

Murray Basin Combined Sewer Overflow Control Facility Design Advisory Group

Meeting Summary

July 17, 2012 6:30-8:30 pm

Fauntleroy School House, 9140 California Ave S.W.

Overview

On July 17, 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 July 17 DAG meeting included:

- Review the SDOT 60% design concept and remaining decisions
- Discuss landscape and architecture design options
- Meet the project artist and review art concepts
- Discuss site fencing and art

Welcome and Introductions

Meeting facilitator Penny Mabie welcomed participants and community members to the meeting and reminded everyone to speak up as the room is large. Penny led a round of introductions and reviewed the meeting's agenda and objectives. The purpose of the meeting was to review the 60% design concept submitted to the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), discuss landscaping and architectural options, meet the project's artist, and discuss the site's future fencing and art.

Update on SDOT review

WTD project manager Erica Jacobs gave an update on the SDOT street improvement permit (SIP) process. The project team last met with SDOT on June 26 to discuss the project's 60% design milestone. The meeting also covered many of the finer details of the project, such as the placement of light poles and sidewalks, to ensure they meet SDOT standards. The project team will next resubmit a few small changes to meet those standards. Review for the 90% design threshold will take place over the next several months. Once that milestone is passed, the project

team will be able to submit a permit to the Department of Planning and Development (DPD).

Questions and Discussion

- DAG member Patrick Gordon said there has been significant confusion within the neighborhood about what the actual road design will look like. He asked when the design would be made public.
 - Erica Jacobs answered that the road design will be part of the official 60% facility design concept, which will be released around Labor Day in early September.
 - Project consultant engineer Eric Bergstrom mentioned that the project team does have an architectural drawing that displays the road's initial design.
 - Patrick said he would just like something to show the public.
 - WTD community relations lead Doug Marsano responded that the project team will put together a one-pager for public display.

Art Concepts

Project consultant landscape architect Matt Gurrad introduced project artist Robert Horner. Robert gave a brief presentation on several of the historic and global images that are at the basis of his landscaping and art concepts for the project. The primary medium of Robert's work will be rammed earth. His concepts also include a series of rain gardens that gently cascade down the slope, reflecting the ecology of the Puget Sound region – from the mountains to the beach. The gardens catch water at the top and release downwards, essentially displaying to the public what the facility itself is designed to carry out. Robert explained that his vision is to develop an ecological place that can be enjoyed by both residents and “natural residents.”

Questions and Discussion

- DAG member Bill Byers asked what rammed earth is.
 - Robert Horner answered that rammed earth consists of subsoils from the earth, which are naturally bound together with the use of pressure. Its strength is similar to or surpasses that of concrete, but it requires significantly less energy to create. Rammed earth essentially produces a sedimentary stone without an extraordinary amount of time. High-strength concrete is typically made using 2,500-3,000 pounds of pressure per square inch (psi). Rammed earth often requires approximately 8,000 psi. The material is also sealed in a manner that allows for protection against vandalism and weatherization.
- Patrick Gordon commented that he believes the art selection committee made an excellent pick. Robert Horner embodies the idea that the project is buying an entire creative thought process, not just a piece of art.

Landscape and Architecture Design

Project consultant architect Chan Cheang explained to the group the project's architectural design. The project team has been working to minimize the volume of the facility and blend it with the landscape and artwork. The use of darker materials and earth tones that contrast with the

building's wall help to reduce the overall mass of the facility. The design also calls for a variety of materials including textured concrete, translucent glazing, louvers, and steel pedestrian railings. Chan showed a cross-sectional view of the facility, displaying the concrete wall with contrasting materials within the wall that serve to break up the wall's industrial feel. Other slides showed the difference in tree and landscape growth between 2 and 20 years.

Matt Gurrad noted that the most important part of the facility's design is for the building face to be attractive as the landscaping begins to take hold and grow. Another concern for the design team is the need for the facility to be maintainable over the long-term. To this end, the project team has selected landscaping plants that are either native or extremely adaptable, requiring a low amount of overall maintenance. These plants do not need much water after they are fully established, so irrigation will likely last only three years. The team has also received a report from an arborist on the trees that are on the project site. Unfortunately, there are several trees that are at risk of becoming future hazards. Overall, the team will strive to keep as many trees as possible. Matt added that the design team has been working with a number of guidelines from King County, SDOT, and the Seattle Green Factor to decide on the exact number and selection of plants.

The team has also been in discussion with King County maintenance staff. They prefer more hardscapes on the roofs, which would reduce the overall amount of areas for planting. Matt presented three options to DAG members for filling in the open roof space next to the public viewpoint area. Option 1, the beach concept, would fill the space with beach-like textures, such as deadwood and stones. Option 2, the sculpted lawn concept, would create a mounded grass lawn on the open space. Option 3, the hardscape concept, is the preferred option of maintenance staff.

Questions and Discussion

- Bill Byers asked about the location of the sidewalk in relation to the small retaining wall in front of Beach Drive SW.
 - Matt Gurrad answered that all trees will be on the east side of the sidewalk, towards the wall. Architects are currently looking at how to provide more lighting to some of the mechanical and indoor spaces once the trees are fully-grown.
- DAG member Chas Redmond asked if the glazing material could refract the light, particularly from the western sunset, making it into an attractive visual feature.
 - Chan Cheang responded that the material is primarily translucent and probably will not refract light.
- DAG member Cheryl Eastberg asked if the team is selecting plants with some consideration of sightlines, particularly for safety.
 - Matt Gurrad answered that the designs call for certain areas of dense shrubs, but are aiming to implement several Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies.

- Patrick Gordon asked if people would have access to the open roof space next to the public viewpoint area.
 - Matt Gurrad said the space would be off limits to the public.
 - Patrick expressed concern that the hardscape concept signals that it is acceptable to trespass on the open space. He preferred the lawn concept and noted that a clear signal will need to be sent to people that the area is not accessible.
- Bill Byers asked if the view of the Olympic Mountains would be preserved.
 - Matt Gurrad responded that the team has consciously tried to preserve the axis sightline to the mountains.
- DAG member Barbara Owens asked what size the open roof space is likely to be.
 - Matt Gurrad said the whole space, including the public viewing area, is made up of the generator component's roof, which is a fairly large structure.
- Bill Byers asked Robert Horner what landscape option seems most creative.
 - Robert answered that he is drawn to the grassy "knoll" as it could evolve into a pseudo-alpine meadow. The lawn could also incorporate some stone and hardscape qualities that would serve as a perfect backdrop to the public art. Plants, such as daisies, could reflect the cyclical nature of the seasons.
- Chas Redmond mentioned the green roof at City Hall and asked what low-maintenance plantings the City uses. Could the project team also use mosses as a low-maintenance cover?
 - Matt Gurrad responded that City Hall's green roof is not as low-maintenance as it appears since it requires weeding twice a week. He said the team will take a look at including mosses in the landscaping but noted that the western exposure may make it difficult for it to grow.
- DAG member Pam Allen commented that part of the landscaping concept is to capture rainwater from the open space and have the water run down to a series of terraced rain gardens. She asked what these rain gardens will ultimately culminate in.
 - Matt Gurrad answered that the gardens will likely culminate into a larger bioswale or rain garden.
 - Robert Horner added that the CSO facility is being constructed because our current infrastructure does not allow for the storage of water. This aspect of the project will ideally be able to store and soak up any remaining water.
 - Pam noted that low areas do not always make good places for rain gardens because the water table is often too high. She recommended the team look at including a rain cistern.
- Patrick Gordon said he loves the idea of the spaces above and below tied together with a common story. He expressed support for the size of the open space and noted his inclination towards a softer, more natural space.

- Chas Redmond asked if there will be rammed earth walls between the pedestrian walkway and the facility.
 - Robert Horner answered that yes, the rammed earth walls will vary in height and some will extend out to serve as natural benches.
- Cheryl Eastberg asked if there will be irrigation in front of the short retaining wall in front.
 - Matt Gurrad said the team is talking to SDOT about whether the right-of-way will need irrigation. In general, the plantings will need irrigation until establishment.
- Bill Byers brought up the issue of fencing and expressed concern that a large chain-link fence will be erected at the eleventh hour.
 - Erica Jacobs responded that fencing remains a topic of discussion to determine whether a fence will be needed on the site and to what extent.
 - Pam Allen added that there are several CSO facilities with art fencing.
- Pam Allen asked about the issue of vandalism and site security.
 - Chan Cheang answered that the kind of glass material the team is planning to use is self-cleaning whenever it rains and is difficult to paint on in the first place.
 - Cheryl Eastberg inquired about the use of lighting along the walkway.
 - Matt Gurrad said safety lighting will be put in place there, but will not be made to “glow.” The team is also considering some highlighting for a few of the rammed earth and glass features.
- DAG member Steve Utaski asked about the transition to Lowman Beach Park. The design is so beautiful that the park may pale in comparison. He would love to see some improvements to the park and swing set area.
 - Eric Bergstrom noted that there will be sidewalk improvements to the west side of Beach Drive Southwest.
 - Matt Gurrad added that the team has proposed a small bump-out that could serve as a small celebration to the entrance of the park.
- Cheryl Eastberg mentioned the slope of the lawn to the north of the pedestrian walkway and asked if it will be flat enough for a picnic.
 - Matt Gurrad answered that the lawn will be flat enough at the bottom, but the team is discussing making it smaller to accommodate a rain garden.
 - Patrick Gordon stated that he would like to see that space potentially available for kayakers to use to gear up for kayaking.
 - Matt added that the lawn is much less lower maintenance than a rain garden.
- Patrick Gordon asked the DAG members their opinions on the project team’s overall art and landscaping design concepts.
 - Chas Redmond mentioned that he particularly likes the rammed earth and transparent glass features of the design.

- After further discussion, the group agreed that the designs mark excellent progress by the project team and have accommodated many of the community's concerns. Overall, the group prefers the lawn concept and is fine with no trees on the roof.
- Penny Mabie summarized from the group's comments and questions that security, lighting, and fencing should be discussion topics at the next DAG meeting.

Site Fencing and Art

King County WTD project management intern Jessica Tanumihardja presented to the group the project team's plan for temporary fencing around the site and art on the fences. A fence is needed to reduce both dust exposure and sound from the construction site to the neighborhood. Art on two sides of the fence will beautify the site until construction is complete. Nature Consortium, a non-profit based in West Seattle that has experience working with youth, will be painting a mural on 12 panels along Beach Drive Southwest. Nature Consortium teaching artist Kathleen McHugh explained to the group that each of their project's 12 panels will comprise one unique part of an overall mural. Urban Art Works, an organization who works with at-risk youth, is painting 12 panels along Lincoln Park Way Southwest. Their theme will be underwater life, including marine animals.

The fences will be installed sometime in the first few weeks of August. On August 18th, the community is invited to participate in painting the Beach Drive Southwest panels together. Doug Marsano stated that he will try to get the word out to the community, but welcomed suggestions and help to make sure all neighbors and interested parties are invited to the event.

Questions and Discussion

- Chas Redmond asked how long a painting lasts outdoors. He added that the group should think about how to preserve the art panels if they end up becoming memorable.
 - Kathleen McHugh answered that Nature Consortium will use treated and sealed plywood as well as a substance that protects against graffiti. She guessed that the art would last a minimum of five years.
- Erica Jacobs clarified that 12 art panels will not fill up all of the fencing on the site. The panels with art will likely be every other panel or clusters of panels together for creative purposes.
 - Doug Marsano added that the other panels can also be used to display some of the graphics that the project team now has to show the public what the site will look like in the future.
- Patrick Gordon noted that there is always curiosity about what's happening behind a construction fence. He suggested the fence include a couple of transparent panels to show what is going on within the site.

- Doug Marsano reminded everyone that the comment period for the site's land use permit is open until August 27th.

Next Steps and Action Items

Penny Mabie asked the attending members of the community if they had any comments or questions.

- Nancy Lestich stated that she has been a resident in the neighborhood for 23 years. She first expressed excitement over the great progress that is being made and the use of the community's input. She also commented that many of the design images make the facility and its features seem quite a bit bigger than she was expecting. The walkway, for example, looks like a sidewalk one would find downtown, not a neighborhood. She added that she is concerned over the amount of concrete on the site and asked if the walls are for public art or the facility's operation.
 - Robert Horner answered that they are intended for both. The walls will be part of a narrative, providing a connection to the water through the landscape (such as the bluffs in Discovery Park). The walls will also break up the facility's feature wall so it does not appear so large.
 - Patrick Gordon added that the stairs in the design images are seen in white, which makes them much more noticeable. He thinks the stairs will recede in size once constructed.
 - Nancy noted that the site will not be very inviting for people if it does not include some kind of cover or canopy for those wet times of year.
- Nancy Lestich asked if people will be able to walk on Lincoln Park Way SW during construction.
 - Erica Jacobs answered that the sidewalk there will remain open.
- Seattle Fire Department lieutenant Mike Daigle said the department is looking into using the existing buildings on the site for training. No buildings would be burned, but firefighters would be practicing techniques such as cutting roofs, breaching walls, and deconstructing the building in as many ways as possible. Sound would likely be the biggest impact to the surrounding neighborhood.
 - Penny Mabie suggested that Doug Marsano send this idea out for comment to the project's email list.

Erica Jacobs said that many of the topics brought up by DAG members and meeting attendees, including permanent fencing, lighting, security, and access to the rain gardens and lawn will be discussed at the next DAG meeting in September. The project team is aiming to reach the 90% design threshold in October, so the September meeting will be the last opportunity to have a conversation on many of the refined aspects of the design concept. Doug Marsano added that the September meeting will also cover construction impacts for the neighborhood, including the methods and timing of the construction work itself. Erica agreed, saying that the community's

feedback on potential construction impacts would be beneficial as the project team will soon outline to the contractor the constraints of the job.

Patrick Gordon noted that DAG and community members need to be conscious of allowing the design team to do their job not limit them. Penny Mabie asked the design team if the DAG's comments and feedback have painted them into a corner at all. The design team agreed that the DAG's responses have been extremely helpful.

The next DAG meeting is scheduled to be sometime in September. A Doodle poll for scheduling will be sent out to all DAG members. The meeting will cover security, lighting, and fencing as well as construction methods and impacts to the community.

Action Items:

- Provide a one-page document showing the initial road design of Beach Drive Southwest.

Attendance

DAG Members

- ☐ Pamela Allen
- ☐ Bill Beyers
- ☐ Cheryl Eastberg
- ☐ Patrick Gordon
- ☐ Barbara Owens
- ☐ Chas Redmond
- ☐ Steve Utaski

Community Members

- ☐ Alan Dyckman
- ☐ Kathleen McHugh
- ☐ Nancy Lestich
- ☐ Lieutenant Mike Daigle, Seattle Fire Department

WTD Staff

- ☐ Erica Jacobs
- ☐ Doug Marsano
- ☐ Jessica Tanumihardja

Project Consultants

- ☐ Dan Pecha (HDR)
- ☐ Eric Bergstrom (HDR)
- ☐ Matt Gurrad (HDR)
- ☐ Chan Cheang (HDR)
- ☐ Cath Brunner (4Culture)

☐

Facilitation Team

- ☐ Penny Mabie
- ☐ Landon Bosisio