



**MEETING NOTES
CENTRAL WATERFRONT COMMITTEE
DESIGN OVERSIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE**

**MEETING #14 January 26th, 2012
11:30 AM — 2:00 PM Seattle City Hall, Floor L2, Boards & Commissions Room**

Meeting Attendees

Subcommittee Members & Advisors

- Mark Reddington, Co-Chair
- Patrick Gordon, Co-Chair
- Cary Moon
- Vlad Oustimovitch
- Brian Steinburg
- Rebecca Barnes

City Staff & Consultants

- Marshall Foster
- Steve Pearce
- My Tam Nguyen
- James Corner
- Tatiana Choulika
- Ken Johnsen
- Kathy Cox-Czosnyka
- Erin Tam

Other Central Waterfront Committee Members

- John Nesholm
- Ben Franz-Knight
- Julie Parrett
- Julie Bassuk

Additional Attendees

- Susan Mueller
 - Sandy Hobson
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Introduction

- **Design Oversight Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Members & Advisors:**
 - The Design Oversight Subcommittee drafted and shared a memo with the design team on January 19th with feedback on the Overlook Fold; today's presentation is a response to that.
- **City Staff:**
 - We have scheduled a series of community forums starting next week at Town Hall to receive public feedback on some of specific ideas and questions that this Subcommittee is discussing.

- The topics for the forums include: Climate and Context (1/31); Mobility and Access (2/8); Environment and Ecology (2/27); Setting the Stage (3/5); and, Uniquely Seattle (3/15).
- If Design Oversight Subcommittee could attend and participate in the roundtable discussions during these forums, that would be very helpful.
- We are also going to start opening incorporating more explicit time for public comment in these meetings.

Overlook Fold – Working Session

*Committee reviewed and referenced materials including: *Overlook Fold Presentation; Working Model.*

Overlook Fold PowerPoint Presentation

- **Consultants (J. Corner, jco):**
 - As a reminder, the “big idea” of the Overlook Fold is to connect Pike Place Market with the Seattle Aquarium and create a large, open space along the Waterfront, which it is currently lacking.
 - This led to questions from the Design Oversight Subcommittee about scale, access, connectivity, relationship to open space and overall character, and we’ll review some ideas in response to that today.
 - Please note: this presentation is a work in progress and so we welcome your insight and conversation around these elements; we also invite you to view the physical working model following this discussion.
 - We have created a series of six new alternatives ranging from maximum to minimum, with different square footages and technical issues; of these, we think Option 2 makes the most sense.
 - One important note is that the Overlook fold is in fact an intricate web of connections from level to level, rather than a monolithic structure. Design team reviewed Overlook fold presentation, including:
 - **Overlook Fold:**
 - October 2012 v. January 2012; Lid Off; Public Realm on the Fold; Buildings on the Fold.
 - **Access & Links:**
 - Primary Route; Overlook Escalator; Pike Street Stairs + Elevator; Market Parking Stairs + Elevator; Western Avenue to Elliott Avenue Stairs + Elevator; Pike Place Market Stairs + Elevator; Elliott Ave Stairs.
 - **Elliott Avenue:**
 - Street Alignment; Buildings Beneath the Fold; Sidewalk & Bike Route; Vegetation + Street Trees; Access; View Looking North at Pike Street; View Looking South at Pine Street; Fish Tank Underpass; Light Installation Underpass.
 - **Scale & Configuration:**
 - The Monolithic Approach – Shrink the Fold; October 2011 v. January 2012; Fold Configurations; Preferred Layout; Total Area; Buildings; Covered Areas; Access; Fitness + Play; Vegetation; Open Space; From Monolith to Urban Fabric.
 - **Program & Places on the Fold/Pike Place Market Program:**
 - Size & Scale Study; Building Typology Study; Building “A;” Lift Ground Plane; Access to Pike Place Market; Building Program; Continuous Shed Structure; Elevation Looking East; Building “B;” Lift Ground Plane + Connect to Access Points; Access to Western Avenue & Pike Street; Building Program; Elevation Looking East; Building “C;” Program Spaces; Insert Under Fold; Shift Volumes to Create Street-Level Access; Elevation Looking Northeast.
 - **Open Space Program & Places:**
 - Play Slopes; Train Overlook; Overlook Ramp; Elliott Bay Balcony; Overlook Steps.
 - The big message we want to communicate is that we’re trying to respond to your questions by breaking down the fold’s scale, maximizing access points and making it more intricate and fine-grained.

General Comments

- **Design Oversight Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Members & Advisors:**
 - So many of the issues have been resolved and there are many smart moves and fine-grained solutions to the place making, which is tremendous—this is great.
 - It's very cool to see the new ideas; the way you've balanced the program versus the flexible space is just right and it allows for evolution and growth over time.
 - I really appreciate the study and explanation you've given of the issues we've raised; I understand it will continue to evolve, but the basic direction and kinds of things you've studied is terrific.
- **Consultants (J. Corner, jcfo):**
 - One important point to note is that this is complicated to walk through and can be difficult to understand so, moving forward, we'll need to make it as legible as possible for the public.

Buildings

- **Design Oversight Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Members & Advisors:**
 - I really like the idea of recalling the historic market structure on the fold and having very contemporary boxes underneath; it's a very intriguing, positive and contemporary solution.
- **Consultants (J. Corner, jcfo):**
 - We found that the boxes were a good way to keep the language and offer outdoor spaces that are undercover while having eyes on the open space, which was expressed as a concern.

Programming

- **Design Oversight Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Members & Advisors:**
 - Perhaps there are little community events mixed in to bring people for other reasons? I think that sort of thing could continue being elevated.

Connectors & Access

- **Design Oversight Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Members & Advisors:**
 - Being more connected in different ways allows greater circulation through the districts and joins the platform to the surrounding context, which is more believable.
 - I like and appreciate the explanation and frequency of the stair connectors and pathways, which seems native to this City.

Fold Design

- **Design Oversight Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Members & Advisors:**
 - Is there a more simple and effective open space solution elsewhere? There's an entire vacant block on Seneca and Spring. I worry that the elegance is being lost as you've tried to resolve issues.
- **Consultants (J. Corner, jcfo):**
 - The fold is designed to achieve more objectives than just creating a bigger, open space on the Waterfront, which include:
 - Connecting Pike Place Market and Belltown to the Seattle Aquarium and the Waterfront;
 - Making sense of the Elliott Avenue gash that cuts in between the waterfront condominiums and the Market;
 - Offering the same raised views that come the viaduct today, which the public said was important.

Step Zone Staircase, Plaza

- **Design Oversight Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Members & Advisors:**
 - The dramatic staircase seems like a slam-dunk from the point-of-view of coming down to the Waterfront; however, looking back up feels extremely dominating.
 - What thoughts do you have about facilitating the excitement going back up? The plaza and connection to the south does not feel as generous and beautiful as what's happening above.
- **Consultants (J. Corner, jcfo):**
 - That is a huge space and we diminished the number of steps by adding a building; we're also leaving the Pier relatively open so I think the space can take something that can hold that volume.
 - We are also expecting events and concerts in this location, so we wanted a certain scale; it will be very cool to sit and watch a concert and have a view behind.

Garage Access

- **Design Oversight Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Members & Advisors:**
 - Is there a better location for garage access when we think of the hill climb fold? My sense is that people from the plaza are more likely to cross the road there.
 - It also seems there may be the potential for something more graceful and artful at the garage entrance; something that's like a special plaza or entry.
 - The entry feels like it is in the right place, but we'd like the design team to take it to the next level of scale and address what the experience will be like going to the retail.
- **City Staff:**
 - There are a lot of great examples of garage accesses that are integrated with plazas.
- **Consultants (jcfo):**
 - We can take another look at the garage again; it's actually a safe place to enter, but it doesn't have to be black asphalt.

Pike Place Market & Seattle Aquarium

- **Design Oversight Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Members & Advisors:**
 - I like the sense that Pike Place Market is moving toward the water, and I wonder about the Seattle Aquarium moving toward the City, as well – what do they think?
 - Both the Aquarium and the Market are beloved and important institutions in this City and region, and it seems like they're the natural caretakers for this whole area.
 - Is the Aquarium interested in the building under the stairs? What is your sense about how intact this is likely to be long-term as different plans evolve?
- **Consultants (jcfo):**
 - Just as the Market has been engaged, so has the Aquarium; they have a set of issues to be addressed, including visibility to water and water coverage.
 - The Aquarium has been supportive of everything we've shown thus far; they're considering their own expansion plans and we're trying to make sure they're congruent with what we're trying to do.
 - We hope they are interested in the building under the stairs, but we also want to make sure that space activates the plaza, and includes something like a restaurant or café.

Housing & Retail

- **Design Oversight Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Members & Advisors:**
 - In our recent retail workshop the point was made repeatedly that having housing along the Waterfront is critical to activating the space and ensuring a built-in level of activity.
 - Have you looked at alternative uses for Building B? I can understand why housing would be challenging, but is that a site that could take on housing with retail at the base, or a different use?
 - Also, is there retail at the bottom of the Fix/Madore building? How comfortable will it be for pedestrians to cross the street? What size of spaces will be most successful in terms of feeling active?
 - Finally, how ambitious does Pike Place Market feel about operating it Building B, or will the new entity take on development and ownership? Making it succeed will be a labor of love.
 - It's important that, as part of the urban framework, those and other activities are encouraged the right way; I think that should be part of the story that is told to the public.
- **Consultants (L. Copeland, Mithun):**
 - In our research on the eastern frontage, we have identified opportunities for residential development:
 - There are a number of housing opportunities on the east frontage, including about six sites in the Central Waterfront area that very well could be new mixed-use housing.
 - There are also a number of buildings that will likely have adaptive reuse when the viaduct is torn down, and some could include housing.
- **Consultants (J. Corner, jcfo):**
 - Uses that we see at Building B include privately operated cafes and small restaurants built by the City and Waterfront entity and leased to independent operators.
 - These could really be extraordinary settings, with views across the bay, proximity to parking and activity that will be happening along Elliott.
 - Up to now we've been thinking of these as market-related buildings that are built by the City or Waterfront entity and leased to the market.
 - In terms of housing, we had a constructive meeting with Pike Place Market yesterday and one of the issues they raised is the housing program.
 - There are two levels at Building B: one relates to the parking level and the other relates to the overlook; programmatically, the desire would be to try and keep the uses active along both sides of the building.
 - Also, we can't have more than two stories because of the zoning height issue and residential building at the back of the garage; we'd need a certain critical mass of units for housing to make sense here.

Steinbrueck Park

- **City Staff:**
 - One of the interesting changes is the relationship between the Western edge of PC1 and the transition up to Steinbrueck Park.
 - We've learned that Steinbrueck Park is distinctive on its own as the belvedere of our Waterfront; there are now more stairs and a more intimate scale as you walk across PC1.
 - This transitional element, with playful elements such as slides, is likely to be much-loved as visitors progress down to the plaza and railroad overlook.
- **Design Oversight Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Members & Advisors:**
 - It seems that elegant relationship protects the unique ecology and speaks to new and different levels; the direct staircase connection to the Elliott-Western connector is also major improvement.

- **Consultants (J. Corner, jcfo):**
 - In terms of Elliott; we're still determining how to balance between parking, public stair circulation, daylight and giving it character in very tight dimensions and big height levels here.

Overall Design & Costs

- **Design Oversight Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Members & Advisors:**
 - What is your sense about how intact this is likely to be long-term as different plans evolve? Is anything redundant? If you had to reduce costs, what might you cut?
- **Consultants (J. Corner, jcfo):**
 - We've shown a range of options and think Option 2 makes the most sense; what is critical is not to lose the opportunity to have an elevated platform with 360-degree views.
 - The primary cost is reflected by the structure and span across the roadway so it's earthquake-proof and accommodates train vibrations; we'll continue working closely with CH2M to make that efficient.

Additional Comments

- **City Staff:**
 - I think this is exactly what the team needed today – finding time to work through the details; this was very helpful.
- **Additional Committee Members:**
 - By and large the presentation today is a huge step forward, but I have concerns about the costs.
- **Additional Participants:**
 - These are great ideas, and perhaps school buses could park under the folds? They should also be high enough to allow for semi-trucks. I wonder if the boxes would work from a business standpoint.
- **City Commission Representatives (J. Bassuk & J. Parrett, Seattle Design Commission):**
 - It seems important that you talk about this project in terms of building a neighborhood, not just a project that will ultimately attract a neighborhood.
 - Also, in addition to retail spaces, we need multi-use community spaces and places where artists can work; that's what will build a neighborhood and make the Waterfront local.
 - I understand the buildings architecturally and conceptually, but not how they will actually be built – a shed with boxes underneath? The public will need better explanation.
 - Also, if the Overlook Fold is not included as one of the first projects, will there be other ways for people to connect down to the Aquarium and Pike Place Market?
 - It would be interesting to pull back a little and see how this area feels if you're approaching along the Waterfront from the south – it will be a gateway.
- **Partners (B. Franz-Knight, Pike Place Market):**
 - One of the things that makes the Market is the public streets, the park, retail, restaurants and the fact that there's housing – ideally throughout the entire district.
 - In further collaborations I hope there's room to continue that discussion, and also in serving the diversity of the market community itself.
 - We're very appreciative of the collaboration underway and that the Subcommittee is allowing time for public comment, which will be more important moving forward; I'm excited to see the public here today.