

# 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**

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## Commissioners Present

John Savo, Chair  
Ben de Rubertis, Vice Chair  
Justin Clark  
Brianna Holan  
Mark Johnson  
Rick Krochalis  
Ross Tilghman

## Commissioners Excused

Evan Fowler  
Rachel Gleeson  
Laura Haddad

## 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) fourth review of the Seattle Center Arena project. The purpose of this meeting was to review the schematic design for the project. After the presentation and discussion, the SDC voted, 7-0, to approve the schematic design for the Seattle Center Arena project with several conditions and recommendations

## Recusals and Disclosures

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

June 21, 2018  
9:00 am - Noon

Type

CIP

Phase

Schematic Design

Previous Reviews

5/3/18, 1/18/18, 10/5/17

Presenters

Geoff Cheong  
Populous

Rico Quirindongo  
DLR Group

Barbara Swift  
Swift Company

Attendees

Tamar Benzikry  
4 Culture

Lyle Bicknell  
OPCD

Valancy Blackwell  
Office of the Mayor

Robert Cardona  
Uptown Alliance

Thomas Druggan  
Haddad/Druggan

Erin Doherty  
DON

Claire Hoffman  
ESA

Ken Johnsen  
SOJ

Hannah Kramer  
DLR Group

Jackie Kirn  
OPCD

Julia Levitt  
Seattle Center

Jessica Ordaz-Garcia  
Populous

Jeff Reed  
Seattle Center

John Shaw  
SDCI

rob Stephens  
CAA Icon

ryan Thomas  
Perkins Coie

Tara Wefers  
Pottery Northwest

Ruri Yampolski  
OAC

Sara Zora  
SDOT

Summary of Presentation

Geoff Cheong, of Populous, Rico Quirindongo, of DLR Group, and Barbara Swift, of Swift Company, presented the schematic design phase of the Seattle Center Arena project. The presentation team provided a brief overview of the project's sustainability goals as well as an update on the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) transportation mitigation report. Information focused on comments from the DEIS transportation mitigation section, which addressed impacts to surrounding sites during construction, existing organizations and recreation areas as well as curbside management, parking, ride-share services, and right-of-way (ROW) improvements.

Following the overview of sustainability and transportation impacts, the presentation focused on the updated designs affecting the public realm (plazas, rights of way, etc.) and how project features affect the use of these spaces (see figure 1). The presentation highlighted key project features including the integration of the egress and mechanical structures, art (see figure 2), lighting, landscape, and accessible pedestrian routes on all sides of the arena facility and showed these features in context with the upgrades to the building and public spaces overall

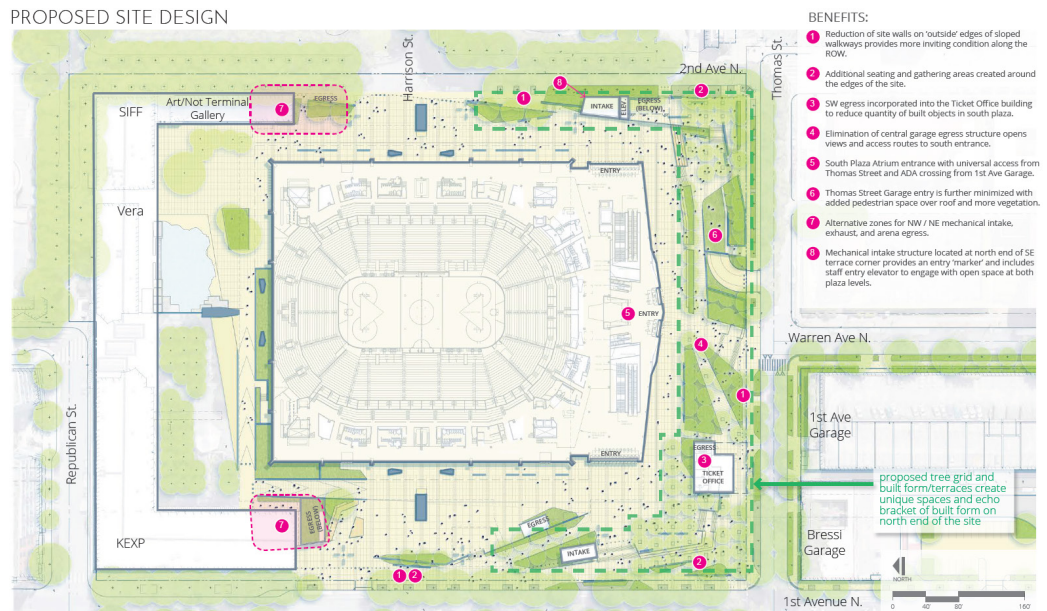


Figure 1: Proposed site design

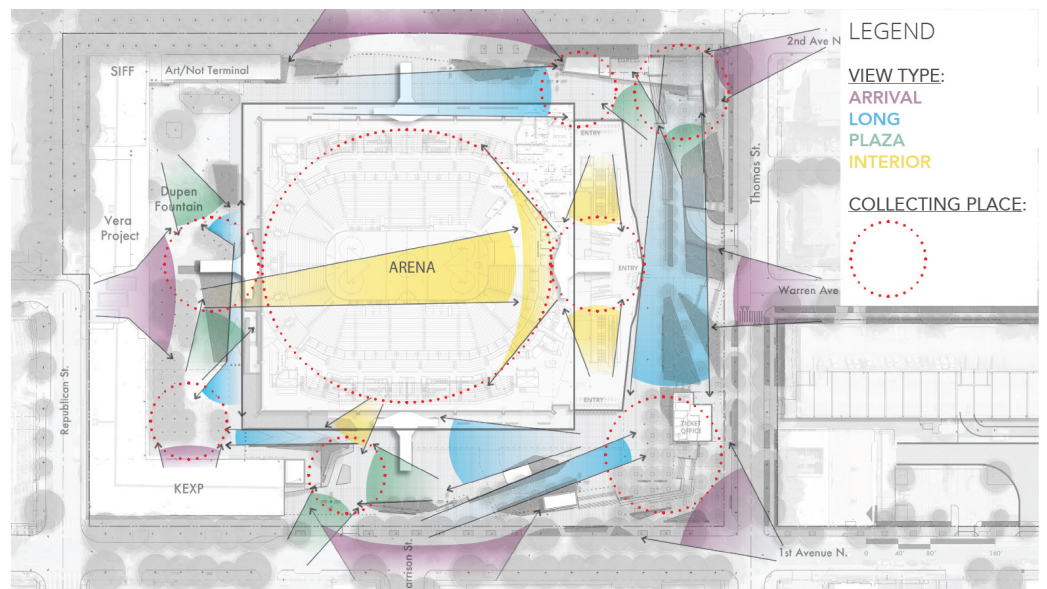


Figure 2: Proposed art plan views

project. Highlights of the presentation include:

- The proposed egress and mechanical structures in the east plaza and their relationship to the existing Paul Thiry designed building housing Art Not Terminal (see figure 3);
- The proposed egress and mechanical structures in the southeast area of the south plaza that include egress and venting and their integration into existing and proposed plazas (see figure 4);
- The proposed egress and mechanical structures near 1st and Thomas St. that include ticketing/program space, art opportunities, and egress from the garage below (see figure 5);
- A proposed single purpose venting stack sited near 1st Avenue in the west plaza that will include Art opportunities (see figure 6);
- 3 proposed egress and mechanical options along the south façade of the NW rooms and how they relate to the spaces occupied by KEXP (see figure 7); and
- Updated designs for the North Courtyard that account for changes to the below ground structures supporting the Arena expansion.

The project team also provided a brief overview of the proposed Art plan, which focuses on the collective experience of remembering tomorrow. The plan references the origins of the Seattle Center and Worlds Fair, Century 21 Master Plan, and existing design within a series of exterior and interior spaces to create a unique experience for users on event and nonevent days. The plan will locate art throughout the site and will include special street paving on Thomas St, portals along the east and west entrances, interactive fan wall, and artistic lighting on specific columns, roof, and walls as well as several rooms or plazas that will include unique lighting, seating, paving, and planting materials.

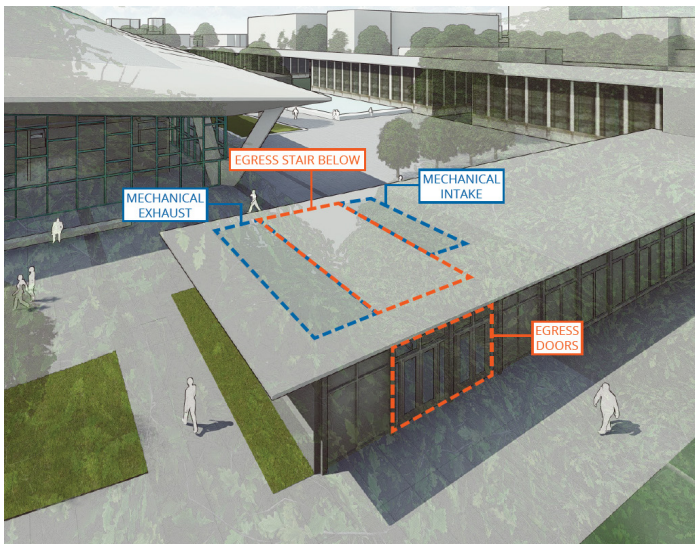


Figure 3: Proposed design for structures in northeast area

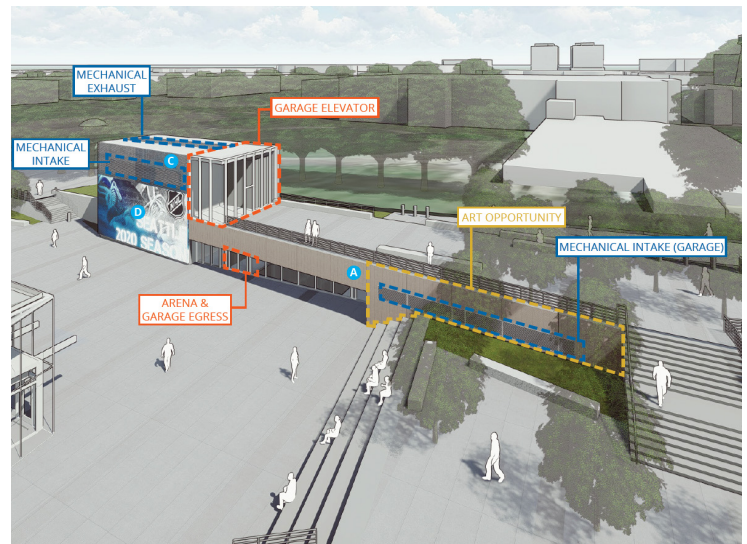


Figure 4: Proposed design for structure in southeast area

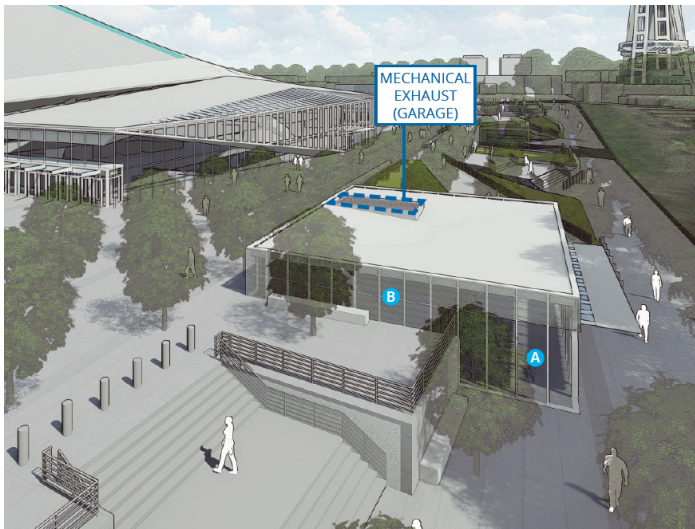


Figure 5: Proposed design for structure near 1st Ave and Thomas St.

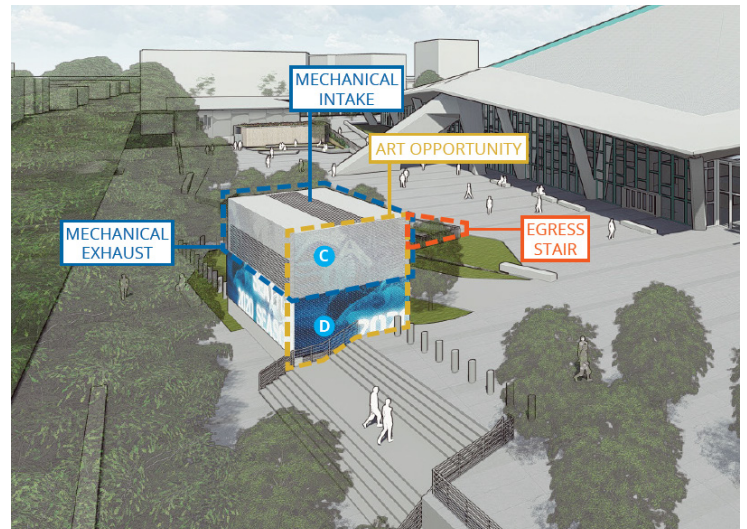


Figure 6: Proposed design for structures near 1st Ave N

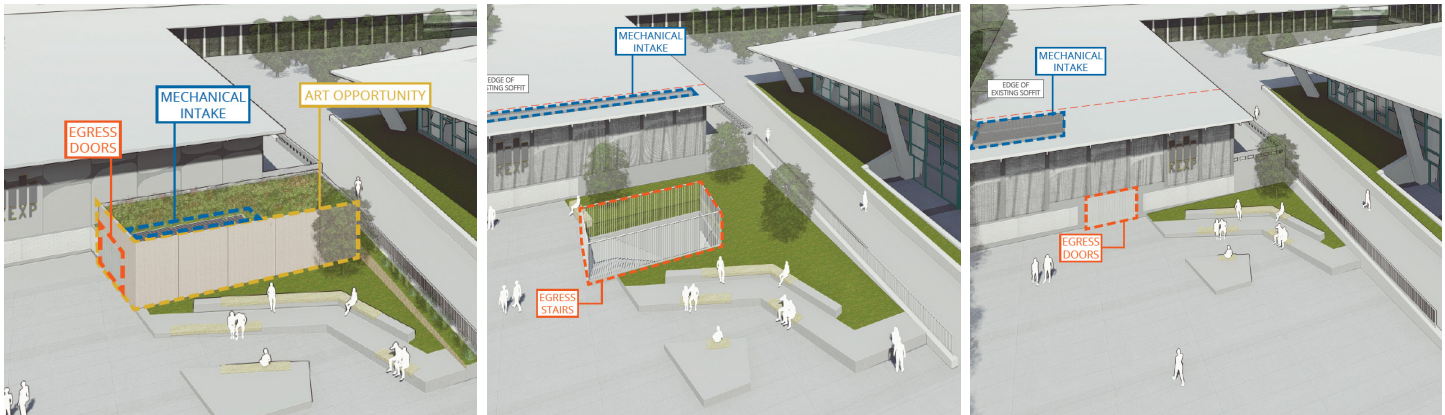


Figure 7: Proposals for structures at Northwest Rooms

Finally, the presenters provided updated information on the development potential of the south parcel site. While redevelopment of the south parcel is not included in this project, the commission has been requesting detailed information on how the proposed truck access would impact development potential on this site, which is owned by Seattle Center. The presentation included additional information on how the access would affect the Bressi Garage, which is a City of Seattle landmark. Information on access and impacts to the existing parking garage accessed from 1st Avenue was also provided. (see figure 8)



Figure 8: development potential for south parcel - NOT PROPOSED

### Agency Comments

**Lyle Bicknell**, OPCD, stated that the surrounding community has a long term vision to improve connectivity between the Seattle Center and surrounding neighborhood. Mr. Bicknell then said that this project goes a long way to achieving that vision. Mr. Bicknell then reminded the commission that OPCD continues to look at the design of Republican St. He said that the proposals built on a number of design concepts, specifically involving light, to ensure connection to Seattle Center and arena can function well.

**Julia Levitt**, Seattle Center, stated that they have studied in great detail the design option for the egress and mechanical structures at the Northwest Rooms. Ms. Levitt then thanked the design team for their continued effort to refine the design options. Ms. Levitt then said that while the design team preferred option A for the design of the egress and mechanical structure at the Northwest Rooms, The Seattle Center preferred option C. Ms. Levitt then said that the Landmarks Board has yet to voice their support for a specific option.

**Ruri Yampolsky**, OAC, commended the project team for their early inclusion of an artist and art plan. Ms. Yampolsky then reminded the project team that all proposed art should be art, rather than serving as a platform for advertisement for the arena.

**Sara Zora**, SDOT, said that SDOT is looking to improve access for people taking alternative transit. Ms. Zora commended the project team for providing increased access to and through the site. Ms. Zora then said that SDOT is analyzing transit and access options within the surrounding area as well as analyzing vehicle and service entries to see how they work together with transit and circulation plans.

### Public Comments

None

### Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Site access and circulation
- Thomas Street design concept
- Vent and egress structures

- North Courtyard
- Materials, finishes, and landscape
- Lighting and art integration
- South parcel redevelopment

#### *Site access and circulation*

The SDC is concerned with the limited information on transportation, site access, and circulation. Although they recognized that it takes time to provide detailed solutions for the site access and circulation, Commissioners agreed that basic strategies and framework to address transportation should be in place. To address their ongoing concern about being presented detailed information on access and circulation, the commission developed a condition that project team provide an integrated transportation plan for the next review. Commissioners requested the project team provide detailed information on transit mode percentages including bicycle ridership and proposed bicycle parking. The SDC also requested that project team provide realistic demand information for each travel mode, including the role of the monorail in meeting transportation demand.

#### *Thomas St. Design concept*

The commission appreciated the information provided on Thomas Street. However, Commissioners indicated that their preference for Thomas would be a curbless street concept. Commissioners appreciated that this portion of Thomas Street would be closed to vehicles during events. The SDC requested further information on pedestrian movements across Thomas St and then recommended the project team explore wider range of design treatments on Thomas St to enhance its ability to act as festival street.

#### *Vent and egress structures*

The SDC agreed to not make specific recommendations for the design of the vent and egress structures located adjacent to the Northwest Rooms near the northwest corner of the project site as they did not want to contradict any guidance provided by the Landmarks Board, who has regulatory authority over any solution affecting this portion of the project. Commissioners thought it would be more appropriate to provide the Landmarks Board with a set of design values and preferences for the structures and adjacent open space.

The Commission then discussed the overall design framework for each vent and egress structure. Commissioners agreed that the most successful integration of the structures occurs in the Garage Southwest location. At this location, the design integrates the structures with art, ticketing services (program space), and garage access. Commissioners also thought that the modern design of the proposed structure integrated well with the existing historic structure. The commission recommended the project team use the same framework to design the structures in the arena northwest and southwest areas.

The SDC also discussed the design proposal and location of the Arena Southwest vent and egress structure. Commissioners are concerned with the limited design of the structure, which includes only a large electronic sign for advertising. The commission then conditioned that the project team return for a subcommittee review of the proposed vent and egress structures with an emphasis on the design of the Arena Southwest structure.

#### *North courtyard*

The SDC commended the project team for increasing accessibility through the North courtyard through the addition of a sloped pathway along the southern edge of the courtyard. This sloped pathway will provide greater visual access to the Arena as well as providing a distinct place that is separate from the larger plaza area abutting the NW rooms and KEXP. Commissioners encouraged the project team to consider how well the courtyard is currently being used as the proposed design continues to evolve.

#### *Materials, finishes, and landscape*

The SDC agreed the project team should carefully consider the texture and color of proposed paving materials and concrete finishes. Specifically, the Commission recommended the project team explore how proposed concrete colors relate in context to concrete located elsewhere in Seattle Center. The SDC then encouraged the project team to include additional seating options that face each other. Commissioners also encouraged the placement of seating within proximity to trees, which will provide additional shade. The Commission then commended the project team for preserving several mature trees and then recommended they show how the proposed landscape ties into the Seattle Center.

#### *Lighting and art integration*

The SDC commended the project team for their detailed and layered approach to lighting. The commission then recommended the project team show how lighting will function on nonevent days. Commissioners also

commended the team for their early identification of opportunities for art integration. The commission then recommended that any proposed art has artistic merit, and not serve as a platform for advertisement for the Arena.

#### *South parcel redevelopment*

The SDC agreed the project team provided an adequate feasibility study for the future development of the south parcel but encouraged that a proposal be developed for the south parcel as soon as possible<sup>1</sup>. Commission were concerned that solutions be developed during the interim period before any redevelopment occurs to screen the impacts of the proposed truck access location. The Commission requested that the project team provide visuals showing what the 1st Ave streetscape along the south parcel during the interim period. Commissioners also discussed the long-term development of the south parcel. Several commissioners encouraged the project team to consider including the 1st Ave garage as part of the long-term redevelopment of the south parcel. The Commission then recommended the project team verify the proposed width of the service access driveway.

#### **Action**

The SDC thanked the project team for its presentation of the schematic design for the Seattle Center Arena. The Commission appreciated the overall detail of the design proposal as well as the team's responsiveness to addressing issues on the integration of the proposed mechanical and egress structures. The SDC voted, 7-0, to approve the schematic design phase of the Seattle Center Arena with the following conditions:

1. Prior to the next meeting, return to a subcommittee to review the design of the Arena Southwest egress and mechanical structures.
2. Provide an integrated transportation master plan by the next commission meeting

The SDC also provided the following recommendations:

1. Show how the design has responded to transportation needs around the site for all modes of transportation
2. Explore wider range of design treatments on Thomas St to enhance its ability to function as a festival street
3. Explore color option for proposed concrete in context of other concrete used elsewhere in the Seattle Center
4. Demonstrate how the proposed landscape program relates to the larger planting plan for Seattle Center
5. Consider how lighting will function on both event and nonevent days; better explain the pedestrian experience
6. Proposed art should have artistic merit; ensure that LED electronic media does not morph into signage for the Arena
7. Verify the curb cut width of the truck drive on the South Parcel
8. Provide visuals showing the 1st Ave streetscape along the south parcel during the interim period

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<sup>1</sup>The South Parcel is owned by Seattle Center. While this parcel is being used for access, any redevelopment of the site that would include the concepts expressed in the presentation is subject to a separate application and permitting process.