APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
July 2, 2015

Northgate Station Garage

Shannon Loew
Planning Commission, Chair

Ellen Sollod
Design Commission, Vice Chair

Brodie Bain
Design Commission

Lee Copeland
Design Commission

Thaddeus Egging
Design Commission

Jerry Garcia
Arts Commission

Rachel Gleeson
Design Commission

Grant Hromas
Design Commission

Brad Khouri
Planning Commission

Marj Press
Planning Commission

Martin Regge
Design Commission

John Savo
Design Commission

Ross Tilghman
Design Commission

Michael Jenkins
Design Commission Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Nicolas Welch
Planner

Joan Nieman
Administrative Staff

Commissioners Present

Shannon Loew, Chair
Ellen Sollod, Vice Chair
Lee Copeland
Thaddeus Egging
Jerry Garcia
Rachel Gleeson
Marj Press
John Savo
Ross Tilghman

Commissioners Excused

Brodie Bain
Grant Hromas
Brad Khouri
Martin Regge

Project Description

Sound Transit (ST) proposes to build a 5 story, partially below-grade parking garage adjacent to the north entry plaza of the future Northgate light rail station. Four stories of the garage would be for ST parking, with the top floor, approximately level with the mall parking lot, reserved for Northgate Mall patrons. The garage would be located at the intersection of 1st Avenue NE and NE 103rd Street, at the southwest corner of the Northgate Mall property. The garage is next to the Northgate Station north entry and across NE 103rd Street from the station's south entry and bus drop off area. Vehicular access to the ST portion of the garage would occur from both 1st Avenue NE and NE 103rd Street; the top floor reserved for Northgate Mall patrons is accessible from the existing mall parking areas north of the proposed garage (**Figure 1)**.

Pedestrian access to the garage will occur from NE 103 Street through a stairway and a separate elevator. An exterior stairway would provide access to the plaza and station north entry from 1st Avenue NE. A pedestrian connection to Northgate Mall for ST riders will occur through a combined ramp and at-grade walkway beginning at the north plaza between the garage and the norther portion of the station.

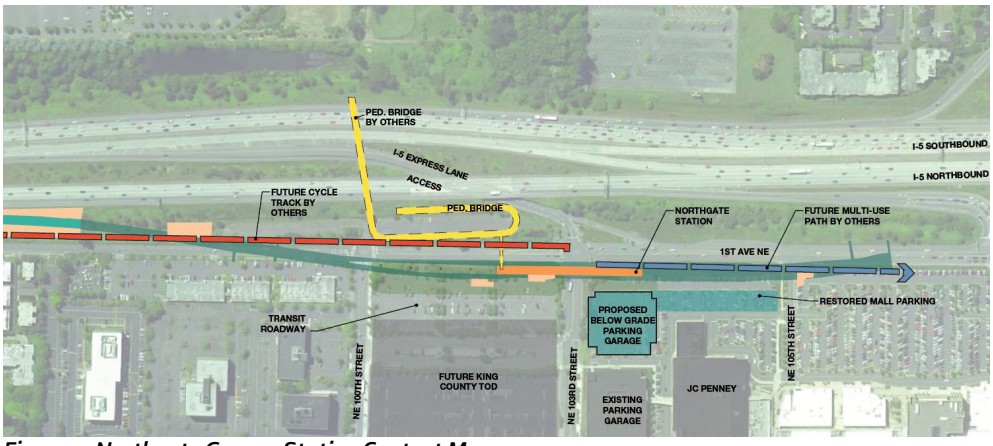


Figure 1. Northgate Garage Station Context Map

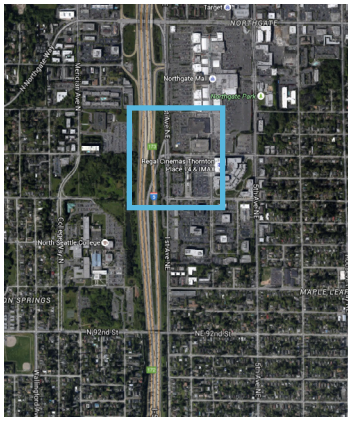
July 2, 2015
1:30 - 3:30 pm

Phase
Schematic Design

Previous Reviews
October 2, 2014

Presenters
Debora Ashland
Sound Transit
Ron Enlich
Sound Transit
David Hewitt
Hewitt Architects
Barbara Swift
Swift Company

Attendees
Gordon Clowers
DPD
Andrew Engel
Jacobs Associates
Leah Ephrem
Hewitt Architects
Eric Guion
Sound Transit
Gareth Loveridge
Swift Company
Gary Prince
King County Metro
Steven Shain
DPD
Fred Wilhelm
Sound Transit
Kym Williams
Sound Transit



Meeting Summary
The Light Rail Review Panel (LRRP) approved the schematic design of the garage with a vote of 8 to 0. The Panel supported the changes to the plaza and garage design that occurred since their October 2014 concept design review, especially the changes to the north entry plaza and refined pedestrian connections to Northgate Mall. The LRRP recommended modifications to the NE 103rd Street stairway accessing the plaza and garage, traffic calming for vehicles entering and exiting the garage at 1st Avenue NE, and studying the optimal location(s) for artwork at the north entry.

Recusals and Disclosures
There were no recusals or disclosures.

Summary of Presentation
Ron Edlich introduced the project and summarized previous LRRP reviews of Northgate Station, the status of the project and the continued negotiations and coordination with the Simon Property Group (SPG). To summarize the status of the project Mr. Enlich noted the following:

- The Northgate Station design will be 100% complete in December 2015
- ST is seeking final permits to allow the station construction to begin in March 2016.
- The City is currently reviewing the street improvement and station building permits
- There will be no direct connection between the SPG parking deck (top floor of garage at the Northgate Mall parking lot level) and ST's parking below.
- SPG parking stall size on the garage roof and the adjacent surface restoration area is consistent with SPG design standards and prior SPG code departure agreements with the City.
- The garage will include 450 stalls for transit riders and the stalls are sized to meet ST design criteria.
- The garage perimeter landscaping is consistent with City of Seattle landscape requirements.

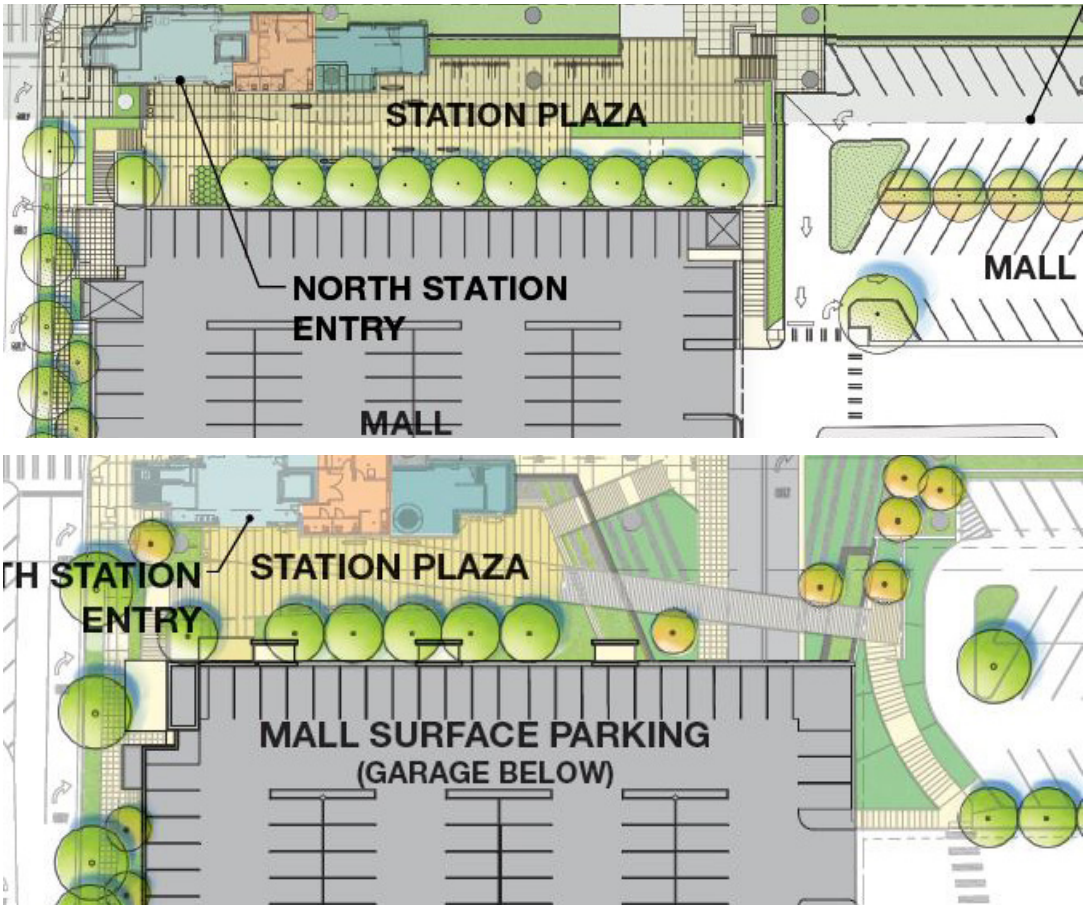


Figure 2. *Site plan for the north entry plaza from the October 2014 (above) and July 2015 presentations.*

- ST & the City are continuing to coordinate on the design of the City's I-5 pedestrian and bike bridge and the 1st Avenue NE cycle track projects.
- A King County Metro (KCM) property and improvement agreement, including construction of the KCM bus facilities, is under negotiation.

David Hewitt provided an overview of changes to the site and garage design since the last review. Several renderings were developed following concept approval showing the redesigned north entry plaza and pedestrian connections (**Figure 2)**. Barbara Swift summarized the landscape design for the entire Northgate Station site.

Mr. Hewitt highlighted the proposed pedestrian bridge that would connect the north entry plaza with the path towards Northgate Mall (**Figure 3**). For the bridge material, Mr. Hewitt stated that the design team is considering steel or COR-TEN. Lighting would be attached directly to the bridge.

Ms. Swift described the canted walls and landscaped rain gardens that line the garage entrance from 1st Ave NE; the rain gardens will infiltrate and treat all of the runoff from ST property. Water from the upper level of the garage serving Northgate Mall will be collected and flow into a separate rain garden. Mr. Hewitt showed two potential locations in the rain gardens for public art. Debora Ashland stated that Cris Bruch, whose work is located elsewhere at Northgate Station, was initially considering artwork at the north entry; that placement is being reconsidered.

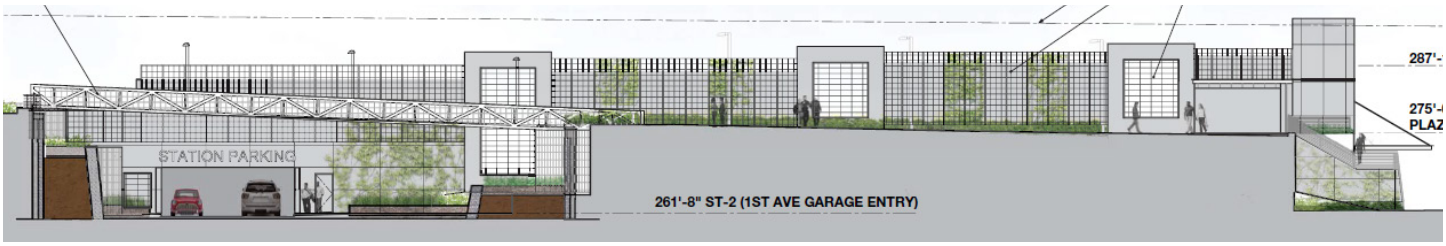


Figure 3. *The proposed pedestrian bridge over the garage entrance is visible in this west elevation.*

Agency Comments
None

Public Comments
None

Summary of Discussion
The LRRP first discussed the plaza and pedestrian circulation at the north entry plaza given the substantial design changes since the LRRP's concept design approval. The LRRP supported the decision to redesign the northern portion of the plaza and the addition of the pedestrian bridge, which Panel members found to be an exciting element of the design. LRRP encouraged the team to make the bridge design as light and transparent as possible to make it distinct from the garage and north plaza. The LRRP also recommended further exploration of whether the stair at the south end of the plaza could move to the west to create a more generous and welcoming landing space at NE 103rd Street adjacent to the elevator.

The LRRP then discussed the landscape design and potential locations for artwork. Some panel members expressed concern about siting artwork in the rain gardens given the scale of other elements in this area, such as the columns and stair. Some also believed that artwork at the upper plaza level could pull people into this space.

Finally, the LRRP considered the elevations and materials for the garage. They commended the design team for integrating the required vents into the garage design. The commission suggested updating the designs of the south-facing wall next to the NE 103rd Street stair landing adjacent to the elevator if the stair from the plaza to NE 103rd Street is moved to the west. The LRRP also recommended differentiation in materials between the plaza, the columns and guideway, and the bridge surface.

Action

The LRRP thanked ST and the design team for presenting the schematic design of the Northgate Garage. The Panel greatly appreciated ST's responsiveness to previous feedback, specifically the Panel's concerns about the north entry plaza. The Panel recognized the challenges of coordinating with SPG and thanked the design team for prioritizing pedestrian safety and looking creatively at the north entry design. The LRRP was encouraged to see this part of Northgate Station become more pedestrian friendly and its improved linkage to Northgate Mall.

The Panel particularly appreciated:

- The refined north plaza design
- The refined stairway from the north plaza to 1st Avenue NE
- The addition of the pedestrian bridge
- ST's commitment to partially fund the Northgate Pedestrian Bridge and related pedestrian and bike improvements in the vicinity
- The incorporation of rain gardens to provide stormwater treatment on site

Figure 4. The LRRP suggested moving the stair to the west (A) and refining the relationship among the canopy, plaza, and garage (B)

With a **vote of 8 to 0**,[1] the LRRP approved the schematic design of the Northgate Garage with the following recommendations:

1. Consider moving the south stair to the west to expand the landing space at NE 103rd St adjacent to the elevator (**Figure 4**).
2. Continue to study whether the crosswalk along NE 103rd Street, shown **in Figure 5**, should be perpendicular to the sidewalk rather than angled.
3. Design the pedestrian bridge to appear light and transparent.
4. Incorporate methods to slow vehicles entering and exiting the garage along 1st Avenue NE, including visual and/or tactile ground-plane treatments.
5. Consider siting artwork in the north entry plaza. Look closely at whether the rain garden area north of the garage vehicle entrance at 1st Avenue NE is appropriate for artwork given the context of other elements there. Maintain flexibility in the design so the artist can have a meaningful impact on the space.
6. Emphasize the use of planting at the entrance to the plaza from 1st Avenue NE (**Figure 6**).
7. Consider raising the elevator canopy at NE 103rd Street to align with the edge of the plaza, particularly if the stair accessing the elevated plaza moves west.
8. As you select materials, consider their full life-cycle cost.

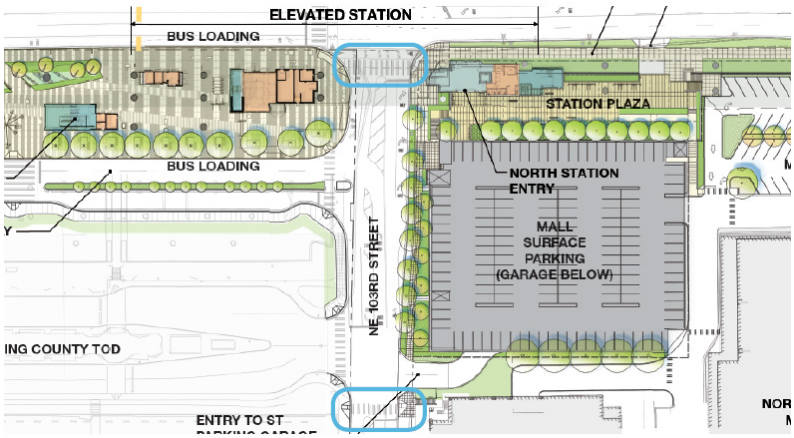


Figure 5. The LRRP suggested further study of this crosswalk in order to create a safe and legible pedestrian experience

Figure 6. The LRRP suggested lush planting along the driveway from 1st Ave NE and treatments to slow vehicles entering and exiting the garage.

[1] Jerry Garcia participated in the deliberation but was not present for the vote.