Crisp, Clean Look Receives Good Reviews

The Center for Urban Waters has been redesigned with a cleaner, more industrial character. The south side, which is the view visitors approach, consists of a curtain wall with fixed sunshades on the exterior; a two-story glass column extending beyond the south façade creates a canopy over the entry. The rest of the building will be covered with aluminum siding, with dark brown on the west side, and the typical silver color on the east and north sides.

The redesigned building results from the original design exceeding the City Council’s approved budget. The design team underwent a value engineering (VE) process which looked for ways to reduce the cost. Some of the major changes include:

- Changing from a concrete to a steel structure which also decreased the weight of the building and reduced the amount of structural piles needed.
- Reducing the quantity of curtain wall by using storefront windows in a rain-screen wall system.
- Moving to low-flow fume hoods in the labs which reduced the size of the lab mechanical systems.
- Switching to a hybrid geo-thermal system from a pure geo-thermal well system. This allowed the number of wells on the site to be reduced.
- Eliminating the atrium and associated skylight while still providing natural daylight to offices.
- Increasing the efficiency of the building by straightening it out. This reduced the building footprint while still accommodating all of the workspace program needs.

The project team presented the redesigned building to the City Council on August 5 and received positive reviews. The team took the Council through the evolution of the project starting with the budget changes and then discussing the VE process. The architects unveiled the new design explaining how they have streamlined the building while still maintaining an attractive design. With the positive feedback received from the Council, the design team is now focused on completing the construction documents. The contractor selection process will begin in late October.

General Contractor Selection Begins in October

Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for construction services will be solicited in October. Interested contractors will be asked to discuss the proposed contracting team’s experience with LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) projects, explain how they would maximize use of HUB (Historically Under-Utilized Business Program) and LEAP (Local Employment and Apprenticeship Training Program) companies and prepare a construction budget and schedule. Using a scoring matrix, the project team will score the RFPs and short-list several firms to interview. The project team will interview the short-listed firms, score them using a scoring matrix and select a final general contractor. Once selected, the general contractor will participate with the design team in the completion of the final design and construction documents and negotiate a final GMP (guaranteed maximum price) contract.
Going for the Greenest of Green

As the building undergoes design changes, one thing remains constant—the goal of attaining LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certification. LEED® promotes sustainable design, construction and operation of buildings. There are four levels of LEED® certification with Platinum being the highest achievable. Some of the LEED® features include:

- Operable windows for natural ventilation,
- Daylighting,
- Radiant heating and cooling,
- Green roof,
- Solar shading,
- Cisterns,
- Ground source heat pump,
- Native landscaping and
- Rain gardens.

Many of the LEED® elements generate multiple environmental benefits. For example, the green roof not only keeps the building cooler by absorbing the sun’s heat, but it also creates habitat. Similarly, the cisterns which will be filled from excess clean water from the labs and roof rain water will be used to both flush the toilets in the building and irrigate the landscaping. Reusing the excess lab and rain water reduces the need to draw from the domestic water supply.

The project is also attempting to reuse heritage materials owned by the City. The design team is considering reusing granite curbs as site benches and reusing Douglas fir planks taken from the Municipal Dock for wall paneling in the main conference room and as base molding in the lobby.

Let There Be Art

The Urban Waters project will include a public art component as part of the project. The Arts Selection Committee, composed of representatives from the City of Tacoma, TES Properties, the Tacoma Arts Commission, Perkins+Will and Lorig Associates, held a kick-off meeting in mid-August. Requests for qualifications will be advertised early this fall with the artist(s) selection expected to take place this coming winter. If you are interested in submitting your qualifications, please check the Urban Waters website (http://cityoftacoma.org/urbanwaters) periodically for details on how to submit.

Public art in Tacoma takes on various forms

Project Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 08</th>
<th>Winter 08</th>
<th>Spring 09</th>
<th>Summer 09</th>
<th>Fall 09</th>
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Contractor Selection/GMP Pricing (Oct. ’08 - Dec. ’08)
Construction (Jan. ’09 - Mar. ’10)

Want To Know More?
Visit www.cityoftacoma.org/urbanwaters

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