

# Seattle Center Arena

**Jenny A. Durkan**  
Mayor

**Samuel Assefa**  
Director, OPCD

**John Savo**, Chair

**Ben de Rubertis** Vice Chair

**Justin Clark**

**Evan Fowler**

**Rachel Gleeson**

**Laura Haddad**

**Brianna Holan**

**Mark Johnson**

**Rick Krochalis**

**Ross Tilghman**

**Michael Jenkins**  
Director

**Valerie Kinast**  
Coordinator

**Aaron Hursey**  
Planner

**Juliet Acevedo**  
Administrative Staff

**Office of Planning and  
Community Development  
Seattle City Hall**  
600 4th Avenue, 5th Floor  
Seattle, WA 98124

**TEL** 206-684-0435  
**FAX** 206-233-2784  
seattle.gov/designcommission

## Commissioners Present

John Savo, Chair  
Ben de Rubertis, Vice Chair  
Justin Clark  
Evan Fowler  
Mark Johnson  
Rick Krochalis

## Commissioners Excused

Rachel Gleeson  
Laura Haddad  
Brianna Holan  
Ross Tilghman

## Project Description

The project team is proposing to redevelop the existing Seattle Center Arena for existing and future professional sports team, other sporting events, concerts, and shows. The redevelopment site includes the area surrounding the existing arena as well as the block bounded by 1st Ave N, Thomas St, Warren Ave, and John St. The existing arena, which is a designated City of Seattle landmark, will be expanded below grade to increase overall seating capacity. The current loading area and truck access along Thomas St. will be redeveloped into an atrium and pedestrian plaza with 400 stall parking garage and loading services located below grade. Access to truck loading will occur south of the site through a tunnel under the south parcel.

## Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) third review of the Seattle Center Arena project. The purpose of this meeting was to review the updated design concept for the project. The commission did not take an action during today's meeting. Instead, the SDC provided the project team with several recommendations that should be addressed prior to the next meeting.

## Recusals and Disclosures

**Laura Haddad** recused herself as her studio was selected to serve as the artist for the project

**May 3, 2018**

9:30 am - Noon

**Type**

CIP

**Phase**

Schematic Design

**Previous Reviews**[1/18/18, 10/5/17](#)**Presenters**Geoff Cheong  
PopulusRobert Nellams  
Seattle CenterJill Crary  
Seattle CenterRico Quirindongo  
DLR GroupJohn Shaw  
SDCIBarbara Swift  
Swift Company**Attendees**

Chris Allen | Mortenson

Lyle Bicknell | OPCD

Valancy Blackwell | Office of the  
Mayor

Jessica Conquest | ESA

Ariel Davis | Fehr &amp; Peers

Erin Doherty | DON

Debi Frausto | Uptown Alliance

Claire Hoffman | ESA

Joy Jacobson | FAS

Ken Johnsen | SOJ

Jackie Kirn | CBO

Donald Kunz | Uptown resident

Julia Levitt | Seattle Center

Gareth Loveridge | Swift Com-  
panyWill Ludlam | Seattle Center  
Advisory Board

Shaun Mason | CAA Icon

James Stieg | M-E Engineers

Ryan Thomas | Perkins Coie

Sara Zora | SDOT

**Summary of Presentation**

Geoff Cheong, of Populus, Rico Quirindongo, of DLR Group, John Shaw, of SDCI, Barbara Swift, of Swift Company, and Robert Nellams and Jill Crary, of Seattle Center, presented the updated design concept for the Seattle Center Arena project. The project team discussed how the project fits within the overall programming and activation of Seattle Center. The presentation team then provided a brief update of the development process, including the selection of an artist, curb space management plan, the project's current scope of work, and draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) process and alternatives.

The project team then presented updates to the concept design (*see figure 1*). The design proposal will continue to include truck/service access along 1st Ave N and vehicular access to below grade parking will be located on Thomas St east of Warren Ave N. The proposed truck/service access will include a 30-foot wide curb cut, while vehicular access includes a 26-foot wide curb cut with two lanes dedicated for traffic flow in and out of the garage. The design proposal also includes improvements to Thomas St between 1st Ave N and 2nd Ave N. Between 1st Ave N and Warren Ave N, the design proposal reduces the width of Thomas St, extends the sidewalk, and eliminates on-street parking along the southside, while maintaining a parking and loading zone on the north side of the street. This portion also includes proposals for either a half block or full block curbside street design. Thomas St, between Warren Ave N and 2nd Ave N, will maintain parking and loading zones and curb locations on both sides of the street.

The design update also included information about accessible routes and programming opportunities throughout the site as well as updates to a proposed curtain wall along the southeast corner of the facility, which will be visibly distinct from the historic curtain wall that currently surrounds the facility.

The project team then focused on the necessity, design, and location of six above ground mechanical structures throughout the project site. The mechanical structures are needed to intake, circulate, and discharge air from the facility. Due to the historic landmark status, the project team has proposed a non-typical strategy that includes airducts located below grade as well as six egress and mechanical structures located above grade. Combined egress and mechanical structures are proposed for the following locations:

- Northeast section- Combined structures will be inserted into the existing footprint of the A/NT gallery building (*see figure 2*)
- Southeast section – Option one combines mechanical structures with the upper plaza and elevator facility which provides access from the plaza to the vehicular garage below. Option two integrates the combined mechanical structures with the upper plaza but does not provide elevator access from the upper plaza. (*see figure 3*)
- Garage east section – Integrates the combined mechanical structures with the façade of the lower plaza (*see figure 4*)
- Garage west section – Integrates the combined mechanical structures within the proposed garage facility (*see figure 5*)
- Southwest section – Creates a standalone combined mechanical structure that will also serve as signage for the Arena facility (*see figure 6*)
- Northwest section – Option one includes the addition of a combined mechanical structure along the eastern portion of the south façade of the northwest rooms. Option two proposes extending the entire south façade of the Northwest Rooms to integrate the combined mechanical structure with the existing building. Both options also include a public stair, seating, and open space (*see figures 7 & 8*)

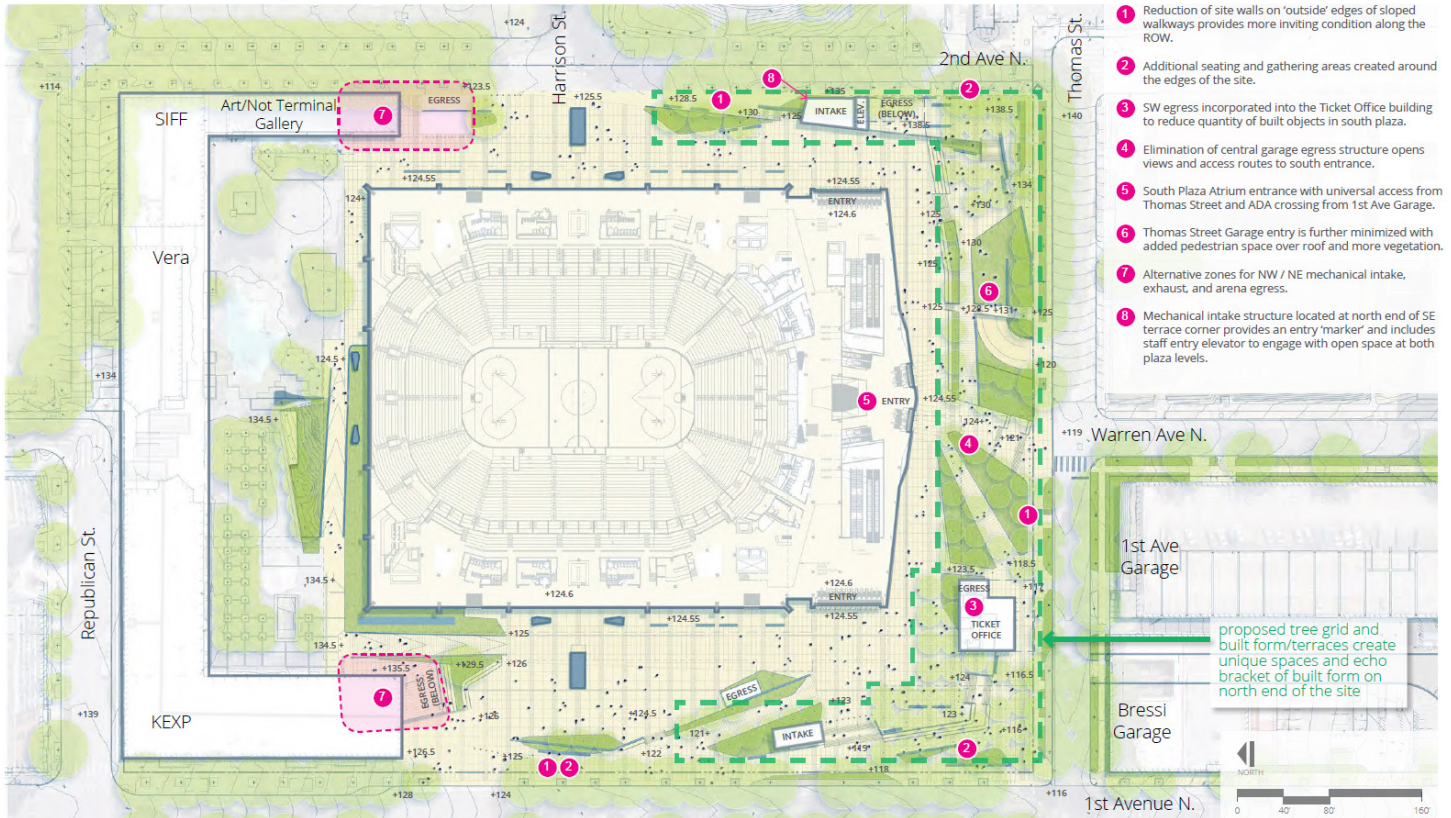


Figure 1: Proposed site design



Figure 2: Northeast section structure location



Figure 3: Southeast section structure location

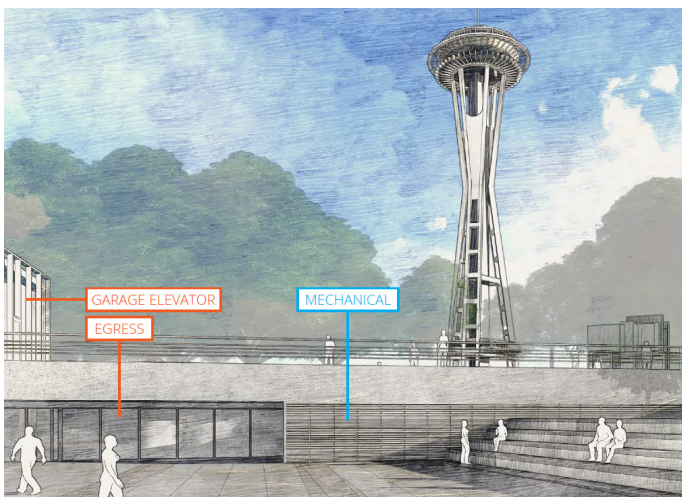


Figure 4: Garage east structure location

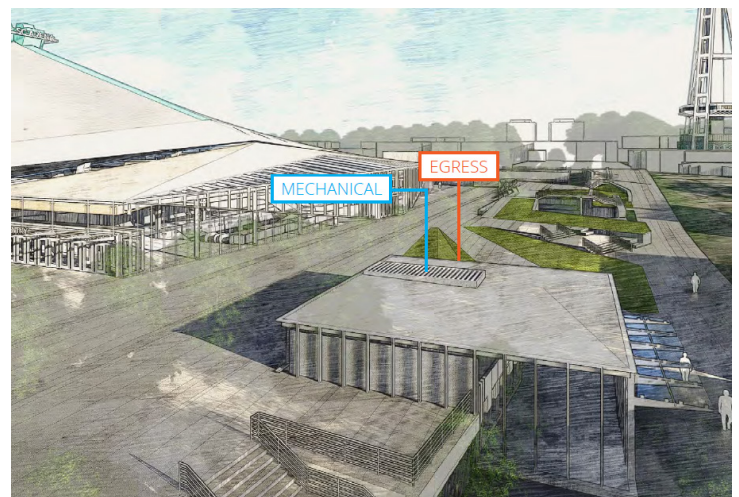


Figure 5: Garage west structure location

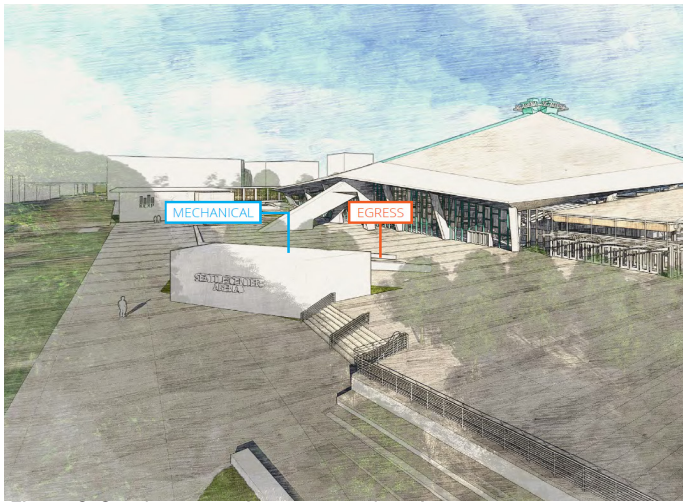


Figure 6: Southwest section structure location

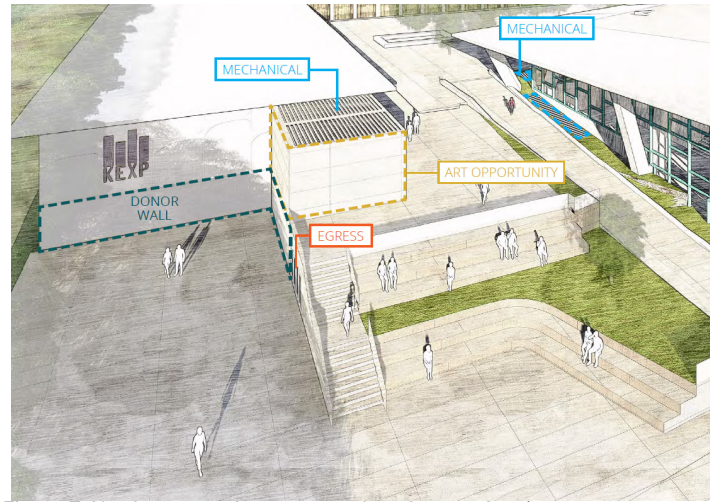


Figure 7: Northwest section structure location - option 1

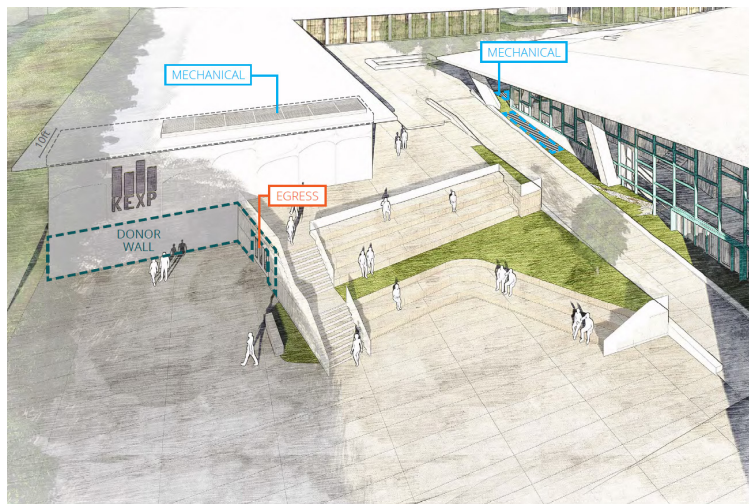


Figure 8: Northwest section structure location - option 2

The project team then presented the framework for the artwork plan, which is focused on the collective experience of remembering tomorrow. The artwork plan will analyze the historic past, dynamic present, and unknown future of the project area.

### Agency Comments

**Sara Zora**, SDOT, mentioned that although she hasn't had a chance to look at the design proposals for the streets surrounding the project site, she knows that Thomas St is a designated green street and greenway for bicycles. Ms. Zora then said that she would like for the design team to show how they can incorporate additional green street elements on the surrounding streets, since preserving the curb along Thomas St. will be necessary for loading and unloading. Ms. Zora then stated that transportation is a big deal for the surrounding neighborhood and that proposed designs should address issues for event attendees as well as for community members.

**Erin Doherty**, Staff coordinator for Landmarks Preservation Board, stated that the board is pleased with the development of the proposed addition to the arena as well as design elements for the adjacent open space. Ms. Doherty then said that the board also provided some guidance related to the architectural character of the addition. She then addressed the design and locations of the egress and mechanical equipment. Ms. Doherty said that the board agreed with the integration of the egress and mechanical equipment on the northeast portion of the project site. The board also showed support for option 1 for the egress and mechanical equipment located in the southeast corner of the site. Ms. Doherty then said the board is concerned with the egress and mechanical equipment proposal near the southwest corner of the site. The board also supports extending the entire length of the Northwest Rooms rather than creating a separate structure for the egress and mechanical equipment near the northwest corner of the site, but cautioned the design team from mimicking the historic design of the existing structure. Ms. Doherty then said that the board is getting comfortable with the parking proposal.

## Public Comments

**Debbie Frausto**, Uptown Alliance, stressed that the goal is to integrate Seattle Center and Arena within the surrounding neighborhood. Ms. Frausto commented that having well designed streets is key, specifically calling out Republican St. and Thomas St. She then stated that Uptown organizations and residents need to hear more about how the project will integrate with the neighborhood. Ms. Frausto also commented that programming and activation is necessary for the success of the surrounding plazas and open space.

**Will Ludlam**, Seattle Center Advisory Commission, stated that the project developer has been a great partner and has received broad support from the Seattle Center Advisory Commission. Mr. Ludlam said that this project is an important step in the future of the Seattle Center. He then said that the Advisory Commission agreed with providing open space on the southside of the arena and encouraged the project team to consider the types of uses along Thomas St. He then strongly encouraged the project team to consider future pedestrian traffic as transit develops, specifically light rail.

**Donald Kunz**, Uptown resident, encouraged the SDC and project team to look at the proposed spaces around the arena. Mr. Kunz encourage the project team to use materials and patterns to enliven the pedestrians experience and to make the entrance exciting and unique.

## Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Access, circulation, and the pedestrian experience
- Open space, programming, activation needs
- Art and sustainability
- Additional guidance

### *Access, circulation, and, pedestrian experience*

The SDC commented that the project team should consider including a curb-less street on Thomas St., between 1st Ave and Warren Ave, in all proposed design alternatives. Commissioners agreed that providing a curb-less street in this location would elevate the quality of the pedestrian experience while crossing Thomas St. The Commission elaborated on the previous comment by encouraging the project team to design Thomas St. to prioritize pedestrian movement. Several commissioners then commented that they agree with the preferred vehicular and truck/service access points along 1st Ave and Thomas St. but recommended the project team provide information on the truck turn movements for the service/truck entrance along 1st Ave. to confirm the necessity of the proposed curb cut width.

The SDC is concerned with the proposal to remove publicly accessible restroom facilities. Commissioners strongly recommended the project team consider relocating, rather than eliminating the restroom facilities. The Commission then commented that the project should better integrate other modes of transportation, specifically addressing delineated space and curb management for ride share programs and autonomous vehicles.

The SDC then discussed the location and design of the egress and mechanical equipment. Overall, the SDC encouraged the project team to design the above ground egress and mechanical equipment in a way that will not mimic the historic design of the arena. Commissioners encouraged the project team to continue to think about proposed materials for each structure. The SDC had no issues with the location and design of the preferred option for the egress and mechanical equipment in the northeast, garage east, and garage west sections of the project site. The Commission then strongly recommended that the preferred option for the design and location of egress mechanical equipment in the southeast section of the project site include elevator access between the upper plaza and garage below grade. The SDC also strongly recommended that the proposed design for the egress and mechanical equipment in the southwest section of the project site serve as more than just a place for signage. The SDC is concerned with the proposed options for the egress and mechanical equipment in the northwest section of the project site. The Commission encouraged the project team to extend the entire length of the southern edge of the Northwest Rooms to accommodate the egress and mechanical equipment. Commissioners then encouraged the project team to think about the overall design solution -texture, patterns, and materials- for the new addition prior to designing the adjacent stair and gathering space.

### *Open space, programming, activation needs*

The SDC was encouraged to see the future potential for activation and programming of on-site open space. The Commission strongly recommended the project team continue to understand how each open space will be used for programming on event and non-event days. The commission stressed the importance of equity and inclusion when providing on-site programming.

*Art and sustainability*

The SDC recognized the preservation of the existing facility as a major part of the overall sustainability strategy. The commission recommended the project team continue to work on the strategy as the project evolves. Commissioners were encouraged to hear that Seattle Center has guidelines addressing art and recommended the project art plan integrate with the Seattle Center guidelines.

*Additional guidance*

The SDC reiterated its concern for the treatment of the south block and recommended the project team design truck/service access on south block along 1st Ave in a way that does not prevent or delay future development. The commission also recommended the project team provide more details on the redesign of the North Plaza as well as a comprehensive circulation study. Commissioners then recommended the project team provide detailed information on the relocation of the skatepark, progress of the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS), and the activation of onsite open space including the potential for partnerships.

**Action**

The SDC thanked the project team for its presentation of the concept design update for the Seattle Center Arena project. The Commission appreciates progress made to open space design, consideration of alternatives for parking access, and integration of new air requirements within the proposed design. The SDC did not take an action during today's meeting. The commission provided the following recommendations that should be addressed prior to the review:

1. Provide additional information on proposed materials used for, but not limited to, paving and vertical treatments of the egress and mechanical equipment that would provide variation from historic materials which currently exist
2. Strongly reconsider the elimination of public restrooms at the southeast corner of the site
3. Provide information on the traffic management plan, including the integration of ride share, public, and alternative transportation
4. Provide information on the truck turn movements for the service/truck entrance along 1st Ave.
5. Address equity for all visitors to the arena on event and non-event days
6. Continue to work on the proposed sustainability strategy
7. Integrate art plan with Seattle Center art guidelines
8. Demonstrate that truck/service access on south block along 1st Ave does not preclude opportunities for future development
9. Provide information on the activation of onsite open space; include information on potential partnerships
10. Provide information on the relocation of the skatepark
11. Provide information on the progress on the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS)
12. Provide details for the redesign of the North Plaza