

Envisioning First Hill

Link Light Rail in Seattle's neighborhoods



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

The First Hill community established the following vision in their neighborhood plan: "In the future [First Hill will] be a home to people with a full range of incomes, abilities, and interests; a regional center for state-of-the-art health services, a dynamic neighborhood ready to meet the challenges of the future; a community that celebrates its rich history and cultural heritage; a premier city neighborhood as well as business and employment center with opportunities to grow." Fast, convenient, reliable, and safe public transportation is critical to First Hill's success as an urban center and key to the community's long-term vision. This vision includes a light rail station that strengthens the neighborhood business district, energizes Madison Street and adds to the livability of the area for residents and visitors. New development at the station and in the surrounding area will respect First Hill's history and character, and complement the historic buildings found throughout the neighborhood through design guidelines developed in partnership with the community, the City, and Sound Transit.



The underground light rail station will be located on Madison Street with entrances at Boylston Ave. and Summit Ave. This location was selected because it is within a 5-

minute walk to most of the residences, cultural facilities, and schools, as well as a number of major destinations, including Seattle University, Swedish, Harborview, and Virginia Mason medical centers. The station's two entrances will be attractive, active spaces that are convenient and safe for those who live or work in the area or are visiting for the first time.



View of the First Hill station area looking northeast along Madison Street at Summit.

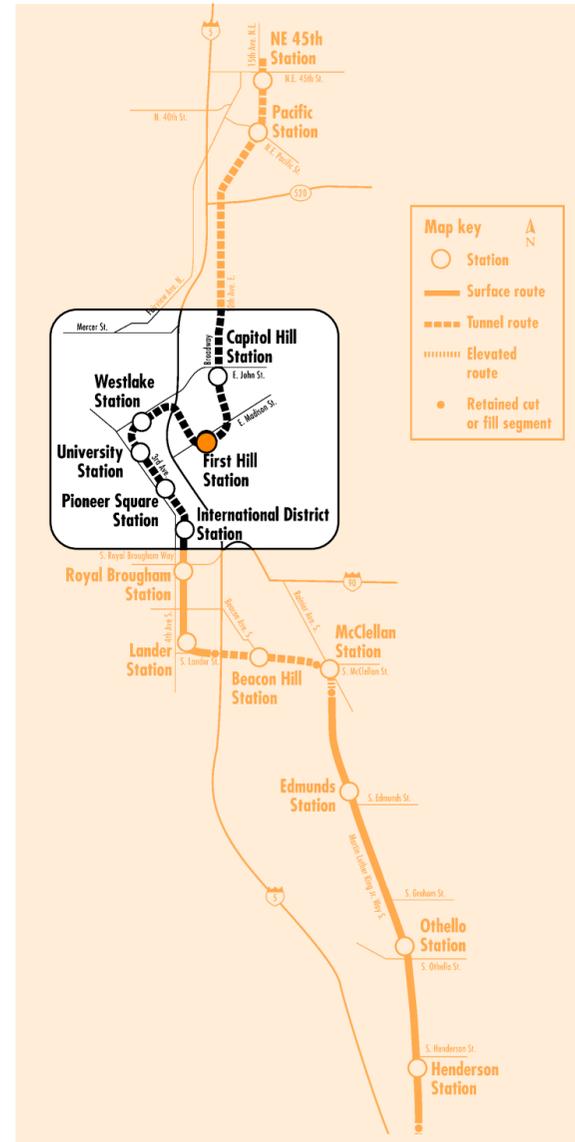
To make this happen, the streets, crossings, buildings, and bus stops must be designed to work together. Madison and other streets around the station must balance needs of pedestrians, cars, buses, and bicycles. Clear signage that includes public art will help people find the station, get to school or the doctor, or take advantage of one of First Hill's many cultural attractions. There will also be good connections to nearby bus stops, as well as the nearby Pike/Pine, Spruce Park, and Jefferson Park neighborhoods and Yesler Terrace and Jefferson Terrace communities.

New housing development is also part of the community's vision. It should be well designed, made of high quality materials, and fit in with the character of the neighborhood. Madison Street is First Hill's "main street," where residents walk, shop, and gather. New residences over the light rail station, street-level shops, plazas for gathering, good street lighting, and street trees will add to the livability of the neighborhood. Housing on First Hill should increase the amount of market rate housing and home ownership on First Hill; preserve the existing housing stock of moderate rent apartments; limit further increases in subsidized housing; and increase neighborhood amenities to insure a quality community. Madison Street and 8th Ave. were identified as areas for development of new housing.

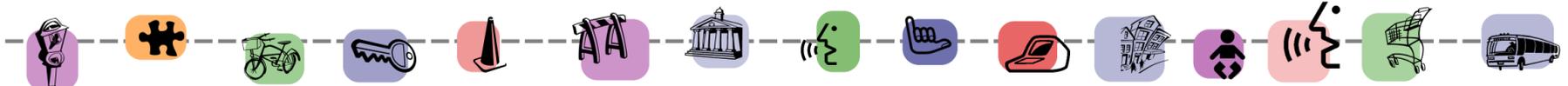
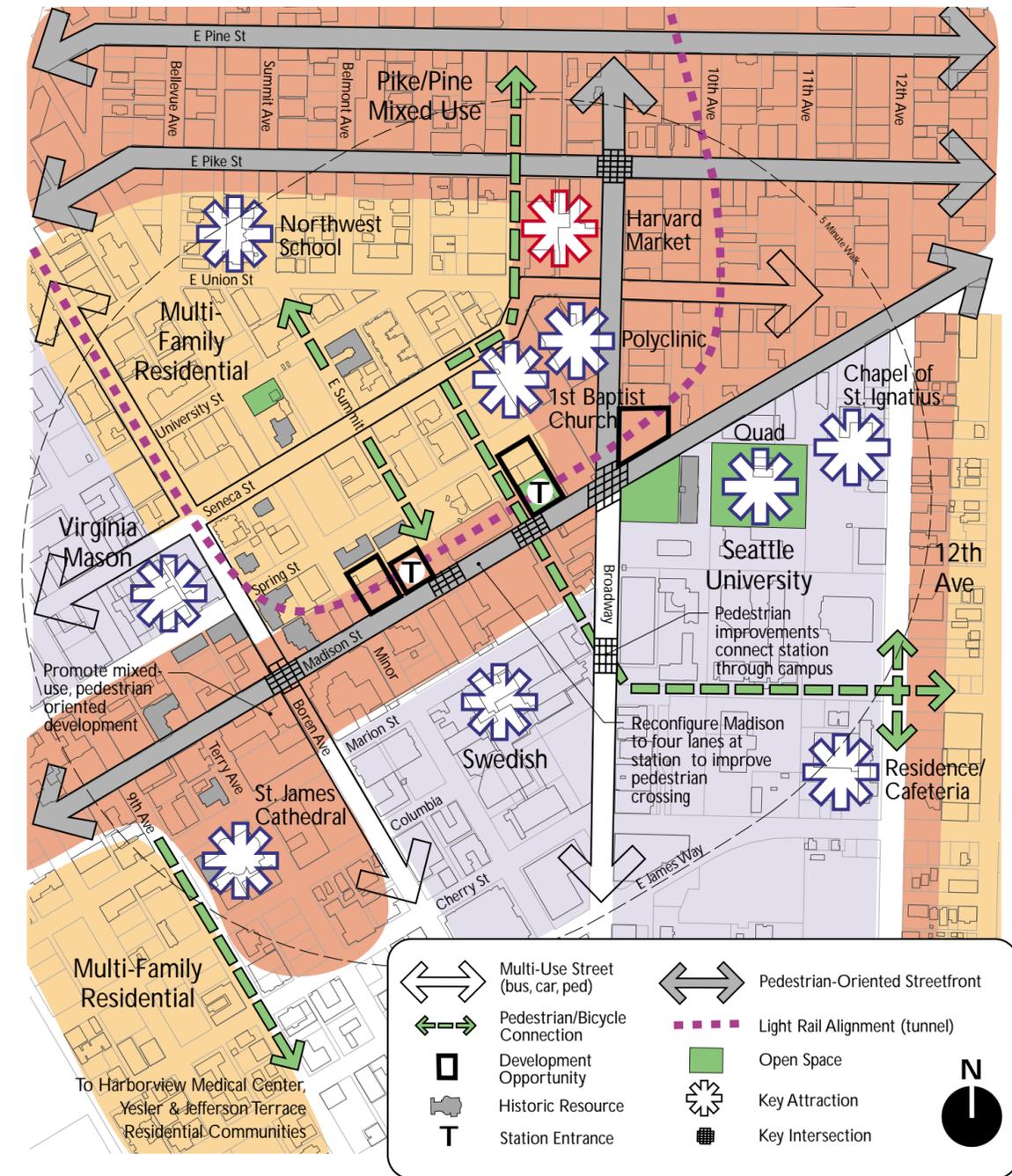
Human services, including childcare, benefit greatly from being located near light rail stations. Existing childcare centers on First Hill, as well as other locally-owned businesses need support to adjust to light rail construction. After the station is complete, childcare near the station will benefit families with working parents, provide a new market for childcare providers, and jobs for local residents.

The development of the First Hill light rail station will provide access to regional light rail and bus service, helping achieve the community's vision of First Hill as a premier city neighborhood.

The development of the First Hill light rail station will provide access to regional light rail and bus service, helping achieve the community's vision of First Hill as a premier city neighborhood.



Urban Design Concept for First Hill



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



We can achieve our vision for First 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 First Hill light rail station, with its housing, shops and open space, will support light rail and bus ridership, discourage auto use, and promote pedestrian and bicycle activity. Land use regulations within the station area should also encourage a variety of housing types.

Action: Establish a Station Area Overlay for the First Hill station, which could include: height allowances above station entrances to account for the tall "ground floor" created by the transit station, and change lot coverage requirements and development standards (including increased sidewalk width for new development and fulfilling open space requirements off site). The height of any developments at the west station entrance should take into account the proximity of historic buildings.

Parking Strategies

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

Action: Work with the City to implement the First Hill Parking Study recommendations. Enact policies that: prioritize parking for residents and shoppers, discourage commuter parking, allow shared parking among developments, and separate parking costs from building rent costs. Consider sharing parking with institutions and among private developments. In addition, consider parking requirements appropriate to the neighborhood that promote the use of light rail and buses. Manage on and off street parking supplies.

Design Guidance

Objective: Ensure that the station, surrounding development, and associated street and sidewalk improvements reinforce the architectural, social, and visual character of the neighborhood and support the community's vision and goals. Incorporate public art, entry points, and other design elements to 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 to influence projects developed on Sound Transit, City and County owned properties. Coordinate with other City light rail permitting processes and/or guidelines. Mark station entrances and/or other key entries to the station area with public art, kiosks, lighting and the First Hill Clock. Emphasize connections between the station and First Hill's cultural, educational, religious, and medical facilities through the use of maps, signs, and public art. Encourage community participation in the City's Design Review process.

Public Facilities

Objective: Promote a vibrant, active community with a number of recreational and community gathering places. Design public buildings to reinforce neighborhood character. Design community gathering spaces, plazas, bus stops and the light rail station to inspire positive social interactions between neighbors.

Action: Work with the community to improve open spaces for gathering and recreation, integrate public art into the station, and provide public restrooms in the vicinity of the First Hill station, either as a public amenity or through arrangements with private businesses.

Street/Alley Vacations

Objective: Balance the public benefits of street/alley vacations with the need for local circulation and access.

Action: Consider surface or subterranean street/alley vacations to accommodate new development if the project meets neighborhood goals for the station area.



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: Implement the sidewalk and street improvements proposed in the Strategic Transit Initiative for Madison Street, including widening sidewalks and narrowing pedestrian crossings at the station entrances. These improvements will create more direct walking routes to Seattle University, residential neighborhoods east of Broadway, and bus zones on Broadway.

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: Bring curb ramps up to the standard set by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Repair heaved sidewalks between major destinations and station entrances where necessary. Increase sidewalk width within 300' of station entrances or make other improvements to pedestrian environment if sidewalk widening is not possible due to right-of-way constraints. Add lighting that lights the sidewalk and crossing improvements where necessary. Provide safe, well-marked walking routes to the medical centers, Seattle University, the Pike/Pine shopping district, and surrounding residential neighborhoods. Take steps to make Summit Ave. a more pedestrian-friendly street.



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 station entrances to accommodate passenger demand and increase transit ridership. Establish standards for additional bike parking in new station area developments.

Car Sharing

Objective: Make it possible for residents to live in a neighborhood with excellent light rail and bus service, without owning a car, yet have access to one when necessary.

Action: Support the existing carsharing program and encourage greater participation. Identify parking spaces for carsharing in the station area, either on-street or in new developments.

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. Work closely with community groups and private developers to create opportunities for public-private partnerships that will benefit the community.

Action: Design and construct new housing and commercial developments at both station entrances and staging areas. Develop housing over the west station entrance that is designed to meet community goals.

Economic Development

Objective: Support existing businesses and services impacted by construction and 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.



Open Space Improvements

Objective: Provide additional open spaces for gathering and recreation in the station area. New open space should provide a vibrant, active, and safe environment for area residents and transit riders to gather and relax.

Action: Work with the community, Sound Transit, King County, and other agencies to develop high-quality open spaces in the station area. Develop a plaza to serve as a community gathering space at one of the station entrances.

Housing Actions

Objective: Increase opportunities for new housing and home ownership in the station area that take advantage of access to the light rail system, maintain the character of the neighborhood, and generate activity around the station. Encourage new development that fosters a dynamic, mixed-income neighborhood around the station where people are encouraged to walk, gather, and shop.

Action: Increase homeownership opportunities for people working, or renting, or wanting to move to First Hill. Promote new housing development above shops and services on public and privately-owned sites in the station area. Develop a housing program and financing mechanisms that enable work-force housing to be built in new developments. Promote greater use of Property Tax Exemption and Location Efficient Mortgage programs where they support City housing goals. Preserve existing moderate priced housing. Work with institutions to find sites for replacement housing when institutions expand in the neighborhood.



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 and Sound Transit to provide frequent bus service to the light rail station. Make transfers between bus and light rail convenient to encourage transit ridership. Add service on 12th Avenue to provide access to First Hill station from neighborhoods not served by light rail.



Human Services

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

Action: Retain existing childcare centers and explore options for new childcare facilities as part of the First Hill station area developments.



Public Safety

Objective: Create a safe, lively environment throughout the station area through good design and encouragement of a high level of pedestrian activity and community interaction.

Action: Provide good lighting and clear lines of sight in public spaces and new development to promote pedestrian activity and "eyes on the street." Coordinate with Seattle Police officers, the business community, security services from the major institutions, 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 First Hill planning activities are consistent and that station area planning implements the community vision.

Action: Support activities that implement the First Hill Neighborhood Plan. Coordinate with the First Hill Housing Action Plan and the Seattle Transit Initiative. Coordinate station area actions with major institution master plans.

