sound End and Portals
Unico

Commissioners Present

Julie Bassuk, Chair
Graham Black
Malika Kirkling
Tom Nelson
Julie Parrett (excused from 1:00-2:00pm)
Osama Quotah
Norie Sato
Donald Vehige

Commissioners Excused

Laurel Kunkler

Incoming Commissioners Present

Debbie Wick-Harris

Staff Present

Valerie Kinast
Tom Iurino



May 5, 2011	Project:	Alaskan Way Viaduct South End and Portals
	Phase:	Design Update
	Last Reviewed:	Mar 17, 2011; May 20, 2010; May 6, 2010; Mar 18, 2010; Feb 18, 2010; Jan 21, 2010; Oct 1, 2009; Jun 18, 2009; May 21, 2009
	Presenters:	Ron Paananen, WSDOT Steve Pearce, SDOT
	Attendees:	Amy Turner, Alaskan Way Viaduct Communications Bob Powers, SDOT Brian Elrod, Seattle Tunnel Partners Cary Moon, Peoples Waterfront Coalition Clyde Joseph, Seattle Tunnel Partners Diane Hilmo, WSDOT Mike Johnson, SDOT Ron Judd, WSDOT Susan Everett, WSDOT

Time: 11:00am – 12:00pm

Presentation

WSDOT and SDOT summarized the history of the planning of the south portal area. In 2009, WSDOT, SDOT, ROMA and NBBJ created the Portal Area Design Guidelines. The Design Commission reviewed these guidelines; they became part of the RFP for the design build contract.

WSDOT and SDOT presented the urban design components of the south portal area, including plans for bike and pedestrian access, redevelopment opportunities on 1st Ave, a new waterfront connection via Railroad Way, the connection to adjoining neighborhoods, the S. Atlantic Street overcrossing, and the tunnel portals. They emphasized that the design-build team, Seattle Tunnel Partners, has continually referred to these guidelines throughout its design process.

At a Design Commission review in March 2011, WSDOT and the design-build team presented changes to the south portal area, specifically adding an elevated ramp, moving and consolidating the tunnel entrance portals, and modifying the “little h” overpass design. The Design Commission denied approval of the changes because they did not meet the intent of the visual guidelines. (See Design Commission’s actions from its 3-17-11 meeting.) WSDOT explained that the design-build team suggested the changes to improve constructability, reduce risk, and reduce the expanse of pavement in the final design. WSDOT and SDOT felt the tradeoff was reasonable; the new ramp was not in a sensitive location, was lower than the viaduct, and helped make the transition into downtown as the change in elevation and offered a sense of arrival.

SUMMARY

The Design Commission thanked WSDOT and SDOT for presenting a background summary of the Alaskan Way Viaduct South End and Portals project. Given WSDOT’s commitment to the elevated ramp and relocated and consolidated tunnel entrances and that WSDOT and SDOT did not present a revised design in response to the commission’s March 17, 2011 recommendations, the commission made the following comments:

- **Respond to the commission’s suggestions to improve design and mitigate negative impacts as identified in its March 17, 2011 actions.**
- **Refine the landscape design concept and enhance its connections to adjacent neighborhoods. The quality of the space is as important as the quantity of space. Don’t just apply landscaping.**

- **Explore design solutions that can help mitigate the problems created by the new elevated ramp and consolidated and relocated portals. Apply CPTED principles, maintain street-level views to the waterfront from the development sites that border 1st Ave, and minimize spaces that create antisocial behavior. Think creatively and broadly about how the design can create a new opportunity for better urban design and connections to the neighborhood; it should not be an excuse to degrade the urban environment.**
- **Adhere to the documented urban design goals. The ROMA plan looked more urban and appropriate to the setting; the current concept looks more like a highway interchange. Pay just as much attention to the pedestrian experience in the public spaces and urban realm shaped by this project as the experience of the driver that is bypassing the city.**
- **Provide a plan and chart of the timing and location of all contracts associated with the Viaduct Replacement project (and not just those reviewed by the Design Commission). This analysis will help the commission and team understand how pieces fit together.**

At the next review the commission would like more than an hour to review the project.