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**John Savo**, Vice Chair

**Lee Copeland**

**Ben de Rubertis**

**Thaddeus Egging**

**Rachel Gleeson**

**Laura Haddad**

**Brianna Holan**

**Rick Krochalis**

**Jescelle Major**

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### Commissioners Present

Ross Tilghman, Chair  
John Savo, Vice Chair  
Rachel Gleeson  
Laura Haddad  
Brianna Holan  
Rick Krochalis  
Jescelle Major

### Commissioners Excused

Thaddeus Egging  
Ben de Rubertis  
Lee Copeland

### Project Description

The petitioner proposes to vacate Occidental Ave S between S Massachusetts St and S Holgate St in the South Downtown (SODO) Neighborhood to facilitate development of a 750,000-square-foot, 18,000-20,000-seat multi-purpose arena for NBA basketball, NHL hockey, other sporting events, concerts, and shows.

The project site is bounded by S Massachusetts St to the north, 1st Ave S to the west, S Holgate St to the south, and the BNSF Railway right-of-way to the east. The proposed development includes a plaza space at the northwest corner of the site and widened sidewalks along 1st Ave S and S Holgate St.

### Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) first review of the project proposal under the new vacation petition submitted by ArenaCo in February, 2017. This petition was submitted after ArenaCo's first petition to vacate this segment of Occidental Ave S was denied by the City Council in May, 2015.

At this meeting the SDC reviewed updates to the Urban Design Merit and Public benefit packages that were developed following the Council denial of the first petition. The SDC reviewed the Urban Design Merit and the proposed Public Benefit packages separately. Following ArenaCo's presentation, public comment and SDC review and deliberation, the SDC voted 6-1 to approve urban design merit with several recommendations. After which, the SDC voted 7-0 to approve the proposed public benefit package with several recommendations.

### Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

**April 6, 2017**

**1:30 – 4:00 pm**

**Type**

Street Vacation

**Phase**

Urban Design Merit and Public Benefit

**Previous Reviews**

None

**Presenters**

**Mark Brands**  
SiteWorkshop

**Jack McCullough**  
McCullough Hill Leary, PS

**Attendees**

**Tom Backer**  
Ballpark Public Facilities

**Beverley Barnett**  
SDOT

**Jessie Clawson**  
McCullough Hill Leary, PS

**Chris Daniels**  
King 5 News

**Dan Eder**  
Council Central Staff

**Rollin Fatland**  
Seattle Arena

**Joseph Gellings**  
Port of Seattle

**Norie Sato**  
Seattle Arena

**John Shaw**  
SDCI

**Summary of Presentation**

Mark Brands, of SiteWorkshop, and Jack McCullough, of McCullough Hill Leary, presented an overview of urban design merit and the proposed public benefit package. Jack McCullough provided background information and timeline addressing project updates since the SDC last reviewed the project on September 3, 2015.

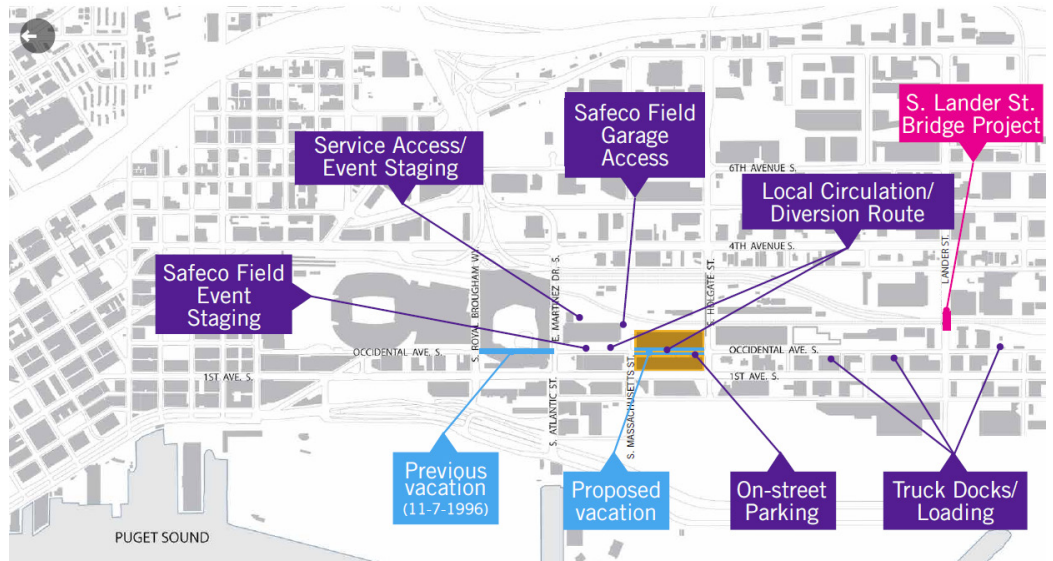


Figure 1. Site location and existing conditions

**1. Urban Design Merit**

The Urban Design Merit phase evaluated the impacts on the public realm by the proposed vacation of Occidental Ave S, including an overview of the vacation and no vacation scenarios. The site is bounded by 1st Avenue S, S Massachusetts, S Holgate and the Burlington Northern railroad rights of way. The general area includes a variety of lowrise warehouse, assembly and manufacturing facilities. To the north of the development site is Safeco field and its parking and loading facilities, along with a series of low to medium scale buildings. To the west of the site are a series of lowrise buildings and newer multilevel office buildings. The site is within a 20-minute walk of three light rail stations, King Street Station, Sounder regional train station, the First Hill Streetcar line, and several bus stops.



Figure 2. No vacation/vacation alternatives

Under the no vacation alternative, the applicant would anticipate developing up to three office facilities totaling 800,000 square feet. Access to the site under the no vacation alternative would occur from 1st Ave S, S Holgate, and Occidental Ave S.

Under the vacation alternative, ArenaCo would develop its proposed 18,000 – 20,000 square foot sports arena. The land use code requirement for the project is 1,726 parking spaces; additional may be required to mitigate environmental impacts. To meet the code requirement, a multi-level garage could be built at S Holgate and Occidental along with 150 parking spaces in the Arena facility, however, this facility would be permitted separately and is not a part of the current Master Use Permit application for the arena. Access to the offsite garage would be provided from S Stacy Street, one block south of S Holgate. Access to onsite parking and loading would be from a 20-foot-wide access road between the Arena and the east property line. The provision of a separate garage was recommended by the SDC as well as a required condition developed by the City Council as part of their deliberations under the first vacation petition. However, ArenaCo’s preferred scenario would meet their parking requirements through shared-use agreements with the Seattle Mariners in their garage across the street from the proposed Arena and in existing parking garages and surface lots in the area.

The access road would also provide access for automobiles leaving the Safeco garage.

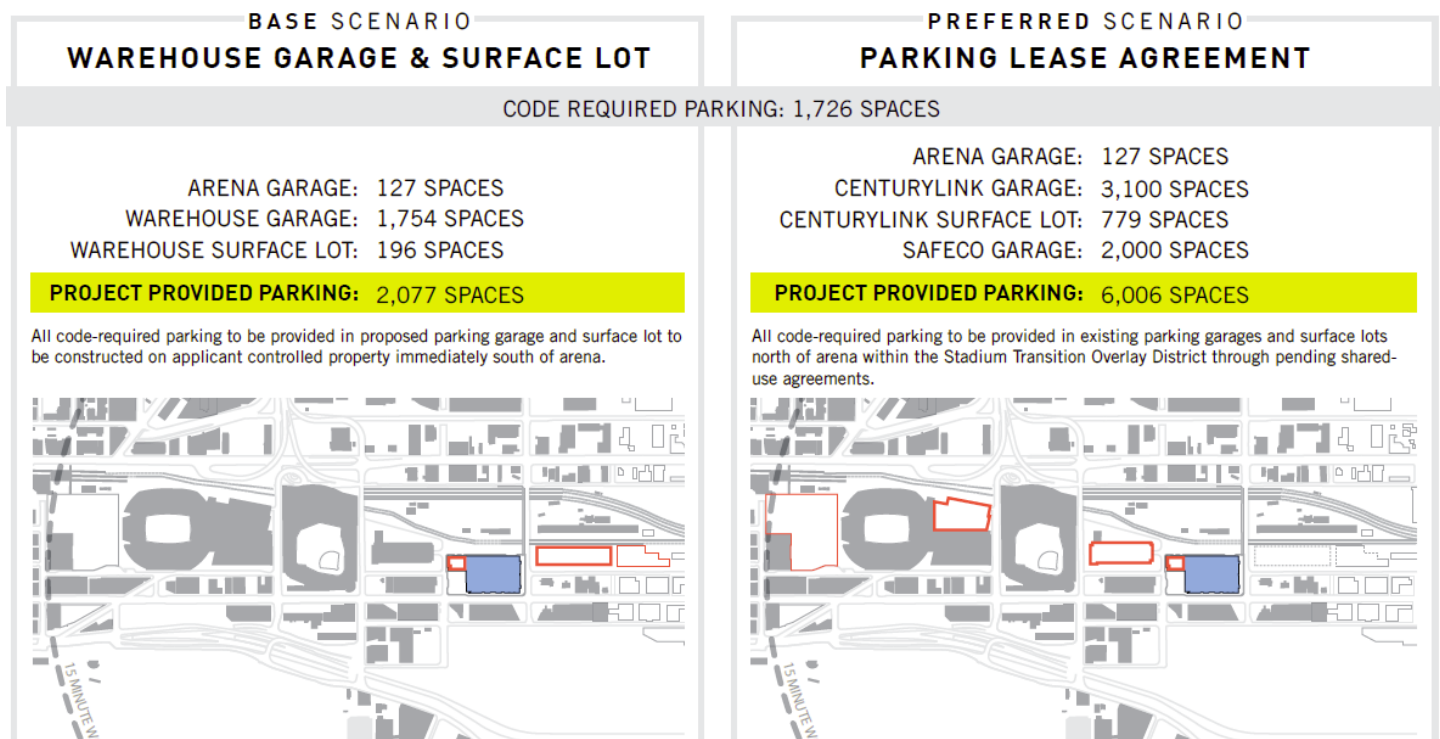


Figure 3. Parking commitments

The vacation would also allow the creation of a 36,370 sf public plaza at the corner of S Massachusetts St and 1st Ave. The plaza will also include a unique water quality facility along with access to the arena and accessory functions like storage and ticketing. Existing utility services will be relocated around the facility. Existing above ground utilities will be relocated underground.

2. Public Benefit

The following public benefit elements remain from the first vacation petition:

- Plaza programming & living machine
- S Massachusetts St. ROW improvements
- 1st Ave S ROW improvements
- S Holgate St ROW improvements
- Public art program
- Bicycle facilities
- Off-site wayfinding signage

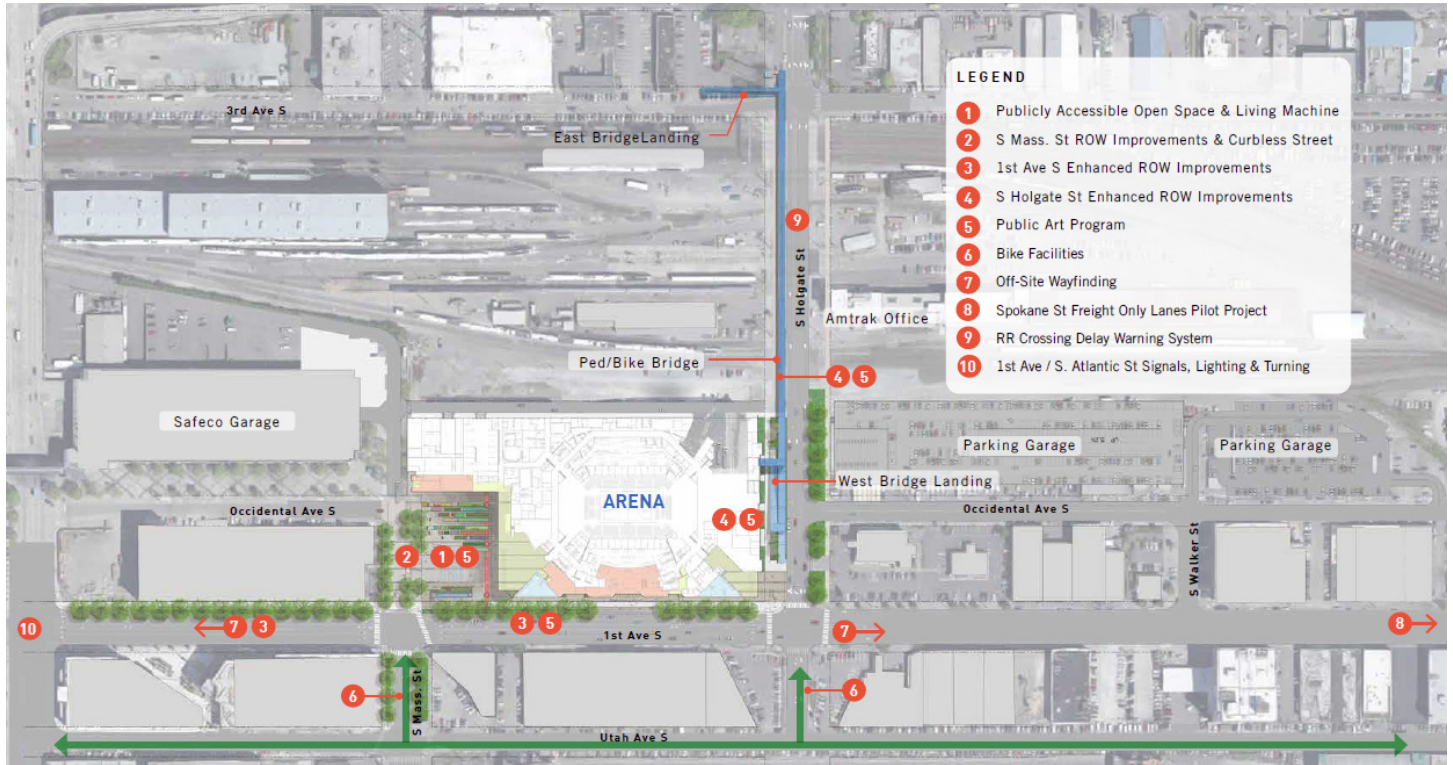


Figure 4. Proposed updated public benefit package

The following additional elements are proposed in the updated public benefit package:

- Freight only lanes pilot project
- 1st Ave S and Atlantic St intersection improvements
- Railroad crossing delay warning system

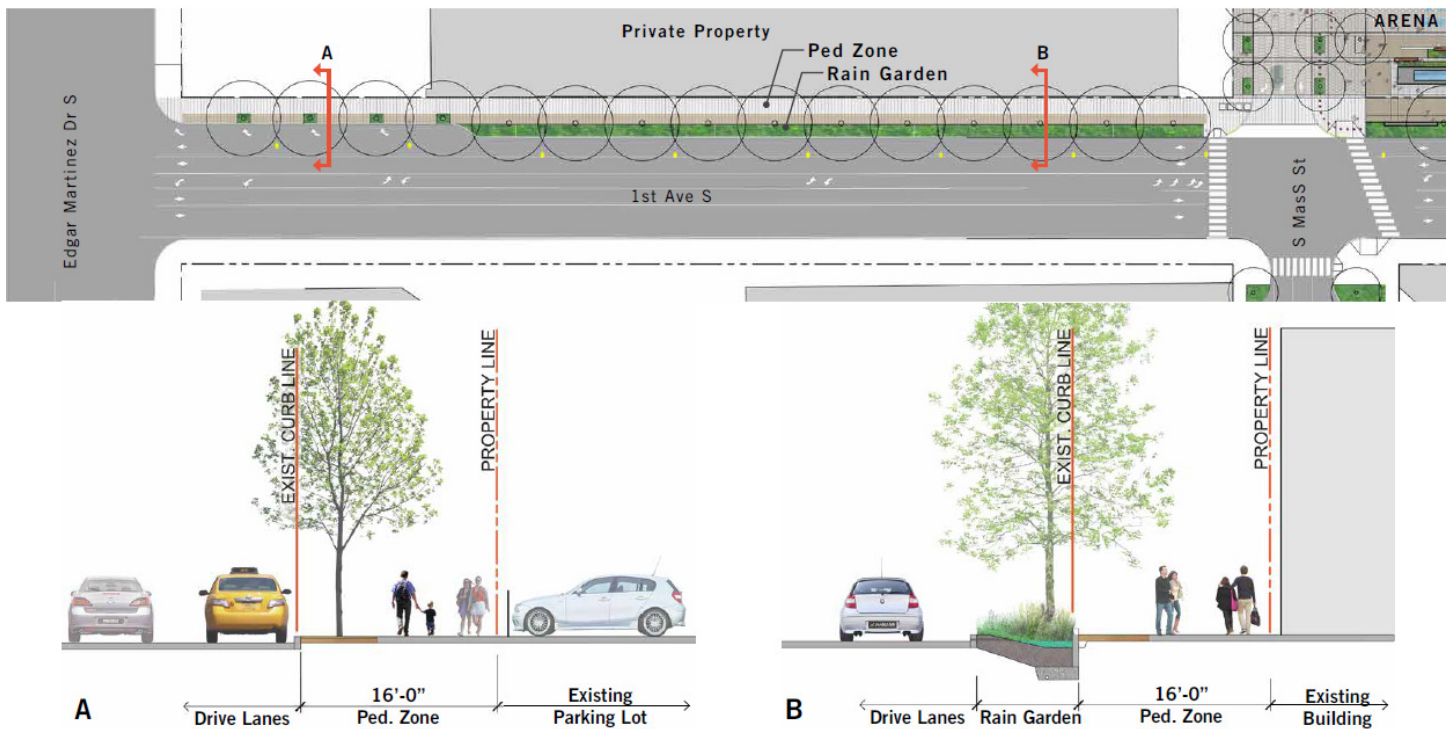


Figure 5. 1st Ave S right of way improvements

These three elements were identified in the Freight Master Plan that was adopted by the Council following their denial of the first vacation petition.

### *Freight only lanes pilot program*

The proposal will provide \$200,000 to SDOT for a Phase I planning study for freight only lanes along Spokane St.

### *1st Ave S and Atlantic St intersection improvements*

The proposal will provide \$600,000 to SDOT for the funding of signal, lighting, and turning improvements at the intersection of 1st Ave S and Atlantic St.

### *Railroad crossing delay warning system*

The proposal will provide \$500,000 to SDOT for the funding of an intelligent transportation system (ITS) railroad crossing delay warning system. The system will monitor and inform freight drivers of closures and alternative routing on S Holgate St.

## **Agency Comments**

**Joseph Gellings**, Port of Seattle, stated that he is concerned with the negative effect the project will have on freight mobility. Mr. Gellings said that the Port of Seattle is analyzing the network of streets and events that will constrain the freight network. He then stated that there are traffic scenarios where the portion of Occidental proposed for vacation serves as a critical link in the overall freight network. Mr. Gellings commented that the additional public benefit elements addressing freight mobility lack in addressing direct impairment to the freight network. Mr. Gellings then stated that the Port of Seattle would like if the joint scheduling agreement were executed and enforceable.

**Beverly Barnett**, SDOT, mentioned that SDOT has received the new petition and is reviewing it internally. Ms. Barnett then stated that she is reviewing comments made by City Council to see if there are issues that should be addressed. Ms. Barnett said they are reviewing additional public benefit elements and have requested information to see if data used for the transportation analysis needs to be updated. Ms. Barnett then stated that there is wide support for the establishment of a joint events agreement between ArenaCo and the Mariners organization. The agreement would be part of a condition imposed by City Council.

## **Public Comments**

None

## **Summary of Discussion: Urban Design Merit**

The SDC discussed the urban design merit and public benefit package separately. The commission discussed and voted on urban design merit prior to discussing and voting public benefit.

The Commission organized its discussion on urban design merit around the following issues:

- Circulation and Access
- Open space
- Utilities, light, and air

### *Circulation and access*

Although the SDC appreciates the concerns raised by the Port of Seattle about the impediment of the freight mobility network, commissioners agreed the applicant has provided sufficient evidence that the proposed facility will not have a negative impact on freight mobility within the SODO neighborhood.

The Commission is concerned that the proposed loading areas on S Massachusetts St would not meet demand on the day of any events, particularly for potential rideshare users. Therefore, the SDC recommended the applicant provide additional loading zones along Occidental Ave S in front of the potential garage facility.

The SDC commended the design team for proposing speed bumps and other traffic calming measures along Utah St.

### *Open space*

The SDC recognized the greater amount of open space provided in the vacation scenario over the no vacation alternative. Commissioners appreciated the proposed sidewalk width along 1st Ave S, which will help facilitate large crowds during game days and other programmed events.

*Utilities, light, and air*

Commissioners recommended the design team consider how the construction of a pedestrian bridge along Holgate St will impact views of downtown from the S Lander St Bridge. It is noted that the pedestrian bridge associated with the arena will be required to be reviewed by the SDC as part of a skybridge/term permit process in the future. Although the proposed arena facility will obstruct views looking west from Beacon Hill, commissioners recognized the attractiveness of the proposed facility design and green roof.

The SDC recommended the public plaza include electrical outlets near seating areas in efforts to increase year around programming opportunities. The commission recommended the project team return to further review the public space programming plan.

**Action: Urban Design Merit**

The SDC thanked the project team for the quality of their presentation and the design team's response to previous concerns and recommendations. The SDC voted, 6-1, to approve the urban design merit for the Seattle Arena project with the following recommendations:

- Provide additional loading areas along Occidental Ave S in front of the potential future garage.
- Prior to the issuance of any construction permits, the SDC will review and approve the programming plan for the open space, to include street furniture and related utilities to support events.
- Ensure safety is prioritized across all design elements

The following are comments from commissioners who voted against the project:

**Brianna Holan** – I am concerned with not knowing how pedestrian connections between the potential future garage and the Arena will be made.

**Summary of Discussion: Public Benefit**

The Commission organized its discussion on public benefit around the following issues:

- Base package
- Changes and additions
- Adequacy

*Base package*

The SDC commended the project team for the proposed public benefit package. In addition to their support for the overall package, the commissioners appreciated the continued commitment to provide public restroom facilities within the public plaza. Commissioners also appreciated the attention to addressing site connectivity as well as the continued inclusion of offsite wayfinding. The SDC strongly encouraged the proposed art plan address the native, environmental, social, and industrial history of the site and surrounding area.

*Changes and additions*

The SDC appreciated the additional elements provided in the public benefit package. Commissioners agreed with the plan to provide funding to SDOT for the study and planning to create a freight-only lane on Spokane St.

The Commission commended the design team for including a living machine with above ground planting beds in the public plaza. Commissioners are concerned with ongoing care and seasonal planting selections of the planting beds. The commission recommended the project team incorporate educational opportunities and/or partnerships with local schools and organizations to help create a sense of ownership over the planting beds. The SDC also recommended providing additional lighting along with properly elevating the planting beds so they are adequately protected during programmed events.

*Adequacy*

The SDC feels the public benefit package is adequate.

**Action: Public Benefit**

The SDC voted, 7-0, to approve the public benefit package for the Seattle Arena with the following recommendations:

- Ensure that proposed artwork address distinct history of the project site and surrounding neighborhood
- Living machine planting bed programmed for educational purposes as well as seasonal planting varieties
- Provide temporary shading in the public plaza for mobile tables and chairs during programmed events
- Explore lighting options for the living machine planting beds and ensure planting beds are adequately protected from large crowds