



## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**Bruce A. Harrell**  
Mayor

**Rico Quirindongo**  
Acting Director, OPCD

**Vinita Sidhu**, Chair

**Elaine Wine**, Vice Chair

**Matt Aalfs**

**Adam Amrhein**

**Erica Bush**

**Elizabeth Conner**

**Jill Crary**

**Amalia Leighton**

**Puja Shaw**

**Molly Spetalnick**

**Michael Jenkins**  
Director

**Valerie Kinast**  
Strategic Advisor

**Windy Badekar**  
Planner

**Juliet Acevedo**  
Administrative Staff

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**December 1, 2022**

Convened 9:00 am

Adjourned 11:55 am

### Projects Reviewed

NE 130<sup>th</sup> Street Light Rail Station

### Commissioners Present

Vinita Sidhu, Chair\*

Elaine Wine, Vice Chair

Matt Aalfs

Elizabeth Conner

Jill Crary\*

Amalia Leighton-Cody\*

Molly Spetalnick\*

### Commissioners Excused

Adam Amrhein

Erica Bush

Puja Shaw

### Staff Present

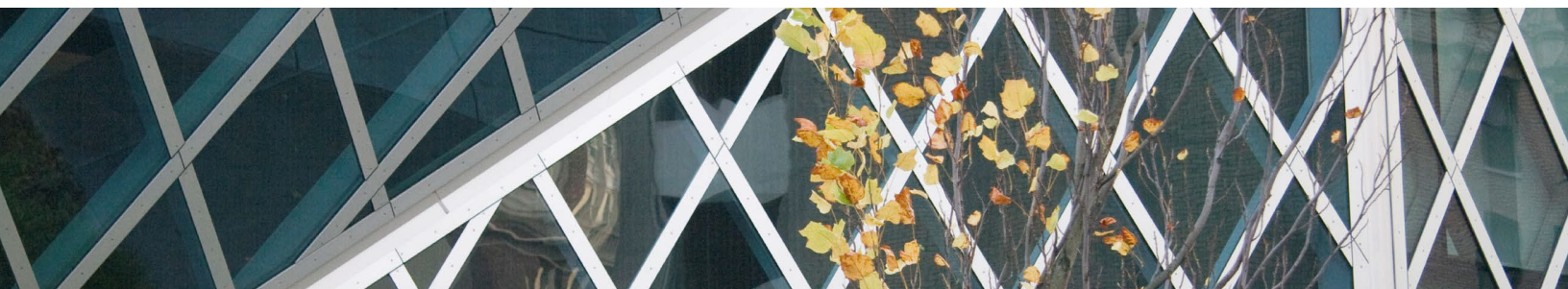
Michael Jenkins\*

Valerie Kinast\*

Windy Gay

Juliet Acevedo

\* In person



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**December 1, 2022**  
**9:00 am - 11:55 am**

**Project:** NE 130<sup>th</sup> Street Light Rail Station  
**Type:** Light Rail  
**Phase:** Design Development  
**Previous Reviews:** 2-3-2022, 5-20-2021, 4-16-2020  
**Presenters:** Randy Harlow, Sound Transit  
Catherine Calvert, Sound Transit  
Osama Quotah, LMN  
Lucile Chich, Sound Transit  
Lyna Nget, HNTB  
Clenel Williams, LMN

**Attendees:** Patrice Carroll, OPCD  
Sean Conrad, SDCI  
Jason Huff, Office of Arts and Culture  
Jonathan Layzer, SDOT  
Kate Lichtenstein, Sound Transit  
Barbara Luecke, Sound Transit  
John Marek, SDOT  
Julie Montgomery, Sound Transit  
Mark Murray, Sound Transit  
Brian Macik, King County  
Taylor Carroll, Sound Transit  
and 23 call-in attendees

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### **Recusals and Disclosures**

Adam Amrhein and Puja Shaw recused.

### **Project Description**

Sound Transit is proposing to build a light rail station in the Interstate 5 right-of-way north of NE 130<sup>th</sup> St between 5th Ave NE and Interstate 5. The station consists of elevated side platforms with canopies, enclosed stairs, escalators, elevators, and mechanical room structures, a plaza, vehicle turn around, bike lockers, three plazas (north, south and central), and stormwater management plantings. As part of the project, Sound Transit is also redesigning and rebuilding sections of NE 130<sup>th</sup> Street and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, as well as their intersection, adjacent to the station, in partnership with SDOT, King County Metro, and WSDOT.

In 2016 voters approved the addition of the substructure for a light rail 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 station was provided.

### **Meeting Summary**

This is the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) fourth review of the NE 130<sup>th</sup> St Light Rail Station project. The purpose of this meeting was to review the design development phase (90% design) for the project. The SDC voted, 6-1, to approve the design development phase for the NE 130<sup>th</sup> St Light Rail Station, with one condition and several recommendations. The project will not be reviewed again by the full SDC, but the condition of approval will be addressed in a future Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) meeting, where SDC members serve as representatives.

### **Summary of Presentation**

Representatives of the project team presented the project.

In a station overview the presenters described:

- Station location in the Lynnwood Link, Interstate 5 corridor, between the Lake City Urban Village and Bitter Lake / Haller Lake Urban Village;
- Cultural context - Licton Springs, Bitter Lake, Thornton Creek, and Ingraham High School;
- Planning context – Bitter Lake and Lake City Urban Design Frameworks, Station Area Planning, and Comprehensive Plan updates;
- Station elements – Vertical circulation, ancillary space, information and ticketing, information kiosk, plazas, bike facilities, vehicular drop off areas, art;
- Landscape and station design concepts;
- Station access and circulation;
- Partner collaborations with SDOT, Metro, and WSDOT.

The project team then presented the artist selection and art development process, including:

- Art development schedule;
- Artist Romson Bustillo, his bio, approach and past work;
- Inspiration and preliminary concept;
- Art locations;
- Community engagement plan.

The designers walked the commission through design updates:

- Design concept;
- Choices of Elements of Continuity and Distinction for building and landscape elements;

- The experience of approaching and moving through the station outdoor and indoor spaces, using "personas"
- 90% design of platform, circulation areas in and around the station, vehicular access, station plazas, planting and bioretention areas, furnishings, interpretive signage, and station access improvements.

The project team concluded the presentation by going over the project schedule and explaining next steps.

### **Agency comments**

Brian Macik, King County Metro

Tammy Frederick, SDOT

Patrice Carroll, OPCD

### **Public Comments**

None

### **Summary of Discussion**

The Commission discussed the project using four topics:

- Art and Art Integration
- Community Engagement and Equity
- Circulation
- Experiential Quality of the Architecture and Public Realm

Art and Art Integration, and Community Engagement and Equity

- Commissioners encouraged the team to develop more materiality (texture, variety of materials, etc.) in the artwork. They suggested laser cutting, casting or other methods to vary surface and texture.
- Commissioners liked the richness of the glyphs and iconography. They discussed the necessity to consult with tribes if Indigenous iconography is used.
- Given the critical role art plays as an element of distinction, commissioners noted the art felt too constrained within its designated locations. They suggested the team explore opportunities for the artwork to extend beyond the current boundaries of the "placeholders" shown in the presentation, to consider variation in scale, and careful placement to provide clear sightlines for the artwork. Other suggestions included
  - provide art at the platform level, where people waiting or passengers passing in trains can experience it as a distinguishing feature of the station;
  - extend artwork around the southwestern corner so that it is visible for pedestrians on the I-5 overpass;
  - explore integration of artwork with the perforated panels.

Circulation and experiential Quality of the Architecture and Public Realm

- Commissioners were disappointed by the low level of distinction of the station. They noted the design relied too much on the art and plantings to achieve character. They lamented the extensive use of grays and cool colors. Most material elements of distinction appeared ordinary and indistinguishable from the elements of continuity. Apart from the uniqueness of the artwork and plantings, the use of a single, muted blue for some architectural elements did not provide the facility with distinction. Commissioners encouraged the team to increase the delightfulness, variety of scales and textures, and physical/visual warmth of the station, and its materiality.
- Commissioners generated ideas for refinements that would improve the distinctiveness of the station.
  - More clearly express the hierarchy of station elements and differentiate between the vertical circulation structures, the ground plane, and the columns and support structure.
  - Fine-tune the materiality, proportions, and size of the vertical circulation structures and applied materials. It was suggested that the proportion of the art panels, perforated panels, and open area at the stair towers be studied to create more character.
  - Celebrate the rise up to the station by building on the diagonal line of the escalator visible on the outside of the building to accentuate the traverse of the route up into the building. (This could be explored in 130<sup>th</sup> station or as study for future WSBLE stations.)
- While commissioners saw progress in the west elevation, they still did not see the design rising to the level of excellence warranted in such a visible place of prominence as the SDC expects of Seattle's civic projects.
- Commissioners commented on the choice of benches and encouraged the team to incorporate seating that have backs and arm rests that are useful to people with a range of physical abilities. There was concern that the cast concrete seating elements were physically and visually too cold rather than warm and welcoming.
- Commissioners noted a lack of seating that provides opportunities for sitting together in small groups, such as how high school students might gather.
- There was concern about the boulders' size, number, and groupings.
- Commissioners were disappointed that no advances had been made in making the north ramp and stairs a more attractive, universally designed feature. They noted the ramp area appeared secondary considering how many riders would likely utilize this approach from the vehicle drop off.
- Commissioners were concerned that the bike rack area at the north end of the site might be too tight for maneuvering and asked the team to confirm the dimensions were adequate to support ease of use.
- Commissioners noted that the lack of architectural expression of the station was a missed wayfinding opportunity for pedestrians approaching the station from the west across the freeway overpass.
- Commissioners were very glad to see the extensive collaboration with the City of Seattle, WSDOT, and Metro. They applauded the increased space allocated at bus stops and crossings. There was still concern that the bike and pedestrian spaces were not being sized with future, denser development of the area in mind. There was also concern that vehicles bringing the vulnerable users to the station

were not being prioritized over other vehicles. Paratransit would need to loop around the driveway instead of dropping people off quickly and directly at the station.

### **Action**

The SDC thanked the team for their presentation of the design development plans for the NE 130<sup>th</sup> Street Light Rail Station.

The SDC expressed appreciation for building the station during Lynwood Link construction and not postponing the project. Commissioners appreciated advances made with the design in response to SDC recommendations. The SDC applauded the extensive collaboration with SDOT, WSDOT, and Metro to design the streets and pedestrian, bike and bus spaces around the station.

Commissioners had concerns about the utilitarian appearance and lack of civic expression of the facility for the community and Seattle, given the station's highly visible location. The building appears as a conglomeration of architectural, engineering, landscape, and not-yet-integrated art pieces assembled for functional reasons as presented, the station still lacks distinctive design elements, thoughtfully integrated to enhance passenger experience and station identity.

Commissioners found that art and color were being relied on too much to distinguish this station in the system and were not enough to truly distinguish the architecture. The materials and color choices made from Sound Transit's Elements of Continuity and Elements of Distinction palette had not resulted in welcoming public and civic spaces.

The SDC voted 6 to 1 to approve the design development phase of the NE 130<sup>th</sup> Street Light Rail Station with one condition:

Develop the art, and refine the architecture and landscape architecture, in response to the SDC recommendations under Art and Art Integration below. Present the response to the Public Art Advisory committee and refine the design according to their guidance.

The SDC provided these recommendations:

#### **Art and Art Integration**

1. Develop more materiality and dimensionality of the art on the vertical conveyance and ancillary facility structures, and columns. Explore additional fabrication methods, such laser cutting or etching.
2. If the art will reference local Indigenous culture, consult with local tribes.
3. The art appears very constrained as it is placed in the project. Develop the art to make a bolder expression. Explore having it extend to areas above the art panels or to the platform levels where people waiting or riding on trains could see it as a distinguishing feature of the station. Explore continuing artwork around the southwestern corner of the Station, so it is visible to pedestrians on

the I-5 overpass. Consider working with the artist on design of the perforated panels and/or integrations of the artwork with these panels.

#### Circulation

- Right size bike and pedestrian facilities based on future higher density of this area.
- Reconsider paratransit routing and drop-off. As traffic volumes increase with station opening the current route will make it cumbersome and time consuming for passengers to reach the trains.
- Improve the visibility and vibrancy of the station so that it offers better wayfinding for pedestrians approaching the station from the west across the freeway overpass.
- Revisit the north ramp and stairs design to create a more attractive, universally designed feature.
- Provide more space in the bike rack area for better maneuvering.

#### Experiential Quality of the Architecture and Public Realm

- Refine the design of the station to create a more rich civic expression, that is welcoming, delightful and warm. Rely less on the art, limited areas of blue, and plantings, to achieve distinction.
- Reexamine and reduce the use of grays and cool colors in the color palette.
- Review the colors of selected materials (particularly the Creek Blue) in order to ensure that wayfinding elements are as vibrant in built form as they are in the renderings.
- Consider developing a more clear and intentional hierarchy of station elements.
- Explore how to differentiate among the vertical circulation structures, the ground plane, and the columns and support structures, to create a more interesting and legible user experience.
- Fine-tune the materiality, proportions, and detailing of the architectural elements of vertical circulation structures.
- In fine-tuning the architectural design of vertical circulation structures, consider how to celebrate the ascent to the station by accentuating the diagonal line of the escalator visible on the outside of the building.
- Refine the west elevation design further to exhibit a level of civic design excellence warranted in such a visible location.
- Choose or design seating that is more comfortable, practical, inviting and varied than the concrete block seating elements shown in the current design. Provide opportunities for seating in small groups.
- Carefully select and group boulders so that they appear to belong in the space.

Commissioner Amalia Leighton-Cody voted no because of concerns that the pedestrian and bicycle facilities are not sized adequately to serve a higher future number of users when the area grows around the new station.

The SDC does not anticipate reviewing the project again in a full SDC meeting, but the condition of approval will be addressed in a future Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) meeting, where SDC members serve as representatives.