

## **Transportation Staff team – Initial Review**

### **Transportation Team:**

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### **Seattle Partners:**

**A. Provide a world-class civic arena (the “Arena”) to attract and present music, entertainment, and sports events, potentially including NBA and NHL events, to Seattle and the region.**

**B. Provide for Project design and Arena operations in a manner that integrates with and enhances connections to Uptown and adjoining neighborhoods and aligns with the Urban Design Framework (“UDF”).**

The proposal has strong integration of both the Uptown UDF and Seattle Center Master Plan principles and goals, as well as the Seattle Comprehensive Plan and Climate Action Plan. The proposer spends a significant amount of effort to describing the pedestrian environment and amenities, the Seattle Center gateways into campus, and better connectivity and visibility into the Seattle Center campus. The proposal references the Uptown UDF goals numerous times and is in alignment with multimodal transportation solutions. The proposal also states that they would be involved in various degrees to complete UDF concept and festival street plans. They also express support for Uptown as an Arts and Cultural district.

It is evident that this proposal went to great lengths to recognize that the proposal Coliseum is a part of the surrounding neighborhood, will impact the neighborhood, and wants the Arena to fit into the broader urban context. The proposer’s site plan extends beyond the immediate vicinity of the developable parcels and emphasizes urban design and achievement of some of the Uptown UDF goals. They propose to open up the southern edge of the Seattle Coliseum between 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N and 2 Ave N by placing the loading dock underground and activating the corridor with retail, food and beverage opportunities and other community space along Thomas St. Also within the proposal is the reclamation of 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N street edge by preserving the active street characterization with transit and bicycle prioritization. As stated in their proposal, they have already begun outreach to local businesses and propose working to develop a “come early, stay late” program that would encourage Coliseum patrons

to arrive early and stay late in the neighborhood, which would both enhance area businesses and distribute trips to and from the Arena. The commitment to help establish an Uptown/Seattle Center Transportation Management District reinforces that they will strive to provide a venue that identifies and addresses opportunities to maintain accessibility and mobility in the Uptown area.

In responding to the City's questions, the proposers indicated that there will be a VIP parking garage accessed through the loading dock off Thomas St for 120-stalls. In addition, the 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N Garage will also be available for VIP parking, as it is now.

The pledge to hire a full-time Seattle Coliseum Director of Transportation to oversee on-going transportation operations is a plus for this proposal. This person will provide a consistent point of contact and coordination with Seattle Center, local businesses, neighborhood groups, and city officials to minimize scheduling conflicts, to communicate advanced notice of events/impacts, and promote access for all Seattle Center patrons. The Transportation Staff team would like this position to be hired early, if the proposer is awarded the contract, to ensure that building design and envisioned operations concurs with off-site improvements as recommended in the proposal, and to have a transportation point person during construction as well.

**C. Provide for design, permitting, development, demolition (if applicable), and construction of the Arena (the "Project") with minimal City financial participation.**

The proposer has committed that the associated costs of a Coliseum would be funded independently; however, the proposal anticipates \$250M in municipal bond funding. They also propose to take over the City's revenue-generating business of sponsorships on Seattle Center campus.

The transportation-related investments include a commitment of \$5,000,000 for capital improvements (to be determined). However, there are many transportation improvements suggested or recommended in the plan which would either require City (or other agency) funding commitments or a reduced list of potential access and mobility improvements. Many of the suggested capital improvement projects, programs and services are part of existing City plans and may be eligible for City funding contributions with or without Coliseum construction. The timing of these City investments, however, may need to be reconsidered if this proposal moves forward.

With the lengthy list of stated investments in the proposal, it is unclear which projects would be funded with the \$5,000,000, which projects would be developed in partnership (with the City or others), or which projects will be completed entirely by another entity. There are many vague phrases that do not fully commit Seattle Partners to their transportation investment ideas, such as "help" the City build out the Center City Bike Network, "Work with" the City and ST for direct station connection into Coliseum, "partner" with Commute Seattle for neighborhood-based access management program, and "partner" with Seattle Center to improve Monorail access from Link. This makes it confusing to understand how much City financial participation would be necessary to implement the transportation ideas as recommended by the proposer.

The Transportation Staff team would like to see a "transportation investments" table created to display the proposed transportation investment commitments (projects/programs/partnerships), and who the proposer is expecting to fund the improvements. This will be especially important to understand if this proposal moves forward into the environmental and development review process.

**D. Provide for the continuous, successful, sustainable operation of the Arena as a world-class civic venue with minimal City financial participation.**

The proposal is unclear about on-going financial commitments for transportation operations. The one clear recommendation that is stated as a financial commitment is hiring a Seattle Coliseum Director of Transportation. This commitment is an advantage of the proposal. Elsewhere, the proposal uses non-committal language that makes it difficult to understand the amount of effort that the City would ultimately have to contribute for ongoing transportation efficiencies. The proposal suggests ongoing partnerships with Commute Seattle, KC Metro, Westlake and South Lake Union parking garage operators, and shuttle services.

The proposal suggests there may also be funding for traffic enforcement, bike valet, communication and marketing, and pedestrian street activation.

More quantification of the financial commitment would be helpful in evaluating the overall contribution of the proponents to accommodating the access demand of Coliseum event patrons. Many commitments are suggested, so it would be good to understand the plan in full with a more concise summary. The level of City transportation investments needed to make this proposal work should be more clearly understood.

The Transportation review team would like to see on-going transportation operational funding elements added to the transportation investments table, mentioned above in part C.

**E. Provide for mitigation of transportation impacts due to Project construction and Arena operations.**

This proposal does a good job of (1) realistically viewing demand for travel to the arena within the context of demand for travel to the Seattle Center and the larger Uptown Urban Center, and (2) establishing a clear target to achieve a 6% reduction in SOV mode share for travel to the Seattle Center, which we hope means reduction in overall vehicle trips, since SOV trips are not very common for event patrons. A general private automobile reduction target would likely be a more effective metric.

The proposal did not include much substantive work on identifying impacts in their proposal (they did some existing condition and future events impact analysis), although they do analyze overall mode share trends for Center City, parking supply data, and offer transportation investments projects/ideas to help with mode share targets. The proposal is more focused on "policy" drivers than analysis; we would expect more detailed traffic operations assessment, strategy, modeling, and design to be undertaken if this proposal moves into the environmental and development review stage.

The proposer recognizes there will be adverse impacts to the neighboring residents and businesses because of the parking congestion created by more frequent and larger peak events at the new Coliseum and acknowledges that current access to Seattle Center is challenging during the afternoon peak. The proposal recognizes that interim strategies will need to be in place before light rail arrives in the area in 15-20 years.

There are a number of potential investment and improvement opportunities listed in the proposal, including: A Seattle Center Shared Mobility Hub (on 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N and Republican St); adaptive traffic signalization on Denny Way, Mercer St and Elliott Ave; dynamic message signs on main access routes; Thomas Street (and other) east-west pedestrian improvements; an on-going Director of Transportation position; collaborative marketing and planning efforts with Uptown and Commute Seattle; support of Westlake and Harrison mobility hubs; digital wayfinding and trip planning kiosks; 1st Ave N "Complete Street" improvements; 1st Ave N & Queen Anne Ave N protected bike lanes; a Seattle Coliseum Bike Center; connections to the Thomas Street pedestrian bridge; management of curb space for both transit and passenger pick-up/drop-off; regional park-and-ride plans; expansion of E-Park to Uptown and South Lake Union (SLU); and special event shuttle service to Westlake, SLU and other locations. These are all promising ideas to encourage trips to the arena by multiple modes, but more work would be needed to understand how the proposers would advance these ideas, as opposed to the City of other entities.

The proposer also has a good set of elements for travel demand management and to mitigate vehicle trips to the area, including: better managing and utilizing existing parking already in a broader area (SLU, Denny Triangle, Uptown, Interbay); creating a shared parking program; working with SDOT on curbspace management of on-street parking/passenger loading/flexible space during events and to reduce impact to neighborhood businesses (references best practices from Portland's Providence Park); development of a neighborhood based access management program ("Uptown Event Access and Parking Plan"); eliminate SOV trips for event support staff via transit incentives; incentivize HOV parking in Seattle Center garages; incentivizing parking operators to offer reduced rates for HOV; expansion of City's E-Park and parking communication tools to Uptown; and contributions to increase number of officers implementing and enforcing traffic control policies.

The proposal relies upon existing and dispersed parking facilities to address demand for vehicle access to the Coliseum, as well as a new VIP 120-stall parking garage, using loading dock access from Thomas St. Using existing and dispersed parking facilities is appropriate in light of the urban context for the proposed Coliseum, the availability of off-street and on-street parking as summarized in the Seattle Center/Uptown Parking Study (2016), and the larger focus of the Sustainable Transportation Access and Mobility plan to promote non-auto (sustainable transportation) and HOV access to the Center. Dispersed parking may also better support local economic development objectives by encouraging event patrons to park once, then visit local restaurants, bars, and retailers on their walk to or from the Coliseum. Dispersed parking will also disperse the local circulation impacts of the arena to a broader area.

The proposer has identified a pretty comprehensive coverage of programs, initiatives, incentives, and communication ideas to implement mobility services, including: funding the development of information technology pre-trip decision-making apps ("Access + Mobility Platform"); subsidizing transit fares with event ticket purchases; creating relationships with micro-transit (Chariot); establishing partnerships with TNCs; partnering with Commute Seattle and employers to encourage transit use among Uptown employees and Coliseum patrons; partnering with downtown hotels and businesses to offer Monorail/ORCA cards bundled with event packages; exploring options for shuttles (possibly autonomous) to Westlake and SLU to supplement Monorail/bus service; working with Monorail to implement Orca 2.0 integration; improving wayfinding at Westlake Station and extend Monorail operating hours per event, and an option for Sounder to add a stop at Thomas Street. These ideas all

have merit, but again, the transportation team needs a better understanding of the role of the proposer in advancing these strategies, if this proposal moves forward.

The responses to City questions states that they would build an underground seven-truck loading dock with direct access from Warren Ave N and/or from Thomas St to the facility, with no plans to tunnel under Thomas St to maintain proper truck and bus access (Note—the total number of truck capacity in this loading dock still might need clarity). Warren Ave N will provide on-street for the 80 events per year that require staging for large multi-axle trucks on the rear side of the parking garage and will also be stored in industrial neighborhoods when fleets must be parked for multiple days.

Again, the Transportation staff team would like to see a “transportation investments” table or summary created to display the proposed transportation investment commitments (projects/programs/partnerships), and who the proposer is expecting to fund the improvements.

**F. Provide Project construction and Arena operations in a manner that is equitable for workers and consistent with the City’s Race and Social Justice Initiative.**

**G. Provide for Project design and Arena operational integration with Seattle Center, contributing positively to the vibrancy of Seattle Center.**