

Murray Basin Combined Sewer Overflow Control Facility Design Advisory Group

Meeting Summary

January 12, 2012 6:30-8:30 pm

Fauntleroy School House, 9140 California Ave S.W.

Overview

On January 12, 2012, the King County Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) hosted a Design Advisory Group (DAG) meeting for the Murray Basin Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Control Facility. The DAG is providing input and advice regarding proposed site layout, facility layout, post-construction site use, and landscaping and aesthetics to share with the broader public and WTD. The group is reviewing technical analyses in order to understand proposed layouts and provide input about design options to inform the County's decision-making. The DAG is acting as a sounding board for the project technical team, and a project liaison to the public, helping ensure the County project team receives a broad community perspective.

Topics for the January 12 DAG meeting included:

- Review traffic calming survey results and impacts on the preliminary facility design
- Discuss preliminary facility design concept drawings and reach a common understanding on the group's initial reactions
- Provide feedback for King County's upcoming meeting with SDOT

Welcome and Introductions

Penny Mabie, meeting facilitator, welcomed participants to the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance. After a round of introductions, Penny reviewed the agenda and explained that the purpose of the meeting was for the DAG to provide feedback to King County before their Jan. 24th meeting with SDOT.

Erica Jacobs, WTD project manager, spoke about the SDOT permitting process. The meeting on January 24th represents the first official milestone in the Murray facility's design review process. SDOT's Street Improvement Process (SIP) will likely be the longest review process that King County will undertake for this project. Multiple local agencies are involved, including the Seattle Department of Planning and Development, Seattle Public Utilities, and the Seattle Parks and Recreation Department. Erica explained that although the SIP is designed to be an iterative process, King County will try to make the process as linear as possible, given the tight schedule of the Murray project. The SIP includes a series of milestones that the project must pass, the first of which is the 0-30% design phase. Erica added that King County will incorporate the DAG's

input at each stage of the SIP and move through SDOT's design milestone reviews concurrently to the extent possible with the stages of the county's design (i.e. 30%, 60%, 90%, 100%).

- Patrick Gordon voiced concerns that the design process has been sped up without the DAG's approval. He asked why there haven't been more public involvement opportunities before this stage as previously agreed upon with King County and as noted in the project calendar. According to the calendar, the DAG is supposed to review architectural design in May. Patrick said that the timeline does not coalesce with what is on the agenda for the current DAG meeting. Patrick reiterated his concern that King County is submitting preliminary architectural drawings to the City without properly involving the DAG and providing a chance for helpful feedback. If the drawings are submitted, it will become public record, potentially provoking negative publicity and criticism of the County's public involvement process.
- Scott Gunderson added that many of the issues that have been discussed at previous DAG meetings, such as the Murray right-of-way, have yet to be resolved. He expressed trepidation that the design process is moving forward faster than had been made clear to the public.
- Bill Beyers posed the idea of an informal meeting with SDOT. At this time, conversations with SDOT should be more of a discovery process instead of a rigid, 0-30% design hurdle.
- Erica responded that Mary Rutherford from SDOT was specifically invited to the last DAG meeting to have an exploratory conversation with the group. Mary explained to the DAG the choices involved with the Murray right-of-way and different streetscape options for Beach Drive SW. Furthermore, King County has a number of constraints that it must work through. All four of the County's CSO projects are on a very tight schedule as dictated by the state's Department of Ecology deadline. The County is still learning about the SIP process and is following SDOT's requirements for the process's first milestone. Erica added that the architectural drawings were created with the current degree of detail only to solicit meaningful feedback from the group. The County does not have to bring drawings to the SDOT meeting with this level of detail; the DAG can decide how much detail should be submitted on Jan. 24th.
- Doug Marsano, WTD community relations, agreed, saying the drawings were created to show the common themes that have resulted from the DAG and other public meetings, and were intended to generate feedback from the DAG to inform the architectural themes technical memo which will be included in the preliminary design report submitted to Ecology in March. Doug noted that the public participation calendar showed the DAG discussing architectural themes in December, so the drawings were provided to foster that discussion.
- Sue Kaufman-Una, WTD, stated that as a former permitter, providing more detail equates to more meaningful feedback from the permitting agency, thereby increasing the

likelihood of success for the project. Although the 0-30% milestone does not require much detail, it will be difficult for SDOT to provide constructive comments without a certain level of specificity. Sue added that any design drawings in the future should be dated and labeled “Discussion Only.”

- Erica noted that King County will be upfront with SDOT and clearly state that the drawings are derived from common themes of the community.

Traffic Calming Survey

Erica turned the group’s attention to the traffic calming survey and its results. Earlier in January, DAG members were asked to complete a survey ranking the traffic calming options under consideration for Beach Drive SW between Lowman Beach Park and the proposed facility. The DAG’s most preferred option was to maintain parking availability along the street. As expected, the group’s least preferred option was to reduce parking. The survey also made it clear that back-in diagonal parking is not favored by the DAG. SDOT has also expressed its dislike for back-in diagonal parking along Beach Drive SW.

Questions and Discussion

- Scott suggested that another option for parking could be diagonal nose-in parking on one side of the street.
 - Several DAG members responded that diagonal parking in Seattle is almost exclusively back-in parking for safety reasons.
 - Erica said King County will put forward the idea of nose-in parking at the SDOT meeting.
- Chas Redmond expressed support for more parking on one side of Beach Drive. Is it possible to get 16 or more diagonal parking spots on the west side? This would help kayakers and bikers who want easy access to the park.
 - Cheryl Eastberg responded that according to the plans, 11 spots can fit on one side with diagonal parking. She added that if back-in parking is created on the east side of the street, drivers will be inclined to stay there longer and enjoy the view.
 - Eric Bergstrom, HDR, said diagonal parking may push sidewalks onto County property, creating another property transfer issue for the project.
- Chas asked if it is possible to pave Beach Drive with permeable pavement so runoff can go directly into the ground.
 - Dan Pecha, HDR, answered that there may be groundwater issues since the water level is only 2-3 feet underground.
- Bill Beyers stated that nearby neighbors know congestion on Beach Drive is bad, so reducing parking would not make sense.

- Cheryl pointed out that there may not be a good place to turn around on Beach Drive, especially if a maintenance gate will block the driveway to the facility.
 - Erica answered that if the gate is moved too far back, people will want to use it as a parking spot.
 - Chas said a driveway that is three-quarters the length of a car would prevent parking but still allow room to run around.

- Scott stated that there may be ways to discourage people from going down Beach Drive unless they live there or are using the park. The street should provide good access to the park but restrict people from going down the dead end.
 - Bill added that signage on Beach Drive could help, especially for lost ferry-goers.
 - Chas said using paint to dictate vehicles from Beach Drive to Lincoln Park Way could be useful.

- Patrick recalled the group's attention to principles rather than detailed solutions. The DAG should be advocating for concepts that allow for a pedestrian gateway to the park and discourage more vehicle traffic down beach drive. Diagonal parking has the unintended consequence of more pavement across the right of way. He suggested the DAG needs to be careful about coming up with in-depth solutions and stick to basic principles.

- Erica said SDOT no longer likes to mark crosswalks. She asked if curb bump-outs are enough to suggest a pedestrian crosswalk across Beach Drive?
 - Chas suggested the group use SDOT's solution on California Avenue SW. The department used a 10-inch raised area all the way across the street to clearly identify where pedestrians can cross freely. From the perspective of a vehicle, the raised area looks like an obstruction in the road, making it necessary to slow down. Why not use these kinds of visible cues that SDOT is already implementing in West Seattle?
 - Patrick brought up the idea of the meandering "woonerf" as another potential solution.
 - Erica answered that the idea has support from SDOT. The woonerf option will remain as a possible option, particularly as the survey shows that it is a popular concept among DAG members.

- Cheryl said there will be a need for heavy machinery and large vehicles to have access to Beach Drive in order to maintain utilities. It is already difficult for them to make the sharp turn from Lincoln Park Way.
 - Erica answered that Seattle Public Utilities will be involved during the SIP permitting process.

- Erica asked the group whether they would support parallel parking on each side of the street. SDOT suggested the right of way be taken down to 25 feet wide, just like a residential street.
 - Group members agreed to keep this as an option.

- Cheryl asked how drivers will let other cars go by if there are no open spots to pull into.
- Scott responded that if neighbors on the end of Beach Drive are fine with the option, it should be kept on the table.
- Barbara Owens noted that there may be issues with people trying to turn around.
- Bill said there is a huge amount of pedestrian use on the street along the park.
- Chas agreed, saying that people already use it as a “woonerf.”

Preliminary Facility Design Drawings

Doug presented preliminary design drawings for the Murray CSO facility. He explained that the drawings are only meant as a first interpretation of the community’s common themes and that King County wants to hear from the DAG whether the drawings are reflective of those themes. Donn Hogan, HDR and the facility’s architect, explained that the drawings show the building’s basic footprint as it follows Lincoln Park Way. The design is intended to look as natural as possible, with green landscaping on the top and the building set into the hillside. To prevent the facility from looking industrial, a layer of landscaping and growth is set in a crescent formation in front of the building, allowing people to view the building itself. A stairway cuts down the building, providing pedestrians views of Puget Sound, the Olympics, and Lowman Beach Park. The stairway can also be backlit, making it safer for pedestrians to use at night. By placing the building as far back into the hill as possible, the design saves the northern portion of land for other uses. The generator building requires 16 feet of clearance, likely making that section of the facility 18-20 feet high.

Questions and Discussion

- Bill stated that it looks like a lot of the concepts from the previous meetings and design charrette are definitely being used and that this design is responsive to the group’s comments. He also pointed out that the drawings need to more clearly identify the small access point to Othello, which is slightly to the left of the Beach Drive dead end opening.
 - Patrick commented that he is stunned by the detail of the drawings. These drawing are primarily about the architecture of the building. He would love the opportunity for the DAG to be able to sculpt the landscape. Softening the edges could change the entire view of the building without moving much of the facility itself.
- Bill asked why the fuel tank cannot be located below ground.
 - Donn answered that there are issues with possible soil contamination and the high groundwater table.
 - Dan stated that there are also issues with the 48-inch-wide sewer pipe located directly under the Murray right-of-way, and that the City may not allow buried fuel tanks in the right-of-way.
 - Eric added that if the building is moved back from what is represented in the drawings, the facility may get too close to that pipe.
- Chas said that the drawings represented a great conceptual move forward and have done a great job capturing the group’s comments. The drawings give the group a good look at a

potential new asset – the stair step – which will provide beautiful views west. Is there is a way to soften the edges? The DAG had previously asked for an entryway on top of the facility. He added that it would be wonderful to make the stair step part of an educational design feature.

- Barb agreed, saying that she likes the layout, particularly because it could lend itself towards being an educational piece of the park. It looks like there is space for educational learning signs.
 - Cheryl asked if art could play a part in the design.
 - Erica responded that King County is definitely supportive to the idea of art on the site. A future meeting will include a representative from the Seattle Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs to discuss the possibilities.
- Patrick stated that there are many ways to use the views and soften the angular relationship of the stair step. He asked if there is a way to use the land form to disguise the front of the building.
 - Donn answered that the project team has yet to decide on the desired security of the building. One option could be to use green walls or other green infrastructure.
 - Patrick said he accepts that there is an area where people aren't allowed, but there is still a need for a screen that disguises the facility. Is there a point where we will place a security line?
 - Donn responded that the design shows a short wall along the initial screen of trees.
 - Barbara suggested the design use all natural features instead of a wall.
 - Patrick asked if it's possible to move back the screen to give back more public space. The project team should start thinking of the facility less as an actual building and more as landscaping or a land form.
 - Cheryl stated that it will be difficult to grow trees or large plants on top of the edge of the tank due to the lack of topsoil.
 - Donn said that although there will only be approximately two feet of soil, the project team can develop some pretty large landscaping if appropriate.
 - Barbara commented that it looks like there is a lot of concrete in front of the facility which could possibly encourage skateboarders. How about making that area gravel?
 - Bill asked if the project team has done an inventory of trees along the Murray right-of-way.
 - Erica responded it hasn't been done yet, but it will be done.
 - Scott said he liked the drawings but asked if it's possible to have the facility's components run horizontally along the hillside so that it doesn't jut outward as much as what is currently shown.
 - Don answered that the project team considered that possibility; unfortunately an obstacle was airflow to the emergency generator. This facility has to work; that's the priority. The facility's components have to breathe on their own.

- Patrick expressed a strong preference for the rounded street concept as it can easily meld with the beginning of the park. He asked if the sidewalk on the Lowman Park side of the street could be curved to match the rounded street and visually connect the two properties.
- Linda Cox noted her concerns about the size and architecture of the facility, noting that it seemed large and hulking. She also expressed interest in the power lines on the western side of Beach Drive Southwest being buried as part of this project.
- Pam Allen asked what components need to be above ground.
 - Eric answered the electrical room which must connect to the pump station across the street and the fuel storage tank.

Next Steps and Action Items

Penny reviewed the draft DAG charter with the group. The charter now includes King County's roles and responsibilities as well as protocol for external communications. All emails that include materials will be sized down to facilitate easy downloading.

Erica asked the group what level of detail should be disclosed at the upcoming SDOT meeting.

- Patrick stated that it is imperative for King County to not submit the architectural model or it will become public record. Instead, the County should submit a basic site diagram of the facility's necessary components.
- Penny asked the group if anybody had a problem with displaying the drawings on the Murray CSO project website.
 - Patrick said that if people see the drawings, there will be strong pushback from them on the specificity of the design.
 - Penny answered that if DAG members experience pushback, they could say that these drawings are based on preliminary concepts and there will be further discussion at the next DAG meeting.
 - Bill added that the drawings should be shared as long as the drawings are seen as a first cut open to revision. The drawings are responsive to the public's previous comments.

Although the next DAG meeting was scheduled to focus on green building themes and art possibilities, the group agreed that the facility's architectural concepts need to be finalized before moving on to other details. The next meeting will most likely take place in late January or early February. A Doodle poll for scheduling will be sent out to all DAG members.

Action Items

- Keep January 18th open for King County to visit and update the Morgan Community Association (MoCA) on the project.
- Send out a Doodle poll to DAG members to determine the best day for DAG meeting #4.

- Show the Othello Street opening more clearly on next version of architectural drawings.

Attendance

DAG Members

- Scott Gunderson
- Pamela Allen
- Barbara Owens
- Chas Redmond
- Patrick Gordon
- Cheryl Eastberg
- Bill Beyers
- Susan Kaufman-Una (King County WTD)

Community Members

- Linda Cox

WTD Staff and Consultants Facilitation Team

- Doug Marsano (King County WTD)
- Erica Jacobs (King County WTD)
- Dan Pecha (HDR)
- Eric Bergstrom (HDR)
- Donn Hogan (HDR)

Facilitation Team

- Penny Mabie (EnviroIssues)
- Landon Bosisio (EnviroIssues)