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Populous Designs Industry-Leading Climate Pledge Arena in Seattle

SEATTLE, Wash. – October 22, 2021 – Global design firm [Populous](#) designed the new Climate Pledge Arena in Seattle, which opens its doors to the public on Friday. This transformational project is set to be the first-ever net zero carbon arena in the world and is one of the most significant private investments in Pacific Northwest sports and entertainment history.



Populous was engaged as Architect of Record by Oak View Group and the City of Seattle to design this 740,000-square-foot arena with three goals: to create the most sustainable arena in the world, to responsibly revitalize a historic landmark and to cultivate the ultimate fan experience. As the region's largest indoor venue, Climate Pledge Arena will host the NHL's newest team, the Seattle Kraken, the WNBA's Seattle Storm, and numerous concerts and other events.

Climate Pledge Arena's name stems from Amazon's naming-rights partnership, which enlists the facility in The Climate Pledge, a global initiative that commits signatories to net zero carbon across their businesses by 2040. Populous collaborated with the owners, a public-private partnership between Oak View Group, Seattle Kraken Hockey and Seattle Center, as well as project manager CAA ICON and construction partner MA

Mortenson to bring the sustainable design and historic vision to life. As a result, Climate Pledge Arena is poised to become the world's first International Living Future Institute-certified net zero carbon arena.

The Populous design enables Climate Pledge Arena to employ numerous sustainable practices and operations. The arena relies solely on renewable energy sources — including on-site solar energy designed on the atrium roof — to power the facility. Populous contributed to a fully-integrated transportation plan that subsidizes mass transit for fans. The site design provides space for electric vehicle charging stations and bike valet services, while also building strong connections with the monorail. Populous designed the facility to support water conservation systems — such as harvesting rainwater from the roof to turn it into the greenest ice in the NHL — and zero waste initiatives. These sustainable design strategies set a new bar for the global sports and events industry.

“Creating the world's best live entertainment building while celebrating an important and cherished landmark is what sets Climate Pledge Arena apart,” said Populous senior principal and architect Chris Carver. “We are proud to have created an industry-leading design that fits with the vision of our partners at Oak View Group and the City of Seattle to be a benchmark for venues to come.”

Historic Revitalization of Original Paul Thiry Design

This multifunctional venue in the heart of Seattle Center harkens back to its original facility, which was built for the 1962 World's Fair. The design was centered around revitalizing the landmark arena, and honoring its original design intent while activating and enhancing a pedestrian-focused plan. The former arena was a flat-floor, column-free pavilion with an entirely glass façade allowing visitors to see inside. Populous' design preserves many of these character-defining features and draws from the firm's vast experience of creating meaningful spaces for people to gather.

In addition to the challenge of designing a carbon neutral arena, Populous was challenged to maintain the preservation of the 59-year-old historic roof designed by Paul Thiry, the father of architectural modernism in the Pacific Northwest. The new construction required the 44-million-pound roof to be suspended above the site while the new arena was built underneath. To increase the size of the arena to 740,000 square feet — approximately twice the size of the former venue — and give the venue 360-degree pedestrian access, it was necessary to dig 16 feet deeper than the previous 1995 renovation that bottomed out at 38 feet below ground level, and significantly expand the below-grade building footprint in all directions. In addition, a historic glass curtain wall was preserved in the new arena's north end, presenting visitors with a view to the plaza.

“Populous has designed the most beautiful arena in the world, and the Kraken are proud to call it home,” said Tod Leiweke, CEO of the Seattle Kraken. “We're excited for fans to walk into Climate Pledge Arena on game day and be blown away by its beauty and have a first-class experience while cheering on their favorite players.”

The Plaza: All-Seasons Open Space in the Emerald City

Populous designed an expansive and universally accessible outdoor plaza to surround the arena, providing year-round open and green space within the Seattle Center campus. With 360 degrees of landscaped plazas surrounding the venue, effectively placing the arena within a picturesque, landscaped park — a first for an urban professional arena in the United States — Climate Pledge Arena is more accessible to all, links local neighborhoods, and restores the original relationship between surrounding plazas and the building. Populous collaborated with a diverse group of Pacific Northwest artists to coordinate eight unique public art installations for the plazas, establishing playful touchpoints for community engagement year-round. Populous' design also preserves the site's longest-living tenants: 67 London Plane trees that hold landmark

status from the 1962 World's Fair. These trees maintain a massive canopy on the site, aid in carbon capture and connect surrounding neighborhoods with the expansive Seattle Center campus.

The World's First Dual Suspended Scoreboards

Unlike any other arena video display, Populous designed the industry's first dual suspended arena scoreboards — a signature element of Climate Pledge Arena. Behind this new design lies a thorough analysis of on-ice and on-court action for hockey and basketball, spectator and athlete sightlines, and flexibility for shows and concerts. The result is a pair of distinctly shaped video displays that place digital content in an ideal location for spectators, improving the atmosphere and connection between fans on opposite sides of the seating bowl. Setting this forward-thinking design innovation under the historic roof honors the legacy of the building, which was to showcase futuristic ideas and exhibits as part of the "World of Tomorrow" theme of the 1962 World's Fair.

"The dual scoreboards are one of the many examples of innovation in fan experience incorporated into Climate Pledge Arena," said Populous principal Geoff Cheong. "Our partners at Oak View Group wanted a world-class, iconic experience, and these unique displays will undoubtedly contribute to that. These are unexpected, incredibly dynamic and will allow fans to consume digital content in an entirely new way. They are the centerpieces to an entertainment experience unlike any other."

Brand Activation and Wayfinding

Populous worked with more than 30 corporate partners to create uniquely branded spaces throughout Climate Pledge Arena. With Amazon's naming rights to the arena, the venue features grab-and-go and self-checkout markets, and four innovative food and beverage environments featuring Amazon's 'Just Walk Out' technology. These spaces offer graphics and branding opportunities customized to specific partners. The clubs and premium spaces are also branded, from the event-level Verizon Lounge that features artwork and lighting to reflect the network's coverage, to the entire PitchBook level of the arena, which includes original art as well as data-inspired graphics to communicate PitchBook's brand identity.

Each level of Climate Pledge Arena has a different color of wayfinding signage, which harkens to natural features as the levels go deeper underground — from the light blue on the top level to mimic the atmosphere, to a muted orange to reflect the earth on the main concourse level, to a dark gray for the lower level.

The arena boasts 28,175 square feet of digital signage, the most in the world for a sports and entertainment venue. The immersive LED experience throughout the user journey displays wayfinding, events and partner promotion, and atmospheric imagery that is customizable for each event. The Climate Pledge brand is further strengthened through a 200-foot living wall with live plants and LED activations on the main concourse, creating social media-friendly content opportunities. Egress tunnels and other LED displays throughout the arena blur the lines between the structure and the outdoors with graphic imagery.

About Populous

Populous is a global architectural design firm that creates the spaces where people love to be together, like the Olympics, World Cups and Super Bowls. Our more than 3,000 projects live at the intersection of sports, entertainment, arts and culture to amplify emotional connection and belonging. Since 1983, the firm has been connecting people and place through services such as architecture, interior design, event planning, brand activation, wayfinding, urban planning, aviation design and sustainable design consulting. Populous has offices on four continents and regional centers in Kansas City, London and Brisbane. Learn more at www.populous.com.