

Edmunds

The Edmunds station area affords opportunities for neighborhood-scale transit-oriented development. Infill residential development, combined with some ground-floor mixed use, would be consistent with the character of the neighborhood and would provide housing opportunities near the light rail station. Mixed use and pedestrian development can also help create the opportunities for walking and transit use, complementing the existing commercial uses in the area.

SOUND TRANSIT ALIGNMENT AND STATION OPTIONS

There are five possible Columbia City station locations under review. Depending on the alignment selected, one or two of these stations will be built. One of these may be located near South Edmunds Street and MLK Way South (the “Edmunds” station).

EXISTING STATION AREA CONDITIONS

LAND USE AND HOUSING

Single-family uses cover the largest amount of land in the station area, followed by open space and schools. Retail uses cover relatively little land, limited to a few small parcels at the intersection of South Alaska Street and MLK Jr. Way South. Residential areas are located throughout the station area, and include the Rainier Vista garden community in the northern portion of the station area. Genesee Park—which is within walking distance—provides the largest contiguous open space in the area.



View looking north along Martin Luther King, Jr. Way at Edmunds Street.

The Edmunds station area is characterized by very low residential density. While average net residential density for the station area is 5.1 units per acre, single- and multi-family areas have densities of 9 to 11 units per acre.

TRANSPORTATION

The major transportation corridor in the Edmunds station area is MLK, Jr. Way South, which provides a link to Downtown Seattle, Renton, and other neighborhoods in the Rainier Valley. Major arterial streets in the station area are generally not oriented to pedestrians, although the compact street grid in the station area neighborhoods provides opportunities for walking.

- *Auto Access to Adjacent Neighborhoods.* MLK Jr. Way is the principal automobile route in the area, with Mountain View Drive and 30th Avenue South providing north-south connections. The hillside to the west of the station area prevents effective access from MLK, Jr. Way westward. South Alaska Street and South Dawson Street crosses MLK, Jr. Way, allowing through traffic to cross the neighborhood.

Edmunds Station Area – Existing Conditions, 1997¹	
Population	1,399
Employment	231
Median Household Income (1996)	\$ 44,585
<i>Residential Land Use</i>	
Total Dwelling Units	519
Density ²	
Single-family Zones	5.5
Multi-family Zones	4.9
<i>Commercial Land Use</i>	
Total Floor Area (sq. ft.)	307,820
Retail/Service	28,978
Office	5,577
Floor Area Ratio (FAR) ³	0.07
¹ Within a ¼-mile radius of station location.	
² Dwelling units per net acre in specified residential zones. Residential units in non-residential and downtown zones are excluded.	
³ Ratio of non-residential space per net acre of commercial and industrial land use.	

- *Pedestrian Circulation.* MLK Jr. Way is not particularly oriented to pedestrian travel and does not permit convenient or comfortable access from adjacent neighborhoods. Due to the hillside to the west and unsafe pedestrian conditions, Beacon Hill residents cannot access the Edmunds station area easily. Moreover, the Edmunds station area has no real

destination, since it has few commercial or institutional uses.

Community Issues

The *Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee Draft Interim Planning Report* includes a Transportation Improvement Program calling for pedestrian safety and access, bicycle safety and circulation, traffic-calming, an evaluation of commercial parking, and coordination with King County METRO to enhance local transit service and light rail connections.

The community wishes to design light rail stations to facilitate good connections between the light rail station and the neighborhood core. The neighborhood conducted a community forum on this issue in summer 1998.

1995 Metro Six-Year Plan

MLK Way South is designated a major consolidation corridor, meaning that bus service along the corridor will be consolidated to improve efficiency. Savings from the efficiency improvements will be reinvested in the subareas where the savings are generated. Meanwhile, bus frequencies along the Rainier Beach-Downtown core connection will be increased. The connection uses Rainier Avenue South – roughly parallel to MLK, one half-mile to the east – as a primary corridor.

These strategies are consistent with the plan's overall objective to improve Metro's service structure. Routes are consolidated, bus frequencies are increased along core routes, and transit hubs of various size provide quick, easy transfers.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE NETWORK

MLK, Jr. Way South is the major arterial in the Edmunds station area. Pedestrian connections to Beacon Hill are inadequate, as streets do not connect through. Pedestrian stairs located at select street-ends would help improve access to the station area.

URBAN DESIGN FEATURES

The Edmunds station site is located along MLK, Jr. Way South between the Beacon Hill neighborhood and the hill separating the station area from Lake Washington. Zion Preparatory and Columbia School are located in residential portions of the station area. Columbia City, the Rainier Community Center, and Rainier Playfield are within walking distance of the station site.

Visual Landmarks

The most prominent visual landmark in the Edmunds station area is the Rainier Vista public housing site in the northern portion of the station area. This subsidized housing is characterized by its post-World War II-era wood construction.

Views

There are no significant scenic views in or from the Edmunds station area.

RECENT MARKET TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

MARKET CONDITIONS

The Edmunds station area has relatively low apartment rents and residential vacancy rates of approximately 6%, suggesting that the residential housing market currently has low-rent housing available. However, recent trends in land prices for multi-family housing suggest that housing prices and rents are increasing. While the area may be relatively affordable for housing, its affordability is attracting new residents and, therefore, increasing the value of properties.

There has been little commercial development overall in the station area, although there is an increasing trend in commercial land prices. This suggests that commercial properties may be able to support additional development in the near future.

RECENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The Rainier Vista garden community is being considered for redevelopment in the near future. That project would significantly change the character of the Edmunds station area with new architecture, open space, and building frontages along MLK, Jr. Way South.

Edmunds Station Area – Market Conditions¹	
Rents and Vacancy Rates	
Apartment Rents (per sq. ft.)	\$ 0.71
Apartment Vacancy Rate	6.0%
Office Rents (per sq. ft.)	N/A
Office Vacancy Rate	N/A
Trends in Land Prices²	
Commercial Lots	8.2%
Single Family Lots	7.2%
Multi-family Lots	4.5%
Active Permit Applications	
Housing Units	0
Commercial Space (sq. ft.)	0
¹ Within a ¼-mile radius of station location.	
² 1985-95 average annual increase, based on sales prices recorded by King County Assessor and reported by zone category.	

RELATIVE STRENGTH OF DEVELOPMENT MARKETS IN THE EDMUNDS STATION AREA

Retail development has market potential in the Edmunds station area. Parcels along MLK Jr. Way South have excellent accessibility and visibility, two key elements for retail development. The station area currently has few established retail uses suggesting that additional retail can be supported.

Housing also has development potential in the Edmunds station area, as the area is already predominantly residential. Opportunity sites can be developed for additional multi-family housing, and accessory dwelling units can be added to single-family structures (which cover more than 30 acres of the station area).

Edmunds Station Area – Relative Market Strength ¹	
	Ranking (5 high, 1 low)
Housing	2
Retail	2
Office	1
¹ Indicates relative strength of market type of station area, compared to other potential station areas. Ranking is based on rents, employment levels, vacancy rates, land values, recent development activity, stakeholder interviews, field observations, and other information.	

EXISTING PLANS AND ZONING

PLANNING CONTEXT

The eastern portion of the Edmunds station area is located within the Columbia City Residential Urban Village. The station would be located on MLK Way South near two schools. The station area includes the southern tip of the Rainier Vista Garden Community and single-family residential areas.

ZONING

Zoning in the Edmunds station area allows for predominantly low-density single-family residential development. Higher intensity uses are clustered near the intersection of MLK Jr. Way South and South Hudson Street, where zoning allows for higher densities along MLK and lower-density single-family residential uses farther away. Commercial zones (C1) allow for auto-oriented retail and commercial uses along MLK Jr. Way. Low-rise multi-family residential zones are situated behind the commercial uses fronting on MLK Jr. Way, and additional low-rise residential zones are located in select spots along MLK Jr. Way. Single-family resi-

dential zones are located around this cluster of commercial and multi-family residential uses.

Southeast Seattle Reinvestment Area (SESRA)

Commercial areas abutting MLK Way South are included in the SESRA Overlay District, the intent of which is to promote community revitalization and investment, business activity, and employment opportunities for Southeast Seattle residents. SESRA’s neighborhood-oriented and pedestrian-oriented regulations can serve as the basis for transit-supportive policies. SESRA regulations encompass two types of regulations:

- *Prohibited Uses.* SESRA prohibits uses incompatible with reinvestment goals, such as outdoor storage, adult movie theaters, work release centers, and construction services.
- *Rezoning Criteria.* SESRA establishes criteria for the rezoning of base zones. A rezoning must reinforce existing commercial nodes and promote business retention, or it must enhance the business environment (increased pedestrian activity; more retail, entertainment, and personal services; infill development; more recreational opportunities).

Edmunds Station Area – Potential Development Under Current Zoning Regulations¹		
	<i>Commercial (sq. ft)</i>	<i>Residential (units)</i>
Existing Development	307,820	519
Additional Potential Development under Current Zoning Regulations ²	259,259	590
TOTAL	567,079	1,109
¹ Within a ¼-mile radius of station location.		
² Potential development capacity is based on City of Seattle GIS database and Scenario 2 in the “Zoned Development Capacity” background paper.		

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN ISSUES

The *Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee Draft Interim Planning Report* recommends several policies for improving the character of the neighborhood. Suggested policies include:

- Ensuring that light rail serves as a catalyst for transit-oriented development within the station area.
- Cleaning up the neighborhood and improve the neighborhood image.
- Instituting an anti-graffiti and litter reduction campaign to deter vandalism.

High priority concerns cited at the summer open house include:

- Adopting design guidelines to reinforce the positive elements that distinguish each of the business districts
- Adopting design guidelines to promote a good pedestrian environment;

- Eliminating/reducing litter and weeds;
- Improving enforcement of abandoned vehicles; and
- Incorporating public art in public/community facilities.

STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

The neighborhood plan that includes the Edmunds station area acknowledges Sound Transit's light rail planning effort. At a neighborhood planning workshop during the summer of 1998, the planning group identified key parameters to be met by any selected light rail station. Issues include historic preservation, pedestrian linkages, neighborhood image, local transit access, and protection of existing residential and commercial uses. Specific comments include:

- *Pedestrian Network.* "Create a pleasant pedestrian mall and business park at Edmunds Street, connecting MLK Jr. Way and Rainier Avenue and linking the station to Columbia City historic district."
- *Density and Mixed Use.* "A good mix of housing and businesses is needed to make the LINK system work in the area. You cannot expect business growth without density." "A mix of housing, retail, and offices is needed near the Rainier Valley station."
- *Community Facilities.* "We need street improvements, parks, and recreation areas to beautify the area, as well as more open space, curbs, sidewalks, and gutters."
- *Design Guidelines.* As identified at the summer 1998 open house, design guidelines would help to reinforce positive elements that distinguish each of the business districts and to promote a good pedestrian environment.

STATION AREA DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITY SITES

The Edmunds station area has 105 parcels comprising nearly 16 acres of land available for development. These opportunity sites represent vacant and underutilized parcels.

Zoning for Opportunity Sites

The largest number of opportunity sites are located in the multi-family residential areas located predominantly east of Martin Luther King Jr. Way South. The L-1, L-2, and L-3 zones together contain more than half of all the parcels (58 out of 105) and more than 40 percent of all the acres (6.73 out of 15.91 acres) identified as opportunity sites.

Additional sites are found in the CI commercial zones along MLK (11 parcels, approximately 2 acres), and a large 1.63-acre site on South Edmunds Street in the eastern half of the station area is zoned as NC3-65. These sites provide opportunities for new retail development. and in the SF 5000 single-family residential zones (32 parcels, 5.37 acres) located along the outer

edges of the quarter-mile station area.

DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

The existing land around the Edmunds station site is almost completely built out. The small number of acres of opportunity sites could potentially constrain development. In addition, the small size of parcels (ranging between 0.10 and 0.19 acres) may constrain development if the local market cannot support small-scale infill development.

Edmunds Station Area – Opportunity Sites by Zoning Designation¹		
	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>Acreage²</i>
L-3	18	1.70
SF 5000	32	5.37
L-1	15	1.45
NC3-65	1	1.63
NC1-40	3	0.21
L-2	25	3.58
C1-40	11	1.97
TOTAL	105	15.91
¹ Within a ¼-mile radius of the station location.		
² Based on City of Seattle GIS database.		

Existing zoning may constrain the potential for transit-supportive development in the Edmunds station area. Single-family residential zones have low density development patterns and do not permit mixed use development. Low-rise multi-family residential allows denser development, but does not allow the mixed use development that would promote pedestrian access to the station. While NC3 zones allow mixed use development, they also permit a wide variety of commercial and auto-oriented uses. New commercial development is likely to be consistent with low-density commercial uses and parking in the area. Overall, current zoning is likely to encourage and maintain the existing separation of low-density uses in the neighborhood. Potential development will not be likely to create improved conditions for pedestrian activity in the Edmunds station area.

STATION AREA FORECASTS

Three different forecasts were developed for the new population, employment, dwelling units, and commercial floor area that will be added to the station area by 2020:

1. “Without light rail transit;”
2. “With light rail transit, but without supportive land use policies;” and
3. “With both light rail transit *and* supportive land use policies.”

POPULATION AND HOUSING

An average of the PSRC Trends and *Comprehensive Plan* Extrapolation projects an additional 160 dwelling units in the Edmunds station area. While several developers have identified this area as one with potential, there are currently no projects in the permit pipeline. Perceptions of crime have limited the demand for single- and multi-family housing. As housing costs rise in other parts of the city, there may be additional demand, and baseline forecasts may increase. At the northern edge of the station area, the Rainer Vista public housing project is slated for future redevelopment, which could boost the projected number of new housing units.

EMPLOYMENT AND COMMERCIAL FLOOR AREA

An average of the PSRC and *Comprehensive Plan* Extrapolation forecasts projects an additional 60,000 square feet of commercial floor space. Most of this space will tend to be auto-oriented retail uses that take advantage of high traffic volumes on Martin Luther King Way.

LAND USE IMPACTS OF LIGHT RAIL

The land use impacts of “rail without supportive policies” will likely be a modest increase in housing within the Edmunds station area. Since the station area is generally auto-oriented, the development of new housing is likely to be dispersed throughout the station area.

LAND USE IMPACTS OF LIGHT RAIL WITH SUPPORTIVE POLICIES

The potential development strategies for the Edmunds station area focus on providing incentives in the zoning code for mixed-use transit-oriented development, improved pedestrian linkages, and direct economic and financial assistance to support housing and mixed uses. Targeted development strategies could boost the number of new dwelling units by 120 units and the new commercial floor area by approximately 27,000 square feet.

Edmunds Station Area – Market Forecasts, 1997-2020¹				
	<u>1997</u>	<u>1997-2020 Growth</u>		
		<i>Without LRT</i>	<i>With LRT Only</i>	<i>LRT and Supportive Policies</i>
Population	1399	240	255	375
Dwelling Units	519	160	170	250
Employment	231	200	210	300
Commercial Floor Area ²	307	60	63	90

¹ Within a ¼-mile radius of the station location.

² Square footage (in thousands); includes commercial, industrial and institutional space, but excludes Sound Transit facilities and public facilities.

POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The overall approach for the Edmunds station is to ensure that new development supports transit use and pedestrian activity. The area is not seen as being able to accommodate high-density commercial or residential development, primarily because the local real estate market is not likely to be able to support such intensive development. Existing commercial and residential structures, as well as infill development, can be regulated to optimize transit and pedestrian use. The overall development strategy for the Edmunds station area can be summarized as follows:

- *Pedestrian Environment.* The station area can be made more oriented to pedestrians. Re-zoning opportunity sites to NC-3 would encourage small-scale commercial development with better pedestrian connections and facilities. Implementation of a POZ could create a pedestrian environment and could limit new auto-oriented uses to provide greater opportunities for pedestrian-oriented development. Links to adjacent communities can be improved.
- *Parking Management.* Implementation of an RPZ in residential areas can help control the supply of parking and encourage the use of alternative modes of travel, particularly light rail. In conjunction with improved transit service, parking management can help change travel patterns to and from the neighborhood in the long run.
- *Affordable Housing.* Provision of affordable housing in the Edmunds station area can provide opportunities for living in proximity to transit, particularly for lower income households that are less likely to own cars. Work with SEED is possible.

The table on the next page shows potential high-priority and recommended actions for the Edmunds station area.

Potential Development Strategies: Edmunds (30)

Strategy	Potential Action	Comments
Land Use Tools	●	Establish limitations on auto-oriented uses on CI-40 opportunity sites south of station.
Pedestrian Network	●	Establish POZ south of Ferdinand for CI-40 sites and improve linkages to adjacent neighborhoods and to Columbia City historic area, especially pedestrian improvements on Edmunds between MLK and Rainier Avenue.
Parking Management	○	Establish residential parking zones, if needed in adjacent neighborhoods.
Economics/Financial Assistance	✓	Support SEED to help finance affordable housing.
Regulatory Process	✓ / ?	SESRA in place. Provide expedited review/SEPA clearance for TOD projects.
Local Transit Service	○	Provide feeder bus service, especially to Beacon Hill destinations.
Development Partnerships	●	Further planning needed.
Pilot Projects	?	Further planning needed. Explore co-location of community and education facilities and redevelopment of publicly-held land.

✓ = Supportive Policy/Program in Place

● = High Priority Action

○ = Recommended Action

? = Further Study Required

TOD = Transit-Oriented Development

POZ = Pedestrian Overlay Zone

RPZ = Residential Parking Zone

Graham

The Graham station area affords opportunities for neighborhood-scale, transit-oriented development. Infill residential development, combined with some ground-floor mixed use would be in keeping with the character of the neighborhood and would provide housing opportunities near the station. Mixed use and pedestrian development can also help create the opportunities for walking and transit use, complementing the existing commercial uses in the area.

SOUND TRANSIT ALIGNMENT AND STATION OPTIONS

All alignments call for a potential station near South Graham Street (at grade or below) and a station at grade near Othello Street. The potential site for the Graham station would be located near South Graham Street at MLK Way.

EXISTING STATION AREA CONDITIONS

LAND USE AND HOUSING

Single-family uses cover the largest amount of land in the Graham station area, followed by vacant parcels and schools. The large number of vacant parcels (71) – suggest that the neighborhood has not experienced much investment in recent years.



Typical view of auto-oriented commercial area at Martin Luther King, Jr. Way and Graham Street.

The single-family uses and vacant parcels together create a very low-density environment, with the density of single-family residential neighborhoods in the range of 4.3 units per acre. Residential densities in multi-family residential areas, however, reach as high as 12 units per acre, representing areas of more intensive development in an otherwise low density area.

TRANSPORTATION

The major arterial streets serving the Graham station are Graham Street (east-west direction) and MLK Jr. Way South (north-south direction). Specific transportation characteristics of the area include:

- *Auto Access to Adjacent Neighborhoods.* MLK Jr. Way and Rainier Avenue South are the principal automobile routes in the area. Graham Street provides a complementary east-west connection to Beacon Hill and Interstate 5 to the west.

Graham Station Area – Existing Conditions, 1997¹	
Population	1,396
Employment	627
Median Household Income (1996)	\$ 21,935
<i>Residential Land Use</i>	
Total Dwelling Units	485
Density ²	
Single-family Zones	3.7
Multi-family Zones	12.1
<i>Commercial Land Use</i>	
Total Floor Area (sq. ft.)	623,663
Retail/Service	103,353
Office	48,818
Floor Area Ratio (FAR) ³	0.13
¹ Within a ¼-mile radius of station location.	
² Dwelling units per net acre in specified residential zones. Residential units in non-residential and downtown zones are excluded.	
³ Ratio of non-residential space per net acre of commercial and industrial land use.	

- *Pedestrian Circulation.* MLK Jr. Way is not particularly friendly to pedestrians and does not permit convenient or comfortable access from adjacent neighborhoods. The compact street grid east of the station allows for pedestrian movement throughout the residential neighborhood.

Community Issues

The *MLK @ Holly Street Neighborhood Plan* includes provisions for pedestrian and bicycle circulation throughout the neighborhood. Specific issues of concern include bicycle parking areas for development in the station area and bicycle lanes along MLK Jr. Way to help promote bicycle access to the station.

1995 Metro Six-Year Plan

MLK Way South is designated a major consolidation corridor, meaning that bus service along the corridor will be consolidated to improve efficiency. Savings from the efficiency improvements will be reinvested in the subareas where the savings are generated. Meanwhile, bus frequencies along the Rainier Beach-Downtown core connection will be increased. The connection uses Rainier Avenue South – roughly parallel to MLK, about one mile east – as a primary corridor.

These strategies are consistent with the Plan’s overall objective to improve Metro’s service structure. Routes are consolidated, bus frequencies are increased along core routes, and transit hubs of various size provide quick, easy transfers.

URBAN DESIGN FEATURES

This area is a residential neighborhood and to the southwest (toward Beacon Hill) is the Holly Park Garden Community, which is being redeveloped by the Seattle Housing Authority. See Othello Station Area Profile. The Sharples School is a destination and major land use in the station area.

Typical uses in the area include single-family, school, multi-family, neighborhood commercial, and commercial development. Zoning changes being considered for the neighborhood include:

- developing a Residential Parking Zone program;
- refining NC zone development standards to give incentives for transit-oriented development; and
- establishing a pedestrian overlay zone;

The *MLK @ Holly Street Neighborhood Plan* includes proposals to:

- develop a landscaped median along MLK Way South;
- develop landscaped gateways at various places in the neighborhood;
- include a community plaza and kiosk as part of the station; and
- develop pedestrian and bike path connections between the station and the neighborhood.

Visual Landmarks

The Sharples School and the King Way apartment complex are visual landmarks in the station area.

Views

There are no significant views in or from the Graham station area.

RECENT MARKET TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

MARKET CONDITIONS

Similar to other station areas in the Rainier Valley, housing vacancies in the Graham station area are approximately 6%, and apartment rents are low compared to other parts of Seattle. However, land prices for multi-family residential uses have been increasing more quickly than in the I-90, McClellan or Columbia City station areas.

Although there is little evidence of commercial development in the Graham station area, commercial land prices are increasing at nearly 9%. This suggests the new development may be possible in the near future.

Graham Station Area – Market Conditions¹	
Rents and Vacancy Rates	
Apartment Rents (sq. ft.)	\$ 0.71
Apartment Vacancy Rate	6.0%
Office Rents (sq. ft.)	N/A
Office Vacancy Rate	N/A
Trends in Land Prices²	
Commercial Lots	8.9%
Single Family Lots	7.5%
Multi-family Lots	7.5%
Active Permit Applications	
Housing Units	0
Commercial Space (sq. ft.)	0
¹ Within a ¼-mile radius of station location.	
² 1985-95 average annual increase, based on sales prices recorded by King County Assessor and reported by zone category.	

RECENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

In the northwest portion of the station area, Homesight is proposing the Noji Gardens project, which will provide up to 100 units of new affordable homes. The project will combine single-family, triplex, and fourplex townhomes and a 27-unit condominium building.

RELATIVE STRENGTH OF DEVELOPMENT MARKETS IN THE GRAHAM STATION AREA

Housing is slated as having the greater market potential for the Graham station site and would complement the existing single-family and multi-family housing in the area. Single-family areas can achieve greater density through accessory dwelling units, and multi-family structures can potentially provide new housing opportunities in proximity to the station.

Graham Station Area – Relative Market Strength¹	
	Ranking (5 high, 1 low)
Housing	2
Retail	1
Office	1

¹ Indicates relative strength of market type of station area, compared to other potential station areas. Ranking is based on rents, employment levels, vacancy rates, land values, recent development activity, stakeholder interviews, field observations, and other information.

EXISTING PLANS AND ZONING

PLANNING CONTEXT

The Graham station area is located in the northern portion of the MLK at Holly Street Residential Urban Village. Auto-oriented commercial development is concentrated on parcels along MLK Way South at South Graham Street. West of MLK, the station area includes primarily single-family development and vacant parcels. The eastern portion of the station area includes a mix of single- and multi-family development and the Sharples School.

ZONING

Most land within the Graham station area is zoned SF5000 for single-family residential uses. Additional zones allow for higher density residential development in varying densities. MR allow mid-rise residential development, and L-3 allows for low-rise residential.

The pattern of land uses is structured around a neighborhood commercial node of auto-

oriented land uses, with higher density residential uses around the commercial node and less dense housing in the SF5000 zones farther away. Thus, more intensive land uses are concentrated around MLK and Graham.

Southeast Seattle Reinvestment Area (SESRA)

Commercial areas abutting MLK Way South are included in the SESRA Overlay District, the intent of which is to promote community revitalization and investment, business activity, and employment opportunities for Southeast Seattle residents. SESRA’s neighborhood-oriented and pedestrian-oriented regulations can serve as the basis for transit-supportive policies. SESRA regulations encompass two types of regulations:

- *Prohibited Uses.* SESRA prohibits uses incompatible with reinvestment goals, such as outdoor storage, adult movie theaters, work release centers, and construction services.
- *Rezoning Criteria.* SESRA establishes criteria for the rezoning of base zones. A rezoning must reinforce existing commercial nodes and promote business retention, or it must enhance the business environment (increased pedestrian activity; more retail, entertainment, and personal services; infill development; more recreational opportunities).

Graham Station Area – Potential Development Under Current Zoning Regulations¹		
	<i>Commercial (sq. ft.)</i>	<i>Residential (units)</i>
Existing Development	623,663	485
Additional Potential Development under Current Zoning Regulations ²	757,650	1,750
TOTAL	1,381,313	2,205

¹ Within a ¼-mile radius of station location.
² Potential development capacity is based on City of Seattle GIS database and Scenario 2 in the “Zoned Development Capacity” background paper.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN ISSUES

Key neighborhood concerns focus on connecting the neighborhood to the transit station through transit-friendly development. Specific issues include:

- promotion of transit-friendly uses by working with commercial and institutional property owners;
- connection between the station and south Seattle destinations;
- use of station design and location to ensure public safety;
- preservation of the community character; and
- creation of an activity center around the station, as a focus for development.

STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

The MLK @ Holly neighborhood values transportation to jobs and services, due to the presence of Holly Park and the high transit use of the residents. Residents, employees, and property and business owners attended two field trips and two light rail workshops in 1997 to plan for the Othello light rail station and surrounding area. Some of the neighborhood's ideas about how the Othello station area should be developed may also apply to the Graham station area:

- *Safety and Neighborhood Image.* “This is an area that people perceive to be a crime-ridden and economically depressed neighborhood, when the reality is the opposite. The neighborhood will benefit from people coming here and having their assumptions challenged.”
- *Mix of Uses.* “We need a good mix of housing, office, and retail for a true urban village concept around station.”
- *Pedestrian and Bicycle Network.* “The station should be a place that links bicycle and pedestrian activities with open space, a farmer’s market, and station and neighborhood destinations on Beacon Hill and the Rainier Valley.”

STATION AREA DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITY SITES

The Graham station area has 132 parcels and approximately 42 acres of land available for development. Aside from the Northgate station area, no other station area has such a large number of acres available as opportunity sites. In the Graham station area, opportunity sites include vacant parcels, as well as select parcels that can potentially be increased in density. Most opportunity site parcels are located in the single-family residential areas throughout the station area. HomeSight plans to develop up to 100 units in the northwest portion of the station area.

Zoning for Opportunity Sites

Most opportunity sites are found in SF5000 zone, which allow single-family residential uses. Low and mid-rise multi-family residential development can be built on opportunity sites in L3 and MR zones. In particular, parcels in the MR zones occupy, on average, more than two acres, allowing for large-scale development that could be supported in the local real estate market. Approximately 8 acres of opportunity sites are available in the commercial areas located along MLK Jr. Way South.

DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

Existing zoning may constrain the potential for transit-supportive development. The single-family residential zones have low-density development patterns and do not permit mixed use development. The L3 and MR multi-family residential zones allow greater density, promoting pedestrian activity near the station. Also, in MR zones, street-level retail uses are allowed

*Background Report for Light Rail Station Area Planning in Seattle:
Existing Conditions and Future Prospects for Transit-Oriented Development*

Graham Station Area – Opportunity Sites by Zoning Designation¹		
	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>Acreage²</i>
L-3	32	4.68
SF 5000	81	24.63
CI-65	6	3.81
MR	2	4.32
CI-40	11	4.11
TOTAL	132	41.55
¹ Within a ¼-mile radius of the station location.		
² Based on City of Seattle GIS database.		

when the site is within a block of a commercial zone. Commercial zones have some incentives for mixed use development (i.e., no density limit on residential uses in mixed use development and higher heights (+4') in 30' and 40' zones), but they also allow auto-oriented commercial uses. Overall, current zoning is likely to encourage and maintain the existing separation of low-density uses in the Graham station area.

STATION AREA FORECASTS

Three different forecasts were developed for the new population, employment, dwelling units, and commercial floor area that will be added to the station area by 2020:

1. “Without light rail transit;”
2. “With light rail transit, but without supportive land use policies;” and
3. “With both light rail transit *and* supportive land use policies.”

POPULATION AND HOUSING

The PSRC Trends and *Comprehensive Plan* Extrapolation forecasts are relatively close for the Graham station area, projecting 274 and 217 new housing units, respectively. Averaging the two forecasts results in an additional 250 housing units and 375 people in the station area by 2020.

EMPLOYMENT AND COMMERCIAL FLOOR AREA

The PSRC and *Comprehensive Plan* Extrapolation forecasts for commercial space are also very close. An average of the two forecasts projects additional commercial space totaling 150,000 square feet. Most of this space will tend to be auto-oriented retail uses that take advantage of high traffic volumes on MLK Way South.

LAND USE IMPACTS OF LIGHT RAIL

The land use impacts of “rail without supportive policies” will likely be a modest increase in housing in the station area. Because of the heavy amounts of auto traffic on MLK Way South, any new housing development would likely be dispersed within the station area, rather than concentrated around the station. The possible reconfiguration of MLK Way to fewer lanes with surface light rail may make the area around the station more attractive for new development.

LAND USE IMPACTS OF LIGHT RAIL WITH SUPPORTIVE POLICIES

The proposed development strategies for the Graham station area focus on providing incentives in the zoning code for in-fill residential and mixed used development on opportunity sites along Martin Luther King Jr., Way. There is also a need for improved pedestrian linkages and direct economic/financial assistance, such as tax exemptions to support housing and mixed use development. These targeted development strategies could boost the number of new dwelling units in the station area by 100 and new commercial floor area by 30,000 square feet.

Graham Station Area – Market Forecasts, 1997-2020¹				
	<u>1997</u>	<u>1997-2020 Growth</u>		
		<i>Without LRT</i>	<i>With LRT Only</i>	<i>LRT and Supportive Policies</i>
Population	1396	375	390	540
Dwelling Units	485	250	260	410
Employment	627	200	210	530
Commercial Floor Area ²	624	60	63	160

¹ Within a ¼-mile radius of the station location.

² Square footage (in thousands); includes commercial, industrial and institutional space, but excludes Sound Transit facilities and public facilities.

POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Potential development strategies in the Graham station area should focus on improving access to the station and integrating the station with the surrounding neighborhood. With financial assistance, the station area may have the potential to accommodate some higher density housing. Consistent with conditions in the Rainier Valley overall, the existing residential market has lower rents and higher vacancy rates, suggesting that public assistance is necessary to attract successful development projects. The overall development strategy for the Graham station area can be summarized as follows:

- *Mixed Use.* Additional provisions for mixed use development, particularly along MLK, Jr. Way, can help create a diversified station area environment and encourage pedestrian activity.
- *Infill Residential.* Provisions for infill residential development can help increase overall

*Background Report for Light Rail Station Area Planning in Seattle:
Existing Conditions and Future Prospects for Transit-Oriented Development*

station area densities; upzoning can also be used to encourage more compact development.

- *Pedestrian Environment.* The station area can be made more supportive of pedestrians. Implementation of a POZ could provide for pedestrian facilities and limit auto-oriented uses, helping to encourage walking to and from the station. Linkages to adjacent neighborhoods can also be enhanced.
- *Affordable Housing.* Provision of affordable housing in the station area can provide opportunities for living in proximity to transit, particularly for lower income households which are less likely to own cars. Work with a local Community Development Corporation (or SEED) is possible.
- *Parking Management.* Implementation of an RPZ in residential areas can help control the supply of parking and encourage the use of alternative modes of travel, including light rail. In conjunction with improved transit service, parking management can help change long-term travel patterns to and from the neighborhood.

The table on the next page shows high-priority and other recommended actions for the Graham station area. Because the local real estate market is currently strong, it may not be necessary to use economic assistance or pilot projects to stimulate development at this point in time.

Potential Development Strategies: Graham (27)

Strategy	Potential Action	Comments
Land Use Tools	○	<i>Provide incentives for infill residential, including upzoning, where appropriate and mixed-use development on opportunity parcels on MLK. Establish limitations on auto-oriented uses.</i>
Pedestrian Network	●	<i>Establish POZ and improve linkages to adjacent neighborhoods.</i>
Parking Management	○	<i>Establish RPZs, if needed, in adjacent neighborhoods.</i>
Economics/Financial Assistance	●	<i>Help CDCs to finance affordable housing and economic development projects.</i>
Regulatory Process	✓ / ?	<i>SESRA in place. Provide expedited review/SEPA clearance for TOD projects.</i>
Local Transit Service	○	<i>Provide feeder bus service and neighborhood circulators.</i>
Development Partnerships	?	<i>Support potential affordable housing projects.</i>
Pilot Projects	?	

- ✓ = Supportive Policy/Program in Place
- = High Priority Action
- = Recommended Action
- ? = Further Study Required
- TOD = Transit-Oriented Development
- POZ = Pedestrian Overlay Zone
- RPZ = Residential Parking Zone

