

The Seattle Design Commission (SDC) advises the City Council on two issues related to a proposed street or alley vacation.



Urban Design Merit

Urban Design Merit evaluates the proposed vacation's impact on the street grid and the physical impacts of the proposed development.

Factors considered by the SDC include:

- Auto and pedestrian traffic functions in the area
- Neighborhood character
- Impacts on relocated utilities
- Quality of the pedestrian experience in the area
- The potential loss of open space from the vacation
- The scale of proposed development

SDC meetings on Urban Design Merit:

March 7, 2013

April 18, 2013

Public Benefit

The SDC evaluates the proposed public benefits, using the Council's street and alley vacation policies as its guide.

Public benefits can be located on- or off-site and be designed to enhance the remaining open space and transportation network. Public benefit features typically include:

- Publicly accessible plazas or green spaces
- Widened sidewalks
- Additional street trees or vegetation in the right of way
- Street furniture — seating, lighting, etc.
- Public art
- Bicycle facilities
- Investments in City parks
- Implementation of a neighborhood plan element
- Improvements to designated Green Streets

SDC meetings on Public Benefit:

May 16, 2013

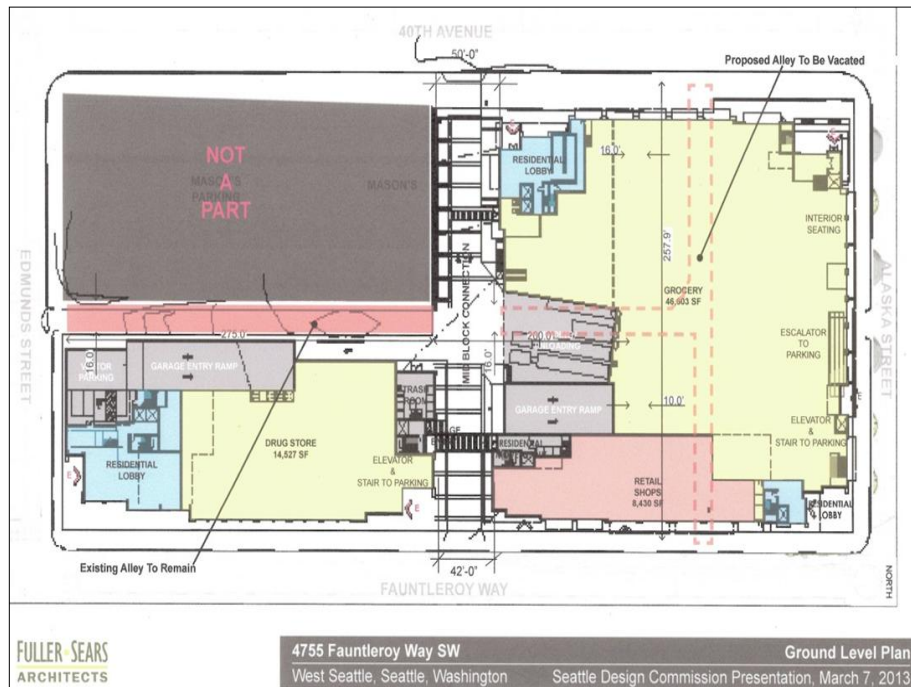
June 20, 2013

March 7, 2013

First SDC meeting

The SDC voted unanimously to deny the Urban Design Merit phase of the vacation:

- Improve safety with the midblock connector – address conflict between autos and pedestrians
- Resolve pedestrian–auto conflicts along 40th Avenue at the midblock connector
- Design a gateway feature at Alaska and Fauntleroy, as anticipated in the West Seattle Triangle Plan
- Improve pedestrian connections along the remaining portion of the alley



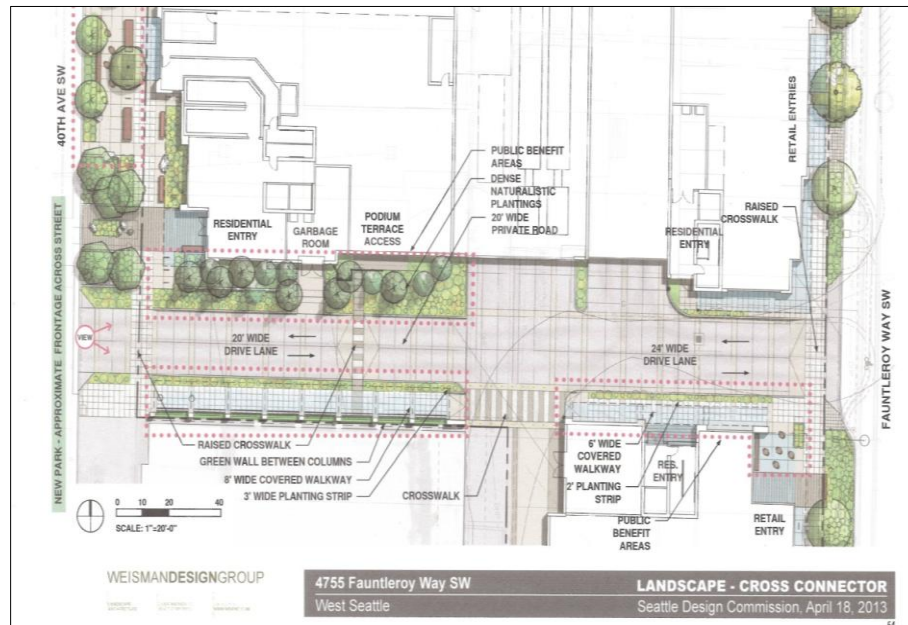
April 18, 2013

Second SDC meeting

SDC received a second presentation on Urban Design Merit. The presentation addressed concerns raised by SDC in its March 7 meeting.

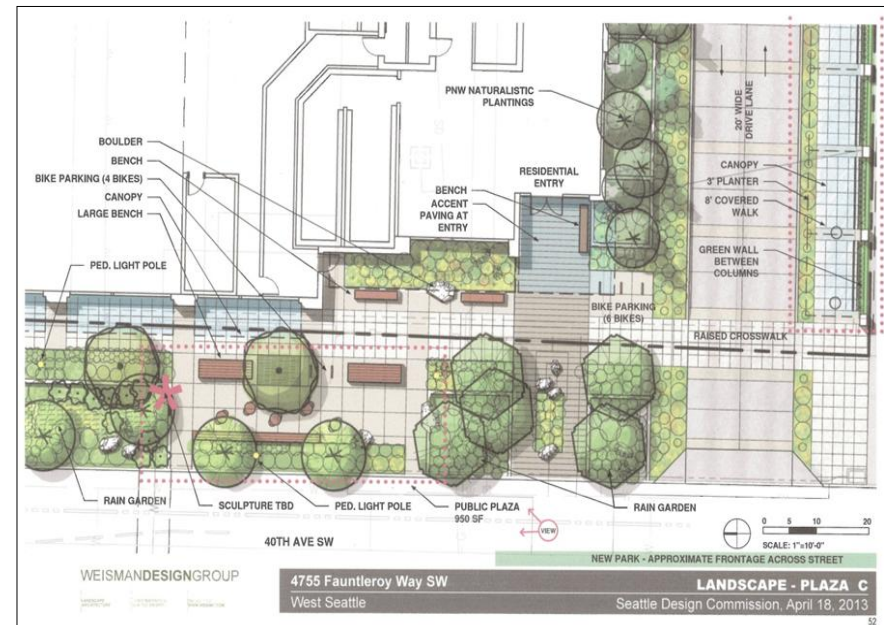
Enhanced pedestrian elements along the midblock connector

- Continuous planting strip
- Green wall
- Enhanced crosswalk
- Sidewalk into residential entry



Intersection of 40th Ave SW and midblock connector

- Raised crosswalk
- Further defined pedestrian walkways



April 18, 2013

Second SDC meeting

SDC approved Urban Design Merit:

- The vacation replaces the alley with an 11,100 sf private drive with pedestrian links.
- The proposed midblock connector provides a valuable through-block pedestrian connection and better meets a need identified by the City, as represented in the West Seattle Triangle Plan, than provided in the current size and configuration of the alley.

The SDC recommendation included the following conditions:

1. Work with the Masonic Temple to address their parking access
2. Address the pedestrian connection across 40th Ave SW to the proposed park
3. Provide a loading zone for building residents near residential entrances that does not impact streetscape amenities
4. Improve pedestrian connections at the intersection of the remaining alley and the midblock connector

May 16, 2013

Third SDC meeting

SDC begins evaluation of proposed public benefit package

- Improved parking access to Masonic Temple
- Enhanced loading spaces
- On street parking

Gateway corner refinement developed through Design Review Board oversight



Alaska and Fauntleroy Plaza



March 2013
Residential entrance at plaza

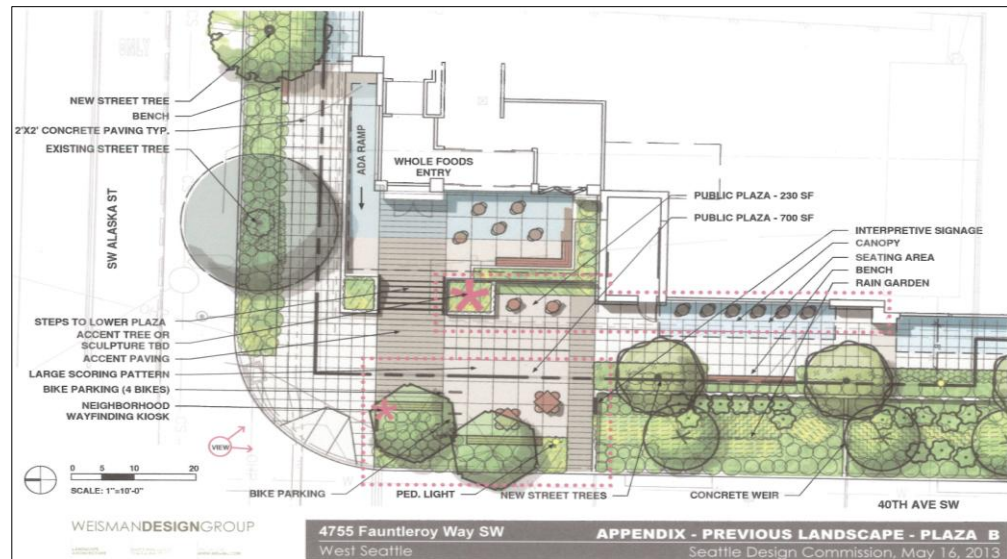


May 2013
Updated design

- Reoriented residential entrance
- Refined landscaping
- Changes to art program

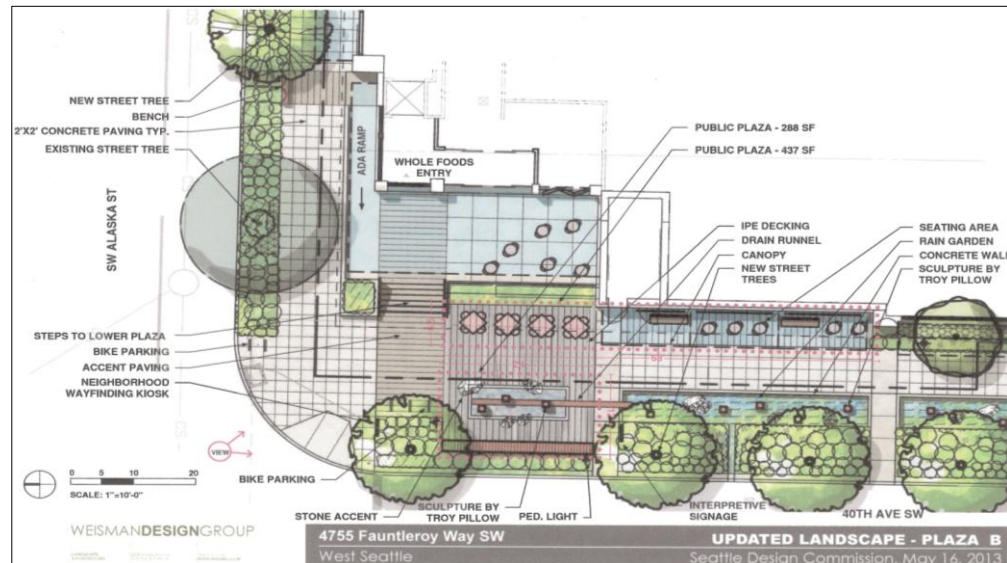
Alaska and 40th Ave SW Plaza

March 2013
Original design



May 2013
Updated design

- Decking in plaza
- More table seating
- Art in plaza
- Refined landscape
- Additional seating area next to building



May 16, 2013

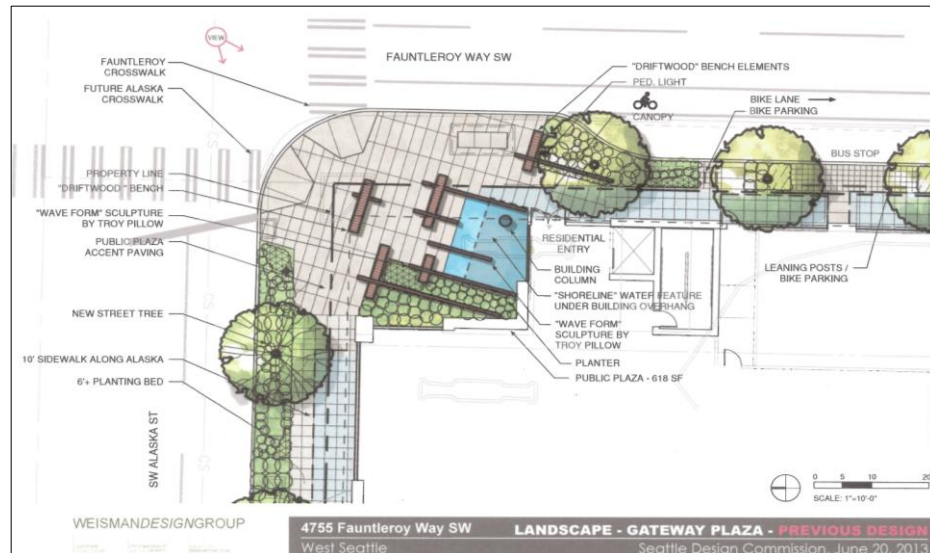
Third SDC meeting

SDC denied Public Benefit with these recommendations:

1. Resolve the hierarchy of plazas
2. Refine the Fauntleroy and Alaska plaza
3. Simplify the 40th Ave SW design elements and connect the various gathering spaces
4. Simplify the art elements for more consistency
5. Provide a direct connection to the proposed park across 40th Avenue SW

June 20 SDC meeting Fauntleroy and Alaska Gateway Plaza

May 2013



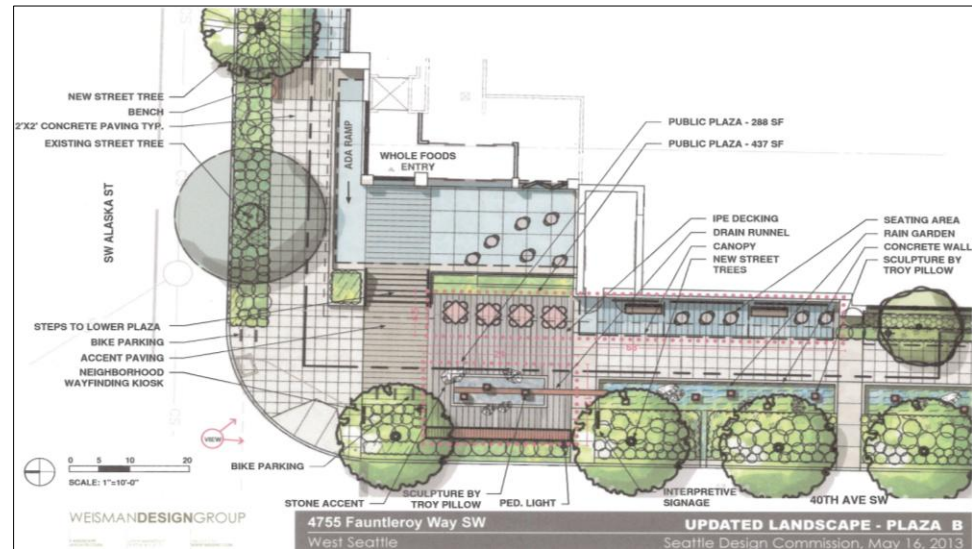
June 2013

- Simplified art concept
- Additional trees and shrubs in plaza
- Additional seating



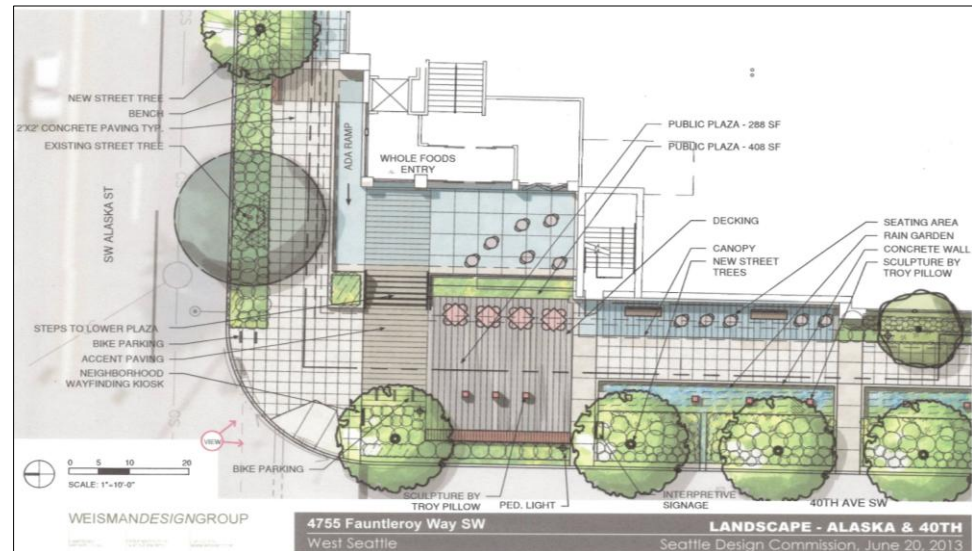
Alaska and 40th Ave SW Plaza

May 2013



June 2013

Simplified art concept in plaza



40th Ave SW

Offsite landscape improvements – Masonic Lodge



June 20 – SDC approves public benefits

Approved public benefit package

1. Voluntary building setbacks
2. Midblock pedestrian connector
3. Five small plazas
4. 40th Ave SW green street improvements, including offsite improvements along Masonic property
5. All street improvements abutting the development
6. \$25,000 contribution toward design of proposed park
7. Planning and installation of bike lane along Fauntleroy

Conditions – subject to further SDC review

- SDC shall be consulted if public benefit changes if needed to meet code requirements or cannot be built
- SDC shall review Art Plan once it has been developed
- SDC shall continue review of Fauntleroy/Alaska gateway element
- SDC shall continue review of green wall in the midblock connector

Recommendation

SDC requests that SDOT allow a crosswalk from midblock connector to proposed park.