

FEATHER RIVER RAIL SOCIETY – AGENDA REPORT

DATE: October 8, 2013
FROM: Eugene Vicknair - Director
ITEM: Old Business 1
SUBJECT: Disney Zephyr Location

As part of proposed work on utilizing the Disney Zephyr materials, the Board needs to approve a permanent location for the cab. In discussions with members, the leading location that has emerged is off the east end of the loading dock. The height is ideal and there is space to place the cab without impacting traffic or major operations.

Included in this report are diagrams and drawings showing examples of how the cab would be sited and how the area around the cab and to the east could be developed to create a viewing promenade that would use the cab as its central focus.

The cab would be placed on a section of track and stabilized with a framework. The track would sit on the current concrete since this has well settled. Any new work would occur around the trackwork. The cab would also be set about 1-2 feet from the dock to allow future refurbishment work and construction of the proposed Zephyr Exhibit, whatever form that takes.

Using this space would provide several benefits:

- Currently, the loading dock is poorly utilized considering it is in such a prominent location.
- The height of the dock works well with the cab.
- The cab would become an anchor point for a small building on the dock, again better utilizing the space.
- The Dock Track could be used to located 1-2 Zephyr cars which would be open for tours. As this would be adjacent to the proposed Zephyr Historic Gallery, this would create a powerful exhibit.
- ADA access would be relatively easy by using one of the lifts donated by Santa Clara County VTA.
- The Dock could still be utilized in the near term for truck unloading.
- The cab would be easily accessible and could be equipped as an interactive display, with sounds of horn, bell, brakes, engine throttle and even radio chatter being controlled by a simple system and operating in response to the controls currently in the cab.
- Placing the cab in such a prominent location would be consistent with the wishes of the Disney organization.
- The area between the proposed Gallery and the Diesel Shop could be used for picnic benches, public gathering or some other prominent use. A shade structure or sail could easily be deployed in this area.

Wayne Monger sent me an email arguing for locating the cab in the Diesel Shop itself. While Wayne does make several good points and has some interesting ideas, I feel placing this in the Diesel Shop would not be advisable.

Wayne's proposal:

"I think the plan of placing it at the end of the dock out in the open does not significantly improve the visitor's experience at the WPRM (it is no different from what visitors see from the cabs of any of our other 3 WP F-unit cabs), does not come up to the level of special sensory experience visitors (and the membership) would expect to have from a donation from the Disney Corporation to the FRRS, presents an ADA access problem to be solved (current ramp to the dock is many times too steep for ADA access) plus would be su. As an alternative, I offer to you a plan that would utilize the Disney Half F unit that would be a significant improvement to the current visitor experience. This alternative uses the eastern most 40 feet of Track 2 inside the Dieselhouse building (yes, 1/2 of where you have the Silver Hostel parked. The 20ft length of the Half F would sit facing east toward the door about 7 ft away from the door. Around the entire inner perimeter of the door we would build a fake tunnel portal approx 6 feet deep. On the inner surface of the door we would install a projection screen, onto which cab views of travel over various portions of the WP (old and current) would be projected for visitors sitting in the cab of the Half F to see. The Half F would be turned into an interactive sensory platform utilizing off-the-shelf model railroading Tsunami sound chips for First Generation EMDs and Digitrax DCC controller electronics. The throttle, bell, horn, air brake action sounds would be activated by from the DCC controller electronic switches attached to the matching equipment in the cab being moved. This would all be delivered via an improved sound system in the cab (plus sub-woofers directly under the cab floor). Access to the rear entrance of the Half F would be by an ADA compliant (both width and gradient) inclined concrete ramp parallel to the south side of Track 2 inside the shop up to a 10 ft by 10 ft concrete platform exactly at the floor level of the Half F. This platform would have a split level, as the west 5 ft surface would be at the same level as the end entrance door into a passenger car (i.e UP 105) allowing interior access by visitors. The inclined concrete ramp would have multiple purposes, which would include viewing into the windows of any passenger car on display at that location that is not otherwise open to access plus use by FRRS vounteers as a work platform for any locomotive/car undergoing repairs and/or restoration on this section of Track 2 inside the Dieselhouse. One other plus for this location for the Half F is that it would be under close supervision (preventing damage from vandalism, misuse, etc.)by FRRS members/volunteers/staff."

My concerns are as follows:

- The Diesel Shop is already overloaded with current activities.
- Placing the F on track 2 would permanently lock off that track for through movement.
- While the ramp and platform Wayne suggests would solve the ADA issue, it would be a very large structure that would also take away space inside the Diesel Shop. To achieve the needed rise, a wheelchair ramp would need to be 53' long by about 3'6" wide, or be set in a U configuration, for a floor space of 29' to 30' by 7' to 7'6". This would mean, including the 10' X 10" platform and the 7' setback, placing the F in the Diesel Shop would consume 67' to 90' of length. We could reduce this by using one of the VTA lifts in the Diesel Shop.
- It would again concentrate our materials and visitors in the Diesel Shop. We need to be expanding our visitor experience beyond this single building.
- This location would not allow in context exhibiting of our Zephyr archive and artifact materials, including items received from Disney.

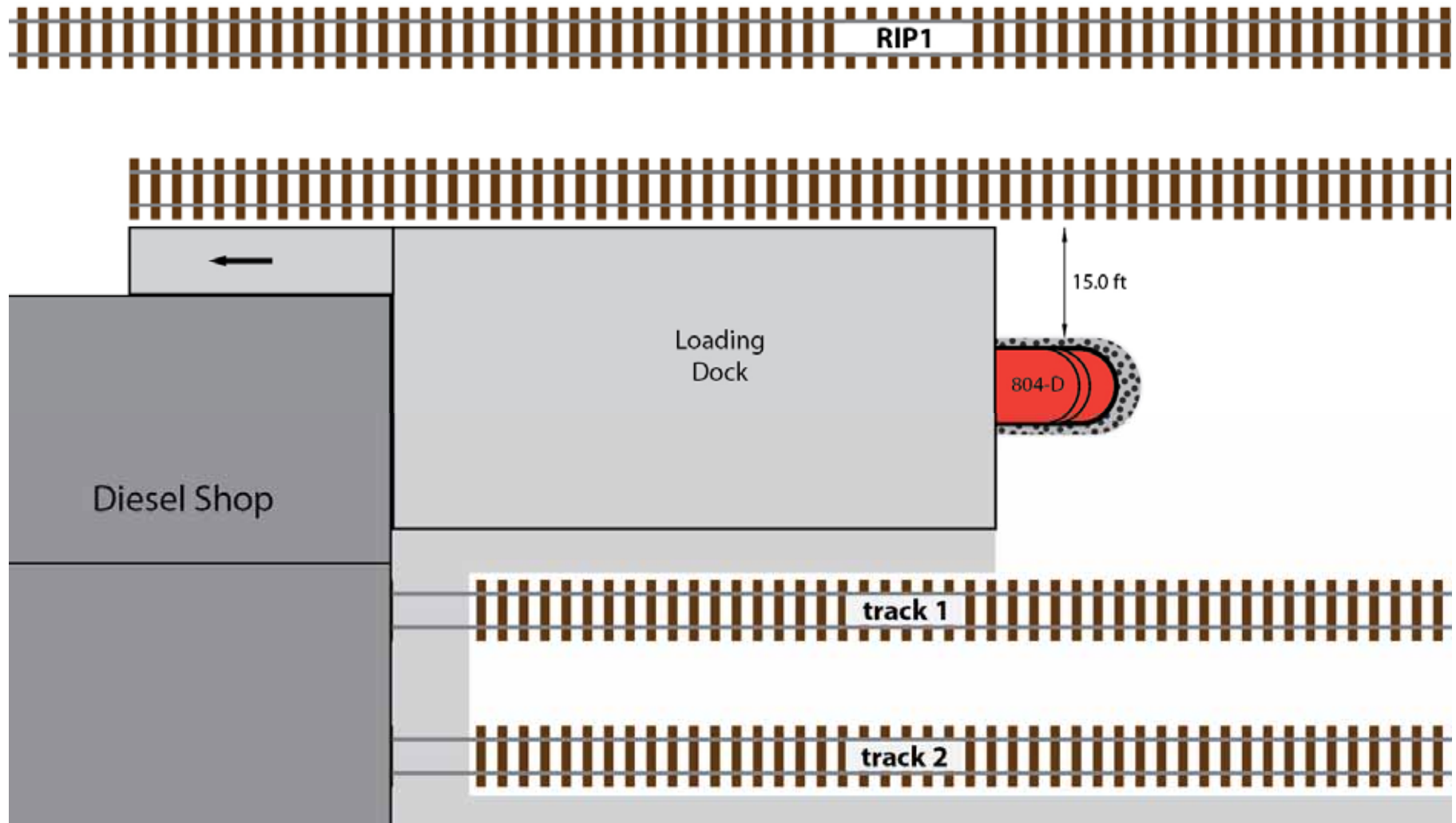
I strongly believe that we need to move away from concentrating things in the Diesel Shop. The building has very real limitations and we need to better utilize other spaces. IF the cab is located adjacent to the Dock as part of a complete build out plan, we can use it to enhance the visitor experience and create more interest around the property.

The Dock location would require relocation of our handicapped parking and possibly placing our dumpsters in a new location. I am talking with Scott Franklin about a low cost way to provide hard surface parking in the current parking lot that would allow for handicapped parking. This would just leave the dumpster issue.

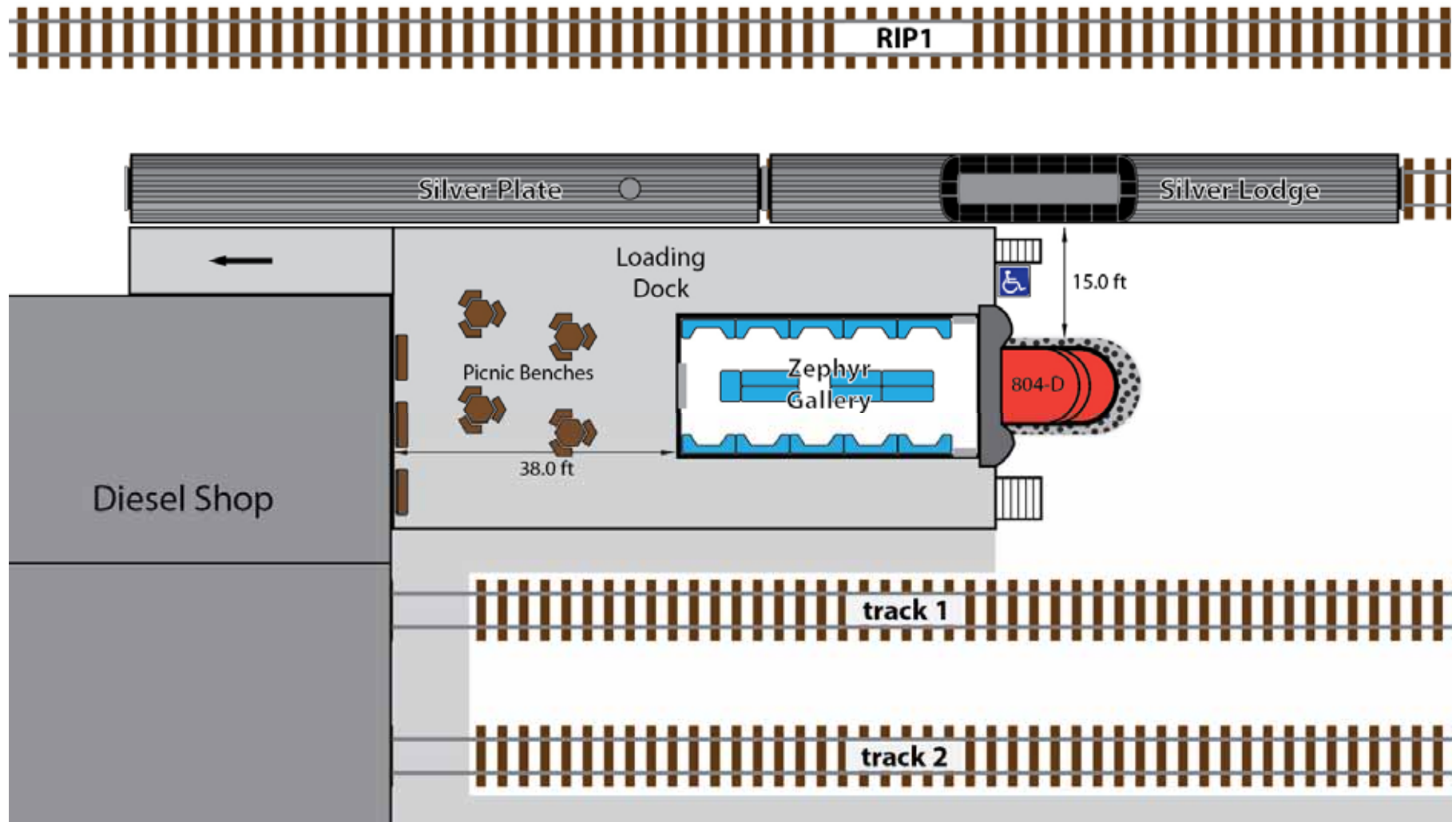
This placement would be a big step in utilizing the materials given to us by Disney and would be the improvement of the dock area which is now a poorly utilized space.

REQUESTED ACTION: Approve the east end of the Loading Dock as the permanent location for the Disney Zephyr F-unit cab and the future Zephyr exhibit space. Authorize work party for this fall. Possible expenditures to be returned to the Board for authorization.

On the following pages are diagrams showing the proposed location of the cab and build out ideas that came out of discussions with EHDD Architecture and several of our mechanical and operations people. I have also provided a rendering showing a display concept for the cab on the Dock end.



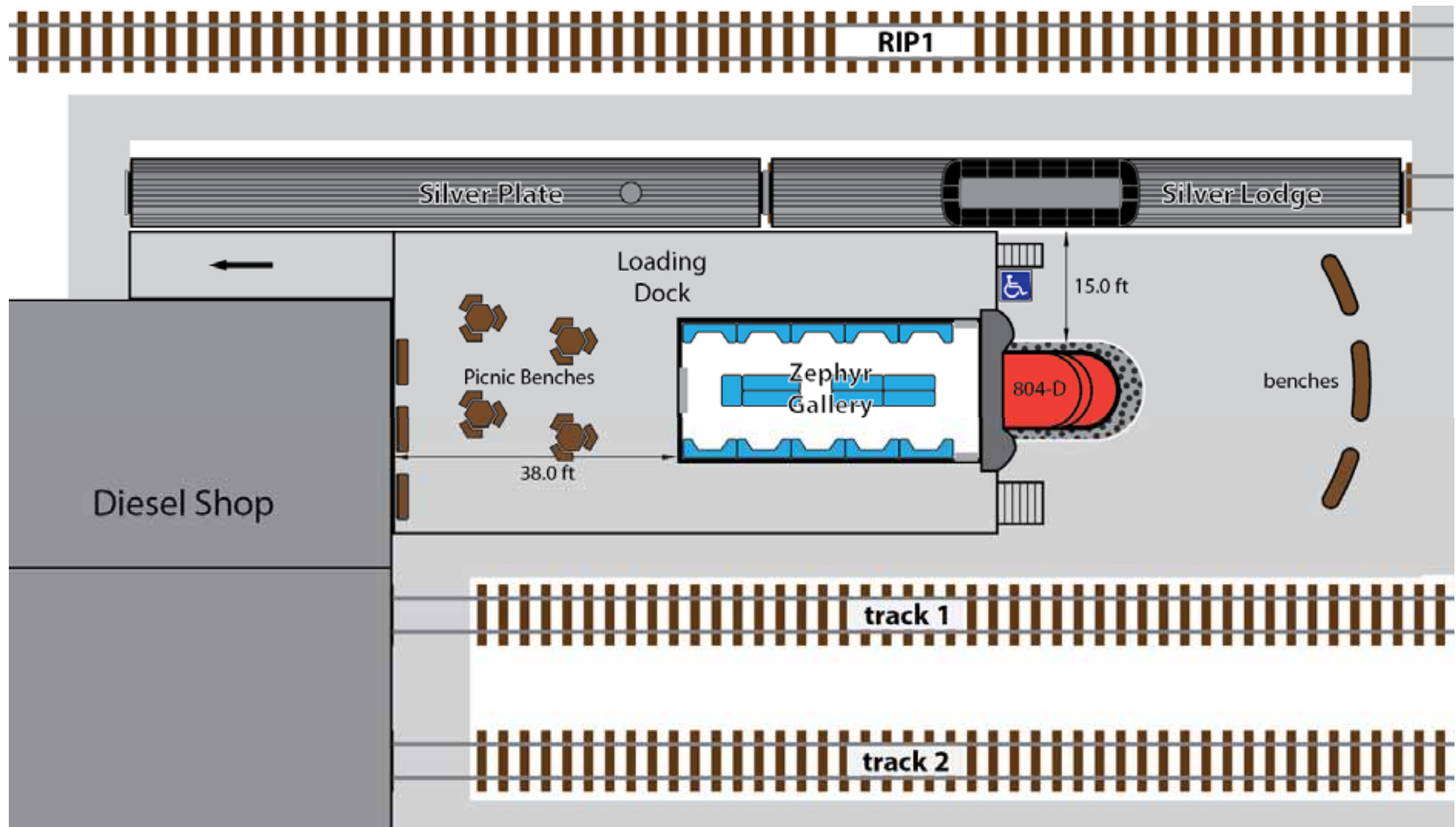
The F-unit cab would be placed about 1-2 feet off the end of the loading dock, set biased toward the south to allow 15' to 16' of dock space for truck unloading. Eventually, as we further develop the property, unloading should be done elsewhere, but we can preserve this capability now. This placement would not place any weight of the cab on the dock.



Access to the dock would be via the ramp on the west end and via pre-cast concrete or steel steps on the east end, as well as using one of the donated wheelchair lifts. As we develop the space, a building would be placed behind the cab, measuring about 18' to 20' wide and 38' to 40' long, giving us up to 400 square feet of exhibit space. We can develop the west section of the dock into a seating area with benches, picnic tables and a shade structure. Eventually, it would be good to relocate the Office Car and the WP heavyweight baggage car and use the Dock Track for passenger car exhibit access.

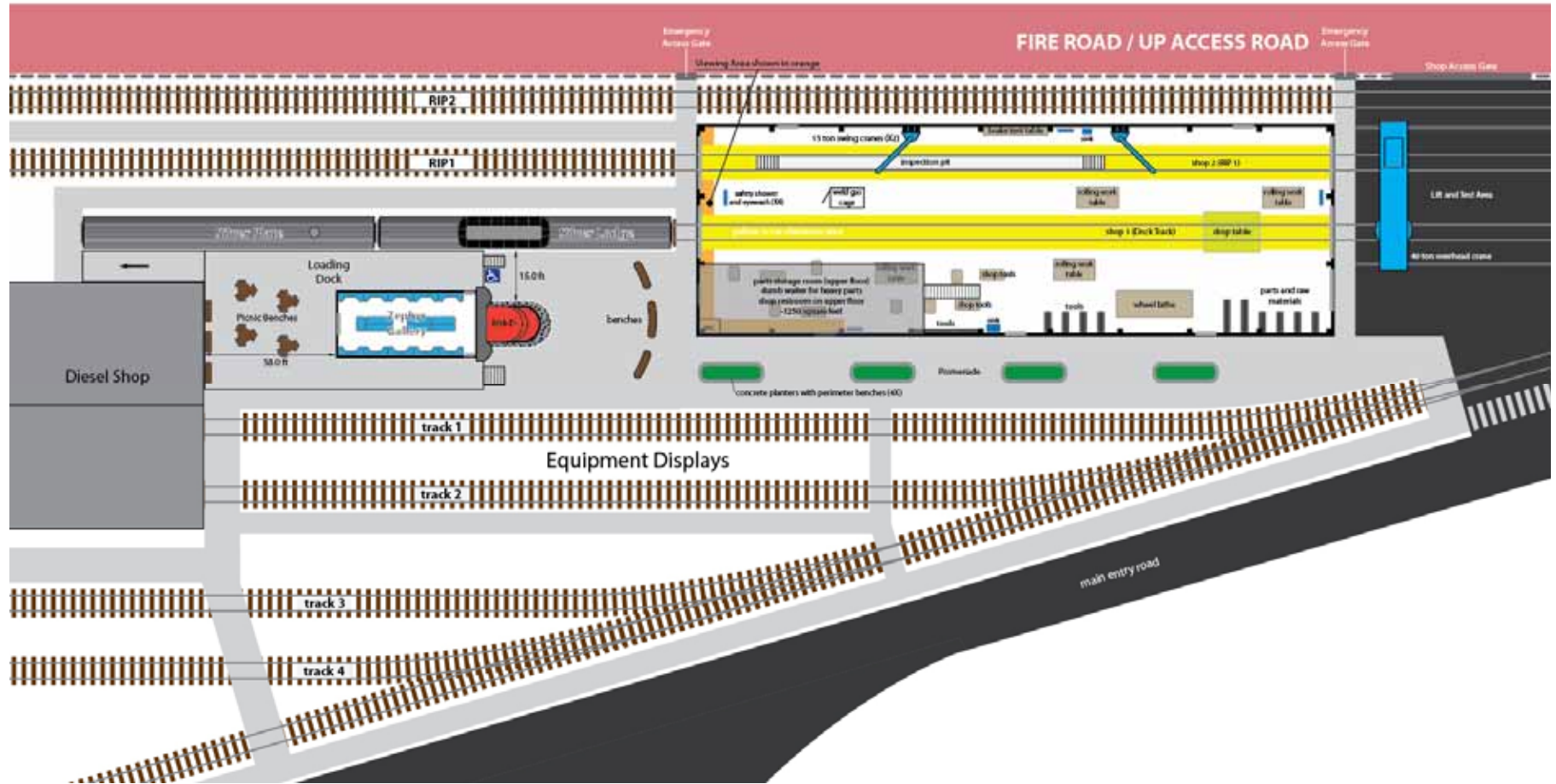


One possible concept for the Zephyr Gallery building: creating a replica carbody for the F. Another concept would be to create a simulated rock tunnel portal with the cab emerging from it and build a structure behind that. By using light steel frame construction, the building's weight can be kept within the weight limits of the dock. Also, part of the building weight would be on framework off the east end of the dock, reducing load on the dock.



To further develop the space, we would extend the concrete area eastward and could create a seating area that would face the Disney Zephyr cab. This seating area could function as a group gathering location for tours or as a discussion and lesson space. Display two restored Zephyr cars on the Dock Track would provide close context with the Zephyr exhibit and concentrate our Zephyr artifacts. The Silver Lodge would act as the entry for the Silver Plate and both could be used for event seating. We could relocate the LNG tank on the end of the dock track and also add stairs for entry and exit through the end of the Silver Plate.

POSSIBLE LONG TERM CONCEPT



There has been a lot of desire over the years for a more capable shop facility to free up the Diesel Shop. In bringing these ideas to the architects at EHDD, the suggestion was made to use the space east of the Dock, between Track 1 and RIP 1, to site a new heavy repair shop and place a pedestrian promenade, complete with planters and bench seating. This would draw more visitors into the eastern end of the facility, allowing Tracks 1 and 2 to function as display areas and giving us a highly capable shop facility. The Disney Zephyr cab would become a focal point at the west end of this promenade. The Dock Track would be extended alongside RIP 1, initially for extra storage and eventually to act as a shop track.

This is just one possible concept showing how the Zephyr cab could use the starting point for creating a completely new visitor experience area by utilizing currently underutilized space at the museum.