



APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

February 3, 2022

NE 130th Street Infill Light Rail Station

Bruce A. Harrell

Mayor

Rico Quirindongo

Interim Director, OPCD

Justin Clark, Chair

Vinita Sidhu, Vice Chair

Adam Amrhein

Elizabeth Conner

Mark Johnson

Amalia Leighton-Cody

Elaine Wine

Michael Jenkins

Executive Director

Valerie Kinast

Coordinator

Juliet Acevedo

Administrative Staff

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Commissioners Present

Justin Clark, Chair

Vinita Sidhu, Vice Chair

Elizabeth Conner

Mark Johnson

Amalia Leighton-Cody

Elaine Wine

Commissioners Excused

Adam Amrhein

Staff Present

Michael Jenkins

Valerie Kinast

Juliet Acevedo

Recusals and Disclosures

None

Project Description

In 2016, voters approved the addition of a light rail infill station to the Lynnwood Link Extension at NE 130th St. The Lynnwood Link Extension was approved in 2008 as part of the Sound Transit 2 (ST2) ballot measure to provide light rail service between Northgate and Lynnwood. With the Sound Transit 3 (ST3) ballot measure, funding for the NE 130th infill station was provided. The NE 130th St station will be located north of NE 130th St between 5th Ave and Interstate 5, and will serve a growing residential neighborhood between the Northgate and Shoreline South/148th Stations (*see Figure 1*).

Meeting Summary

This is the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) third review of the NE 130th St Light Rail Station project. The purpose of this meeting was to review the schematic design phase (60% design) for the C3 package of the phased project. The C3 package consists of the plaza, vertical circulation, station finishes, and right-of-way improvements. The Commission previously received both the C1 package (guideway columns and superstructure), approved as part of Lynnwood Link (currently under construction), and the C2 package (the platform girders, slab, and canopy structure), that was approved by the SDC on May 20, 2021.

At this meeting the SDC voted, 7-0, to approve the schematic design for the NE 130th St Light Rail Station C3 package with two conditions and several recommendations. The project will be reviewed again in subcommittee and the full project will be reviewed at the design development (90% design) phase.

Summary of Presentation

The presentation included an overview of how the project designs have advanced since the previous C3 package review, including:

- Project background;
- Ongoing outreach and community engagement;
- Advancement of designs for station access;
- Proposed right of way improvements, including drop offs, transit stops, and sidewalk enhancements;

February 3, 2022

9:00 am - 12:25 pm

Project Type

light rail

Phase

schematic design

Previous Reviews

-

Presenters

Taylor Carroll
Sound Transit

My Nguyen
Sound Transit

Alex Krieg
Sound Transit

Keith Ireland
KPF

Lyna Nget
HNTB

Lucile Chich
Sound Transit

Howard Fitzpatrick
LMN Architects

Allyson Jackovics
O'Brien 360

Attendees

JP Alvarez
LMN Architects

Christina Arthur
SDOT

Nir Barnea
Community Member

Val Batey
Sound Transit

Steve Beadle
WSDOT

Murphy Bush
Council Staff

Catherine Calvert
Sound Transit

Patrice Carroll
OPCD

Jonathan Childers
Sound Transit

Sean Conrad
SDCI

Tammy Frederick
SDOT



Figure 1: Project location

- Advancement of station design concepts affecting station platform, open spaces, landscape features, vertical circulation, and related improvements;
- Sound Transit's Public Art (STart) program affecting onsite art integration;
- Advancement of sustainability concepts and goals.

Agency Comments

Patrice Carroll of the Office of Planning and Community Development provided meeting attendees with background information on planning efforts in the neighborhoods including pending changes to zoning, land uses, and related environmental review. Patrice also provided information on legislative actions at the state level that would inform solutions.

Comments from Brian Macik, King County Metro, Steve Beadle, WSDOT, and Jonathan Layzer, SDOT, were provided. Their comments focused in their involvement in the design review process over the past several years and their availability to answer questions.

Public Comments

None

Summary of Discussion

The Commission focused their deliberations on the following categories:

1. Right-of-Way and Integration

- How cohesive is the station; how are the specific site and building elements coming together to support the overall concept?
- What refinements have been made to strengthen the integration of the station in the neighborhood?
- Communication. How has the community engagement process been reflected in the design of the station?

Commissioners appreciated how streetscape designs were progressed (see Figure 2). They recognized how coordination with City, Metro, and WSDOT have enhanced station access improvements. The Commissioners asked the team to consider forward compatibility for all ages and abilities (see Figure 3).

The SDC challenged WSDOT's perspective and Sound Transit's work to address

Andrew Freeling
Community Member

Randy Harlow
Sound Transit

Emma Hinchliffe
DJC

John Hoey
SPC

Aaron Hursey
Gensler

Stephannie Karlsson
Sound Transit

Cindy Kozak
SDOT

Jonathan Layzer
SDOT

Rachael Ludwick
Community Member

Barbara Luecke
Sound Transit

Brian Macik
King County Metro

Teri Marsh
HNTB

Denis Martynowych
Sound Transit

John Mrozek
LMN Architects

Abel Pacheco
Sound Transit

Joanna Perez
Sound Transit

Osama Quotah
LMN Architects

Tats Tanka
Sound Transit

Chris Saleeba
SDOT

Tyler Schaffer
LMN Architects

Blair Scott
King County

Dieter Siperko
Community Member

Molly Spetalnick
Community Member

Clenel Williams
LMN Architects

Kym Williams
Sound Transit

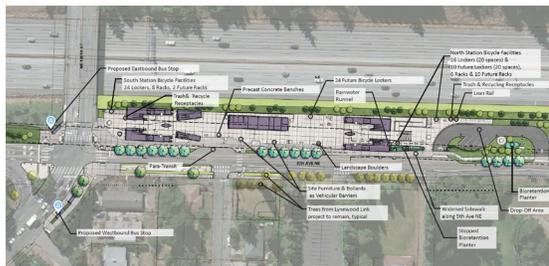


Figure 2: Site improvements

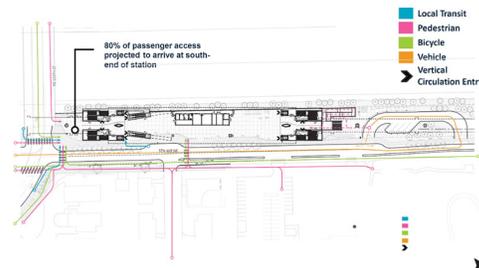


Figure 3: Accessibility

WSDOT's perspective that station features to enhance its appearance facing I-5 could result in driver distraction. They asked that the architecture and landscape architecture on this side of the site be advanced and not treated as a lesser facade of "back-of-house" condition not warranting similar design quality and character to other facades.

Commissioners commended the project team for the community engagement, but expressed disappointment that it was not discernible how the input was integrated into the design.

2. Architecture that Creates a Community Identity

- How is the customized element in a standardized system supporting the program and character of this new facility?
- Is it creating a community identity?

Design Commissioners discussed the overall expression of the station facility at this stage in design. While the station meets functional needs, its civic expression is lacking. The SDC acknowledged that Sound Transit designers must work within their own station design guidelines and system-wide standards to meet budget and operational necessities. Within these constraints though, a higher level of design is possible. Commissioners pointed to the University Station as a good example, and to the Shoreline South/148th station as an example of what Seattle does not aspire to. Commissioners pointed out that creating a station more reflective of community and enriching to the neighborhood is not just a benefit to Seattle but would also help Sound Transit reach their targets to increase ridership and elevate customer experience. Commissioners recommended that Sound Transit consider the dynamism and excitement of light rail movement as they design facilities.

Recommendations came from Commissioners to refine the overall expression of the building as a horizontal building in the landscape. The western facade should be refined to support this aim (see Figure 4). The south entrance should be expressed more strongly, three dimensionally (see Figure 5).

3. Landscape Architecture

- Circulation and functionality of the station?
- Has the project been refined well to work for people using the system?
- Integration with art across all disciplines.
- Is the art place where it is of highest and best use?

Commissioners asked the team to consider how to more richly express the Thornton Creek theme in the design as a neighborhood identifier. They suggested developing the paving patterns to support movements across the site for wayfinding and to elevate the plaza experience (see Figure 6).

Considering that the design relies heavily on art to achieve station distinction (see Figure 7), Commissioners asserted that the artist should already be involved. They asked that the team consider how the art and architectural design can be better integrated in particular to strengthen the south entrance. The idea of a three-dimensional expression to reach out and welcome passengers was supported.



Figure 4: West facade



Figure 5: South entrance

Action

The SDC thanked the team for their presentation of the schematic design for the NE 130th Street Infill Light Rail Station.

The SDC expressed appreciation for not delaying the project. Commissioners applauded Sound Transit and partners for overcoming many of the challenges of the site. They appreciated the level of coordination on the right-of-way design and advances made for pedestrians and transit users. They also lauded the time spent on coordination among all the agencies. Commissioners commended Sound Transit on the community engagement but regretted not seeing its influence on the design.

Commissioners had strong concerns about the design expression of the new station and encouraged the team to consider how it could distinguish itself as an inspiring civic project.

The SDC voted, 7-0, to approve the schematic design phase of the N 130th Street Infill Light Rail Station with the following:

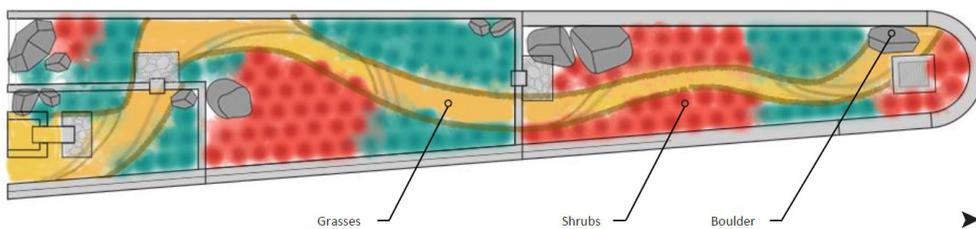
Conditions

1. As soon as possible, before 90%, contract with and integrate the art of an artist. Before returning for 90% SDC review of the entire station, present to a subcommittee of the SDC how the opportunities presented to the artist are being advanced and, if the artist has identified other opportunities, how those are incorporated.
2. Develop an architectural identity for the building. Customize the building, within Sound Transit standards and station design guidelines, to elevate it as a civic facility. Take guidance from the City of Seattle 130th/145th Station Area Planning draft document goal 4 strategy 4.1:

“Collaborate with Sound Transit on a station and station area that creates opportunities for community identity and ensures a sense of belonging that is welcoming, safe, and attractive public space at the 130th Street Station”

In the SDC subcommittee meeting prior to 90% review by the full SDC, please present a response to the following advice:

- a. Develop the south entrance as a portal, a three-dimensional architectural expression, that reaches out to welcome riders in a way that is clearly recognizable and has parity with the north entrance. Use the Paris Metro example that you presented as inspiration.
- b. Convey the horizontal expression of the structure in the landscape. Within Sound Transit standards, consider, for example, making the windscreen a single move, or design a horizontal place using a standard window system. Create a singular, elegant, unapologetic expression.
- c. Consider how the dynamism and movement that light rail brings to the city can enrich the design.



PLAN
Figure 6: Bioretention in north plaza



- d. Develop the west facade to reduce attention to back-of-house of functional elements and elevate its stature as an overall contributing facade to the building.
- e. Demonstrate how the Sound Transit design standards, while providing elements of continuity, can be employed to create unique and character-rich stations that contribute to the City's goals of design excellence.

Recommendations

1. Improve the secondary nature of the ramp at the north entrance, to make it clear, and welcoming.
2. Provide a broader design response to community inputs.
3. Confirm that the location of the new WSDOT I-5 off ramp allows space for the future bike facility (by others) is sized properly for safety and future capacity.
4. Welcome the artist to work directly and collaboratively with the community and architectural, engineering, and landscape architectural design teams to develop design solutions in a timely and integrated way.
5. Advance the design to address all ages and abilities and clearly communicate how the various modes interact. Prioritize bicycle and pedestrian access to the station. Design the sidewalks on both sides of 5th Ave north of 130th to discourage drivers from turning around at entrances to the station and the dead end.
6. More closely articulate the identity and character of the station and communities through bolder landscape architecture, Provide details of surfaces, joint patterns, plantings, artwork, and environmental graphics that will highlight the richness of the neighborhoods, and how the Thornton Creek narrative and trail system is the primary metaphor connecting them, the larger story of the facility design within the regional transit system.
7. Review the technical needs for the street trees in the narrow space.
8. Coordinate station area planning with land use planning.
9. Provide more thoughtful and transparent design on the I-5 side of the building, which will be viewed by pedestrians, drivers, transit riders, and cyclists, as well as drivers using the I-5.
10. Explore three-dimensional expressions of entrances, like the example shown (Paris Metro Station).
11. In future presentation provide clear descriptions/illustrations of how people will experience interior and exterior station spaces, up close and from a variety of directions and distances. Include descriptions of how important connections to the neighborhood will function.

System-Wide and Other Station Recommendations

12. In the interest of equity, Sound Transit and the City should aim to invest in, prioritize and accelerate the delivery of Graham Street Station as was done with this station. Partner with the on-going community planning effort.

To the City Planners

1. Leverage the light rail investments with City investments in a timely manner to reduce impacts yo riders and communities near the station.
2. Leverage light rail investments by planning for more density and to create a livable, walkable, vibrant, transit-oriented community. Expedite station area planning and land use decisions and optimize them to take advantage if this new transit infrastructure. Study how the gold course, specially the edges near both 140th and 148th stations, might be used differently to optimize the location near light rail.

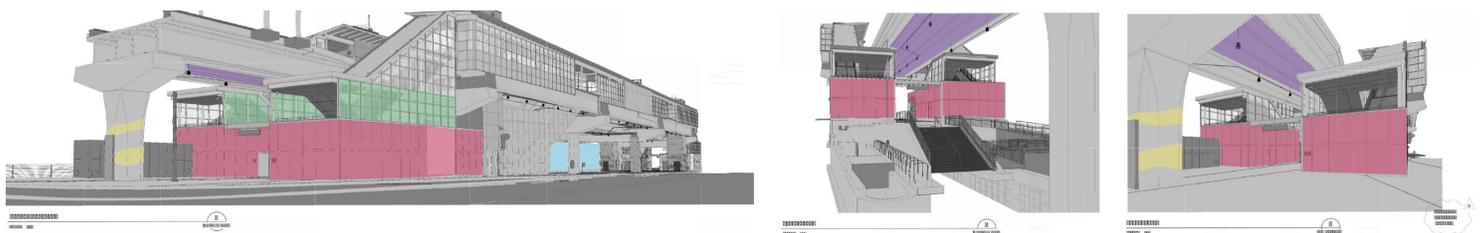


Figure 6: Potential locations of public art