

Seattle Arena – Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1) **When was the Final EIS published?** May 7, 2015
- 2) **When was the Draft EIS published?** August 15, 2013
- 3) **What is the difference between the Draft and Final EIS?** The Final EIS includes updated traffic and transportation information, additional information on parking locations, additional details on transportation mitigation, and comments received on the Draft EIS with responses to those comments. The FEIS also updates potential mitigation measures for the identified impacts.
- 4) **How many and what alternatives are included in the FEIS?** Five alternatives were analyzed (same as in the Draft EIS):
 - a. **No Action (Alternative 1):** The effect of no development on the site; required by SEPA
 - b. **Proposed Project (Alternative 2):** a 20,000-seat arena at 1700 1st Avenue South
 - c. **Alternative 3:** An 18,000-seat arena at 1700 1st Avenue South
 - d. **Alternative 4:** A 20,000-seat arena at the site of KeyArena in Seattle Center
 - e. **Alternative 5:** A 20,000-seat arena at the site of Memorial Stadium adjacent to Seattle Center
- 5) **What are the next steps in the process?** Since the arena proposal involves the closure of a street segment (Occidental Avenue South), it must also be reviewed by the Seattle Design Commission through the street vacation process. The Commission's review includes assessing the function of the street system and how the street vacation impacts the remaining streets in the area. The Design Commission also evaluates the public benefits in exchange for the street closure. The Commission then provides feedback to the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), which informs SDOT's formal recommendation to City Council on whether or not to approve the street vacation. The Design Commission's review and SDOT's review is anticipated to be completed no later than the end of August 2015.

The City Council will then hold a public hearing and will deliberate at one or more meetings before making a decision whether to vacate the street. Street vacation decisions go to the City Council's Transportation Committee and then to Full Council for a final decision.

If the City Council grants the street vacation request, the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) will then publish the Master Use Permit decision for the arena, which may include requirements for mitigation of impacts. Prior to publication of the Master Use Permit decision, a final Recommendation meeting also will be held by the Design Review Board. Based on previous timelines for projects of this scope, the final decision for the Master Use Permit should be published in early 2016 – specifically no later than March of that year.

The notice of decision on the Master Use Permit will open an appeal period to the Seattle Hearing Examiner on the permit decision and the adequacy of the EIS.

The final step in the process would be for the City County and King County Council to take action on any financial commitments or decisions to participate in the ArenaCo project.

- 6) ***When would most of the NBA and NHL games occur?*** For the EIS, it is assumed that there would be 41 home games played between November and mid-April; up to 16 playoff games in April and May, and pre-season games in October. The NHL games would be on a similar schedule starting in September. The games would primarily be evening games.
- 7) ***Would the arena be used for events other than NBA and NHL?*** Yes, additional use is likely. To analyze the traffic and transportation effects, the FEIS considered use of the arena for WNBA basketball with 17 home games occurring from mid-May to late September, plus playoff games. There is also the potential for events unrelated to the professional sports teams. Based on discussion with the applicant, 60-65 additional events were assumed to occur, distributed throughout the year, with a slightly higher concentration during November and December.
- 8) ***Does the Final EIS consider multiple events occurring in the Stadium District?*** Yes, the EIS analyzes traffic and transportation for the No Action alternative (what would occur without a new arena), and three event cases: Case S1 would be a single 20,000-person event at the arena; Case S2 would be a dual event with an event at the arena occurring at the same time as either a Mariners or Sounders game with total attendance of 60,500 people; and Case S3 would be a triple event with an event at the arena, a Mariners or Sounders game and an event at CenturyLink Field with a total attendance of 72,500 people.
- 9) ***How much traffic would the Arena add to the SoDo area?*** Traffic volumes have been forecasted for both the estimated year of opening, 2018, and for the future year of 2030. The EIS prepared for the Alaskan Way tunnel project has been used to estimate traffic volumes that may occur without a new arena. The Port of Seattle also provided information on anticipated increases in truck traffic and routes that those trucks might use to access the Port. Depending on the roadway location and the event case (single or multiple events), PM peak hour traffic volumes along 1st Avenue S could increase from 10 to 13%, and increase from 14 to 20% along Edgar Martinez Drive S. west of I-90, compared to traffic volumes without an arena.
- 10) ***What mitigation is proposed to reduce the impacts to traffic?*** There are generally two types of mitigation measures proposed or potentially required as part of future actions: (1) physical improvements; and (2) programmatic improvements to be included in the Transportation Management Plan.
- 11) ***What would be the physical improvements to improve traffic flow and circulation?*** The project includes realignment of S. Massachusetts Street between Occidental and 1st Avenues S. on the north border of the project site to improve the direct alignment of Massachusetts Street with the section immediately east of Occidental Avenue S and with S. Massachusetts Street west of

1st Avenue S. This would enhance accessibility to the Safeco Field garage and the existing service road accessing the Safeco Field garage. The project also includes a north-south connection parallel to the proposed vacated Occidental Avenue S., linking S. Holgate Street with the extension of S. Massachusetts Street, along the east side of the property. This link could serve as direct ingress and egress to the Safeco Field garage, as well as replace the connection to the south for emergency and service vehicles to the Safeco Field garage, surface parking, and service and emergency road. It is likely that, as part of future actions, ArenaCo would be required to make a pro-rata monetary contribution to projects such as SDOT's Intelligent Transportation System, work with SDOT to upgrade the traffic control equipment at signalized intersections in the Stadium District to increase its reliability, and make a pro-rata monetary contribution to the future grade separation of Lander Street.

12) *What is proposed to improve pedestrian access across the railroad tracks?* ArenaCo potentially would be required as part of future actions to develop or implement one of the following: (1) construction of a pedestrian bridge east from the Arena along S. Holgate Street and over the easternmost railroad tracks; or (2) provide operating shuttles or jitneys that follow a fixed route on a fixed headway that link the Washington State Ferry terminal, Link Light Rail and Transit Stations to / from the Arena, with pedestrian improvements along 1st Avenue S between S Holgate Street and S Lander Street and along S Lander Street between 1st Avenue S and 4th Avenue S.. Jack McCullough, attorney for the applicant, told the Design Commission on April 16 that the applicant has agreed to fund the construction of a pedestrian bridge and has been talking with SDOT about three potential alignments for the bridge along S. Holgate Street (north side, south side, or in the middle). Preliminary estimates are that the bridge would be approximately 700 feet in length. The alignment and height of the bridge will be negotiated with Amtrak and BNSF. A shuttle system would be used in the interim if the arena is approved and ready to open before a pedestrian bridge is built.

13) *What is the goal of the Transportation Management Plan (TMP) and what may be included?* The goal of the TMP is to reduce the number of people who might otherwise drive alone to the arena and park nearby. The draft TMP has two initial measurable goals, to have approximately 20% of event attendees arrive by other than passenger cars (using transit, walking, or bike), and to encourage carpooling of approximately 2.5 persons per vehicle.

14) *What programs may be used to achieve these goals?* The draft TMP includes a number of categories designed to achieve the goals: event management (to avoid conflicts with other events) and marketing; public information to let event attendees know how to use alternative transportation modes to get to the arena including an event access guide; use of social media; traffic and parking demand reduction (such as parking pricing, or packaging with ticket sales; subsidizing transit use or adding cars to Link light rail); and a traffic control plan that would direct incoming and outgoing traffic along specific routes.

- 15) ***Will the City require ArenaCo to enter into an event scheduling protocol with the Mariners or the Seattle Seahawks as a condition of permit approval?*** The City cannot require third parties such as the Mariners or the Seahawks to enter into contracts with ArenaCo as a condition of approval of the Arena. The draft TMP recommends that an event scheduling protocol be established, and that ArenaCo provide an event transportation coordinator to manage scheduling to minimize the occurrence of multiple events, and offers that the City could work with the three venues to establish a protocol. The TMP also proposes that the Port of Seattle could be part of this protocol or participate in a parallel process to advise Stadium District venues when container ship loading / unloading requires double shifting, so events and TMP activities can be adjusted to accommodate priority truck routes and / or time windows.
- 16) ***The construction of an arena at 1700 1st Avenue S. would require the vacation of Occidental Avenue S. between S. Massachusetts and S. Holgate Streets. Who uses that street today and what would be the impacts of the street closure to traffic and circulation?*** Occidental Avenue S. currently provides local access for adjacent business and events, staging for events at Safeco Field and CenturyLink Field, event parking, and a potential route bypass to 1st Avenue S. during periods of higher traffic congestion. Recent traffic counts show that this portion of Occidental Avenue S. carries a weekday average of approximately 3,700 vehicles per day with a peak of 460 vehicles per hour during the AM peak hour. The through traffic would shift onto 1st Avenue S. increasing traffic volumes on that street. The impact of eliminating the Occidental Avenue S. connection to S. Holgate Street could be mitigated by the Arena proposal to replace it with a north-south drive connecting S. Holgate Street with the extension of S. Massachusetts Street, which could provide access to the Safeco Field garage, surface parking, and service roadway. As proposed, this new connection would be a private road; however, an agreement could be crafted to assure that the use of the drive would be available during all appropriate event and activity times for Safeco Field operations. Provision of this roadway coupled with the agreement for Safeco Field use would minimize impacts of the Occidental Avenue S. vacation on Safeco Field operations including deliveries, garage access, and emergency access/evacuation.
- 17) ***Why was there a delay between the publication of the Draft and Final EIS?*** DPD requested additional information from the applicant before proceeding with additional analysis for the Final EIS.
- 18) ***Can I comment on the Final EIS?*** There is not a formal comment period for a Final EIS. However, comments regarding the FEIS may be provided when public hearings are held about the proposed Arena.
- 19) ***Is the proposal considered to be a public or private project?*** Since the proposed Arena was initiated by a private entity (ArenaCo), and would be constructed, operated, and largely financed by ArenaCo, it is a private project for the purposes of SEPA alternatives analysis. An EIS for a private proposal is typically limited to studying alternative proposals on the same site. However, both the City and County also required the review of environmental impacts for a proposed arena at other locations in Seattle. Those alternative sites are the KeyArena at Seattle

Center and Memorial Stadium adjacent to Seattle Center. The City and County's objective is to determine whether to participate in ArenaCo's private proposal to build and operate a Seattle Arena for NBA and NHL home teams.

20) ***Can the City require the applicant to build an Arena at the Seattle Center?*** The applicant has applied to construct an arena at 1700 1st Avenue South. There are two alternatives analyzed in the Final EIS for that location, a 20,000-seat arena and an 18,000-seat arena. There is no application to construct an arena at either the KeyArena or Memorial Stadium sites. The City could deny the application for the 1700 1st Avenue South site or impose conditions requiring mitigation to lessen the impacts, but could not require the applicant to build an arena at one of the Seattle Center locations.

21) ***Why is retrofitting KeyArena not evaluated as an alternative?*** Between 2004 and 2008, Seattle Center studied how the KeyArena could be remodeled to meet current NBA standards. There have been diverse opinions by various NBA ownership groups as to whether this study, "*NewArena Imagine the Future*" successfully met current NBA building standards. Because the existing basketball seating bowl was to be retained, the proposal did not meet NHL standards. While the KeyArena could work as an interim facility for basketball and hockey, remodeling the KeyArena would not meet the project purpose or objective of building and operating an arena for Seattle NBA and NHL home teams.

22) ***What is the City and County's interest in this proposal?*** ArenaCo proposed that the City and County help fund the Seattle Arena. The City and County's objective is to determine whether to participate in ArenaCo's private proposal to build and operate the Arena for NBA and NHL home teams. To help inform future City and County decisions whether to participate in the ArenaCo private project, the City and County decided to compare the potential environmental impacts of ArenaCo's proposed project in SoDo with the potential environmental impacts of building and operating an arena at other locations. Both the City and County Councils will not take action on any financial commitments or otherwise make any decision to participate in the ArenaCo project until after a permit decision is published on the Arena proposal. The permit decision is anticipated to be made in early 2016.