



**ADDENDUM TO THE  
SEATTLE CENTER ARENA RENOVATION PROJECT  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)**

**Issued: June 6, 2019**

**FACT SHEET**

***Project Name***

Seattle Center Arena Renovation Project - Project #3029061

***Proposed Action and Alternatives***

The EIS Proposed Action (Alternative 1) is to renovate Key Arena into a modern multi-purpose arena to accommodate concerts, entertainment, community-oriented events, and sports events, meeting National Basketball Association (NBA) and National Hockey League (NHL) standards, and current uses.

This includes an amendment to sign regulations in Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Chapter 23.55 to establish a Seattle Center sign overlay district that would regulate the number, size, type, content, location, brightness, and operation of signs for the renovated arena, the Northwest Rooms, and the block south of the Arena bounded by Thomas Street, John Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N, and Warren Avenue N.

Alternative approaches to the proposed renovation and to the sign regulations are described in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Modified Proposal (Alternative 2).

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## SUBJECT OF THIS ADDENDUM

This Addendum to the Seattle Center Arena Renovation Project EIS updates the SEPA impact analysis with supplemental information to reflect: changes since publication of the FEIS to the proposed sign program at the Arena site; and recommended changes to the City's Land Use Code sign regulations (Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 23.55) for the proposed Seattle Center Sign Overlay District. The addendum updates, clarifies, and revises factual information and analyses that were published in Chapter 9.0 Visual Resources and associated Appendix G of the FEIS.

Changes since the publication of the FEIS include:

**A sign using video display is proposed to be located closer to 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N than was evaluated in the FEIS, and the code-required distance to curb for video displays is proposed to be reduced by 5 feet.**

As noted in FEIS Appendix G, page G-2, the prior code proposal included a minimum distance of 25 feet from a video display sign to the nearest street curb. The video sign proposed at the time of FEIS publication was approximately 30 feet from the nearest 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N curb. After FEIS publication, additional site design work led the applicants to delete that video display sign (labeled "I-1" on FEIS page 9-18) and instead propose to locate the video display at the proposed sign (labeled "I-2") on a mechanical structure one-half block south of the "I-1" sign location. The video display would comprise a portion of the "I-2" sign.

The "I-2" sign would be as close as approximately 20 feet from the nearest 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. N. street curb, although the sign would be placed at an angle to 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. N, with distance between sign and curb increasing in the southerly portion of the sign. The recommended sign regulations define a minimum 20-foot distance of a video display sign from the street curb, down from the 25 feet stated in the FEIS.

Compared to the scenario evaluated in the FEIS, this sign location outcome would place a video sign approximately 10 feet closer to 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N than its previously evaluated location. The change in signage would affect the impact analysis in two ways:

- **Positive impacts:** Deleting the "I-1" video display sign would reduce the total number of illuminated signs along 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. N. and reduce the visual influence and effects of an illuminated video sign in the 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. N./Harrison Street vicinity. This would mean potentially less distraction of motorists, pedestrians, and nearby residents within this immediate field of view, such as views by motorists traveling eastbound on Harrison Street. The "I-2" sign location is directionally oriented away from this field of view and is located approximately one-half block to the south.
- **Adverse impacts:** The proposed placement of a video display sign as a part of the "I-2" sign approximately 10 feet closer to the curb than the previously proposed "I-1" sign would likely increase its potential to distract motorists passing by northbound on 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. N. This relates to its inclusion in a large illuminated sign that would be directionally

angled toward viewers from the south, which could include motorists. Given this, the FEIS impact findings of potential for driver distraction impacts would continue to apply. Significant adverse motorist visual distraction impacts could be mitigated by factors including the intervening tree vegetation and limbs, requiring the video sign be placed higher where it is less likely to be prominently visible to passing motorists, or by other impact mitigation measures that were disclosed in the FEIS.

### **Changes in number of signs using video display or changing images now included in an updated proposed sign plan**

After FEIS publication, additional site design work led the applicants to propose a few changes to its sign program, including additions, subtractions, and moving sign locations. See page 9-18 of the FEIS for map and label references.

1. Deleting the “I-1” video display sign, and instead relocating that video sign capability to a portion of sign “I-2” (both facing 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N).
2. Moving the south-facing “I-3” LED display sign to be east-facing on the mechanical structure located in the southwest portion of the Arena plaza.
3. Adding a new LED display sign “O” in the southeast portion of the Arena plaza, to face eastward toward the Seattle Center campus.
4. Replacing 30 fabric banner signs on poles with 12 electronic changing-image pole signs, proposed to have reduced dimensions.

The impact analysis for these changes (numbered as indicated in the paragraph above) is as follows:

1. The impact analysis for this change is included in discussion earlier in this addendum.
2. Moving the “I-3” LED display sign to become east-facing would eliminate its potential to add light and potential glare to northbound motorists’ view from 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N. Other signs such as the “I-2” LED and video display sign would remain, as would a proposed illuminated site identification sign labeled as “E.” The FEIS (pages 9-20 to 9-21) identified that the combination of digital signs and the site identification would collectively contribute to spillover light impacts in that immediate vicinity. Moving the “I-3” sign would reduce total sign area creating this light spillover impact by 300 square feet, while the 645-square foot “I-2” sign and 500 square foot “E” sign would remain. This would represent a 21 percent reduction in the total illuminated sign area contributing to this adverse light spillover impact.
3. The new LED display sign “O” would be a nearly 300 square foot illuminated sign added to the wall of a utility structure, adjacent to one entrance route to the Arena plaza grounds. This sign would allow changing messages about Arena events to be seen by Seattle Center visitors from a north-south paved pedestrian corridor that borders other Center grounds including the Fisher Pavilion and International Fountain in the vicinity. This sign would supplement other proposed signage in this immediate vicinity including a digital reader board sign and a wall-mounted site identification sign. These other signs were shown in two “southwest view” images in Appendix G’s “Sign Location Planning Documents.” The new illuminated sign “O” would cast light toward the Center grounds immediately to the east, which would add a source of light and glare not currently

present. This area is not subject to public automobile traffic and does not have residents in the vicinity immediately east of the sign. It therefore would not generate the potential for adverse or significant adverse spillover light or glare impacts of the kinds identified in the FEIS for signs in the western portion of the Arena grounds.

4. The impact analysis for this change is included in the immediately following discussion.

#### **Changes in banner signs on poles, from fabric to electronic changing-image (non-video)**

The prior proposal included up to 30 fabric-banner signs on poles, distributed at regular distances in a line around the Arena. This portion of the sign proposal is now updated to instead propose 12 electronic changing-image pole signs instead of the 30 fabric-banner signs. The FEIS described a 30-square foot banner sign face size, but with two such banners per pole and sign messages on both sides of the banners. The changing-image pole signs now are proposed to have 30 square feet per sign face with one face in each direction. Therefore, the sign area of these new pole signs would be smaller than the prior proposal in total sign area per pole sign.

With the proposed recommendation for 12 pole signs rather than 30 pole-banner signs, the total sign area within the Arena plazas would be reduced from the amount previously disclosed in the FEIS. For example, rather than approximately nine pole-banner signs previously proposed along the 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. N. facing plaza of the Arena, there would be approximately four new pole signs likely visible from 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N. The new pole signs would include electronic changing-image content, which could include a variety of content related to the event occurring at the Arena such as sports team names and colors, or other content.

This addendum discloses that the proposed 12 pole signs would consist of electronic sign displays adding to the total amount of illuminated signage at the Arena site. These illuminated signs could be placed at heights between 15 and 25 feet. This could contribute to an increased cumulative amount of light emitted at the Arena site than was previously disclosed in the FEIS. However, these signs would not be expected to generate significant adverse light/glare levels, based on their size, positions, and their spacing around the Arena grounds. Other illuminated signs located closer to 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. N. would continue to have the greatest potential to generate adverse spillover light impacts as disclosed in the FEIS (and updated in this addendum). Four of these new pole signs along the western plazas of the Arena would be visible to site users and possibly motorists on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N.

#### **Video display limit proposed to be 150 square feet, larger than an FEIS-cited 140 square foot sign size**

The FEIS analysis on pages 9-15 and 9-16 described a proposed video display sign size of 140 square feet for a specific video display sign that would have faced 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N. The FEIS analyses did not state a proposed sign code limit for the size of video signs, even though the draft sign code at the time of FEIS publication included a 150-square foot limit. The previously proposed 140-square foot video sign mentioned in the FEIS has now been deleted from the sign proposal, and the recommended sign code proposal remains as a 150-square foot limit on the size of video displays on signs (other than a sign proposed to be viewed through the south-façade glass wall, which has a larger size limit in the code proposal).

The published FEIS included accurate information about the prior proposed video sign. But, for the sake of clarity, this addendum discloses that the recommended size limit for video display on a sign in the Arena subarea was 150 square feet at the time of FEIS publication and that it remains 150 square feet in the current recommended sign code.

### **Updated recommendations on regulation of sponsorship signage**

The FEIS disclosed on page 9-25:

*“As proposed, the Seattle Center Arena Renovation Project would be inconsistent with the current City sign code. City sign regulations (SMC 23.55) currently limit the number, size, type, illumination, video display, commercial content, and other characteristics of signs throughout the city. Under Alternative 1, the project includes a request to modify many of the restrictions of the sign regulations as they apply to this project (see Appendix G, Table G-1). Mitigation of adverse impacts would be part of the decision-making process.”*

The following discussion provides additional details about the recommended sign code approach that were defined after FEIS publication.

Additional work on the recommended sign code has refined the regulatory approach pertaining to sign content to address sponsorship of the Arena itself. As with other stadiums locally and nationally, the Arena’s name is expected to include a sponsoring entity’s name, which would be included in signage displaying the arena’s name.

The recommended sign code includes a new type of “sponsorship sign” that would accommodate mentioning an event or arena sponsor’s business, product, service, or identity through the use of images, texts, fonts or colors pursuant to an agreement between the property owner or authorized tenant and a sponsor. The sign code would, however, prohibit on sponsorship signs the use of comparative language, price information or other indications of savings or value, or overt encouragement to take any action with respect to the sponsor, the sponsor’s business, or any other products or services.

In the Arena subarea, such signs could be roof, wall, ground, pole, or projecting signs, and would be subject to the other controls defined for the sign overlay district and the Arena subarea. In the Bressi Block subarea, the applicable sign controls, including for sponsorship signs, would be different and more limited than recommended for the Arena subarea.

### **Changes in proposed code regulation of sign illumination limits**

The FEIS disclosed a recommended code limit on sign illumination to not exceed 0.3 footcandles above ambient light conditions (see pages 9-17 and Appendix page G-2 for example). The recommended code limit on illumination has now changed in the current code proposal, which would follow the measurement scale that the City already applies to other signs city-wide, which is 500 “nits” (a “nit” is equivalent to one candela per square meter, a measure of luminous intensity). This change was made to preserve consistency in citywide light measurement methods and code enforcement. Analysis by SDCI after the FEIS indicated that illumination measurements using footcandles could create logistical challenges for code enforcement staff, in contrast to using the simple nit-measuring device already used by staff.

The FEIS on page 9-19 disclosed that the footcandle-based measuring method could reach a maximum light level of about 520 nits at the previously proposed video sign near 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N. Other analysis after FEIS publication identified mathematical conversion formulas between nits and footcandles, and this confirmed that maximum sign lighting limits would be very similar using either light measurement method in the sign code. Therefore, the revised code proposal's use of nits to define sign lighting limits would not likely generate significant adverse impact differences in sign lighting outcomes, and could result in slightly lower maximum sign illumination levels.

### **Changes in proposed code for numbers of signs allowed per linear foot of lot frontage**

The FEIS reported certain numbers of signs allowed per linear foot of lot frontage, as shown in Appendix G. After FEIS publication, additional analysis to develop the sign code proposal revised these sign allowances for a number of reasons. These included refinements such as considering the Arena and Bressi Block subareas separately, confirming lot frontages, removing pole signs from the Type A category (they are another separate category per code), and confirming the distribution of proposed signs at the Arena into Type A, B, and other categories.

Although the rates per linear foot have changed in the recommended code proposal since FEIS publication, the sign-count for the Arena subarea remains very similar. For example, FEIS Appendix G indicated that approximately 39 Type A and B signs could be provided. The current code proposal would accommodate approximately 36 Type A and B signs in the Arena subarea. These sign levels would not result in significant differences in sign-related impacts. Additionally, the revisions to the code proposal have redefined certain types of signs to fall into an "other" category, which further evens out sign counts to approximately match what was analyzed in the FEIS. Also, the current proposed sign program substitutes 30 prior proposed "pole-banner" signs with 12 changing-image pole signs that would serve the same purposes. This would result in a reduction in total sign count at the Arena site compared with the FEIS sign scenario.

Along with the sign code, the intended final agreements between the Arena master tenant and the Seattle Center would continue to influence and limit the total amount and type of signs present at the Arena and its grounds. This would be likely to provide effective controls on the total numbers of signs permitted in the affected area of Seattle Center. This conclusion remains applicable to the FEIS analysis and this addendum's analysis.