

NE 130th St Light Rail Station

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Commissioners Present

Brianna Holan, Acting Chair
Justin Clark
Mark Johnson
Rick Krochalis
Amalia Leighton
Vinita Sidhu
Lucas Whitesell

Commissioners Excused

Elaine Wine

Project Description

In 2016 voters approved the addition of the substructure for a light rail station to the Lynnwood Link Extension at NE 130th St. The Lynnwood Link Extension was approved in 2008 as part of the Sound Transit 2 (ST2) ballot measure to provide light rail service between Northgate and Lynnwood. With the Sound Transit 3 (ST3) ballot measure, funding for the station was provided. The NE 130th St station will be located north of NE 130th St between 5th Ave NE and Interstate 5 and will serve a growing residential neighborhood between the Northgate and Shoreline South/145th Stations.

Meeting Summary

This is the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) first review of the NE 130th St Light Rail Station project. The purpose of this meeting is to review the concept design phase (30% design) for the project. The SDC voted, 7-0, to approve the concept design for the NE 130th St Light Rail Station with several recommendations. The project will be reviewed again at schematic (60%) and design development (90%) phases.

Recusals and Disclosures

Brianna Holan- disclosed that her previous employer is the architect on the project but she was not involved in the NE 130th St Light Rail Station project

Rick Krochalis- disclosed that while serving as the previous Regional Administrator for the FTA, he signed and approved the Sound Transit Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Lynnwood link, which had listed this project as a provisional station, but design had not started yet.

April 16, 2020

1:00 - 3:30 pm

Type

Major Project

Phase

Concept Design

Previous Reviews

None

PresentersTaylor Carroll
Sound TransitBrian Elrod
HNTBHoward Fitzpatrick
LMN ArchitectsKeith Ireland
KPFFKurt Kiefer
Sound TransitChris Saleeba
SDOTMatt Vaggione
HNTB**Attendees**

Mike Baskett, Seattle IT

Lori Burchett, King County

Patrice Carroll, OPCD

Lucile Chich, Sound Transit

Jonathan Childers, Sound
Transit

Radcliffe Dacanay, SDOT

Paul Eng-PE, King County

Tammy Frederick, SDCI

Bryan Hockaday, MOS

Dan Hoyt, WSDOT

Logan James, King County

Aditi Kambuj, SDOT

Jonathan Lewis, SDOT

Lizzie Moll, SDOT

Julie Montgomery, Sound
Transit

John Mrozek, LMN Architects

Gabriel Seo, SDOT

Jenni Whitney, LMN Architects

Clenel Williams, LMN Architects

Ben Wolters, SDOT

Summary of Presentation

Brian Elrod and Matt Vaggione, of HNTB, Howard Fitzpatrick, of LMN, Keith Ireland, of KPFF, Chris Saleeba, of SDOT, and Taylor Carroll and Kurt Kiefer, of Sound Transit presented the concept design phase for the NE 130th St Light Rail Station project. The project team provided a brief overview of the project background, neighborhood context, and community outreach. The project is an infill station located on the Lynwood Link Extension, which is currently in the construction phase (*image 1*).

The infill station was approved in 2016 and will provide light rail access for the growing community surrounding the station area. The original proposed timeline estimated the station opening in 2031, while the Lynwood Link Extension (LLE) is estimated to open in 2024, 7 years ahead of the infill station. The project team is currently exploring options to accelerate the project to minimize potential construction impacts on the LLE light rail line, receiving approval from the Sound Transit Board in February 2020 to accelerate the final design. After final design is complete, the Sound Transit board will decide in early-mid 2021 on the timeline for construction and opening of the infill station.

The project team is collaborating with King County Metro, WSDOT, and City of Seattle to develop a preferred design proposal. The agencies participated in several design and engineering workshops throughout 2019 and continue to collaborate as the proposed design continues to develop. The proposed light rail station is situated at the northwest corner of the NE 130th St and 5th Ave NE intersection between I-5 and 5th Ave NE. The proposed design includes an open plaza at the ground level with an elevated, side platform train station located roughly 30-feet above. The ground level design includes a public plaza spanning the length of the station, which is divided into three areas – south, central, and north plaza areas. Both the south and north plazas include stair and elevator access, escalators, and ticket vending kiosks, while the central plaza area includes an ancillary building, para transit drop-off, and access to a mid-block crosswalk crossing 5th Ave NE. The north plaza area connects to a passenger drop off and pick up area. Pedestrian scaled lighting and paving materials will be used to help guide users to and through the project site. The project team is also considering public art in several locations throughout the ground level plaza area.

Additional design improvements include wider sidewalks and decreased pedestrian crossing distances at the NE 130th St and 5th Ave NE intersection. Unassociated with the project, 5th Ave NE will be reconfigured north of the



Image 1: Lynwood Link extension and proposed station location

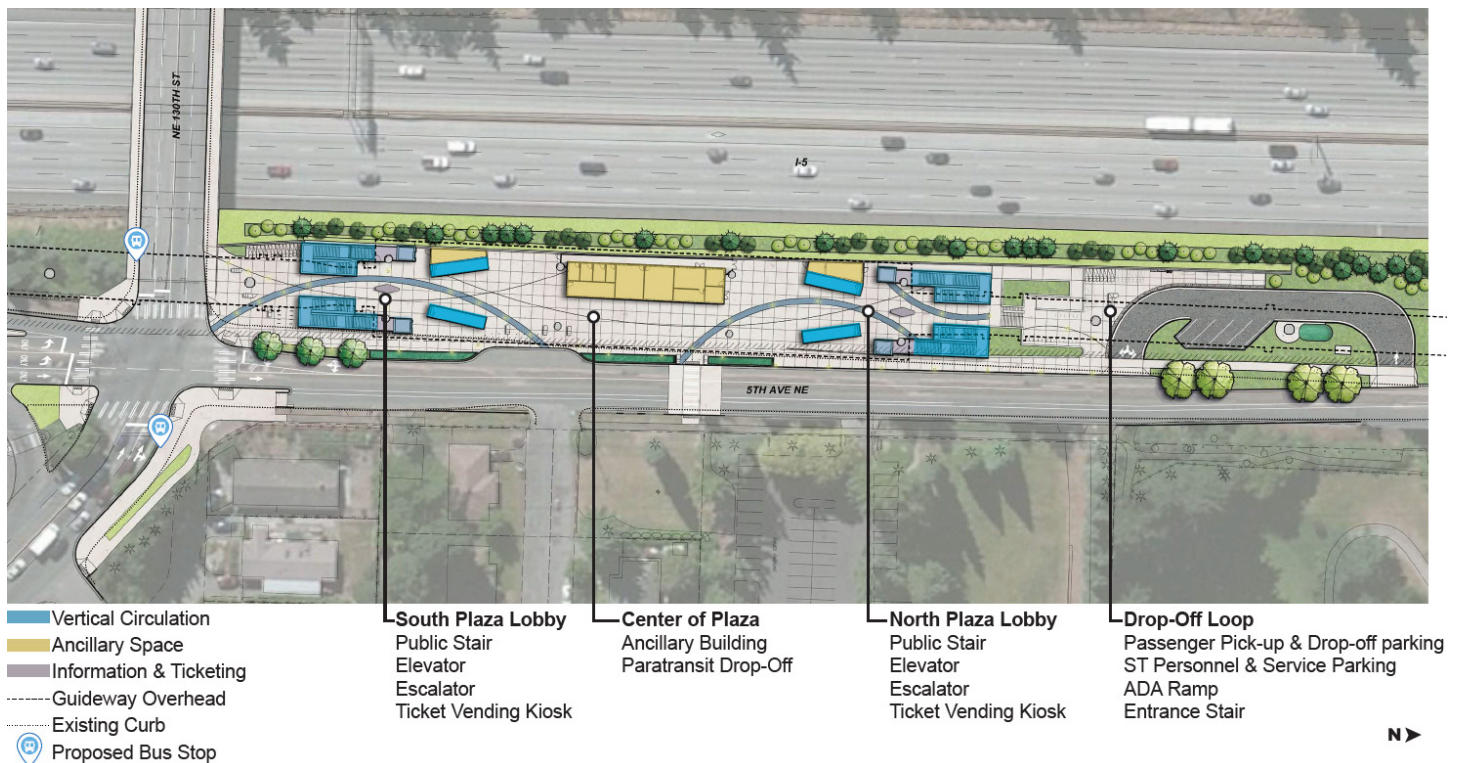


Image 2: Concept design proposal (top), view of station from 5th Ave NE (bottom left), view of station from NE 130th St (bottom right)

station drop off and pick up area, serving as a one-way north bound street for vehicular traffic, to include north and south bound bicycle facilities. The 5th Ave NE streetscape will also include several street trees as well as rain gardens. The proposed design also includes retention of mature vegetation between the station and I-5. (see image 2)

Agency Comments

Commission staff received verbal comments from OPCD before the meeting, which they relayed to commissioners verbally.

Public Comments

None

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Height, bulk, scale, and neighborhood context
- Building site, circulation, programming, and quality of space
- Size and location of design elements
- Offsite circulation
- Sustainability, outreach, and equity
- Future funding

Height, bulk and scale, context of the neighborhood

The SDC recognized that the surrounding neighborhood is currently in transition and encouraged the project team to consider both the current and future context of the neighborhood as the project continues to develop. Commissioners recommended the project team partner with City Departments to better understand how the neighborhood will continue to develop and to make design adjustments that reflect those anticipated developments.

The SDC then recommended the project team provide additional cross sections to have a better sense of how the space will be experienced, showing the scale of the building, including entrances, upper platform, ancillary facility, etc, as it relates to site elevation and circulation.

The Commission also recommended the project team continue to think about the design and materiality of the building, encouraging the team to consider how wayfinding and human scaled elements can be integrated to better situate the station within the context of the neighborhood. Commissioners recommended the project team consider ways to reduce the visual presence of the ancillary building, possibly by relocating the building below ground.

Building site, circulation, program arrangement, quality of space

The SDC appreciated the location and orientation of the stair, which will serve as hub and wayfinding element for the north and south station entrances. The Commission recommended the project team identify how wayfinding, signage, and station entrances are being treated and strongly encouraged the team to provide a clear wayfinding plan for the project.

Size and location of design elements

Although the SDC appreciated the project team's acknowledgment of Thornton Creek in the design of the pavement within the site, Commissioners are concerned the concept will be lost amongst other design elements. The Commission recommended the project team consider additional ways to incorporate design elements and materials that visually reference the idea of waterways moving through the site. The commission then encouraged the project team to evaluate the size and placement of stormwater elements to also reflect this idea.

The SDC then expressed concern with the proposed streetscape design along 5th Ave. Commissioners recognized the placement of the station within a neighborhood setting and strongly recommended the project team increase the street tree canopy, encouraging the design team to think of 5th Ave as a neighborhood street when designing the streetscape experience. The Commission also recommended the project team provide additional details about pedestrian lighting along 5th Ave.

The SDC then discussed the proposed design for the vegetated area between the station and interstate 5. The Commission recommended the project team be realistic about the proposed planting along I-5 and to provide section details showing the relationship between I-5, the planting area, and the station. The Commission then encouraged the project team to consider additional vegetation, or similar design treatments of the retaining walls between I-5 and the station.

Offsite circulation

The SDC discussed site specific circulation issues as well as circulation issues within the context of the surrounding neighborhood. Commissioners are concerned with the limited information provided about circulation within the context of the surrounding neighborhood. Given the location of adjacent transit stops on the southside of 130th Ave, Commissioners are concerned with the limited details provided about circulation patterns for all transit modes at the intersection of 5th Ave and 130th St. The Commission strongly recommended the project team study how the intersection can seamlessly integrate pedestrian and bus access with bicycle facilities and vehicular lanes and strongly encouraged the project team to consider reducing the width for pedestrian crossings to increase access to the station.

The SDC appreciated the project teams explanation of the proposed re-channelization of 5th Ave north of the station and encouraged the project team to visually represent the re-channelization, including bike facilities, sidewalks, drop off areas and vehicular travel lanes in future drawings to better understand how it integrates

with the project. Commissioners commended the project team for the raised design of the mid-block crossing along 5th Ave, but recommended the project team provide more detail on how the crosswalk will function for pedestrian circulation, for example whether there will be a pedestrian activated signal. Commissioners then encouraged the project team to think about how they can use design elements to prevent vehicles from pulling over and blocking the bike facilities adjacent to the station entrance along 5th Ave.

Sustainability, outreach, equity

The SDC expressed concern with the limited development of a sustainability strategy. Commissioners strongly recommended the team provide more information on their sustainability strategy during the next meeting.

The SDC then recommended the project team provide information about their approach to community outreach. Commissioners requested information about how the project team is conducting outreach and ongoing community involvement, especially with regard to gathering input from the representative neighborhood demographics, as well as how the design has changed as a result of community outreach. The SDC then recommended the team provide additional information about how they are approaching art and cultural opportunities. Commissioners recommended the project team consider additional opportunities for the integration and location of art throughout the station, as well as in locations visible from outside the station area, as a way to create an identity for the station and surrounding area and to serve as wayfinding opportunity.

Future funding

The SDC is concerned with the effects potential budget reductions will have on the project. Commissioners discussed the possibility of future budget limitations and the effect it will have on the proposed design. The Commission recommended the project team continue to think about the overall design process and phasing as it relates to potential budget limitations, encouraging the team to think about how the design could change as a result of budget cuts and consider what elements should be retained. Commissioners then specifically encouraged the project team to maintain proposed access on the northside of the station for any design alternative.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for their presentation on the concept design for the NE 130th Light Rail Station. The Commission appreciated the information provided by the project team as well as the early collaboration and coordination between Sound Transit and city, county, and state agencies. The SDC voted, 7-0, to approve the concept design for the NE 130th Light Rail Station project with the following recommendations:

1. Continue to work with the City to anticipate and respond to possible future land use situations
2. Further develop wayfinding elements, signage, and station entrances to create a clear, strong circulation and wayfinding system. Consider using a diagram to illustrate the strategy.
3. Consider additional ways to strengthen the design concept such as incorporating design elements and materials that visually reference the idea of waterways moving through the site. Evaluate the size and placement of stormwater elements to express the concept.
4. Further develop the design and materiality of the building in a way that uses wayfinding and human scaled elements to better situate the station within the context of the neighborhood.
5. Consider ways to better integrate and/or reduce the visual presence of the ancillary building, possibly by relocating the building below ground.
6. Consider additional art location that are visible from outside the station, such as at the south end of the building where it can contribute to wayfinding.
7. Be realistic about the ability to plant mature vegetation along I-5, and consider plantings or other treatments along the retaining walls
8. Strengthen 5th Ave as a residential street by providing additional street trees along 5th Ave to strengthen the tree canopy, and exploring pedestrian lighting
9. Provide information on how the raised crosswalk midblock over 5th Ave serves pedestrians within overall circulation patterns.
10. Address circulation of all modes where 5th Ave transitions into a one-way street.

11. Refine the design of the 5th Ave and 130th intersection to seamlessly integrate pedestrian and bus access with bicycle facilities and vehicular lanes. Further reduce the distance for pedestrian crossings to increase safe access to the station.
12. Explore how TNC and drop off interact with bike facilities and pedestrian access along 5th Ave and consider the placement of project elements to keep cars from blocking bike facility access.
13. Continue to think about the overall design process and phasing as it results to potential budget limitations. Think about how design could change as a result of budget cuts and consider what elements should be retained.

The SDC also made the following requests for the next meeting:

14. Make sure KC Metro is available for questions at future SDC meetings.
15. Provide more information about the overall sustainability strategy as well as specifics on onsite stormwater management
16. Provide more information on how community outreach is moving forward in an equitable way as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. Show how art and culture is integrated into outreach conversations
17. Provide cross sections that give a better sense of the relationships between the various levels and how the facility will be experienced. Provide cross sections that show the scale of the building – entrances, upper platform, ancillary facility, etc- as it relates to site elevation and circulation as well as cross sections that represent vegetation along I-5 and 5th Ave.
18. Provide additional drawings to show how the south entrance and stair will be visible from the street
19. Provide diagrammatic information on the wayfinding system
20. Provide information on the rechannalization of 5th Ave and explain how the station design relates.