



## APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**Greg Nickels**  
Mayor

**Diane Sugimura**  
Director, DPD

**Karen Kiest**  
Chair

**Tasha Atchison**

**Brendan Connolly**

**John Hoffman**

**Mary Johnston**

**Juanita La Fond**

**Dennis Ryan**

**Norie Sato**

**Darrell Vange**

**Darby Watson**

**Guillermo Romano**  
Executive Director

**Valerie Kinast**  
Coordinator

**Tom Iurino**  
Senior Staff

**September 4, 2008**

Convened 8:30 am

Adjourned 12:00 pm

### Projects Reviewed

Fire Station 21 – Greenwood

University Link, UW Station and Pedestrian Bridge

### Commissioners Present

Karen Kiest, Chair

Tasha Atchison

Brendan Connolly

John Hoffman

Mary Johnston

Juanita La Fond

Dennis Ryan

Norie Sato

Darrell Vange

### Staff Present

Guillermo Romano

Valerie Kinast

Tom Iurino

Shannon Glass

### Additional Light Rail Review Panel Members

Richard Andrews, Seattle Arts Commission

Mahlon Clements, Planning Commission

Catherine Hillenbrand, Arts Commission

Kevin McDonald, Seattle Planning Commission



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**4 September 2008****Light Rail Review Panel Review**

**Project:** University Link, UW Station and Pedestrian Bridge  
**Phase:** 60 Percent  
**Last Reviews:** August 16, 2007, September 20, 2007, December 6, 2007  
**Presenters:** Leo Berk, Artist  
 Ron Endlich, Sound Transit  
 Howard Fitzpatrick, Architect, LMN Architects  
 Barb Luecke, Arts Coordinator, Sound Transit  
 Barbara Swift, Landscape Architect, Swift Company

**Attendees:** Debora Ashland, Sound Transit  
 Gary Baldasari, Sound Transit  
 Greg Ball, Northlink Transit Partners  
 Bob Corwin, Resident  
 Ray Gastil, DPD  
 John Harrison, Sound Transit  
 Patricia Hopper, OACA  
 Martha Lester, Council Central Staff  
 Ethan Melone, SDOT  
 Joe Mathieu, SDOT  
 John Patterson, LMN Architects  
 Tracy Reed, Sound Transit  
 Lisa Rutzick, DPD  
 Dick Sandaas, University of Washington  
 Lee Roberts, Planning Commission Intern  
 Tyler Schafer, LMN Architects  
 Todd Schwisow, LMN  
 Kent Williams, KWED

Time: 2.5 hours

(SDC Ref. 121/RS0613)

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**ACTION**

The Light Rail Review Panel thanks Sound Transit for the presentation of the 60% plans for the University Link Light Rail Station, and with a vote of eleven to two recommends approval with the following recommendations and comments:

- We recognize the difficulty of designing a facility surrounded and impacted by significant neighbors, and appreciate the fact that the design accommodates potential changes to SR 520 and hopefully can accept the University of Washington's potential plans for Rainier Vista.
- We understand SDOT is still reviewing the utility of the pedestrian bridge, and we hope they can make a recommendation as soon as possible.
- There are continued concerns about the south end pedestrian crossing functionality, but we leave it to SDOT to determine the appropriate standards for the design there.
- We encourage design elements to give pedestrians priority and visual cues.
- Functionality of pedestrian movements through the head house facility have been improved and refined.

- The crystalline shape and character of the head house appropriately reflects the underground structures; Sound Transit is requested to further refinements of lighting and materials in future plans.
- There is incongruence between the shape of the curved bridge and grand stair and the head house; we encourage an examination of that approach.
- The platform and upper mezzanine need richness of material and visual interest; not all the design effort should go into the chamber element.
- It is important to treat the void space of the station box.
- The proposed art concept is fabulous, both intellectually and visually; extend the chamber experience or visual art cues throughout the station.
- There is concern about the appropriate lighting levels in the station and chamber.
- There is strong support for the concept of the chamber.
- The panel strongly supports diagram and function of the pedestrian bridge. We appreciate the clarity and simplicity of the curve, and hope the design details add refinement.
- Sound Transit is encouraged to refine the landscape.
- Sound Transit is encouraged to work with the City and the University to consolidate vehicular access.
- Sound Transit is encouraged to refine the extrusion of the head house, with continuity of form, material and design. The treatment of the top of the chamber needs further exploration and refinement.
- We encourage detailed refinement of the landscape.
- We encourage the project team to work with the City and the University to consolidate vehicular access.
- We encourage a refined extrusion of the head house, with continuity of form, material and design. The treatment of the top of the chamber needs further exploration and refinement.

**Note:** Dissenting votes because the surface part of the project requires more attention that may not be possible once the project reaches 90% design.

## **Project Presentation**

### **Project Background and Context**

The project is a three-mile extension from the Westlake Station, under Capitol Hill, to the University of Washington. The ridership forecast for the UW station is 25,000 daily boardings. The station arrives under the ship canal, and the station platform is on the north end of the excavated box. It includes a bridge connection to the central campus. The biggest design challenge is to fit this project into the context of neighboring projects that are in various stages of planning and development, such as the intercollegiate athletics master plan and the Rainier Vista planning study. There is also a building proposed for this area, and a road realignment through the University of Washington Master Plan. There is also the SR 520 project, which includes the widening of Montlake Boulevard in some alternatives, which has been accommodated in this design proposal.

### **Public Process Review Update**

An Open House for 30% design review was held in December 2007. The first design charrette with the Rainier Vista planning team was held later that month. The Seattle Pedestrian and Bicycle advisory committees were visited this past spring. Several University of Washington review committees have also been briefed, including the Accessibility Review Committee, Design Review Board, Faculty Council on University Facilities and Athletics. The University of Washington Architectural Commission approved the design development in June 2008, and the recommendation was brought to University Board of Regents in July. The City-University Citizens Advisory Committee was also briefed on September 9th.

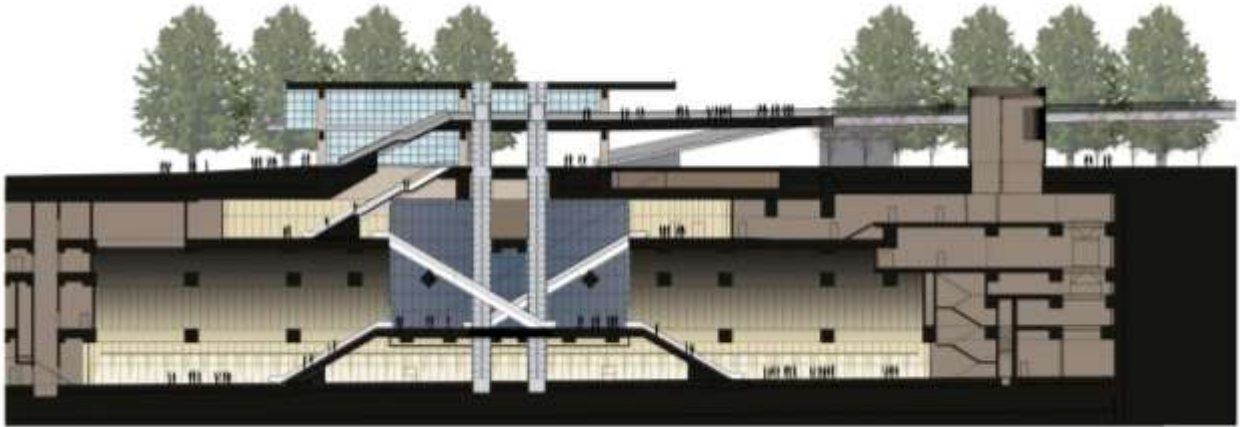
The project is currently reviewing the 60% design package. A public open house will be held on October 1st on the University of Washington campus. The first construction contract for the University of Washington Station was recently awarded with work expected to commence in December 2008.

### Project Context and Design

The head house and pedestrian bridge are set within the context of the University of Washington Medical Center and Husky Stadium. The University of Washington station is approximately 110 feet below grade, coming underneath the Lake Washington Montlake Cut. This depth differentiates this station from others in the system. The intent is to incorporate the station box volume as part of the architectural theme. The architectural expression is simple and understated, allowing the aesthetic of the underground space to read through.

- There is not a hard ceiling; instead, there is an open, virtual ceiling of light, which is about 12 feet above platform level. A grid work holds lighting, signage, speakers and cameras.
- Arriving by train from the south, the first experience the visitor will have is the station platform. There are escalators at either end of the platform, and elevators at its central point. A dramatic feature of the void space is the ability to see upward from the escalators, into the chamber.
- The lower mezzanine, or chamber, is located above the platform. The chamber is the primary circulation route for the escalators to the upper mezzanine; the art work is incorporated into the enclosure of this volume.
- The upper mezzanine is the standard concourse, with ticket machines, information, etc. From the upper mezzanine, toward grade, the path of travel becomes less symmetrical.
- The elevators stop at the platform level, but not at the lower mezzanine level. There's a service stop at the upper mezzanine level. There are stops at grade and the pedestrian bridge.
- At grade, there is a stair/escalator combination exiting either north- or south-bound. There is also a grand stair from grade to the pedestrian bridge, north of the head house.
- Bicycle parking is weather-protected by the bridge; Overhead lighting of the area is placed on the underside of bridge structure.





### Circulation Scenarios

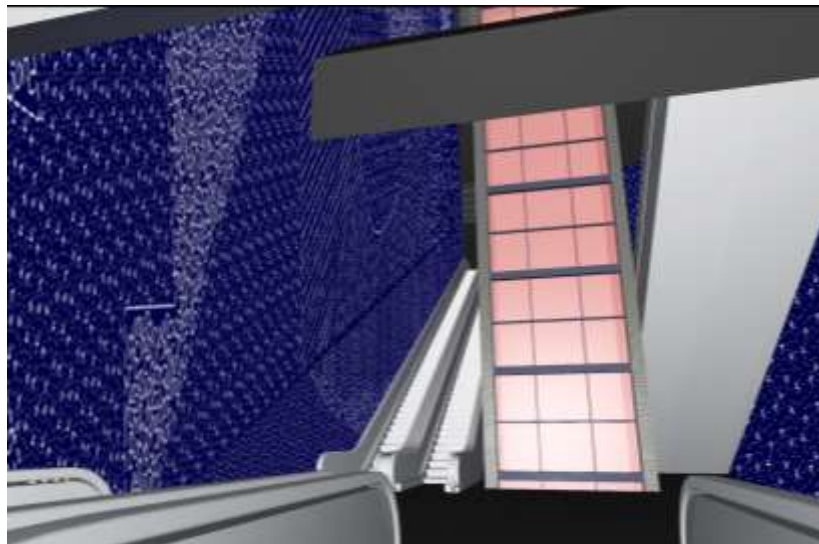
Circulation diagrams illustrate three main pedestrian flows:

- To and from campus, via the grand stair pedestrian bridge
- To and from Medical Center, Health Sciences Center, and parking, with a pedestrian crossing at the corner
- Post football game crowd from stadium, which is least common, but most critical; there is a queuing area for access to the station after games

### Art

The central chamber is an opportune location for the artwork, because passengers coming down the escalator are a captive audience. It is a transitional space, leading to the unusual experience at platform level, 110 feet below grade. The art intends to remind and accentuate where passengers are going. It is inspired by the research on the University of Washington campus, and the depth of the platform level. It also considers underground utilities, tunnels, and soil profiles.

The intention is to create dramatic environment that heightens sensibilities while traveling through the chamber. A constellation of pattern and dappled light surrounds travelers and orients them within the surroundings, like a planetarium. Hatch patterns are used to diagram or describe the surface space. Perforated metal panels are backlit, using a diffusing panel to transmit light evenly and efficiently.



### Site Structures

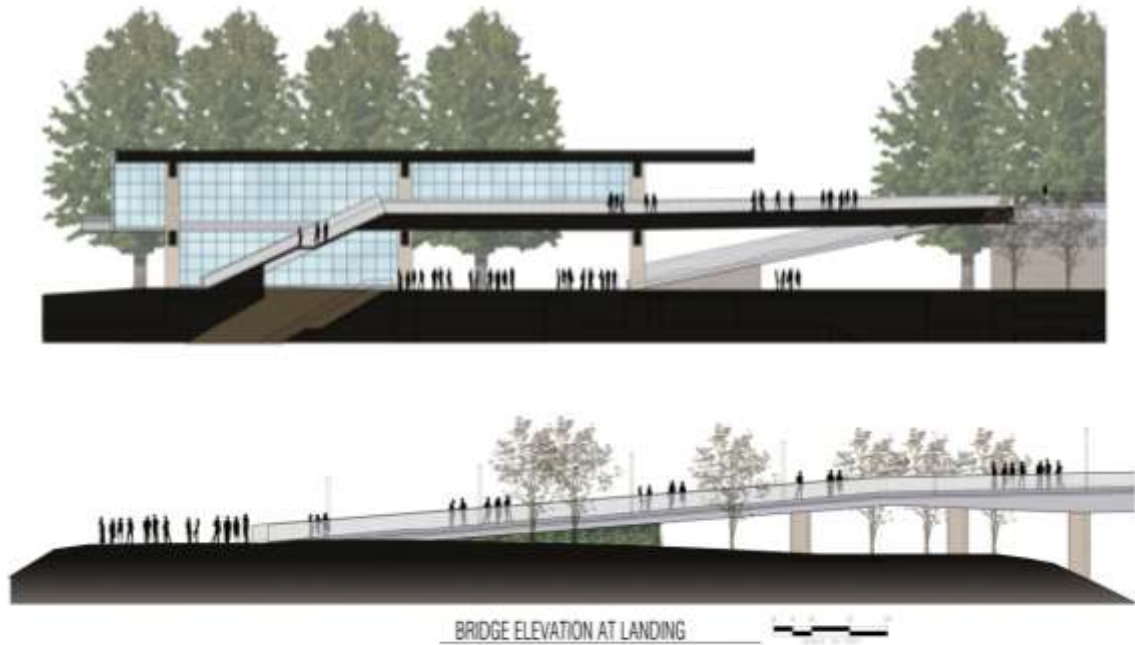
The head house is a simple, understated, and sleek structure. Three simple concrete frames support longitudinal steel beams, all of which is enclosed by a curtain wall system. Cantilevered portions extend north and south for rain cover, and pick up on the graceful arc of the pedestrian bridge.

The grand stair is one of the key design elements, hinging from the sweep of the pedestrian bridge. It features an aluminum railing system and simple columnar light fixtures, to reinforcing understated and subdued quality of the architecture. There is a ten foot wide tread, with one foot wide steel bicycle channels on the sides, stainless steel handrails, and aluminum guardrails.

There is an emergency stair at the south, allowing two means of egress from station. It is a simple, striated concrete box, with aluminum bar grating.

There are two emergency ventilation vents. They are elliptical concrete tubes, with aluminum bar grating. At 36 feet high and 35 feet long, they are substantial structures, so ways to soften and mitigate their presence are being explored.

The pedestrian bridge is 16 feet wide, with a steel box girder, a cast in place concrete deck, and aluminum railings, and lighting fixtures 32 feet on center. There is a simple landing at Rainier Vista, and a ten feet clearance over the Burke Gilman trail.



The Triangle Plaza is located between the head house and Rainier Vista. There is an elevator and stair combination to travel between the bridge and triangle, where there is a bus stop. It is a simple structure, like head house, with a similar design language.

**Landscape**

The landscape proposal is working to knit back to the fabric and context of the campus and Montlake Boulevard. If the University is able to fund the work for the Rainier Vista, there will be potential opportunity to modify the bridge alignment allowing direct pedestrian access to the triangle.





The centerpiece of the Rainier Vista is the architecturally featured circle, landscaped areas and the below grade parking structure. Currently, the pedestrian triangle is not an activated area other than as a bus connection area. The proposal introduces groupings of trees at the triangle pedestrian plaza. The plaza is also where the public can access the elevator or stair to the pedestrian bridge.

The pedestrian bridge landing terminates slightly to the east of Rainier Vista. This location allows for the possibility of future redevelopment of the Rainier Vista corridor.

The design team is working with an arborist in order to maintain the landscape frame of Rainier Vista. The context allows for a sense of a boulevard with adjacent layering of trees. This landscaping vocabulary is also used at the pedestrian plaza adjacent to the head house with tree plantings fronting Montlake Boulevard. Other pedestrian amenities include leaning rails, areas for gathering and bicycle parking. The proposal introduces trees which are sufficiently limbed up to provide a pleasant and secure tree canopy along with low-growing plants. There is mix of texture, species, and seasonal color. A combination of swales and small landforms are also integrated into this edge. In addition a storm water management strategy involving swales and rain gardens are also being developed. The head house area functions as a broad circulation spine and orients the public arriving or leaving the station. The pedestrian routes are laid out on a north-south axis as well as on a diagonal. These routes will be delineated in the paving pattern to assist the public with defined crossing locations and routes.

The sidewalk zone parallel to Montlake Boulevard has been held back for potential widening of this street. There are also low seating walls adjacent to the stadium area are bicycle parking directly under the pedestrian bridge. Another element under consideration is the redevelopment of the south parking lot which also serves as the terminus of Rainier Vista. Planted areas are proposed using appropriately scaled trees to minimized views of the parking lot from Rainier Vista.

## Public and Department Comments

### Ethan Melone, SDOT

*The pedestrian sky bridge requires approval by the City Council pursuant to a recommendation from the Director of Transportation; an application has been submitted to the City. The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) appreciates that Sound Transit has carefully addressed many issues around the pedestrian bridge and pedestrian circulation. SDOT appreciates the treatment of the ground plane and how the pedestrian bridge landing functions. The arc of the bridge has the potential to soften the visual impact and integrate it into the area. SDOT has functional concerns and we are not convinced that the sky bridge is the best solution. We believe there may be alternatives which would not use a bridge but could accommodate pedestrian circulation requirements at grade. SDOT would like to have Sound Transit examine pedestrian volumes in more detail preferably in October when school is in session*

### LRRP Member Comments

*How will this project work with the University's concept plan for Rainier Vista?*

We have established a concept with the University of how the plan could change to connect with the triangle. The University has to give notice of a design change prior to fall 2009. There are additional design costs for modifications.

*Are we not seeing that modified plan today because it would be precipitated by funding in fall 2009? Or should we be reviewing it as a proposed alternative to that situation?*

Rainier Vista Plan has not been funded for preliminary design. The University of Washington had a conceptual planning effort, but there are no funds available to support additional design work.

*Is there a plan of proposed surface improvements for pedestrian crossings at the triangle, with or without SR 520?*

We have allowed space for SR 520 improvements, such as setbacks and widening. The design is based on existing conditions.

*What are the expected noise levels in the chamber when a train arrives or departs?*

We are working with an acoustical consultant, and there are a few unsettled variables. There may be possibilities for acoustical treatments.

*If a passenger is standing on the platform waiting for a train would the chamber be visible?*

It is possible to see upward from the platform, into the chamber.

*What is the proposed material planned for the walls opposite the platform?*

Perforated metal panels to a height of approximately 8 feet, with acoustical treatment. Above 8 feet non-perforated metal panels would be used.

*What does one see when looking up toward the ceiling?*

The proposal currently has a lighting grid above the platform to illuminate the platform level. There will be some light flooding out of the chamber providing a twilight effect. Some of the station's structural components will be visible, but not intentionally illuminated.

*What is the floor material in the chamber?*

A non-slip gray and buff tile.

*What pavement material is used within the station?*

A non-slip gray and buff tile.

*What do the elevators look like?*

They have glass doors that will allow passengers to see out and be seen.

*Where do passengers get tickets?*

There are ticket machines at the head house, bridge level, grade level, and upper mezzanine.

*The chamber ceiling doesn't meet the lower mezzanine level; is that a functional need?*

The proposed design is to have the chamber form to read as a sculptural object in the space, and to complete itself before it hits the ceiling.

*Some concerns about balancing contemplative experience of dappled lighting, with safety lighting.*

There is a challenge to keep panel system backlit, while maintaining required light levels.

It seems doable to create lighting for safety, and accommodate the art.

*How are the platform and upper mezzanine levels illuminated?*

There are opportunities for color in tile walls, a transverse lighting, and an expanded metal ceiling grid to restate the theme of transparency

*What are the improvements for pedestrian safety at the crossing?*

There are options for movement. The University of Washington is considering an interim plan for the Rainier Vista Triangle. If the University of Washington receives funding to move forward with the long range plan, there is a proposal for potentially another crossing which will bring pedestrian movement onto the triangle.

*Are other surface treatments being considered to enhance safety?*

The proposed design incorporates elements of lighting and pavement treatment to encourage separation of bicycles and pedestrians.

*The plazas at the triangle and Rainier Vista areas are significant landings. There will be pedestrian activity there, so there is an issue of their safety.*

Cast -in-place concrete paving is proposed. The plaza area is at or less than a 2% slope, which will feel relatively level. There will be permeable paving in relationship to trees to facilitate storm water infiltration. The plaza is sized to respond to bus pick up area, without objects obstructing flow.

*There are problems with pedestrian movement on game days.*

The proposed design reestablishes brick paving squares at the main gates, and cars will pass through those defined pedestrian treatment on the ground. Curb edges have been minimized to accommodate pedestrian movement and reduce potential tripping hazards..

*Is there a direct pedestrian connection from the station to the Pacific Street interchange?*

Yes. It's about 60 feet wide, with a combination of permeable pavement and cast in place concrete.

*Is the head house glass clear, reflective, or colored?*

It is clear glass. We're working with the standard glazing system approved by Sound Transit.

*What will the head house look like at night?*

It is illuminated from the ceiling, and will glow from within; although it is not designed to throw light outdoors.

*Potentially extraordinary moment inside architecture. Can potentially be the gem of all the stations. Ambivalent about shaping of chamber, but Leo's work is powerful.*

*The pedestrian bridge has incredible potential for pedestrian use from the nearby community; will have huge user population from communities south of the Montlake Bridge.*

*There is concern that getting people to choose to use a sky bridge is very difficult, even when it could seem a rational choice; it would require an extraordinary and compelling design. The concept presented is utilitarian in both structural concept and expression.*