



Portland Art Museum Expansion Briefing

Commissioner Saltzman

February 2, 2017

History

The Portland Art Museum was created in 1892 in the City's public library building. In 1905 it relocated to a building at SW 5th & Taylor. In 1932 the current location opened. In 1939 a major expansion doubled the existing building and opened on the original property. In 1968 a major building renovation was started that added a new wing to the existing building. Also in 1968 City Council passed a street vacation ordinance vacating a portion of SW Madison between SW 9th and SW 10th.

The 1968 vacation Ordinance had three conditions: a) a permanent 8-wide pedestrian easement be provided b) that the easement not be blocked in any manner and that it be adequately illuminated, and c) that the vacated area not be used for any other purpose than an open mall. PBOT staff have been unable to locate a recorded pedestrian easement to date.

In 1984 City Council amended the 1968 ordinance to allow the Art Museum to close off the 8-foot wide pedestrian easement between 11pm-7am in response to vandalism that was occurring in the evening hours. In 1992-1994 the Museum acquired the Masonic temple to the north.

In late 2012 the Art Museum requested to further limit the public hours of the open walkway to match the Art Museum operating hours. This request was not supported by the Planning & Sustainability Commission. The Art Museum also attempted to gain support from Mayor Adams to champion a council action to reduce the hours or remove the pedestrian connection.

In December 2016 the Art Museum again contacted Council offices to request support to close the pedestrian connection and allow a new building/connection to be built between the two existing buildings.

Land Use History

There have been approximately 20 land use reviews dating back to the first design review on the site in 1967.

In 1998 the Art Museum applied for a Historic Design Review to make renovations to the Hoffman Wing and add a 375 seat auditorium primarily below ground and under the vacated SW Madison right of way. The Pacific College of Art relocated out of the Museum and into the Pearl initiating the renovation. This land use application was approved by the landmarks commission. This is the description from the land use application including a reference to maintaining the walkway easement and keeping it open during daylight hours.

(II) Improvements in the vacated Madison Street right-of-way: Between the Museum and the Masonic Temple, the existing courtyard is proposed to be completely redesigned, and is proposed to include a new sculpture garden. Beneath the new sculpture garden is a new 375-seat auditorium. The new sculpture garden is proposed to be enclosed by a 10 foot high glass wall and 10 foot high metal grille fence with openings at the west and east sides. A pedestrian easement that varies from 11 feet to 12 feet 6 inches wide is maintained along the north edge (along the Masonic Temple).

In 2003 the Art Museum requested a Type II Conditional Use Review for a renovation and addition of floor area of the Masonic Temple. No changes were proposed to the existing walkway area. Findings supporting the conditional use approval included the following language addressing the Urban Design Policy.

Policy 12: URBAN DESIGN *Enhance the Central City as a livable, walkable area, which focuses on the river and captures the glitter and excitement of city living.*

The eight-foot wide easement between Park and 10th Avenues in the vacated Madison Street right-of-way will be maintained as an unobstructed pedestrian walkway. It will be enhanced with an additional eight-foot wide band of new pavement extending to the exterior face of the south bay. Terraced landscape planters along Park Avenue and Main Street are designed to increase the flexibility of the sidewalk level spaces. The elimination of the "moat" and expansion of the pedestrian walk between Park and 10th Avenues will also allow for expanded usage of the sidewalk area, creating a rich enjoyable environment for pedestrians.

Connectivity

PBOT has supported connectivity through the City resulting in connectivity policies in the City's Transportation System plan identifying street connections be not greater than every 530 feet and pedestrian connections no further than 330 feet. Additionally, Portland has placed great emphasis on the downtown 200-ft x 200-ft street grid. The City's 2035 Central City Plan continues to emphasize the importance of walking in the downtown. (*POLICY 3.8 Walking. Encourage walking as the principal way to get around the Central City, with improved on-street and off-street infrastructure that enhances safety and closes access gaps to areas within, and adjacent to, the Central City.*)

Pros/Cons of Maintain or Eliminating Pedestrian Connection

Pros

- Supports continued expansion of Art Museum & Programs
- Eliminate concerns of historical vandalism

Cons

Reduces walkability in Central City

Increases out of direction travel for pedestrians coming/going to Portland Streetcar 10th & Jefferson "Art Museum" stop.

May create ADA issue as shortest and most direct access to street car stop is eliminated for users coming/going to streetcar stop.

Eliminates conditions of approval and findings in public land use decisions spanning seven decades requiring, supporting and referencing the pedestrian connection.