

# OTHELLO



## Light Rail Station Area Planning

For the past four years, many citizens have been working together to develop neighborhood plans and define a vision for our community. The goal of **station area planning** is to integrate the light rail stations with the work already done in neighborhood planning. Station area planning will produce a set of actions that may include increased choices for housing, support for existing businesses, new business development, parking management strategies, and pedestrian and public space improvements. The purpose of station area planning is **NOT** to create another "plan," but to use the light rail investment as a catalyst to achieve community goals. Generally, a station area is defined by the walking distance (approximately one-quarter mile) around each light rail station.

In March 1999, station area planning held a kick-off event for Southeast Seattle. Following the kick-off, **advisory committees** of community stakeholders and interested individuals were assembled for each station area. These volunteer groups continue to meet throughout the summer, providing feedback to Sound Transit engineers on details concerning station area locations and working with City staff to prioritize station area planning efforts.

## Key Considerations

### COMMUNITY VISION AND ISSUES: What we heard from the community

- Create mixed-use neighborhood center at MLK and Othello with potential uses including day care, bakery, restaurant, bookstore, coffee shop, police storefront, thrift store, motel (long-term).
- Limit new development to a maximum of 3 stories.
- Provide bike and walking connections along Othello Street to link Othello Park, the light rail station, and Van Asselt.
- Provide streetscape improvements including street furniture, waste baskets, pedestrian lighting, public art, and an informational kiosk.
- Major concern: station design and station area development designed for safety.
- Potential shared parking opportunities. Potential public outdoor market.
- Support and assistance to impacted property owners along east block of MLK.
- New elderly housing at the west end of Myrtle St requires an important connection east to the station which will need pedestrian improvements.



### THE STATION: What we know from Sound Transit

- Sound Transit's baseline configuration is a side platform station in the center of MLK. The station is centered between S. Othello St. and S. Myrtle St. The light rail construction impact occur on the east side of MLK while preserving property along the west side of MLK.

## Design and Development Work Session

In order to take the ideas that came out of the neighborhood plans and the advisory committees to the next level, the City held an intensive two-week **design and development work session** for Southeast Seattle from July 19 to July 30, 1999. The goal of the design and development work was to develop concepts and options for the station areas that were grounded in economic reality and which supported existing neighborhood plan recommendations. The work sessions began with a community forum and included community interviews to gather additional public comments. Some of the key considerations for the Othello station are listed below on this poster.

The design teams of City staff, Sound Transit staff, and consultants then used this information to develop options for the station areas and examine the tradeoffs of different recommendations. The design and development work session results were presented to the community in a report-out event on August 14, 1999.



### DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL: What we learned about the market

- More near-term development potential than at other stations.
- Existing viable business district.
- Success and planned expansion of King Plaza.
- Large key parcels of land in single ownership which could facilitate redevelopment.
- Market support for a moderate level of new development for additional community and neighborhood-serving retail (including ethnic retailers) and small offices.
- Any new development in the short-term is not likely to be greater than 3 stories.
- Near-term demand for additional multi-family housing units in the area is likely to be satisfied by New Holly project. New residents will strengthen the area's retail base.
- Challenges:
  - Timely support for business/land owners seeking to redevelop and remain in the area.
  - Identifying resources (both technical and financial) to assist business/land owners seeking to redevelop and remain in the area.
  - Coordinating existing and planned development to meet transit-oriented development and relocation objectives.
  - Communicating clear acquisition/development timelines to property, business owners.
  - Suitable zoning to permit and encourage desired development.

