



# City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development  
D. M. Sugimura, Director



## THIRD EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3014195

Address: 1700 1st Avenue S (Seattle Arena)

Applicant: Jack McCullough for WSA Properties III, LLC

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, January 22, 2013

Board Members Present: Gabe Grant (Chair)  
Mathew Albores  
Pragnesh Parikh  
Brian D. Scott

Board Members Absent: Gundala Proksch

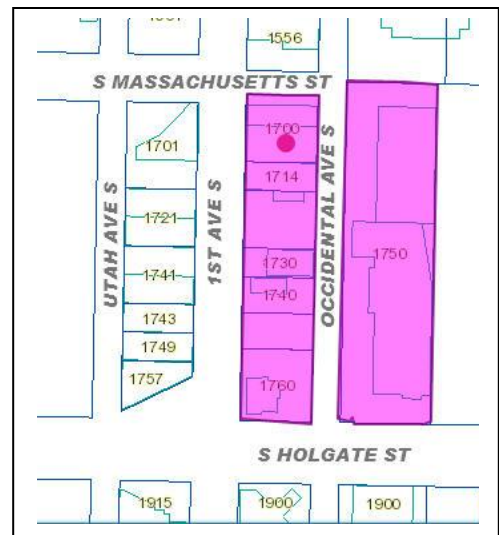
DPD Staff Present: Garry Papers, Senior Land Use Planner (Design Review)  
John Shaw, Senior Transportation Planner

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Industrial Commercial (IC-85 ft)  
Stadium Transition Overlay

Nearby Zones: (North) IC-85  
(South) IG2 U/85 & IG1 U/85  
(East) IG2 U/85  
(West) IC-85

Lot Area: 276,000 sf (approx 397ft x 680 ft)  
(including Occidental Ave ROW)



Current Development: One story warehouse along east edge, fronting railroad yard. Four structures along S 1st Ave, 1-2 stories tall, with surface parking. Brick and asphalt paved Occidental Ave S running north-south through middle of site.

Access: Vehicular access from S Holgate, S 1st, and currently Occidental to the north; no access from the east which is railroad property.

Surrounding Development: Mixed commercial and office buildings, 1-5 stories to north, south and west, mixed in with surface parking. A 5 level parking structure for Safeco Field is adjacent to the northeast. Railroad yards to the east.

ECAs: Liquefaction Prone Soils (entire site)

Neighborhood Character: 1st Ave is fairly consistently lined with masonry and concrete structures between 2-5 stories, for multiple blocks north and south; railroad yards and support structures to the east and southeast up to 3rd Avenue; Safeco parking structure and stadium on blocks to north; mixed commercial on 1st Avenue to west, with container cranes, Rt 99 and Port lands behind to the west.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Future construction of an approximately 725,000 sf, 18,000 – 20,000-seat private spectator sports facility (Seattle Arena). Project includes demolition of eight existing structures of approximately 128,087 sf, and grading will occur for construction. Proposal includes venue-related commercial development at the site (such as team merchandise stores, ticket offices, team offices, and potentially restaurants and club spaces). Occidental Ave S between S Holgate and S Massachusetts is proposed to be vacated. Required parking for the facility is proposed to be provided by commercial parking lots off the site.

### EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: November 27, 2012

Due to the large project scale and unique program, this Early Design Guidance (EDG) review is divided into 2 meetings: EDG #1 focuses on Context/Urban Analysis and Standard Arena Programming. Herein, the Downtown Design Review Board (DRB) offered preliminary response and comments on those issues, to inform the applicant in the development of massing options. More detailed studies will be presented at EDG #2.

EDG #2 is scheduled for Tuesday, December 11, 2012, where the DRB will provide typical EDG feedback and guidance, including identifying Priority Guidelines and Departures.

## APPLICANT PRESENTATION

The EDG packet includes materials presented at the November 27, 2012 EDG meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at this website:

[http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design\\_Review\\_Program/Project\\_Reviews/Reports/default.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp).

or contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

**Address: Public Resource Center**  
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000  
Seattle, WA 98124

**Email:** [PRC@seattle.gov](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 40 members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Noted the adjacent parking structure has important access drives and vehicle queuing locations that should be shown on context drawings.
- Stated that major truck routes along Edgar Martinez and Holgate/Atlantic might pose constraints on the project site, and its loading functions.
- Noted that Safeco Field to the north has 4 spectator entry points, one at each corner.
- Noted the presentation did not mention parking; applicants responded that all required parking will be provided at off-site locations, to be determined and finalized later.
- Noted that a building of this scale is rare, and the project should fit and define its context, and set the future tone for the district.
- Encouraged the project to be both respectful, contextual, and support the ground level, and be something inspiring, striking and not hide the arena functions.

## PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, understanding the program factors as presented, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following overall siting, program and design guidance. Relevant guidelines are referenced by **letter/number** when applicable. For reference, the Downtown Guidelines are summarized at the end of this report. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

1. **Overview:** The Board discussed the vision for the surrounding district, and the specific role this facility should play in this context:
  - a) The arena will be a public landmark and should provide public amenities and spirit.
  - b) The vicinity is urbanizing, maturing, and pedestrian volumes will increase to balance out the existing vehicle bias; this project should reinforce pedestrian scale. **(C-1)**

- c) Building and site should incorporate best-practice sustainability features, which exploit and express the unique scale and visibility of an arena; eg large roof area for rainwater harvesting and/or treatment, and/or Photo-voltaic panels.
  - d) Innovation, technology and forward-thinking should be expressed in the facility, as they are a hallmark of the Seattle identity. **(A-1)**
  - e) Besides the approximately 150 arena events/year (with basketball and hockey in winter/spring), the building, its uses, and public spaces should contribute to the district year round, and when no events are occurring. A full-year event schedule should be provided.
2. **Context Response:** The Board emphasized the arena should be much more than another big stadium object which is vacant and lifeless when no event is happening.
- a) 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue is a vital street north AND south of the site, with a consistent, mixed-use, fine-grain street wall connecting diverse destinations. The arena is in the middle of this street, and should provide continuity and reinforce its urban, pedestrian attributes. **(B-3)**
  - b) Besides 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and south, the facility should anticipate pedestrian movement and other access from the east along Holgate, and north from E Martinez, as the district to the east evolves. Bus, light rail and other modes may also come from the east.**(B-1)**
  - c) Parking locations and resulting pedestrian flows to the arena are important influences on the building design, entries etc. If those parking locations are not established or permanent, then the building entries and pedestrian flows should provide suitable flexibility for future changes and possible connections. **(E-2)**
  - d) Especially since no on-site parking is provided, pedestrians will arrive from all directions based on variable rates and lot availability. The applicants should examine pedestrian flows and where access is expected, with estimated quantities for each flow (totaling 20,000). **(C-4)**
  - e) Provide all available mode data and access/departure directions from the 2 existing stadiums to the north.
  - f) Since event patrons may arrive via shuttle buses and other modes, consider site planning for bus layovers and other event needs besides pedestrians.
3. **Massing & Architectural Concept:** The Board agreed the project must be both fabric, contextual, and street supportive, AND be a landmark, with a memorable character that is uniquely Seattle.
- a) Plazas and public amenities should create strong place-making, provide generous before/after celebration space, and be available during non-event times. **(D-1)**
  - b) The project should express a memorable roof image and/or profile, to respond to prominent views from afar (ferries, hills, trains, downtown, etc.). **(A-2)**
  - c) While the primary concourse level may end up elevated above grade, the typical vertical transition of steep stairs and escalators should be mitigated, and other options explored, that smooth those transitions and create special places. **(D-3)**

- d) Specific (eg Rainier) and general (eg downtown) views out from the upper levels should be provided and celebrated, and encourage some upper level view terraces that are open to public at all times or at least during non-event times. **(A-1)**
  - e) The generic arena program (as presented) suggests an omni-directional approach to concourses and vertical circulation, yet this site is constrained east-west; this arena should respond to that constraint, and not appear “forced’ onto the site. **(B-2)**
  - f) The east façade facing the railroad tracks is very visible and should have a deliberate, scaled design treatment; it should anticipate potential, future access bridges or decks from the east. **(C-3)**
4. **Streetscape and Public Realm:** The ground level treatment, especially along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, should be pedestrian scale with active uses, and public spaces should be located and scaled to accommodate crowd gathering and flows, especially at intersections.
- a) All street edges should be permeable and activated with uses that serve both internal and street customers, and are a diverse mix, not simply team or event related; ‘a new idea’ about arena amenities that support the neighborhood full-time. **(C-1)**
  - b) The movement of large crowds and dispersing onto active streets should be choreographed and moderated to not overwhelm infrastructure, and the facility design should emphasize an “experiential” more than consumer approach.
  - c) All service areas should be hidden and curb cuts/service doors consolidated to minimize pedestrian impacts. **(E-1)**
  - d) The base of the building should stitch the district fabric together, but not copy or mimic a historic style. **(C-2)**
  - e) Occidental Avenue has possibilities as a shared, flexible plaza space, but terminates into Safeco field and has no crosswalks there; pedestrians must jog back to 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. Consider pedestrian gatherings and flows in multiple directions. **(D-1)**
- 5) **Presentations:** The Board stressed the required 3 options should be genuinely different alternatives of equivalent programs; not variations on one theme, or obviously infeasible options. They also encouraged diagrams and drawings that display the design evolution.

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| <b>SECOND EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: December 11, 2012</b> |
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## APPLICANT PRESENTATION

The EDG packet includes materials presented at the December 11, 2012 EDG meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (and referencing the above date) at this website: [http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design\\_Review\\_Program/Project\\_Reviews/Reports/default.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp). or contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

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**Email:** [PRC@seattle.gov](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 40 members of the public attended this Second Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Concerned about safety at the Holgate rail crossings, especially if the number and length of trains increases from existing volumes; a State rail plan implies increases by 2023.
- Requested any pedestrian plazas be carefully placed and sized to accommodate waiting crowds at vehicle and rail crossings, especially at the Holgate locations.
- Noted the adjacent parking structure has busy access drives and staging locations that would be compromised by the proposed pedestrian flows onto the north plaza.
- Requested more clarification about the “potential access alternative” shown on pg 26.
- Noted the preferred option creates a maximum footprint that does not widen sidewalks on First Avenue or Holgate, for pedestrian surges; stated the sidewalk at Safeco is 31 ft wide.
- Stated the stepped plaza shown in the preferred option is poor for crowd gathering, and suggested a flat plaza would perform better.
- Commented that much can be learned from the many years of operations by the two existing stadiums, and operational agreements between the 3 entities are desirable.
- Requested abundant and convenient bike parking.
- Requested all disabled ramps be convenient and protected from weather.
- Requested adequate and convenient disabled van parking.

## PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, understanding the program factors as presented, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members focused their concerns and design guidance on the following **major topics**. These and various other minor topics are also listed under the relevant guidelines in the following section; **the applicants should read and consider all sections of this report.**

### 1. Plazas and Public Realm:

- A) The Board supported a large public plaza at the northwest corner of the site, however they were very concerned the terraces and 30 ft transition to the concourse shown, would create an inflexible gathering space, and the raised terraces with hard planters and intimidating stairs would not be sufficiently public in character. **(D-1)**

The plaza should incorporate the following revisions:

- 1) most of the gathering space should be at sidewalk grade; **(C-1)**
- 2) the plaza should engage First avenue as much as Occidental, and allow diverse pedestrian movement desire lines from First, Occidental and entries; **(B-1)**
- 3) ramps and/or stepped terraces should not be located along First Avenue because they compromise street wall activation; **(C-3)**

- 4) the primary arena entrance at this corner should inflect to the primary movement axis of First Avenue and not be exclusively axial on Occidental; **(B-3)**
  - 5) disabled access should be equivalent and fully integrated into the plaza, arena entrances, and any ramping or stepped approaches. **(universal access principles)**
- B) The Board agreed the sidewalk width along all of First Avenue should be significantly larger than the existing 16 ft; more than the 23 ft suggested (to provide a café zone). It could also be a distinctive linear landscape and/or sustainability element. **(C-1,D-3)**
  - C) Generous crowd capacity spaces (inside the property line) at the two southern corners on Holgate should be provided, to allow queuing space near the railroad crossing and across First Avenue; also allow for the diagonal pedestrian desire line at Holgate and First. **(C-4, D-3, D-6)**
  - D) Upper level view terraces open to the public (event and non-event times) are a desirable feature, as long as they are easily reached and have clear way-finding, and resolve security and vagrancy issues with lighting, monitoring and operations. **(D-5,6)**

## 2. Street Edge Activation and Form:

- A) The Board supported a consistent, articulated, and largely transparent street wall along Holgate and most of First Avenue (excepting the northwest plaza), executed with authentic, durable materials. Large amounts of blank wall should be avoided and located away from corners, where eased movement and pedestrian transparency into the 'iconic cone' should be maximized, at several locations. **(C-1, C-3)**
- B) The Board stressed that consistent activating uses along First and Holgate are as important as the architectural form. A distributed mix of arena/ team-related tenants and typical street-oriented tenants is desirable, to ensure a rich pedestrian experience even during non-event times. The east end of Holgate is a logical vehicle and service point, but that pedestrian approach should be mitigated with arena entries, activation and quality pedestrian-scaled design features. **(B-3, C-1)**
- C) Activating uses should also edge the plaza and address Occidental Street. **(D-1)**

## 3. Architectural Character and Materiality:

- A) The Board supported the basic expression of the revised option 3 shown in the addendum, as a positive start on their guidance to achieve a civic landmark with strong contextual aspects. They focused especially on the street level views showing the facade layering that reveals the 'iconic cone' **(B-1)**. The character and degree of covering over the northwest plaza needs further study, in terms of structural complexity, sustainable purpose, and balancing daylight and rain protection **(D-1)**.
- B) The connection of material choices to Seattle and the region should be fully explored, and combined with serious integration of sustainable materials and methods. **(D-3)**
- C) Sustainable strategies and integrated design should be more explicitly documented, and the building forms might express sustainable elements more overtly, and possibly with an educational purpose to the thousands of event visitors. **(A-1, D-3)**

## 4. Context and Parking Response:

- A) This very large project should fully coordinate its design and operations with adjacent neighbors such as Amtrak and the Safeco parking structure, and its access. **(B-1)**
- B) Users will approach the building from off-site parking and transit from all directions, regardless of applicant agreements for the legislated minimum parking. Therefore the project should anticipate and be flexibly designed for many access contingencies over 50+ years, including possible pedestrian/bike flyovers from the east at Holgate. **(A-1)**

The Board also identified the following **Downtown Design Guidelines** of highest priority for this project (**headers in Bold-underline**), although all Downtown Design Guidelines listed are still applicable. For the full text of all guidelines, please visit the [Design Review website](#).

## Council-adopted Downtown Design Guidelines

### A. Site Planning & Massing

#### *Responding to the Larger Context*

- A-1 Respond to the Physical Environment.** Develop an architectural concept and compose the building’s massing in response to geographic conditions and patterns of urban form found beyond the immediate context of the building site.

**This is demonstrated by the consistent streetwall, complimented by a public plaza oriented to the primary access off First Avenue, and needed in a park-deficient district.**

- A-2 Enhance the Skyline.** Design the upper portion of the building to promote visual interest and variety in the downtown skyline.

**The Board encouraged the ‘iconic cone’ shape as a skyline landmark, its legibility at street level, and its distinctive color making it visible from hills, ferries and viewpoints in the surroundings. The specific materials, reflectivity and lighting of this element (and the entire building and site) will be critical as the design evolves, considering a majority of the sports events will likely occur on winter evenings.**

### B. Architectural Expression

#### *Relating to the Neighborhood Context*

- B-1 Respond to the Neighborhood Context.** Develop an architectural concept and compose the major building elements to reinforce desirable urban features existing in the surrounding neighborhood.

**The compositional balance of the streetwall ‘square’ and a visible, accessible arena cone ‘circle’, are crucial to ensure this design contributes to the district context.**



- B-2** Create a Transition in Bulk & Scale. Compose the massing of the building to create a transition to the height, bulk, and scale of development in neighboring or nearby less intensive zones.

**Although the structure will be relatively small compared to the two existing arenas, it will be a large and approximately 130 ft tall mass from the street. All streetwalls should display various modulation rhythms to break down the 400 - 500 ft lengths, yet not be overly fussy or contrived. The proposed layering and stepped-back transition at the top of the street wall is encouraged.**

- B-3** Reinforce the Positive Urban Form & Architectural Attributes of the Immediate Area . Consider the predominant attributes of the immediate neighborhood and reinforce desirable siting patterns, massing arrangements, and streetscape characteristics of nearby development.

**This reflects the Board guidance to maintain a strong street wall along Holgate and First Avenue, stitching together the consistent, existing street wall north and south of Holgate.**

- B-4** Design a Well-Proportioned & Unified Building. Compose the massing and organize the publicly accessible interior and exterior spaces to create a well-proportioned building that exhibits a coherent architectural concept. Design the architectural elements and finish details to create a unified building, so that all components appear integral to the whole.

**The Board supported the contemporary expression and rich layering of materials shown in option 3. They requested shorter expanses of solid wall along First Avenue. Street wall materials can be contemporary and lighter colors, as long as they exhibit depth, relief, shadow-play and authenticity of detailing and execution.**

## **C. The Streetscape**

### ***Creating the Pedestrian Environment***

- C-1** Promote Pedestrian Interaction. Spaces for street level uses should be designed to engage pedestrians with the activities occurring within them. Sidewalk-related spaces should be open to the general public and appear safe and welcoming.

**The Board agreed the street level uses, especially along First Avenue, should be diverse, many to be open at all days/hours (not only events), and represent a fine-grain mix of tenants. See D-1 for details on the Plaza spaces. The project can greatly improve**

on the existing stadiums by including a mix of street level activating uses, and incorporating a flexible and truly public plaza, valued and used by citizens at all times.

- C-2** Design Facades of Many Scales. Design architectural features, fenestration patterns, and materials compositions that refer to the scale of human activities contained within. Building facades should be composed of elements scaled to promote pedestrian comfort, safety, and orientation.

**The west and south elevations should express this guideline to a typical degree, in the storefronts and other human scale elements. The east elevation remains highly visible, and requires a quality, artful facade treatment that balances the train acoustic issues, service uses within, and the visibility from trains, 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and the hills beyond.**

- C-3** Provide Active—Not Blank—Facades. Buildings should not have large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks.

**The Board emphasized this as an issue of form, transparency and a wide mix of active uses. They cautioned that any edges adjacent to the plaza, sidewalks or street corners, maintain activating uses with shorter blank wall segments than those shown.**

**\*\* To ensure compliance, a detailed ground floor building and landscape composite plan is essential, showing structural columns, floor level elevations, uses and all demising walls, solid/glazing relationships, door access points, etc., all to scale and dimensioned, showing property lines, sidewalks, plazas, street trees and curbs.**

- C-4** Reinforce Building Entries. To promote pedestrian comfort, safety, and orientation, reinforce the building's entry.

**The primary entries for event crowds require generous gathering space and should accommodate multiple pedestrian movement desire lines.**

- C-5** Encourage Overhead Weather Protection. Encourage project applicants to provide continuous, well-lit, overhead weather protection to improve pedestrian comfort and safety along major pedestrian routes.

**The project should integrate generous rain canopies along the two streets, and study simpler approaches for protection at the plaza, which might include variable transparencies and/or photovoltaic opportunities.**

- C-6** Develop the Alley Façade. To increase pedestrian safety, comfort, and interest, develop portions of the alley façade in response to the unique conditions of the site or project.

**The east elevation is comparable to an alley façade; see C-3 above.**

## D. Public Amenities

### *Enhancing the Streetscape & Open Space*

- D-1 Provide Inviting & Usable Open Space.** Design public open spaces to promote a visually pleasing, safe, and active environment for workers, residents, and visitors. Views and solar access from the principal area of the open space should be especially emphasized.

**The Board extensively discussed the plaza character and activation in terms of this guideline, and agreed the stepped terraces shown were not effective for diverse gatherings, nor fully public in character. The plaza should be primarily at grade to reinforce the sidewalk and this guideline, and the Board agreed a smaller portion of stairs, terraces or ramps could work adjacent to the plaza, as long as sloped or dead wall portions not reach First Avenue.**

- D-2 Enhance the Building with Landscaping.** Enhance the building and site with substantial landscaping—which includes special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, and site furniture, as well as living plant material.

**The Board encouraged a lush landscape treatment to soften the requisite large paved areas, and the integration of sustainable best practices, in particular rainwater harvesting and/or storm detention.**

- D-3 Provide Elements that Define the Place.** Provide special elements on the facades, within public open spaces, or on the sidewalk to create a distinct, attractive, and memorable “sense of place” associated with the building.

**The Board continues to seek more explicit elements that locate this design in Seattle, preferably through sustainable systems and material choices, and regional symbols.**

- D-4 Provide Appropriate Signage.** Design signage appropriate for the scale and character of the project and immediate neighborhood. All signs should be oriented to pedestrians and/or persons in vehicles on streets within the immediate neighborhood.

**Preliminary signage placeholder sizes and locations should be shown, including in order of priority: ground level public way-finding; ground level merchants; pageantry banners and graphics; building identification. Public Art opportunity sites are welcome.**

- D-5 Provide Adequate Lighting.** To promote a sense of security for people downtown during nighttime hours, provide appropriate levels of lighting on the building facade, on the

underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, and on signage.

**Besides those outlined above, the Board stressed that all public spaces, especially any upper level public terraces, require generous lighting. Also see D-6.**

- D-6** **Design for Personal Safety & Security.** Design the building and site to enhance the real and perceived feeling of personal safety and security in the immediate area.

**The Board emphasized design for safety in all the public realm components.**

## **E. Vehicular Access & Parking**

### ***Minimizing the Adverse Impacts***

- E-1** **Minimize Curb Cut Impacts.** Minimize adverse impacts of curb cuts on the safety and comfort of pedestrians.

**This is particularly important at the southeast corner and along Massachusetts Street, where pedestrians must cross curb cuts or possibly active streets.**

- E-3** **Minimize the Presence of Service Areas.** Locate service areas for trash dumpsters, loading docks, mechanical equipment, and the like away from the street front where possible. Screen from view those elements which for programmatic reasons cannot be located away from the street front.

**All loading and service functions should be screened from view or behind doors.**

### **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

**This EDG did not present any departures. The need for departures should be discovered and clearly shown at subsequent meetings.**

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based upon the departure's potential to help the project **better meet** these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

### **BOARD DIRECTION**

**At the conclusion of this EDG meeting, the Board thanked the applicants for a complete presentation, and looked forward to the EDG #3 meeting on Tuesday, January 22, 2013.**

## THIRD EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: January 22, 2013

### APPLICANT PRESENTATION

The EDG packet includes materials presented at the January 22, 2013 EDG meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (and referencing the above date) at this website: [http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design\\_Review\\_Program/Project\\_Reviews/Reports/default.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp). or contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

**Address:** Public Resource Center  
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000  
Seattle, WA 98124

**Email:** [PRC@seattle.gov](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 40 members of the public attended this Third Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Pleased that preliminary discussions are occurring between applicants and ArenaCo (Mariners parking structure) operators.
- Requested more details about the proposed “access road” on east side of arena, including clear height for trucks; otherwise trucks must use existing Massachusetts Street.
- Noted Occidental and Massachusetts streets provide “critical functions” for Safeco and Century Link fields such as emergency access, ADA and transit drop-offs, and bus staging.
- Concerned about conflicts of those street uses with the proposed “Festival Plaza” spillover shown in the “red dot drawings (pg 36-39)”, northward from the project’s stairs and plaza.
- Concerned about ADA access up plaza stairs and to facility in general. [Applicant responded ramps there are not proposed, but instead access via entry doors and internal elevators.]
- Wanted clarification about location and quantity of bike parking. [Applicant responded: along First Ave and quantity TBD, possibly a bike valet system.]
- Asked about the quantity of ticket offices and location. [Applicant responded: one adjacent to flat plaza at northwest entrance, and one internal.]

### PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the response to Board guidance provided by the proponents, understanding the program factors as presented, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members focused their concerns and design guidance on the following **major topics**. *These are the Boards priority comments at this stage in the design evolution, and do not replace the specific Design Guideline comments contained under EDG #2 above, which still apply.*

## Summary of off-site issues:

The Board identified significant un-resolved off-site issues and factors that influence and impact the project design. The applicant has made assumptions about these off-site outcomes, but the Board advises that until these issues can be resolved with certainty, the applicants should design for the “worst case” and accommodate all plausible contingencies on their property, without relying on preferred but unverified outcomes, and not using the public right of ways to accommodate project-generated impacts.

- 1) **Pedestrianized Occidental & Massachusetts Streets:** Existing Safeco parking and truck cross-traffic uses these streets; existing bus staging and loading occur on Occidental. The proposed plaza steps end about 9 ft from the Massachusetts property line. The proposed size and location of the large north stairs appears to depend on a modified Occidental character and use. The issue remains unresolved regarding where the thousands of north-exiting patrons will circulate at the foot of the stairs, if the existing streets and/or traffic remain in the current configuration.
- 2) **Off-site Parking and pedestrian access directions:** The project will generate 15 - 20,000 patrons per event and does not include parking; choosing a variety of parking lots/rates, users will approach the building from off-site parking from all directions, regardless of agreements for the code-required minimum parking, or additional demand parking. There is no pedestrian entry/exit at the southeast corner, yet many parking sites, the 5<sup>th</sup> Ave busway, and light rail are located to the east. Pedestrian access at grade at that location is complicated by the proposed loading docks, access road, and Holgate ramp. Pedestrian access to the east is also complicated by numerous active rail tracks, and the building design should anticipate pedestrian queuing spaces at grade, and a possible pedestrian flyover connecting to the building at an upper level.
- 3) **Removal of existing parking lane along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue:** SDOT has not approved removal of this lane and such approval is unlikely given the traffic capacity and possible streetcar space needs in the ROW. Additionally, there is the need for curbside ADA, shuttle bus drop offs and other transport-to-entrance adjacencies. The Board advised that a widened sidewalk (about 20 ft paved pedestrian width, plus a curbside buffer) be created via a continuous building setback, to accommodate the event generated pedestrian flows. (For reference, note the existing Safeco Field 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue sidewalk is about 30 ft wide).
- 4) **Holgate sidewalk and loading:** The proposed loading dock and Holgate ramp appear to assume truck maneuvering IN the Holgate ROW, a very busy freight street. This is under review by SDOT. The ramp generates a long and large blank wall, which the proposed green wall does not successfully mitigate. Because of the loading and curb cuts, the proposed southeast corner does not provide much pedestrian queuing near the railroad tracks. The southwest corner does not recess to provide pedestrian

queuing at a key intersection, and assumes the existing wide sidewalk will remain, which has not been confirmed long-term by SDOT.

- 5) **Access road and Holgate loading ramp:** The proposed east access road should be tall enough to accommodate trucks, which would have at least 2 apparent benefits: the current truck traffic on Massachusetts could be diverted to the access road and improve the pedestrian condition at the north plaza/stairs; also - according to the applicants - arena trucks could then approach from the north using the access road, and the Holgate ramp could be relocated off the building perimeter, freeing it for more active uses and a pedestrian scaled design at the sidewalk.

**In brief:** The project – which generates extraordinary pedestrian traffic - provides no public realm relief on its south or west sides, has pedestrian unfriendly walls and loading along Holgate, and the north Plaza/stairs/terrace have questionable public-use value and several major design issues.

#### **Specific Project Issues:**

Based on three EDG reviews of the proposed development, the Board endorsed the basic massing approach, and position and height of the arena bowl. Considering the revised materiality and architectural character shown on this date, the Board agreed the design has evolved well, but before commenting more on architectural treatment, *the Board identified the following more urgent urban design and public realm interface concerns in the current proposal:*

- 1) **North Plaza:** The proposed public ‘upper terrace’ appears difficult to access, lacks a vital function for its large 33,000 sf, and creates approximately 30 ft tall walls on 3 sides that are apparently blank; the dead-end platforms and water wall shown on the west face is poor mitigation. The Board requests evidence why the practice courts generating this awkward form cannot be shifted south, depressed further, and/or have a modified profile to reduce this tall blank box.

Considering the applicant-provided patron entrance percentages, the central stairs appear oversized (26,000 sf), and they overemphasize the Occidental axis considering the primacy of the 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue ‘address’ and entrance. The Board supported the more recent ‘curved stair version’ (pg 23) as a better gesture to 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, but also suggested exploring stairs that flow down east-to-west (as long as blank walls are not presented to Occidental). The approximately 17,000 sf at-grade plaza appears proportionally small, and deserves more year round activating edges besides the ticket-office. Additionally, the small size and pedestrian capacity is especially an issue if the Massachusetts traffic remains. The Board agreed the north plaza/stairs space should accommodate all anticipated uses, without necessitating spilling into the streets.

- 2) Signage/fin-wall along First Avenue:** The Board reviewed this feature (pg 57) for the first time on this date, and questioned the essential purpose of such an element, besides signage? Although pedestrians can walk under it, the Board was concerned that this feature exaggerates the street wall length at 90 ft high x 680 ft long. The Board is concerned the fin blocks valuable winter southwest sun from the adjacent public plazas, and requested accurate shadow studies.

The Board suggested that such a feature might be more suitable on the east side of the space, buffering the railroad tracks, used like a stage, and/or coordinated with revised stairs stepping down to the west. Some Board members regretted the removal of horizontal rain protection over the public plaza, and suggested some be added back and/or deeper canopies be added projecting from the building and/or fin. This new fin element must be shown on the ground floor/plaza plans, including any code required stairs/exiting, and needs more Board evaluation.

- 3) Equivalent, universal access to all public realm places:** The applicants explained that ramp access would be prohibitive to access the public stair/platforms and upper terrace at 27 ft above grade; yet no exterior, public elevator is evident to serve those spaces during non-event times. The Board stated generous and universal access is vital, and requiring users to enter the building and navigate hallways to internal elevators (as explained by applicants) is not acceptably equivalent, creates post-event bottlenecks, and may not satisfy ADA requirements.
- 4) First Avenue uses and sidewalk:** The Board endorsed the proposed street level active uses (retail and restaurant) as promising, but cautioned they are only about 50% of the frontage, and any blank walls (eg pg 60, 61, 63), lobbies, escalators and other event-only elements should be minimized and pushed off the First Avenue frontage. The clear height of the retail storefronts should be increased above the 15 ft shown.

To achieve a continuous, widened sidewalk without moving the curb, the Board advised setting back **all** building walls about 8 ft from the property line (about 300 ft already is) to create a continuous 18 -20 ft paved pedestrian zone, plus wall modulation along the approximately 500 ft length, and a curbside tree/buffer/seating zone at the existing curb line (permeable depending on curbside drop-off requirements).

- 5) Holgate uses and loading:** The proposed locker and office uses are not ideal activator uses along a sidewalk; and true active uses should extend further east on the Holgate frontage. The Holgate loading ramp parallel and adjacent to the property line creates a blank wall, and the proposed green wall is too large for an at-grade, pedestrian location. The proposed access road, loading and ramps impact the sidewalk greatly; all those functions should be fully internalized on this exceptionally large (6.3 acre) site. To correct this situation, the Board's suggestions in off-site item #5 above should be strongly pursued. The southwest entrance should be recessed more from the busy intersection for patron queuing and security checks, similar to how the northwest entry functions.



- 6) Arena 'Cone' character, street level visibility and materials:** The Board inquired about the cone color and materiality, and endorsed its strong differentiation from the white louvered wrapper. They encouraged the contrasting cone be highly visible from street level views, especially the 3 approach corners (pg 61, 62, 65), and supported the cone reaching directly to grade where the public and patrons can 'touch it'. The Board encouraged highly transparent corners, even more than as shown on pg 61. They inquired about the materials of the cone roof, encouraged consideration of daylight and/or evening accent lighting on the cone, and requested a rationale for the north slope of that roof, in terms of solar potential. The Board noted the 60 ft tall north wall facing the stairs appears to be largely glass, presenting energy and sustainability challenges.
- 7) Other Floor Plans:** Besides the studies and refinements noted above, in order to better understand below grade constraints and all aspects of vertical circulation from the at-grade lobbies, the Board requested next time to see: the below grade and upper level floor plans (at minimum the concourse level served by the primary escalators/stairs). They wish to understand the below grade vehicle ramping and circulation, the reason the practice courts must be located as shown, and the potential for a southeast entry near or above the loading location shown. They are also concerned how the escalators to the concourse level work, what is the universal access from the southwest corner, and how building stairs provide optional entrance and egress.

## **BOARD DIRECTION**

**At the conclusion of this EDG meeting, the Board thanked the applicants for a complete presentation, and looked forward to an EDG #4 meeting, subsequently confirmed for 5.30-8.30pm, Tuesday, March 05, 2013.**