



## APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**Mike McGinn**  
Mayor

**Diane Sugimura**  
Director, DPD

**Marshall Foster**  
Planning Director, DPD

**Julie Bassuk**  
Chair

**Laurel Kunkler**

**Shannon Loew**

**Tom Nelson**

**Julie Parrett**

**Osama Quotah**

**Norie Sato**

**Seth Geiser**

**Debbie Harris**

**Valerie Kinast**  
Coordinator

**Tom Iurino**  
Senior Staff

**October 18, 2012**

Convened 8:30am  
Adjourned 3:30pm

### Projects Reviewed

Mercer West II  
Denny Substation

### Commissioners Present

Julie Bassuk, Chair  
Shannon Loew (excused from 8:30-9:00am)  
Tom Nelson  
Norie Sato  
Debbie Harris (excused from 8:30-9:00am)  
Julie Parrett (excused from 8:30-9:30am, 11:30-3:30pm)  
Osama Quotah (excused from 8:30-9:00am)  
Lolly Kunkler (excused from 8:30-9:15am, 11:30-1:00)

### Incoming Commissioners Present

Seth Geiser

### Staff Present

Valerie Kinast  
Tom Iurino



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**October 18, 2012**      **Project:**      **Mercer West II**  
**Phase:**      90% Design  
**Last Reviewed:**      Apr 19, 2012; Nov 3, 2011; Jan 20, 2011  
**Presenters:**      Eric Tweit, SDOT  
                         Eric O'Brien, SDOT  
                         Dennis Haskell, SVR  
                         Amy Cragg, GGN

**Attendees:**      Kelly Pajek, Arts and Cultural Affairs  
                         Monica Moravec, KPFF  
                         Shelly Langton, KPFF  
                         Susan Bartlett, KPFF

**Time:** 9:00am-11:00am

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### Summary of Project Presentation

The design team presented the Mercer West II Project, which will complete the City's vision for a direct, two-way connection between I-5 and Elliott Avenue West continuing the segment of work constructed by the Mercer East Project. The project includes: widening Mercer between Dexter Avenue N and Fifth Avenue N, including the underpass at Aurora to provide three lanes in each direction, left-turn lanes, wider sidewalks, and a bicycle path; converting Mercer Street to two-way operation with two lanes in each direction and turn pockets between Fifth Avenue N and Queen Anne Avenue N; converting Roy Street to a two-way street with bicycle lanes between Fifth Avenue N and Queen Anne Avenue N; creating a new Sixth Avenue N connection between Mercer and Harrison streets; and closing Broad Street to re-connect the street grid between Ninth Ave N and Fifth Ave N.

The team explained its concept for the design: to create an identity and continuity to whole Mercer corridor including green landscaping. They envisioned the bridge and the whole corridor as a gateway to South Lake Union and Uptown and by covering the massive retaining walls in vines they carried forward the green concept from Mercer East. Since the last review, the team made refinements to the design and made decisions about additional design details. Most notably, the team changed the design of the pilasters to make them taller (at 12 feet above the sidewalk), more contemporary, and with a blue translucent glass element set in a notch at the top. The retaining walls now terminate at the end grade in a concrete newel post with a recessed band that reflects the design of the top of the pilasters. The wall under the bridge on which the artwork rests is now painted purple. The team explained many of its decisions related to the treatment of the bridge itself were limited by WSDOT who determined some specs like bridge girders and guard rail would not entertain any changes that would add weight or cost. Also, the team noted the city needs to decide how to handle the remainder properties created as a result of the vacation of Broad Street.

## **ACTION (by Harris)**

The Seattle Design Commission thanks the design team for its clear presentation of the 90% design of the Mercer West II project. The commission likes the addition of the glass to the pilasters, the use of silva cells, the relocation of the utilities to accommodate tree planting, and the addition of the purple to the underpass wall to frame the artwork. By a vote of 7-1 the commission approves the 90% design with the following recommendations:

- Encourage SDOT to cooperate with other city departments to develop guidance for the Broad Street right-of-way remainders. The guidance should be part of greater plan for the area.
- Revise the city's coordination with WSDOT in the selection of bridge design and materials used on projects in the City of Seattle. For example, the bridge's handrail design and color is too obtrusive, which is the result of how the city's choices are limited by its existing relationship with WSDOT. SDOT should better coordinate with WSDOT earlier in the process to improve the options for better urban design and more design freedom in the city.
- Further study the bridge pilasters, including their scale and proportion. Consider tying the vertical element to the walls and bringing the glass at the top of the pilaster down to the pedestrian scale. Examine further the color of the glass and the light it will reflect to make sure it has the effect the design intends. Also, conduct additional study on the smaller, end posts; the existing design is rigid and doesn't fit well in the context, which is more fluid.
- Further study the purple wall color to insure choosing the right shade and hue of purple. Do more mockups; the drawings may or may not render the color exactly, especially in different lighting conditions.
- Develop a plan for establishment of the vines and to prevent vandalism especially while the vines are being established. Make the rhythm of plants softer along Mercer, and do not use the staccato pattern shown in the renderings that creates the impression of distinct banding.
- Consider adding trash receptacles and a respite or seating for pedestrians and bicyclists, as the length of the walk is nearly three blocks long.
- Elevate planning for bicycle infrastructure, signals, signage, and furnishings to the same level of design and materials as for pedestrians and cars. For example, consider lean rail or change the slope at the intersection of Mercer and Dexter for cyclists on the uphill side.

Commissioner Loew voted no because while the team has done a lot of work, there's been no refinement of design between 60% and 90% and based on the images shown, the design is not yet ready to build.