

On Tuesday, January 7 Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) hosted a community meeting to provide an update on the North Transfer Station (NTS) replacement project. The specific objectives of the meeting were to:

- share the design progress with the community,
- learn about the upcoming station closure and construction, and
- engage attendees with the design team.

About 18 people attended the community meeting, some of whom were part of the NTS Stakeholder Advisory Group and the Green Group.

Penny Mable, EnviroIssues, welcomed attendees to the meeting, explained the meeting format and purpose, and introduced SPU staff members - Jeff Neuner, Hui Yang, and Ken Snipes; Kelly Pajek from the City of Seattle Arts & Cultural Affairs office; the design team - Greg Lindstadt, CDM Smith, Pierce McVey, Mahlum, Dean Koonts and Rachel Dotson, HBB Landscape Architecture; and the contractor - Julianna Plant, Lydig Construction.

Jeff Neuner, SPU, gave a brief presentation on the project's background and need. He explained the plan to demolish the existing station and build a new one that caters to modern day waste needs. He reminded attendees about the work done since 2008 with the Stakeholder Advisory Group and Green Group as well as the agreements made with the Wallingford Community Council and Fremont Neighborhood Council regarding the design and operation of the station.

Greg Lindstadt, CDM Smith, explained the meeting will focus on the design progress of the facility design since the 60% community meeting and demonstrate that the agreements made with Wallingford Community Council and the Fremont Neighborhood Council are being fulfilled. Greg pointed out the three main buildings of the station – the Transfer building; the Recycle building and the Administration building. He explained the site circulation for both commercial and self-haul users and emphasized how the greater separation between users is designed to improve safety for users and workers. Greg noted the proximity of the transfer station to the Stone 34 project on Stone Way and mentioned the coordination between the two projects. He noted that at this stage of the design process the station design is essentially established.

A member of the audience asked if there will be a reduction in the number of solar panels on the roof of the transfer building. Greg acknowledged that the design includes fewer than have been previously shown as the density of the solar panels is still being decided. However, as per the Wallingford Community Council agreement, the solar panels will not project more than four feet above the roof of the transfer building. A member of the community asked about the roof height. Greg pointed out that the roof height is similar to the existing height, with the exception of the solar panels. Another community member asked about operational hours and construction hours. Ken Snipes, SPU, said that

the new facility will operate the same days and hours as the existing station, Monday to Saturday, 8:00 am to 5:30 pm. Penny clarified that Lydig Construction would talk about construction working hours and activities later in the presentation.

Pierce McVey, Mahlum, reviewed the design goals set in earlier conversations with the community: to create an environment that is suitable to the surroundings and reflects the industrial nature of the facility. He highlighted some of the architectural refinements the team has been working on since the last design meeting – N 34th Street, the open plaza on N 34th Street and Woodlawn Avenue N, the photovoltaic array and the north wall design. Pierce acknowledged that at the previous meeting some concern was raised about the screening wall along N 34th Street. It was thought to be not very pedestrian-friendly and could encourage graffiti. The design team revised the design by breaking up the long stretch of building with viewing windows into the station, making it more transparent. He noted they are also adding a planter strip on both sides of the sidewalk. A community member asked about installing benches or leaning rails as this is a long stretch of sidewalk and also gets a lot of sunshine. Pierce said that it was considered in the early stages of design; some concerns were raised regarding the potential for improper use of the benches (sleeping) but noted the design team can still consider the addition of benches.

Pierce explained the different materials and colors that will be used throughout the station. Materials such as pre-cast concrete, metal panels and poly-carbonate panels were chosen for their longevity and low maintenance. Bright colors will be used for way-finding.

Pierce explained that the north wall, which is the sound wall, has been designed to have random textures to enhance visual interest. A member of the community asked about the height of the sound wall. Pierce answered that the sound wall is 10 feet above the adjacent ground elevation and follows the gradient of the site. He also explained that the loading doors on the north of the transfer building have an opening of 25 feet, but will typically only be opened to 15 feet in order to reduce noise levels. A community member suggested adding lighting along N 34th Street. Pierce acknowledged that there will be some emergency lighting from the building, but additional lighting along the sidewalk would be a matter for the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) to decide. Another community member commented on the choice of materials and asked the design team to think more about colors and texture to make the building more neighborhood-friendly.

Rachel Dotson, HBB Landscape Architects, showed the landscape plan for the open space and playground associated with the rebuild of the station. She pointed out the major elements of the landscape plan and mentioned that at this stage of the design, they are refining the detail of materials and finishes.

Rachel highlighted the 0.4 Green Factor of the landscaping plan, which is in line with the community agreements and City standards. Rachel explained that this code is mainly for permit purposes and is

determined by the types of shrubs, trees and other plantings used. Rachel pointed out that only two of the existing street trees along N 35th St would need to be removed. She also noted the trees along Woodlawn Ave N where the design team reduced the number of site trees and clustered them in a way to increase visibility into the open space and maintain views to the west. The trees planted in this area will grow to approximately 25 feet. Rachel explained the different types of trees and shrubs that will be used. She highlighted the use of accent trees, such as the Marilee Crabapple, to add color to tie in art and landscape. A community member suggested using more native trees that are stronger in texture such as the Evergreen Oak. Rachel highlighted that one of the concerns with using Evergreen Oak is the attraction of wildlife. She also noted that the palette of native trees from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) wildlife deterrent list, which is being used by the design team as a basis for plant selection, is quite limited.

Julianna Plant, Lydig Construction, gave an overview of the first year of construction activities. She announced that the last day of operation for the current Transfer Station will be Monday, January 20, 2014. She highlighted that the construction working hours will be Monday through Friday, 7:00 am to 5:00 pm and Saturday (if necessary) 9:00 am to 6:00 pm, as per community agreements and City standards. Julianna announced that the construction crew will start moving onto the site in mid-February. She noted that the sidewalks around the site will be open and useable during most of the construction until they are closed and replaced with new sidewalks. Construction traffic will enter the site at the existing entrance on N 35th Street and exit the site on N 34th Street where the long-haul trailers currently enter and exit the site.

Julianna also noted that Carr Place N will be closed once construction begins and the parking lot at N 35th St and Carr Place N will be used as the parking lot for construction workers. Once the station construction is far enough along, construction workers will park on the station site so the Carr Place N Park can be constructed. Julianna explained the measures that the construction team will have in place to control dust and rodent issues. A community member asked about the timeline of the entire project. Julianna provided an overview of the schedule for construction to be completed in fall/winter 2015 and then testing/commission into 2016.

Tim Croll, SPU Solid Waste Director, thanked the community for their continued hard work on this project. A member of the community thanked Tim and SPU for their work on the project to date.

Question and Answer Period

Following the presentation, community members were provided an opportunity to ask the Design Team questions. These included:

- Is there an update on the artist? Kelly Pajek noted that there were no concepts to review yet. The artist, with oversight from the Seattle Arts Commission and the Seattle Design Review Board, has decided to focus the artwork on a single sculpture in the plaza area of the site.

- Will there be any opportunity to comment on the final station design? No. The final station design will be shared with the community, but by that stage, the design is fixed and not subject to any further review or changes.

Open House

During the open house portion of the meeting, community members viewed the 90% design elements and talked with the Design Team. Below are some of the comments the team heard:

- Benches are preferred along the N 34th St façade because it is a long stretch of sidewalk and the elderly population would likely benefit from benches.
- Pedestrian lighting is preferred along the Woodlawn Ave Open Space walkways.
- More evergreen trees and fewer deciduous trees are preferred to screen the Transfer Station on the east and north sides; possibly swapping the Birch trees for Cork Oak or Tanbark Oak.
- It is preferred that the Crabapple tree on the northwest corner of Carr Place Park be relocated so it does not obstruct the view from the north to the park or the skyline.

Comment Forms

Comment forms were also provided for community members. Below are the responses from the five comment forms received:

What do you think about the 90% design of the new station shown at tonight's meeting? Please explain what elements you liked or disliked.

- Love the solar PV panels – keep them at all costs!
- I am very pleased with the overall design of the site and the buildings, but it could use some relief from its industrial appearance. Add some whimsical decorative elements. The light rail station in Puyallup is a great example.
- No art shown for a \$310,000 (sic) project.
- Meet with artist and community representatives soon – not just Seattle Design Commission and Seattle Art Commission
- It's getting there...the building is still a bit boring – how can you make it more artful, interesting? Integrate art, color, etc. into the materials and surfaces.

Please share your comments and concerns.

- New park needs to connect to WWZO on the east side of Gas Works Park.
- The north sound wall looks monolithic and forbidding. I'd prefer to see stone or masonry rather than metal panels. Please dress it up with some artwork, perhaps some small elements mounted on the top. Something whimsical and fun to reduce the industrial look.

- The planting plan has improved with the use of bosques instead of rows of trees. However the plant palette is weak – needs stronger trees. Consider Evergreen Oaks or other evergreen canopy trees. Please don't use the Junipers – they block sight lines, use up space that people could use, or more interesting plantings.
- Please specify that the irrigation for the green roof remain in operation indefinitely. This will be required for the plants on the roof to survive long term.