



Auburn Station

Parking and Access Improvements

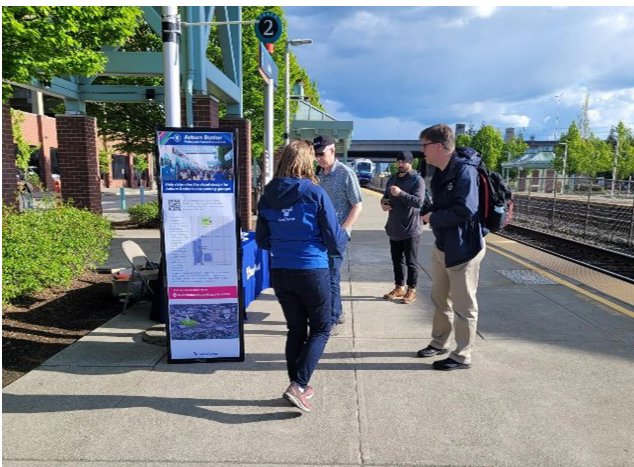
Spring 2022 Visual Design Outreach Summary

Overview

Sound Transit is building a new garage and improving bicycle and pedestrian access at Auburn Station so that more people can conveniently access the Sounder train and regional bus service. In May of 2022, we conducted community outreach to gather input on the visual design of the new garage and provide a project update.

We hosted an online open house from May 4 – May 25 where visitors could read about the project and take a survey about garage visual design. The online open house was available in English, Spanish and Russian and drew over 600 visitors, with 72 people completing the online survey. We also hosted a tabling event at the station on May 10 and a virtual information session on May 16. Overall, more than 95 people participated, either online or in person resulting in 87 written comments.

We will use this feedback to inform the visual design of the new garage. We have drafted a Vision Statement (see below) based on public and stakeholder feedback, which will be included in the project requirements for the design-build contractor. We expect to share final designs with the community in mid-2023 and to begin construction in late 2023.



May 10, 2022: Transit user giving input to Sound Transit staff.



87 comments from in-person and online survey responses



Approximately **80** mailers distributed to station users at Auburn Station



607 users visited the online open house and 72 took the survey



2 email updates sent to over 2,320 recipients on project listserv



23 people gave feedback at the May 10 in person drop-in session



Over **3,330** mailers sent to homes and businesses within a half-mile of the station



4 people attended the May 16 virtual Q&A session



72 people completed the online survey

Summary of comments received

Possible design elements for the parking garage

In the online survey, respondents were asked to rank the importance of visual design elements on a scale of 1-5 (5 being “most important” and 1 being “not important”). The most important elements identified by the 72 survey respondents were:

- Streetscape plants and greenery (4.8 average rating)
- Canopies and other forms of shelter for station users (4.4 average rating)
- Warm, subtle nighttime lighting (3.8 average rating)
- Transparency and Light (3.7 average rating)
- A building with a visually prominent stair tower/entrance (3.3 average rating)
- Using brick/masonry materials (3.3 average rating)

Less popular features were:

- Using earth tones/a natural color palette (2.9 average rating)
- Incorporating pops of color (2.7 average rating)
- Dramatic nighttime lighting (2.7 average rating)
- A building that is iconic and stands out (2.0 average rating)

In addition, we heard from 23 people at the Drop-in session. The most popular features from this group were:

- Transparency and lighting (6 supportive comments)
- Dramatic nighttime lighting (4 supportive comments)



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Transparency and light
(3.7 average rating)



Less popular features were:



Using earth tones/a natural color palette
(2.9 average rating)

Using brick/masonry materials
(3.3 average rating)



Incorporating pops of color
(2.7 average rating)



A building with a visually prominent stair tower/entrance
(3.3 average rating)



Dramatic nighttime lighting
(2.7 average rating)

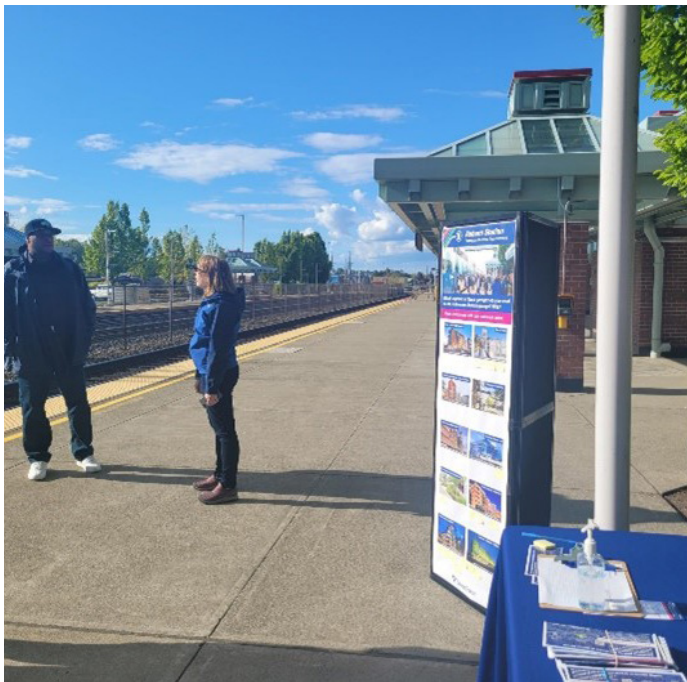


A building that is iconic and stands out
(2.0 average rating)



Example survey comments about visual design

- “Green building, living walls, and rooftops.”
- “Safety features for nighttime use.”
- “It needs to fit in with the rest of the downtown’s buildings.”
- “Please keep in mind not to take away from the historical elements that are left in Auburn. Try to tie in things that go with the historical buildings or even the historical train ways.”
- “Pedestrian access and safety improvements should also be a priority.”
- “I would like it to fit the character of the neighborhood. It should incorporate design features, colors, and materials similar to nearby buildings. I don’t want something too unique that could end up being perceived as an eyesore because of its differences.”



May 10, 2022: Sound Transit staff talking to a transit rider about the survey.

Words to describe the new garage

The survey asked, “When thinking about the new garage, which of the following words describes the type of building you imagine?” The most popular responses were:

- Northwest (i.e. local, feels like it’s from here): 70%
- Sustainable: 38%
- Modern: 30%
- Urban: 27%
- Timeless: 21%

Less popular responses were:

- Future-oriented: 10%
- Agricultural: 4%
- Industrial: 1.4%

How the new garage should look

The survey also asked, “Which of the following best describes how you think the new garage should look?” and listed several design options. The most popular options were:

- Incorporates downtown features: 68%
- Awnings sheltering walkways: 59%
- Natural, earth-toned colors: 34%
- Dramatic nighttime lighting: 34%
- Transparent, utilizing screening & glass (e.g. stair towers): 31%
- Brick/masonry materials: 30%

The ideas that were less important to survey respondents were:

- Prominent entry tower: 17%
- Large and impressive: 15.5%
- Stands out and is unique: 14%
- Variety of materials and textures: 14%
- Bright bold colors: 8.5%

A few respondents wrote in comments; some supported plants, trees and green infrastructure, while others asked to mesh with the style of nearby and downtown buildings.

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Other topics

- Many respondents expressed that security is a primary concern.
"Include safety features. Downtown Auburn is not the safest area and considering the distance between the station and the garage, it's important that it be well lit and closely / easily monitored to prevent crime."
"Safety for commuters. Lots of well-lit areas. Cameras. Security."
- Many respondents expressed a desire for improved pedestrian and bike access to the station.
"Pedestrian access and safety improvements should also be a priority."
"PED Access to Station."
- A desire to incorporate sustainability features was expressed by many.
"Rain gardens, vehicle charging stations, rainwater capture, and reuse, earthquake hazard prevention design"
"Green building, living walls and rooftops."
- Better signage and notifications at the station was identified by some respondents.
"Signage /LED words that say what side of the track the train will be on! Inside the garage and outside the garage. Sometimes I can't hear the announcers and miss my train."

Respondent characteristics

Of the **72** respondents to the online survey, **53%** take transit from Auburn Station, **52%** live nearby, and **13%** work nearby. (Respondents could select more than one option.)

Of the **65%** of online respondents who answered demographics questions:

- The most common home zip codes were : 98092, 98002, 98001, and 98391.
- Four percent identified as Hispanic or Latino/a/x.
- The most common racial identifications were: white (88%), Asian or Asian American (4%), Black (4%), and other (4%).

- The top languages spoken at home were: English (98%), Spanish (7%), and Mandarin (2.3%). (Respondents could choose multiple options.)
- Thirteen percent preferred not to state their household income; 51% had household incomes above \$100,000; 30% had household incomes between \$50,000 and \$100,000; and 5% had incomes under \$50k.
- A majority were between 35 and 64 years old (79%), with 18% ages 25-34, and 2% ages 65 and more.
- 52% were female, 45% male, and 2% prefer not to say or to self-describe.
- 7% consider themselves to have a disability.

Outcomes and next steps

Sound Transit will use feedback from this outreach to inform the visual design of the new garage. We have drafted a Vision Statement (see below) based on public and stakeholder feedback, which will be included in the project requirements for the design-build contractor.

We expect to share final designs with the community in mid-2023 and to begin construction in late 2023.

Stay informed about the project:



Contact Melanie Mayock, Community Outreach Specialist:
melanie.mayock@soundtransit.org or
206-689-4877



Visit the project website:
soundtransit.org/auburn-station-access



Sign-up for project updates by email:
soundtransit.org/subscribe

Frequently Asked Questions

How many stalls will be in the new parking garage?

The new garage will have as many as 550 stalls for transit riders. This is the number we studied in our environmental analysis. The actual number of stalls will depend on the proposals we get from contractors in our procurement process, which will incentivize maximizing the number of stalls at a given budget.

Why isn't Sound Transit building more stalls?

We have to balance the demand for new parking at Auburn Station with the cost and our ability to mitigate traffic and environmental impacts of a new garage. Further, we know we can never build enough parking for everyone who wants a space - that's one reason we also work with our partners on other ways to access the station, including walking, biking, rolling and taking the bus.

Why is Sound Transit building a new garage when the current one is not full?

This garage was promised to voters in the ST2 ballot measure in 2008, to address growing ridership on Sounder and regional bus service. While transit ridership declined during the pandemic, we expect it to rebound over the coming years, and this new garage is going to be needed when it opens in late 2026.

Why isn't Sound Transit building the garage closer to the station?

We studied four potential sites for the garage during Alternatives Analysis in 2017. Other sites were found to be infeasible due to considerations like cost and site configuration. View the Fall 2017 open house materials at: https://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/project-documents/auburn_openhouse_materials.pdf

Will there be restrooms in the new garage?

The new garage will not include public restrooms, which are a significant operational cost. There are public restrooms available at Auburn Station as well as onboard Sounder trains.

Will there be a fee to park in the new garage?

Sound Transit's current policy is to offer monthly parking permits at parking facilities that are 90% full, for up to half the spaces. Monthly permit prices for solo drivers are set at each facility, based on local market pricing, and monthly permits are available for carpools at no cost. The goal of the program is to provide a reliable option at places that fill up early in the morning, as well as to recover costs. Prior to the pandemic, we offered monthly permits at the Auburn garage; that was suspended during the pandemic as demand fell. In future years the Sound Transit Board may decide to offer other parking products, such as daily permits.

Why isn't Sound Transit building housing on this site rather than parking?

A second garage for Auburn Station was part of the ST2 ballot measure approved by voters in 2008. It would be a decision by the Sound Transit Board to make a change from what was approved. We did explore the possibility of building a garage that could be transitioned to housing later and found that it was not feasible.

Can Sound Transit incorporate retail in the garage?

As a transit agency, Sound Transit is focused on providing transit services at our facilities. We encourage our customers to support neighborhood businesses as they travel to and from our stations.

How will you ensure the garage is safe?

Sound Transit implements industry best practices to ensure our facilities are safe. Tactics include:

- Placing security cameras outside garages.
- Landscaping that preserves open sight lines.
- Lighting on the garage exterior and surrounding areas to ensure a visible and well-lit area for pedestrians and others.
- 24-hour lighting inside all areas of the garage.
- Ensuring visibility for stairwells and elevator shafts, such as using glass or other transparent materials.
- Monitoring of garages by security staff and encouraging customers to report any suspicious activity.

What about security on trains and at stations?

We have mobile security patrols throughout the day, as well as emergency telephones in garages and on platforms.

Why doesn't Sounder run on weekends and evenings?

Sounder runs primarily on tracks owned by the BNSF Railroad. They use those tracks heavily during evenings and weekends for freight movements. We do provide special event trains for select events, like some Seahawks, Sounders FC, and Mariners games. See the schedule here:

<https://www.soundtransit.org/ride-with-us/event-service>

What is your policy to ensure people pay their fares?

In August of 2021, we launched the Fare Engagement Pilot Project. This is an effort to reimagine how we handle fare compliance, with a goal of preventing the inequitable effects that often result from unpaid fines. In May of 2022, our Board approved continuing the program through the end of 2022, as well as doubling the number of fare ambassadors who provide customer service and check proof of payment. Read more here:

<https://www.soundtransit.org/blog/platform/new-approach-to-fare-checking-enforcement-moves-forward-fare-ambassador-program>.

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Vision Statement

Context

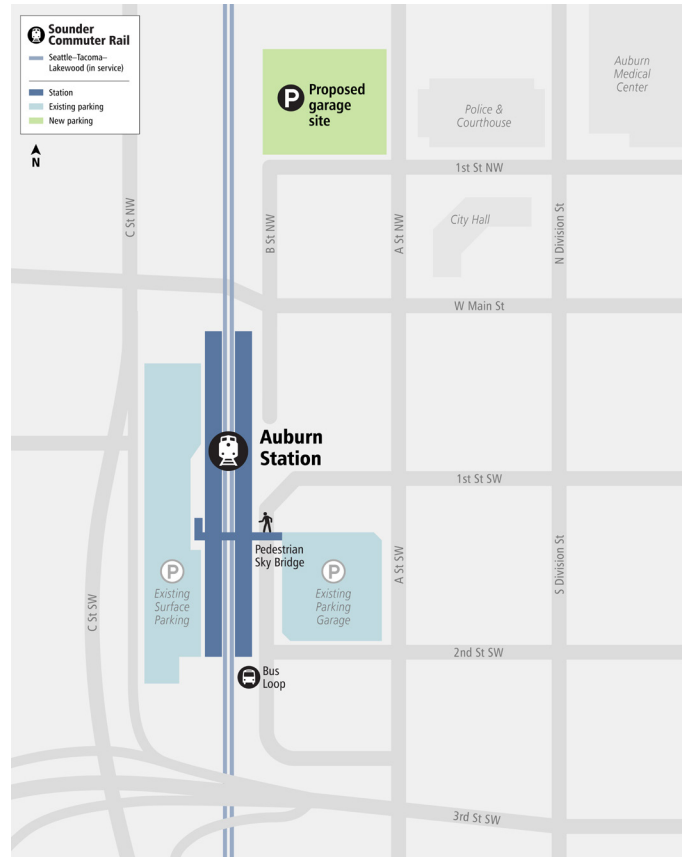
The new Auburn garage site is situated in close proximity to Auburn's historic downtown core at the corner of A Street and 1st St. NW. There are several historic buildings from the 1920s ranging from two to three stories along A street on the path from the new garage to Auburn Station. Auburn City Hall is catty-corner to the site, and directly across the street is the Auburn Regional Medical Plaza garage with a medical complex adjacent and the MultiCare Regional Medical Center (hospital) located to the east.

Auburn is an evolving city with a mix of historic architecture and newer buildings that combine to make its distinctive character. Design elements described in the City of Auburn's Downtown Standards include design details, screening, shielded lighting, and easily identifiable and accessible entrances. The standards seek to avoid upper level garage-looking wall openings.

Architectural Design Elements

Input from the design workshop and online survey reflected a strong desire for a garage that is welcoming and safe. The design of the garage must be transparent and open while providing screening that softens the look of the garage, so it is still inviting and complements the downtown area. Lighting that enhances safety and serves as an inviting architectural feature is also critical.

Given its location at the intersection of historic, commercial, residential, and industrial areas, the garage design must work within the existing context by incorporating a mix of materials and breaking up the mass of the building. The garage must account for the pedestrian experience in a walkable area, as it will be viewed both close-up and from far away. The facades facing south and east (towards downtown) are of particular significance to the downtown experience by both pedestrians and cars. The west façade, facing the tracks, is visible to rail passengers upon their arrival to the City, and its design will be part of their initial impression. The north façade, while not as visible, should still create an attractive view for the neighbors to the north.



The community is interested in a garage that is more modern and incorporates color, expressing its own architectural identity without distracting from the neighboring historic buildings. The image of Lakewood Garage (right), which was presented at the stakeholder workshop and in public outreach, has several architectural elements emphasizing a safe and inviting design. Layers of metal mesh and aluminum louvers and glass screening provide depth in the façade while still being transparent, and the lantern-like effect of the stair tower creates a landmark experience. The material pallet of this garage is distinctly modern while softened by the frosted glazing, warm glow of the lighting, and naturalistic landscaping.

The stair/ elevator tower shall have a prominent situation at the corner of A Street and 1st St. NW and function as a visual beacon for those trying to identify the garage location and entry; it will also provide views from within towards historic Main Street. This tower is a key architectural feature; it is one potential location to include 2D artwork commissioned and

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coordinated with the Sound Transit Art program. Other locations for 2D artwork expressions may include the south and west façades. The design of the tower must tie together art, lighting, stairs/elevators, and large expanses of transparent glazing to become a significant architectural feature for the downtown area and surrounding community.



Streetscape/Landscape

The community placed strong emphasis on a safe and welcoming pedestrian experience, especially at ground level. Uniform lighting must be provided to enhance safety and a cohesive architectural expression. Naturalistic landscaping, with a mix of decorative grasses, shrubs and trees were strongly favored by the community, and softens the appearance of the garage. Landscaping must follow all code-mandated requirements. Weather protection, also a favorite with the community, should be provided where appropriate, such as over the main garage entry and along the walkway at A Street. If overhanging the public right-of-way it will be subject to additional permitting and must meet the requirements of the City of Auburn.

The proposed project site is located within the City of Auburn Downtown Urban Center Zone and the improvements should reflect the architectural character of this community and enhance pedestrian access and experience. The City has published Downtown Sidewalk Design guidelines in order to provide a consistent sidewalk design within this Urban Zone while emphasizing distinctive areas. Sidewalk frontages should incorporate decorative sidewalks with street trees in grates and downtown street lighting. The intersection of A Street and 1st street should include curb bulb as traffic calming measure using brick within the sidewalk and brick and concrete pavements to delineate pedestrian sidewalk crossings.