APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
October 1, 2015

Northgate Station Garage

Shannon Loew
Design 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

Theo Lim
Design Commission

Jake McKinstry
Planning Commission

Marj Press
Planning Commission

Martin Regge
Design Commission

John Savo
Design Commission

Ross Tilghman
Design Commission

Spencer Williams
Planning Commission

Michael Jenkins
Design Commission Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Aaron Hursey
Planner

Joan Nieman
Administrative Staff

Panel Members Present

Shannon Loew, Chair
Ellen Sollod, Vice Chair
Brodie Bain
Lee Copeland
Thaddeus Egging
Rachel Gleeson
Marj Press
Theo Lim
Jake McKinstry
Martin Regge
John Savo
Ross Tilghman
Spencer Williams

Panel Members Excused

Jerry Garcia

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 Northgate Mall's driveway and parking lots to the north, reserved for 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 main 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.

Pedestrian access to the garage will occur from NE 103rd Street through a stairway and a separate elevator. An exterior stairway would provide access to the plaza and north entry to the station 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 northern portion of the plaza.

Meeting Summary

This is the third review by the Light Rail Review Panel (LRRP) of the Northgate Garage proposal. At this meeting, the design team presented the design development phase of the project design. The LRRP approved the design development phase of the garage with a vote of 13 to 0 with conditions and recommendations. Although the LRRP will not review this project again, the artwork plan will come back for an administrative review.

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

October 1, 2015

9:00 - 10:30 am

Phase

Design Development

Previous Reviews

10/2/14, 7/2/15

Presenters

Debora Ashland
Sound Transit

Ron Endlich
Sound Transit

Leah Ephrem
Hewitt

David Hewitt
Hewitt

Barbara Swift
Swift Company

Attendees

Gordon Clowers
DPD

Andrew Engel
Jacobs Associates

Eric Guion
Sound Transit

Gareth Loveridge
Swift Company

Gary Prince
King County Metro

Steven Shain
DPD

Fred Wilhelm
Sound Transit

Kym Williams
Sound Transit

Summary of Presentation

The design development phase of the Northgate Garage was presented by David Hewitt, of HEWITT, as well as Fred Wilhelm and Debora Ashland of ST. Mr. Wilhelm began the presentation by providing an update on the project. He stated that the design phase for the garage will be complete by December 2015 and that construction will start during the first quarter of 2016.

David Hewitt presented the remainder of the project design, while Debora Ashland presented information about the master use permit (MUP) zoning requirements. The presentation was organized around the following categories:

- Site Plan
- Pedestrian Bridge Design
- Master Use Permit Requirements

Site Plan

The Northgate Garage site plan will include a 5-story garage, light rail station plaza, and pedestrian bridge to connect the station plaza with an adjacent surface parking lot (see figure 1 & 2). The first 4 levels of the parking garage will be used for station parking, while the top floor, used for mall parking only, will not include access to the lower parking levels. The garage would be located at the intersection of 1st Avenue

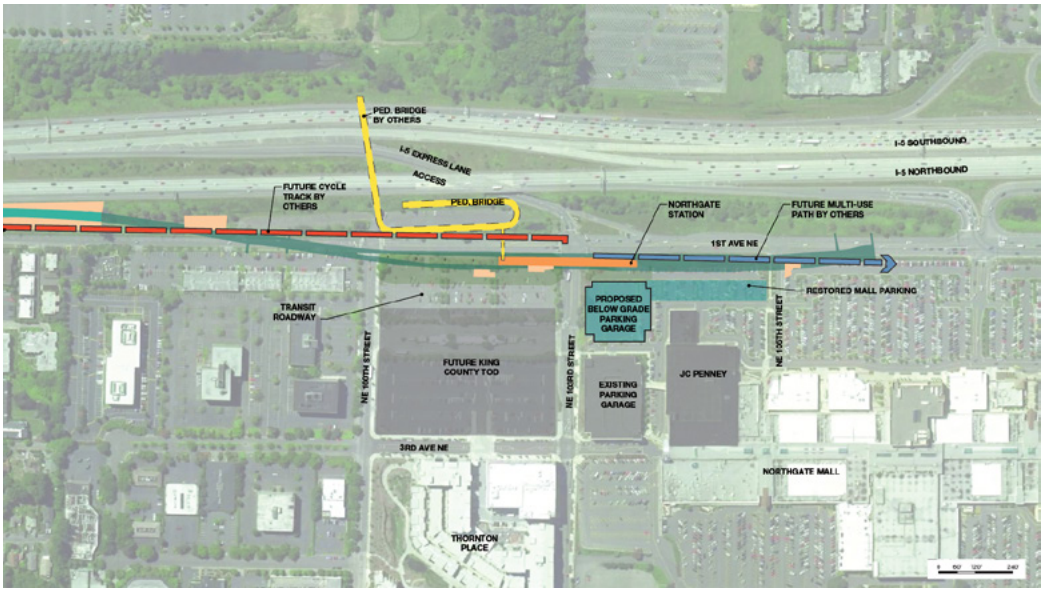

Figure 1: Context map

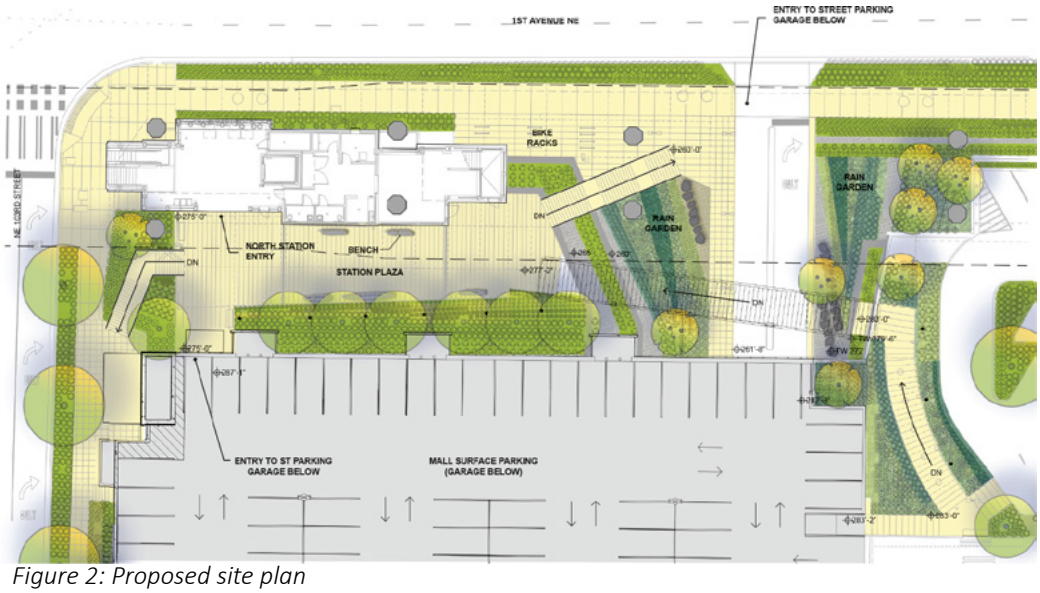

Figure 2: Proposed site plan

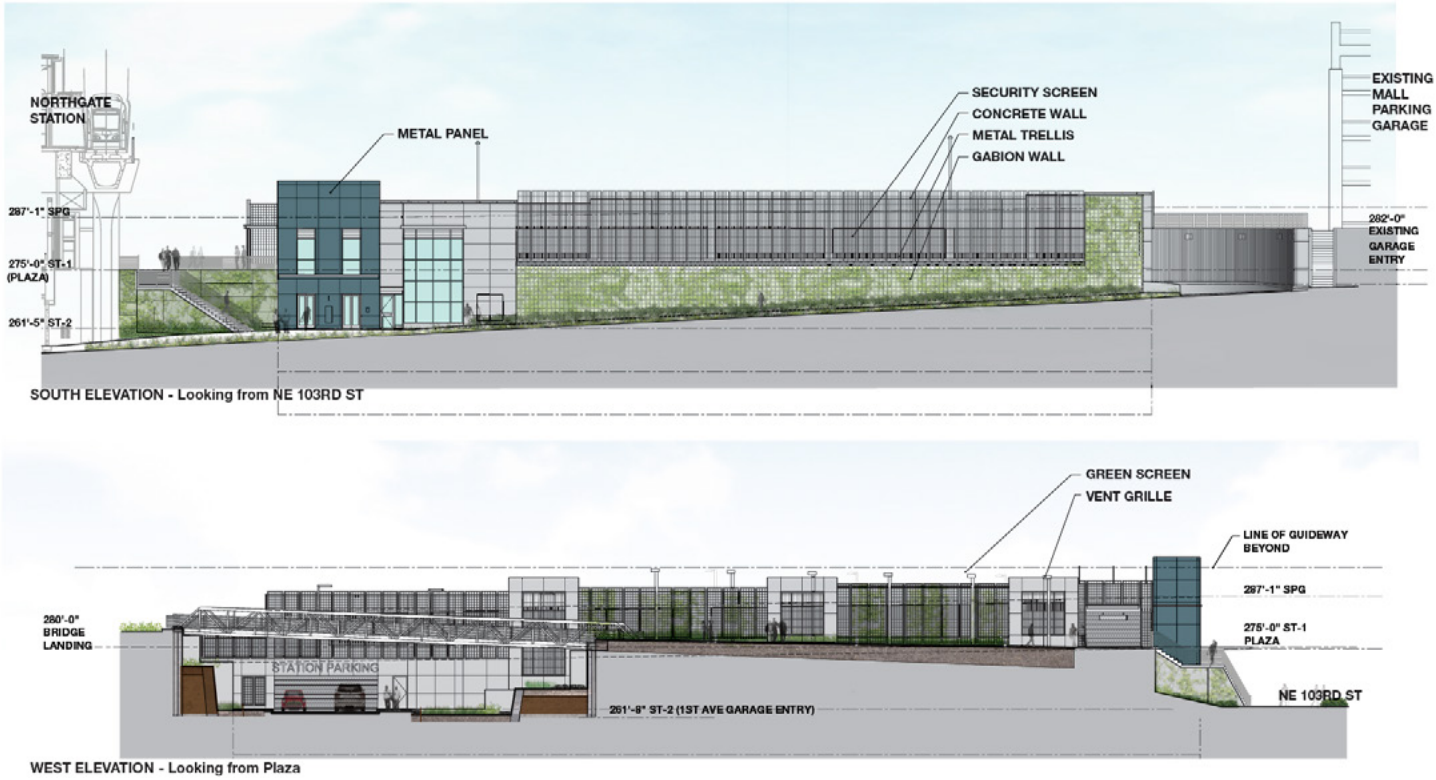

Figure 3: South (top) and west (bottom) elevation section of proposed parking garage

and NE 103rd Street, with vehicular entrances to the garage located on both streets. The design team has further developed the garage entrance along 1st Avenue to include a terraced landscape with a series of rain gardens that allow for greater visibility and increased pedestrian safety.

The south wall facade includes a gabion wall, which will support foliage, as well as a vertical aluminum fence that will not support foliage (see figure 3). Mr. Hewitt described the façade as functioning as a green wall with areas of silver to provide contrast and to enhance its appearance from the street. The landscape next to the garage will be lined with a double row of street trees, which will also provide contrast against the vertical aluminum fencing. Elevator access to the light rail station plaza will be available on NE 103rd Street. The elevator will be enclosed in a concrete shaft with windows.

The fourth floor of the garage will connect to the light rail station's north plaza, located along NE 103rd St. between the garage and light rail station, as shown in figure 4. The station plaza, which is 15 feet above grade, will include an entrance to the mezzanine level of the light rail station. The plaza will be accessible by stairway and elevator along NE 103rd St. as well as a stairway located north of the plaza near the 1st Avenue garage entrance. Both stairways will include a series of terraced landscape areas that will serve as part of the pedestrian experience.

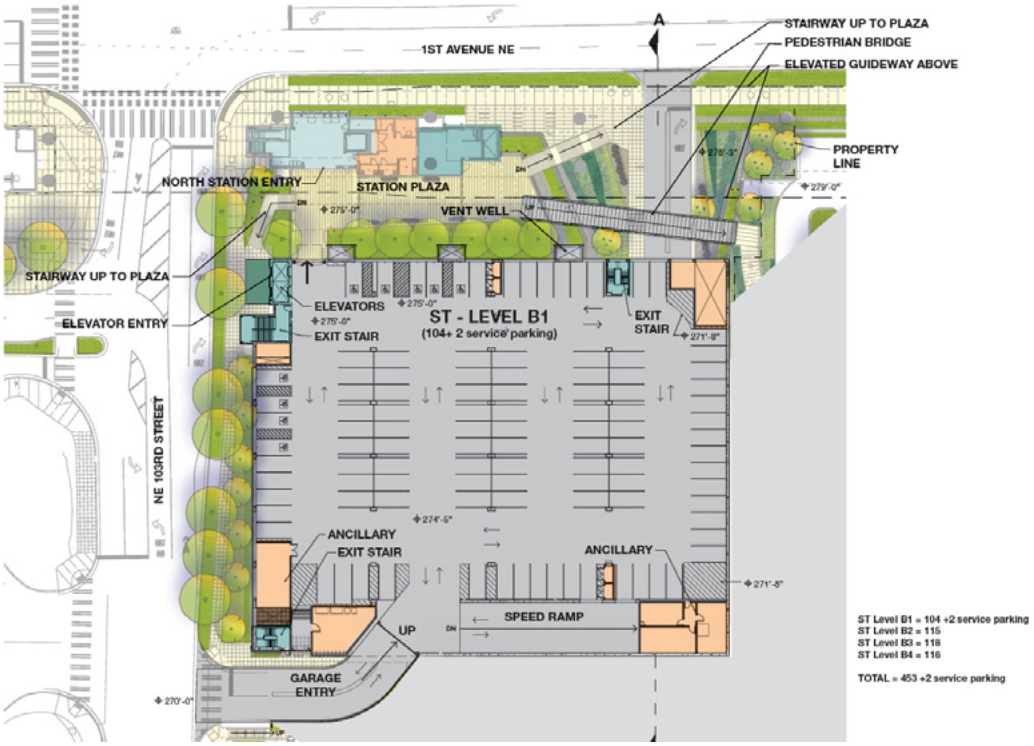

Figure 4: Proposed plaza site plan

Bridge Design

The design team has proposed a pedestrian bridge spanning above the 1st Ave. garage entrance from the light rail station north plaza to a surface parking lot, owned by Simon Properties, located north of the site (see figure 5). The design team has emphasized the importance of the bridge as a link for pedestrians and cyclists to move between the garage, light rail station, or mall. The proposed bridge will be 10 feet wide, which will be wide enough for pedestrians and cyclists to use, and constructed out of aluminum in order provide a soft contrast from the surrounding concrete material. Safety rails for pedestrians and cyclists will be provided at 48 inches and 54 inches, respectively.

Figure 5: Rendering of proposed pedestrian bridge

Master Use Permit Requirements

After the design team's presentation, Debora Ashland addressed the SDC regarding several design elements that do not meet the city's zoning code requirements[1]. The blank façade along 103rd Ave., limited transparency above street level, and setback widths of greater than 10 feet do not meet the current code requirements. Ms. Ashland stated that given the nature of the project, which is a parking garage, coupled with the detailed design plan that includes a double row of trees as well as vertical aluminum fencing and green walls, she believes that the project design is sufficient to move forward without meeting these specific requirements. Ms. Ashland then asked the Commission to comment on whether or not the design was adequate for approval, although the design elements in question did not meet code requirements.

Along with the façade treatment and setbacks on NE 103rd Street, Ms. Ashland also asked the Commission to comment on the top floor of the garage, which is at grade level with the mall entrance. She commented that the top level is reserved for mall parking only as a mitigation measure for the loss of a surface parking lot. Ms. Ashland stated there is some debate as to whether the top floor should be considered a roof or surface parking lot. The distinction will affect the amount of onsite landscaping required by the code. Ms. Ashland believes the top level of the parking garage should be considered rooftop parking, which would require no landscaping. This would allow the design team to maximize the amount of landscaping in other areas of the site. *See figure 6 for more detail regarding the MUP City code requirements.*

Agency Comments

None

[1]Seattle Municipal Code action 23.80.004 allows DPD to waive or modify development standards. The LRRP provides advice to DPD on this issue.

Code #	Code Title	Description	Request
SMC 23.47A.008.A.2	Street-Level Development Standards - blank façade	This code section states that blank segments of the street-facing facade between 2 and 8 feet above the sidewalk may not exceed 20 feet in width. It also states that the total of all blank facade segments may not exceed 40% of the width of the facade of the structure along the street.	The blank facade along 103rd Ave. will include vertical aluminum fencing and gabion walls that will support foliage. Given the nature of the project, the design team requests that wall treatment mentioned above be approved.
SMC 23.47A.008.A.3	Street-Level Development Standards - Street-level street-facing facades	Street-level street-facing facades shall be located within 10 feet of the street lot line, unless wider sidewalks, plazas, or other improved landscaped or open spaces are provided.	The street facing facade includes an additional setback to accommodate an additional row of street trees. Given the nature of the project, the design team requests approval for the additional setback.
SMC 23.47A.008.B.2	Street-Level Development Standards - transparency	SMC 23.47A.008.B.2 code section states that 60% of the street-facing facade between 2 and 8 feet above the sidewalk shall be transparent.	An additional row of street trees will reduce the transparency of the facade from the street. Given the nature of the project, the design team requests approval for the reduced transparency.
SMC 23.47A.016.D.1	Landscaping and Screening Standards - surface parking areas	Please provide confirmation of conformance to SMC 23.47A.016.D.1.	The design team requests the SDC recognize the top floor of the parking garage as roof-top parking rather than surface parking.

Figure 6: Master Use Permit code requirements

Public Comments
None

Summary of Discussion
The LRRP organized their discussion around three categories:

- Structure
- Site
- Master Use Permit

Structure
The LRRP appreciates the material and landscaping choices used to screen the garage façade along NE 103rd Street and 1st Ave. While the aluminum material used for the pedestrian bridge may appear too heavy, the Panel agrees that it will provide visual contrast against both the concrete pillars under the light rail station as well as the surrounding vegetation. The design team should consider using a lighter material, such as stainless steel, which will appear lighter while providing the same contrast as the aluminum material. The Panel is also concerned with the use of aluminum decking, which may feel uncomfortable for cyclists using the bridge, and encouraged the design team to think about the experience for all users.

Site
Although the LRRP appreciates the design team's extensive use of landscaping around the garage, they are concerned with the installation and ongoing maintenance of the vegetated areas. The design team has emphasized how the

landscape will play a large role in providing contrast with the garage façade and as well as creating a positive pedestrian experience, both of which can be negatively affected if plants do not fully develop due to poor soils and limited maintenance.

The Panel is also concerned the design team has yet to present an artwork plan for the project. Although they have expressed confidence in the artist, panel members agree that the artwork must be reviewed at future date.

Master Use Permit

The LRRP agrees that the design team provided an effective solution regarding the treatment of the garage façade and increased setback. They agree that the proposed design should be approved with the requested waivers.

Panel members understand how the top level of the parking garage could be considered both rooftop and surface level parking. Although it appears elevated from three sides of the project site, the northern edge of the parking lot is level with the Northgate Mall entrance, which reads as a surface parking lot within the pedestrian experience. The Panel encourages the design team to soften the northern edge of the parking lot with landscaping and lighting as well as other materials that will positively affect the pedestrian experience.

Action

The LRRP thanked ST and the design team for presenting the design development phase of the Northgate Garage. The Panel appreciated the project team's willingness to collaborate with various agencies and stakeholders, which led to detailed and thoughtful design decisions. The LRRP approved, 13-0, the design development phase of Northgate Garage with the following conditions:

- Improve the landscaping and lighting design on the top floor of the garage to improve the pedestrian and user experience between the garage and the mall entrance
- Return to the LRRP for an administrative review of the public artwork proposal

The LRRP also makes the following recommendations:

- Continue to explore the structural material used to build the pedestrian bridge while taking safety and appearance into consideration
- Continue developing the public artwork plan
- The LRRP recommends the proposed treatment of the façade and setback along 103rd Street be accepted as meeting MUP zoning code requirements.