

Northgate Pedestrian Bridge

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Ross Tilghman, Chair

John Savo, Vice Chair

Lee Copeland

Ben de Rubertis

Thaddeus Egging

Evan Fowler

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Commissioners Present

Ross Tilghman, Chair
John Savo, Vice Chair
Lee Copeland
Ben de Rubertis
Evan Fowler
Rachel Gleeson
Laura Haddad
Brianna Holan
Rick Krochalis

Commissioners Excused

Thaddeus Egging

Project Description

Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is proposing to design and construct a pedestrian and bicycle bridge across I-5 connecting North Seattle College and the Licton Springs neighborhood to the west with Northgate Mall, the future Sound Transit light rail station, and the eastern portion of the Northgate Urban Center. The west end of the bridge would be located on the North Seattle College campus near N 100th St. The east end of the bridge would land adjacent to the future light rail station along 1st Ave NE at NE 100th St and include a spur linking directly to the mezzanine level of the light rail station.

The Seattle Design Commission (SDC) originally reviewed the project in 2014-15. Previously, the project had an estimated cost of \$60 million, exceeding the funding available through local, regional, state, and federal organizations. The project did not obtain a Federal TIGER grant, resulting in a loss of \$25 million in potential funding. Accordingly, the project was placed on hold in early 2016 and reactivated in fall 2016 with a revised budget of \$35 million. The current bridge plan reflects design updates to reduce overall costs.

Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) fourth review of the Northgate Pedestrian Bridge project. The purpose of this meeting was to review the schematic design phase. After the presentation and discussion, the SDC voted 8-1, to approve the schematic design for the Northgate Pedestrian Bridge with several recommendations.

Recusals and Disclosures

Thaddeus Egging recused himself as his employer, KPFF, is working on the project.

Brianna Holan disclosed that her employer, LMN Architects, previously worked on this project up to 30% concept design.

November 16, 2017

9:00 - 10:30 am

Type

CIP

Phase

Schematic Design

Previous Reviews[05/18/17](#), [09/17/15](#), [08/07/14](#)**Presenters****Eric Birkhauser**

VIA Architecture

Amanda Tse

SDOT

Maggi Johnson

Johnson + Southerland

Attendees**Patrick Dodson**

VIA Architecture

Jason Huff

OAC

Rachel McCaffrey

SDOT

Carl Gao

SDOT

Jeff Miller

J. Miller & Associates

Ken Wilson

ISE

Summary of Presentation

Eric Birkhauser, of VIA Architecture, and Amanda Tse, of SDOT, presented the schematic design for the Northgate Pedestrian Bridge. The presentation began with a brief overview of the project, design refinements, and public feedback. In response to concerns raised by the SDC during the review of the revised concept design on May 18th, 2017, the project team has reduced the proposed slope and revised the alignment of the pedestrian bridge. The proposed slope will not exceed 5 percent between the west approach and the Sound Transit Light Rail Station. The revised bridge alignment is further north on the west end, providing a better connection to the adjacent neighborhood and eliminating the need to bisect a parcel of land valuable to North Seattle College. As a result of the realignment, the bridge has increased from 1,650 feet to 2,000 feet in length. See *figures 1 & 2* for more detail.

The updated design also includes a variety of paving materials with visual and tactile cues near mixing areas, transition zones, and overlooks on the bridge. The main trail will have a light grey concrete finish while the mixing zones will include a darker concrete finish. Thermoplastic paving bands will be utilized as a visual and tactile cue as traffic approaching mixing zones and overlooks. Several paving bands will also serve as a secondary wayfinding. See *figure 3* for more detail.

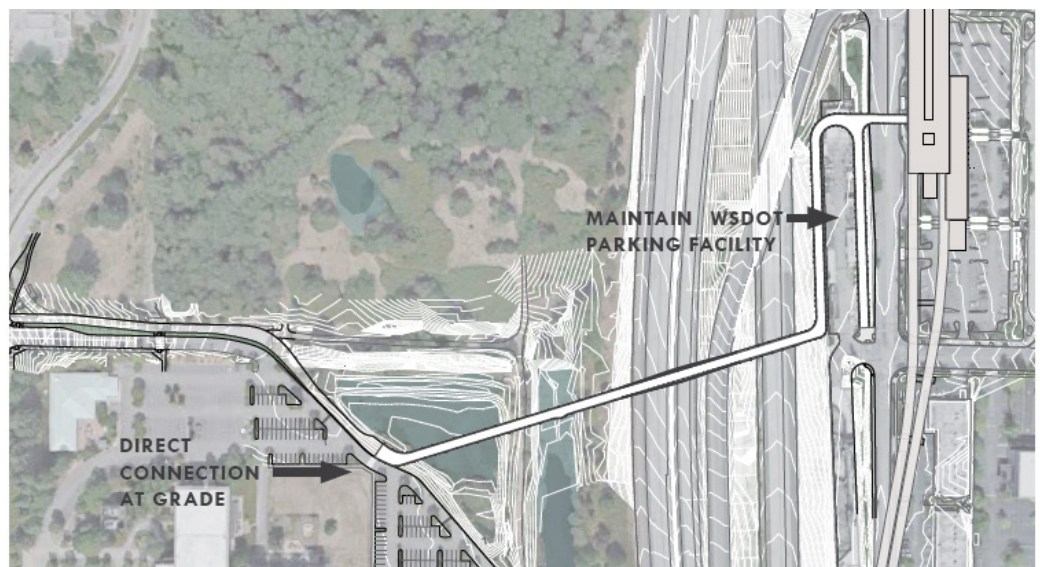


Figure 1: Previous bridge alignment proposal

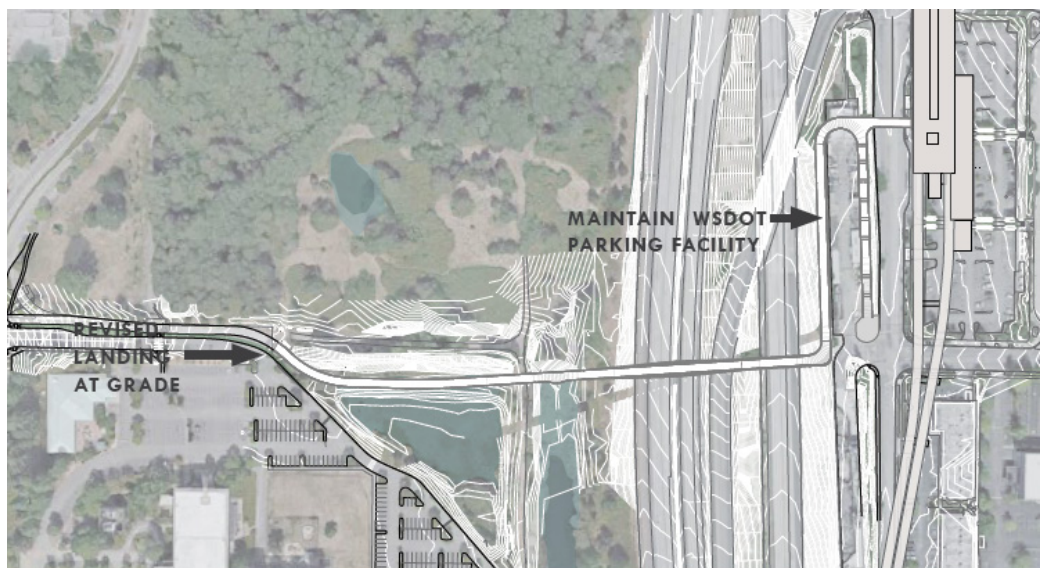
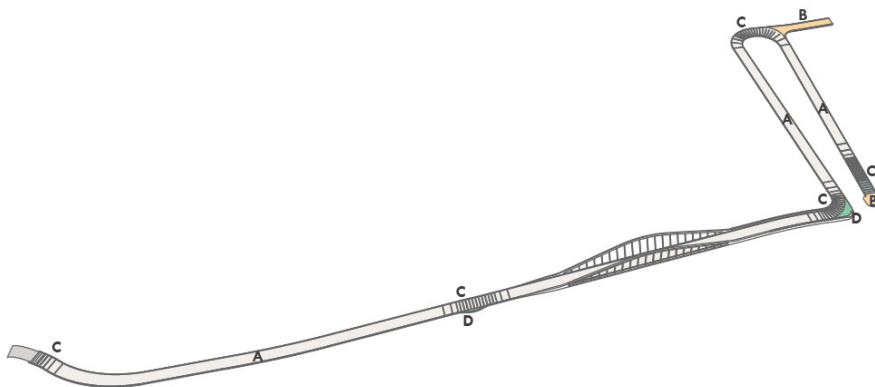


Figure 2: Updated alignment proposal

PAVING AND TRANSITIONS

- Paving as key intuitive wayfinding element of the main trail.
- Paving bands utilized to communicate slowing of traffic at overlooks, curves, and mixing areas and transitions.



A Main Trail	-Broom Finish Light Grey Concrete
B Mixing Zone	-Broom Finish Grey Concrete
C Thermoplastic Bands	-Grey Embedded Striping
D Outlook	-Black Finish Light Grey Concrete with Score Joints

Figure 3: Proposed paving materials near mixing zones, transition zones, and overlooks

WIND PIXELS, A KINETIC INSTALLATION

- A visual field of airfoil sections mounted on a tensile grid.
- Each airfoil constitutes a pixel that creates a dynamic effect in the air and on the bridge deck in shadow.

SUN POINTER

- A sun pointer that always points to the sun, day and night, cloudy or sunny.
- A simple pole with a moving pointer, incorporating a means for recording sunshine, possibly by engraving lines around the pole when there is sun.

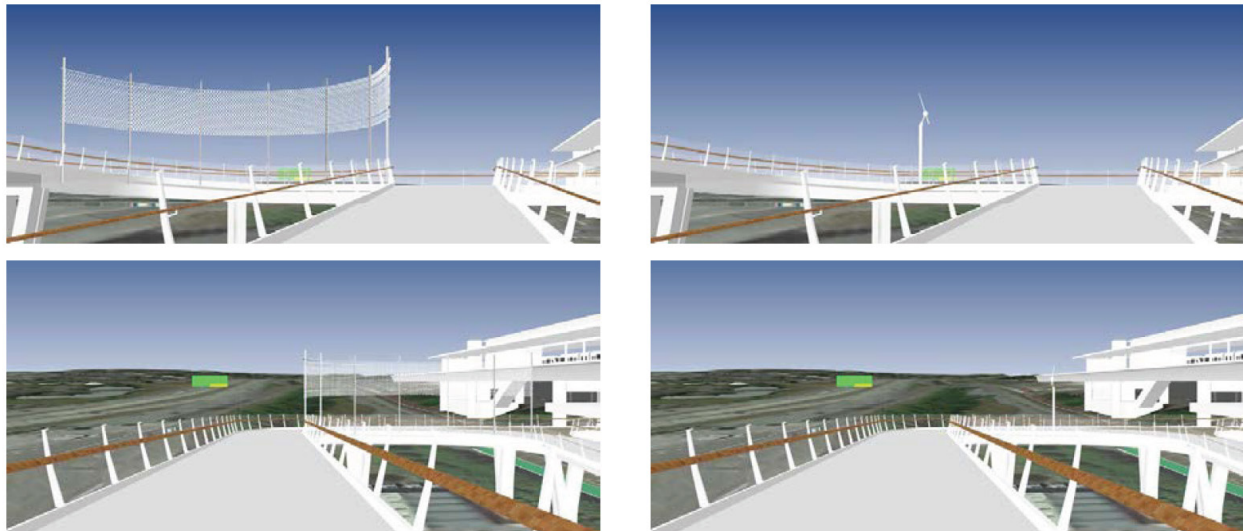


Figure 4: Proposed artwork concepts

The sustainability strategy incorporates SDOT standard practices as well as elements that are unique to the bridge design. The proposed bridge will increase mobility options and will provide greater access to alternative transportation options, open space, and job centers. The project will reuse and/or recycle onsite materials and will also utilize LED downlighting along the bridge handrail.

Proposed planting environments include native forest and wetland habitat plants on the north side of the west end of the bridge and a combination of native shrubs and small trees on the south side. Existing mature trees will also be preserved on the west side of the bridge.

The proposed design also includes two options for artwork, which may be located along the hairpin turn near the Sound Transit Light Rail Station (See figures 4).

Agency Comments

None

Public Comments

None

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Circulation, connections, and wayfinding
- Materials and furnishings
- Landscape and sustainability
- Mixing zones and art
- Overall expression

Circulation, connections, and wayfinding

The SDC commended the project team for revising the bridge alignment which will reduce the slope of the bridge and provide greater neighborhood connections. Commissioners are still concerned with the proposed 8% slope between the light rail station mezzanine level and 1st Ave NE landing and mixing zone, specifically as it relates to increased cyclist speeds. Although the SDC agreed with updates to the proposed mixing zones, several commissioners encouraged the project team to use different paving materials and additional planting near the transition between the bridge pathway and the 1st Ave mixing zone as an additional visual cue for cyclists to slow down prior to entering the space. The commission also encouraged the project team to consider adding a stairway, connecting the 1st Ave mixing zone to the bridge above, in order to reduce travel time.

Materials and furnishings

The SDC appreciated the proposed materials palette. Specifically, Commissioners appreciated the material proposed for the handrails. Commissioners encouraged the project team to further articulate the connection between the handrail and the metal upright attached to the bridge. The Commission also appreciated locating lighting beneath the handrail, but cautioned the design team to make sure lighting levels are adequate to reduce security concerns.

The SDC recommended the project team provide more details about how the bridge columns are integrated with the overall design.

Landscape & sustainability

The SDC recognized the importance of including plantings, specifically along the west end of the pedestrian bridge, as it will enhance the pedestrian experience while providing weather protection. Commissioners appreciated the proposal to include several landscape environments in which the pathway and bridge approach on the west end will pass through. The Commission also appreciated the project team's plan to retain several mature trees.

While acknowledging how important the landscape is to the overall bridge design, the SDC is concerned that the project team is including a landscape architect late during the design process. The commission recommended the landscape plan quickly advance to the level of detail found in the proposed bridge design.

The SDC appreciated the project team's sustainability strategy.

Mixing zones and art

The SDC agreed with the layout and design of the proposed mixing zones. While the Commission preferred the wind pixels artwork, commissioners had differing opinions over the location of the artwork. Several commissioners thought the artwork should be located near the center of the bridge, while others preferred the currently proposed location, as it would be viewed from several different viewpoints. The Commission recommended the project team consider alternative locations for artwork so that it is better integrated with the design of the bridge.

Overall expression

The SDC recommended the project team consider paying more attention to the materials used as well as the overall design of the thermoplastic bands, suggesting the bands could serve as another artwork on the surface of the bridge. Commissioners also reminded the project team to assess the durability of materials used for the bands.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for the presentation of the schematic design phase for the Northgate Pedestrian Bridge. The Commission appreciated the realignment of the bridge, reduction of bridge slope, and sustainability strategy. The SDC voted, 8-1, to approve the schematic design phase of the Northgate Pedestrian Bridge with the following recommendations:

1. Provide more details about how the bridge columns are integrated with the overall design
2. Quickly advance the landscape plan to the level of detail found in the proposed bridge design
3. Consider alternative locations for artwork so that it is better integrated with the design of the bridge
4. Consider paying more attention to the materials used as well as the overall design of the thermoplastic bands

The following are comments from commissioners who voted against the project:

Brianna Holan- I am concerned that the proposed kit of parts doesn't feel entirely integrated into the overall bridge design. At this stage, the design does not feel like a cohesive expression, especially in regards to the landscaping and design of the columns which needs to be pushed a lot further than what was shown today.