

# Envisioning Beacon Hill

## Link Light Rail in Seattle's neighborhoods



CITY OF SEATTLE CONCEPT-LEVEL STATION AREA PLANNING RECOMMENDATION	RESOLUTION # 30165	08.2000 
	EXHIBIT F	

The North Beacon Hill Neighborhood Plan describes "a well-defined urban village anchored by a new library and commercial/retail core accessed by efficient, pedestrian friendly public transportation." In support of this vision, the Beacon Hill light rail station will be located in the heart of the North Beacon Hill business district: a vibrant collection of local businesses in the center of a well-established residential neighborhood. The development of the light rail station and surrounding area will strengthen the existing business district, create opportunities for new homes, and add open space and public art to the neighborhood. The station entrances are envisioned as "signature buildings" that reflect Beacon Hill's community pride and cultural and ethnic diversity.

The underground light rail station will have entrances at Beacon Ave. S and S Lander St. and at 15th Ave. S and S Lander St. The Beacon Hill station will be partially built when Link light rail opens in 2006. The 15th Ave. S station entrance will be partially constructed in Phase 1 of the light rail

project. The Beacon Ave. S entrance will be completed in the future.

The neighborhood plan notes that key to creating "an active and livable urban village is an active, pedestrian-oriented streetscape... Beacon Avenue S should link the neighborhood together throughout the entire neighborhood planning area and should support the urban design and transportation goals for the urban village." As Beacon Hill's "Main Street," Beacon Ave. S must be designed to encourage people to walk, ride their bicycles, take the bus and light rail, and drive comfortably and safely. To achieve this vision, the community identified a "Less is More Solution: The Three



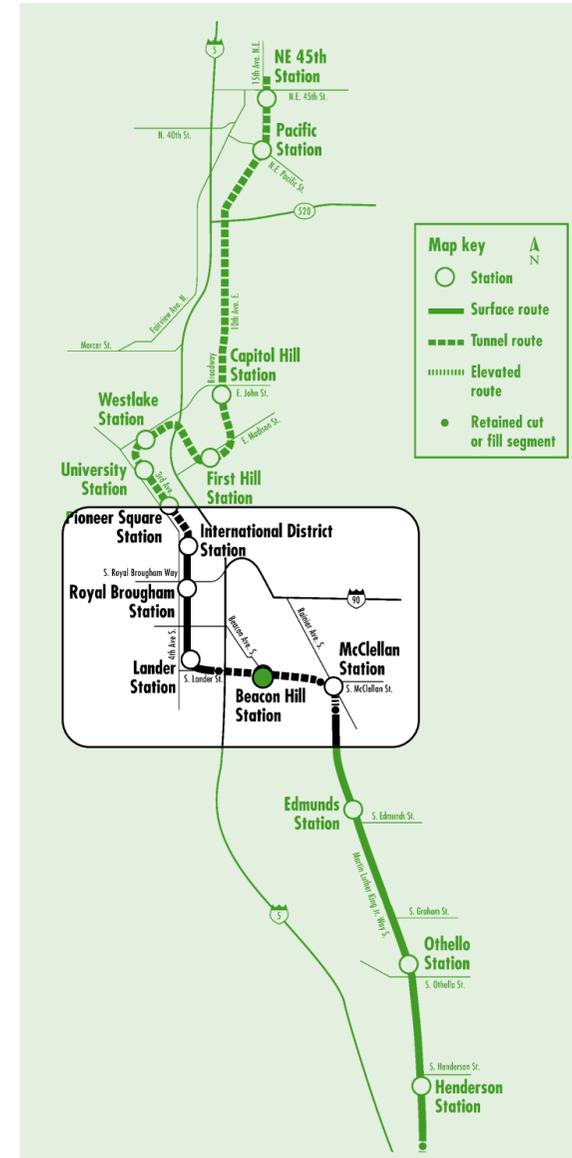
View of the Beacon Hill station area looking northeast towards El Centro de La Raza at the intersection of Beacon Ave. S and S Forest St.

Lane Solution" for Beacon Ave. S. A three-lane configuration (one lane in each direction with a center left-turn lane) will allow wider sidewalks, on-street parking, and bicycle lanes, as well as ample room for cars and buses. Lander St. is envisioned as an attractive street, with landscaping, textured paving, and well-marked crossings to create an inviting front door for the light rail station entrances.

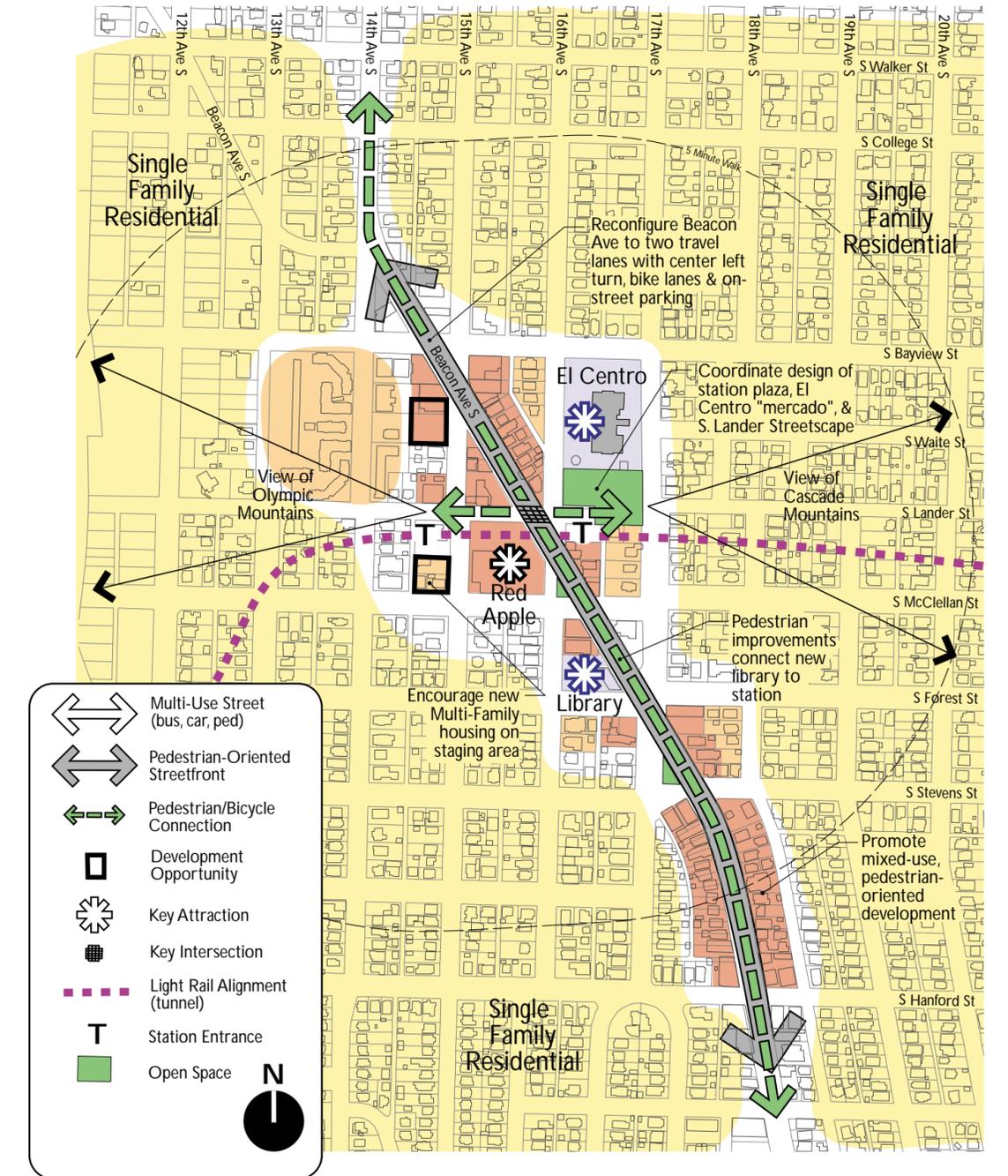
The light rail station entry plazas will be community gathering places and include open space, public art, and landscaping. The plazas and adjacent streets will provide opportunities for decorative lighting, seating, weather protection, and clear signage to create the "vital streets" referred to in the neighborhood plan. The station entrances will be highly visible from the street and be designed with public safety in mind, both above and below ground.

The route between the new branch library and the light rail station will be a well-marked, attractive route. Human services, including childcare, benefit greatly from being located near light rail stations. Existing childcare centers on Beacon Hill, as well as other locally-owned businesses, will need support to adjust to light rail construction. After the station is complete, childcare near the station will benefit families with working parents and provide a new market for childcare providers.

The community envisions new development with a diverse mix of housing types, including housing above shops, more compact development in the urban village core, and less compact development in the northern part of the neighborhood. Light rail will provide many residential, commercial, and employment opportunities for Beacon Hill and help to achieve the community's vision for a vibrant neighborhood center with excellent access to fast, reliable transit.



## Urban Design Concept for Beacon Hill



See other side for tools that help us achieve our vision.



# We can achieve our vision for Beacon Hill with these tools.

A number of different tools and actions can be used to achieve the vision for the station area. Many of these tools will be used in the majority of station areas. Only the tools and the actions specific to this station area are listed below.



## Land Use Code (Text and Zoning Changes)

**Objective:** Change land use regulations in station areas to encourage well-designed development that achieves the community's vision. The light rail station and surrounding housing and shops will encourage residents, employees, and shoppers to drive their cars less and walk, bike, and ride transit more. Land use regulations within the station area should encourage a variety of housing types and densities, as well as economic opportunities for area residents.

**Action:** Establish a Station Area Overlay to encourage a walkable community with retail shops at street level, compact housing that is affordable to people with a broad range of incomes, and parking lots located away from the street or underground. An overlay for Beacon Hill will exclude single family zoned areas and will have specific boundaries designated around the station. The overlay could include the rezones proposed in the Beacon Hill Neighborhood Plan for the urban village core that encourage compact mixed-use development. Other actions that would support the business district and encourage bus and light rail use include a pedestrian overlay zone along Beacon Ave. S, and development standards for new construction (including increased sidewalk width for new development and fulfilling open space requirements off site).



## Parking Strategies

**Objective:** Implement station area parking strategies to promote light rail and bus use, enable development that will benefit from and support transit, and protect neighborhood parking.

**Action:** Consider parking requirements appropriate to the neighborhood that promote light rail and bus use. Manage on and off street parking supplies more efficiently. Set policies that: prioritize parking for residents and shoppers, discourage commuter parking, allow shared parking among developments, separate parking costs from building rent costs, and implement transportation demand management. Consider sharing parking with institutions and among private developments.



## Design Guidance

**Objective:** Ensure that the station, surrounding development, and associated street and sidewalk improvements reinforce the architectural, social and aesthetic character of the neighborhood and support the community's vision and goals. Incorporate public art, gateways, and other design elements that communicate a clear sense of neighborhood identity. Include an easy to understand system of maps, markers, and signs to help visitors and residents find their way around the station area and to key attractions and bus stops.

**Action:** Develop design criteria with Sound Transit staff and the community to influence projects developed on Sound Transit properties. Coordinate with other City light rail permitting processes and/or guidelines for light rail. Develop a street design plan for Beacon Ave. S. Use public art, architectural design, and signs to mark station entrances, the station plazas, the new branch library, and El Centro's Mercado and Performance Hall. Design clear connections between the new branch library and the station entrances along Beacon Ave. S and 15th Ave. S.



## Public Facilities

**Objective:** Promote a vibrant community, with public buildings designed to reinforce neighborhood character and celebrate the diversity of the Beacon Hill neighborhood. Community gathering spaces, parks, playfields, and other public facilities should inspire positive social interactions between neighbors.

**Action:** The station entrances and the new library branch should be designed to accomplish this objective. Address the need for public restrooms in the vicinity of the light rail station.



## Street Reconfiguration/Operational Changes

**Objective:** Improve access to the light rail station for pedestrians, bikes, buses and shuttle vans for disabled riders. Ensure good circulation and traffic flow throughout the station area.

**Action:** Reconfigure Beacon Ave. S to three lanes to achieve a better balance of transportation modes.



## Sidewalk and Crossing Improvements

**Objective:** Improve access to the light rail station for pedestrians. Make walking within 1/4 mile of the station a safe and enjoyable experience for all people.

**Action:** Improve Beacon Ave. S and Lander St. with wider sidewalks, street lighting that illuminates the sidewalks, and crossing improvements. Bring sidewalks and crossings up to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards throughout the station area, especially between the station entrances and the new branch library, El Centro de la Raza, and the surrounding residential neighborhood.



## Bicycle Facilities and Access

**Objective:** Provide bicycle facilities at the light rail station and improve bicycle access throughout the station area to increase bus and light rail ridership and reduce auto dependency.

**Action:** Supply bike parking at both station entrances. Sign and/or stripe bicycle lanes where appropriate. Establish standards for additional bike parking in new station area developments. Mark bike routes on Beacon Ave. S and on 14th Ave. S to improve bicycle access to the station.



## Car Sharing

**Objective:** Provide a viable alternative to car ownership and encourage people who live near a light rail station not to own a car or, in the case of a family, to own one car.

**Action:** Expand the car sharing program to the Beacon Hill station area. Identify parking spaces in the station area for the program's use, particularly near the station.



## Bus Service Changes

**Objective:** Work with KC/Metro to increase access to the light rail system for buses and shuttle vans for disabled riders.

**Action:** Work with King County/Metro to provide frequent bus service to the light rail station. Make transfers between bus and light rail convenient to encourage transit ridership. Add a new route from Mt. Baker to Beacon Hill and the Duwamish Manufacturing and Industrial Center.



## Housing Actions

**Objective:** As specified in the North Beacon Hill neighborhood plan, provide for a more diverse mix of housing types and densities. Increase opportunities for new housing and home ownership in the station area that take advantage of access to the light rail system. New housing should be designed to reflect the diversity and character of the neighborhood. More residents will generate activity around the station and foster an enjoyable, affordable, and prosperous neighborhood where people are encouraged to walk, gather, and shop.

**Action:** Work with Sound Transit to identify housing opportunity sites. Increase housing for homebuyers as well as for renters. Develop housing programs and financing mechanisms that enable housing to be built that is affordable to people with a wide range of incomes. Redevelop public and privately-owned sites in the station area. This may include height bonuses for housing and human services, and reduced parking requirements where demand for parking is lower. Promote greater use of Property Tax Exemption and Location Efficient Mortgage programs where they support City housing goals.



## Open Space Improvements

**Objective:** Provide additional open space for gathering and recreation in the station area. New open space should provide a vibrant, active, and safe environment for people to gather.

**Action:** Develop high quality open spaces at both station entry plazas. Improve Lander St. between the station entrances with landscaping, textured paving, and lighting. Connect with El Centro's Mercado. Include community open space as an interim use at the 15th Ave. S station entrance after Phase I construction is completed until the station opens.



## Human Services

**Objective:** Support human services in the station area that can benefit from easy access to buses and light rail, and will serve Beacon Hill residents, employees, and others in nearby communities.

**Action:** Retain the existing childcare at El Centro de la Raza and at private centers. Explore options for new childcare and other needed human services facilities as part of Beacon Hill station area developments.



## Economic Development

**Objective:** Support and retain existing businesses and services impacted by Sound Transit construction. Encourage new businesses and services that create jobs and generate activity in the station area.

**Action:** Work with the community to develop and implement a plan that directs impacted businesses to appropriate resources, tools, and assistance during construction and helps ensure their successful relocation, operation during construction, and long-term viability. Encourage new businesses that support transit and create jobs. Support neighborhood business incubators.



## Joint Development

**Objective:** Maximize development opportunities on Sound Transit, KC/Metro, and other publicly owned properties that support the community's vision for the station area and maximize the opportunity presented by a regional light rail station. Identify opportunities for public-private partnerships that will benefit the community.

**Action:** Explore options for new developments at the station and construction staging areas that include housing, shops, and services.



## Public Safety

**Objective:** Create a safe, lively environment throughout the station area through the use of good design, creation of economic opportunities, and development of recreational opportunities for youth and adults.

**Action:** Provide good lighting and clear lines of sight in public spaces and new development. Encourage the design of buildings near the station with street-level retail and housing above to promote "eyes on the street." Coordinate with the Beacon Alliance of Neighbors (BAN), Seattle Police officers, the business community and other interested community organizations to develop and implement a public safety strategy that promotes and enhances public safety around the station.



## Plan Coordination

**Objective:** Ensure that all Beacon Hill planning activities are consistent and that station area planning implements the community vision.

**Action:** Coordinate with the El Centro master plan, the Beacon Hill business district study, and future plans for the Veterans Affairs hospital.