Transit Service, Transportation Demand Management, and Parking Program Improvement Concepts

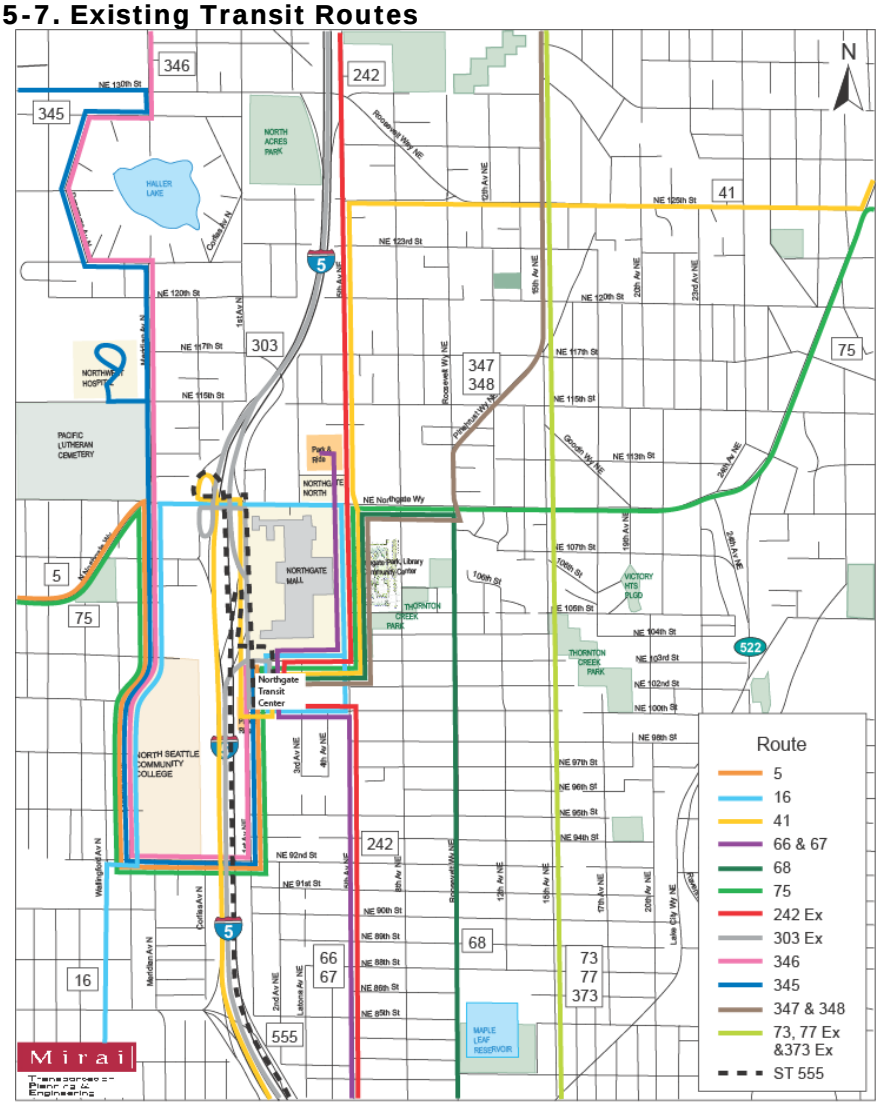
Key Transportation Issues

When the North Link Light Rail is extended to Northgate from downtown Seattle, transit service from Northgate to the University of Washington and downtown Seattle will greatly improve, with added capacity and shorter travel time. Many of the current bus riders will switch to rail, and the current express bus system will need to be restructured.

Existing transit service from Northgate to the University of Washington and downtown Seattle is well used. The 2000 census data shows that ridership for morning trips that originate in the Northgate area (the residents working in locations outside Northgate) is very high. But ridership for workers traveling to the Northgate area is not meeting the CTIP's mode split goal (which is the same as that described in the Transportation Element of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan). Transit service to other urban villages such as Bitter Lake and Aurora–Licton Springs should also be improved to meet the CTIP's transit performance benchmarks, especially for midday service. During the midday period, transit service to the University District should have increased frequencies to meet the CTIP benchmarks. **Figure 5-7** shows existing transit routes.

Finally, as Northgate continues to grow, new development will continue to need some parking, but the cost of creating new parking structures will increase along with land values. Property owners and developers may want to meet their parking needs by selling or leasing parking spaces from each other. While such arrangements may currently be in place between some property owners, a "parking brokerage" that acts as a central clearinghouse for parking, enforcement and other transportation services could create efficiencies and added value. These functions could be managed by a new or existing association of employers and property owners, a Chamber of Commerce, or a Transportation Management Association (TMA). (See **Appendix 5-3** for examples of TMAs.)

Figure 5-7. Existing Transit Routes



Transportation Improvement Concepts

J-1. Following the extension of light rail to Northgate, provide transit feeder services from nearby neighborhoods to the transit center.

J-2. Provide improved transit service with average of 15 minutes frequencies during off-peak hours from Northgate to the University District. This service improvement recommendation should be consistent with the Seattle Transit Plan's Urban Village Transit Network, prepared in collaboration with Metro. (Cost estimate: not prepared).

J-3. Improve transit service with average of 15 minutes frequencies during peak periods and 30 minutes frequencies during off-peak period to other urban villages, such as Bitter Lake and Aurora–Licton Springs.

J-4. Facilitate development of a "parking brokerage" function to efficiently allocate parking needs through shared use of parking spaces. This function could be managed by a new or existing association of employers and property owners, a Chamber of Commerce, or a Transportation Management Association (TMA). These organizations may also be able to provide other services related to improving public transportation and promoting alternatives to drive-alone commutes.

J-6. Amend SMC 23.71.016 to allow shared parking between retail stores and other uses. The Northgate Overlay District is the only zone in the city where retail is prohibited from sharing parking with other uses. Shared parking between uses increases the efficiency with which parking supply is used. Parking impacts of a project can be addressed through SEPA mitigation.

J-7. Amend SMC 23.71.016(C) to allow for reductions to minimum parking requirements for commercial uses, and consider expanding 23.71.016 to allow for these reductions to apply to residential uses as well as commercial uses. 23.54.020(F) applies in other commercial zones in the City, and allows for parking reductions for proximity to transit and provision of alternative transportation strategies, such as vanpools and bicycle racks. This reduction should apply in the Northgate Overlay District as well.

J-8. Amend SMC 23.71.018 to make the Northgate Overlay District mode split goals consistent with the goals for Northgate in the Seattle Comprehensive Plan. The Seattle Comprehensive Plan has mode split goals for each urban center. Mode split goals are an indicator of how many people are driving alone as opposed to using alternative means of transportation.

J-9. Allow residential uses to meet their parking requirements off-site. Under current Code, commercial uses may meet their parking requirements off-site. Allowing off-site residential parking can encourage adjacent property owners to more efficiently meet their respective parking needs.

J-10. Continue researching appropriate parking requirements to achieve Seattle Comprehensive Plan goals LU50 (parking maximums) and NGP12 (discourage SOV use, improve short-term parking accessibility). Through the process, acknowledge stakeholder concerns, including the following comments:

- Retail parking maximums may be appropriate to review with respect to current lending practices.
- Reduced parking requirements should be considered by the City contingent on increased transit service.
- Benefits to developers from reduced parking requirements should be matched by their commitment to alternative travel as demonstrated by provision of transit passes, bicycle facilities, and car-share vehicles.

J-11. Manage on-street parking supply within the commercial core of the Northgate Urban Center to give priority to short-term customer use.

J-12. Conduct a neighborhood parking management assessment for Northgate to ensure that the neighborhood's limited supply of on-street parking adequately serves surrounding land uses, in the mid-term (2008–2010).

J-13. Work with Sound Transit and stakeholders to study and implement proactive parking management techniques around the station to prevent use of neighborhood streets for park-and-ride purposes, prior to the opening of the light rail station.

Transit Center / North Link Light Rail Station Area

King County Metro's Northgate Transit Center is a focal point of transportation activities south of the Northgate Mall between NE 103rd Street and NE 100th Street. Sound Transit plans to extend the North Link Light Rail line from the University of Washington to Northgate. The aerial rail station at Northgate will be constructed along the east side of 1st Avenue over NE 103rd Street.

The new light rail station and bus facility will be structurally integrated to help maximize transit use. Mixed-use developments adjacent to the station, and high-quality pedestrian facilities, will generate and support significant pedestrian activity in the area.

Buses, passenger cars, and pedestrians share the transportation facilities in this area. It is therefore important for the City to provide adequate transportation facilities that support King County Metro's speed and reliability goals for bus operations.

Key Transportation Issues

The CTIP study identified the following transportation issues for the transit station area:

- The efficient and safe operation of key intersections in the vicinity of the transit center, such as 5th Avenue NE and NE 103rd Street, are vital to the maintenance of efficient and reliable transit service.
- Some arterials, including the north side of NE 100th Street, do not have sidewalks, and sidewalks on other arterials, such as 1st Avenue NE between NE 92nd Street and the Transit Center, are in poor condition. Note: Sidewalks are currently programmed for NE 100th as part of public and private redevelopment of the South lot.
- Interstate 5 divides the Northgate urban center. North Seattle Community College and the medical offices on the west side of I-5 generate significant transit ridership, yet because of I-5, transit riders arriving at the Transit Center cannot walk directly to the college or to the medical offices north of the College.

Transportation Improvement Concepts

The following transportation improvement concepts address the issues identified above:

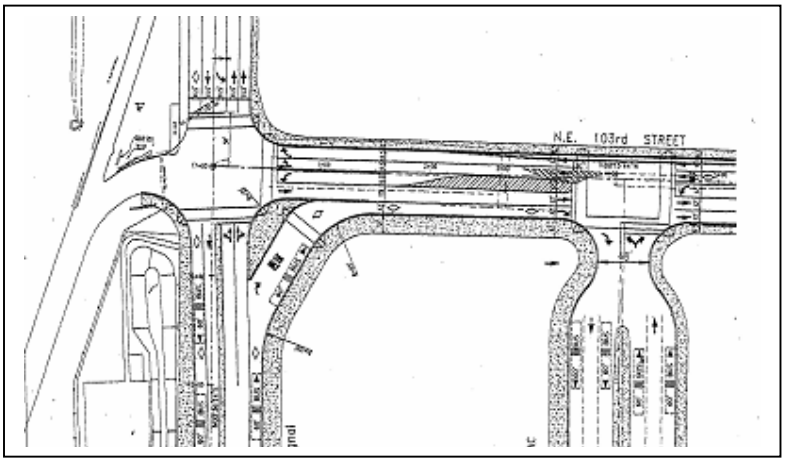
F-1. Add a westbound right turn lane and implement the intersection improvement concept, including marked crosswalks on all legs, prepared by King County Metro and SDOT at the NE 103rd Street/1st Avenue NE intersection as shown in **Figure 5-8**.

F-2. Install a traffic signal at the NE 103rd Street /3rd Avenue NE intersection. Provide urban design treatments for accommodating pedestrians.

F-3. Allow eastbound left turns from the existing curb lane at the NE 103rd Street/5th Avenue NE intersection.

F-4. Construct a three-lane roadway on 3rd Avenue NE from NE 100th Street to NE 103rd Street. This project and the related signal project at 3rd Avenue NE and NE 103rd Street (F-2) are currently under design. These projects are scheduled to be completed in 2007.

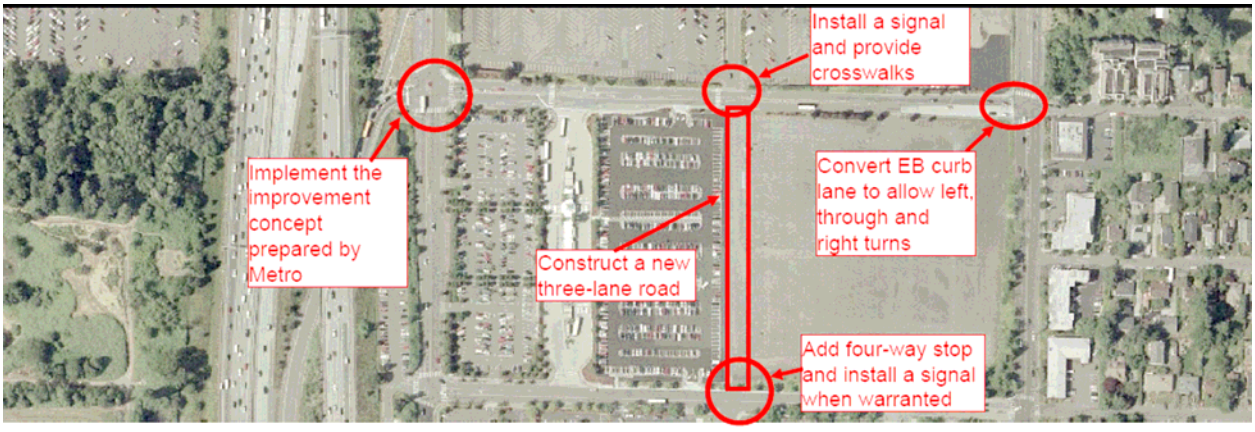
Figure 5-8. Proposed Improvement at NE 103rd Street/1st Avenue NE (F-1)



F-5. When warranted, add four-way stop control and, ultimately, install a traffic signal at the NE 100th Street /3rd Avenue NE intersection. Provide marked crosswalks and urban design treatments to accommodate pedestrians. Note: Upon opening, the 3rd Avenue NE extension will have two-way stop controls on the 3rd Avenue NE approaches.

Figure 5-9 shows the locations of concepts F-1, F-2, F-3, F-4, and F-5.

Figure 5-9. Transportation Improvement Concepts in the Vicinity of King County Metro's Northgate Transit Center (F-1 through F-5)



F-6. Provide sidewalks on the north side of NE 100th Street from 1st Avenue NE to 5th Avenue NE. Note: This project is fully funded. Over time, the City, King County and private development (ERA Care) will construct a continuous sidewalk from 1st Avenue NE to 5th Avenue NE.

F-7. Reconstruct the existing sidewalk on the east side of 1st Avenue NE from NE 92nd Street to NE 97th Street and provide a bicycle lane on the west side of 1st Avenue (by extending the shoulder by 4 feet) between NE 103rd Street and NE 92nd Street. The sidewalk improvement on NE 100th Street and the sidewalk and bicycle improvement projects on 1st Avenue NE are shown in **Figure 5-10**.

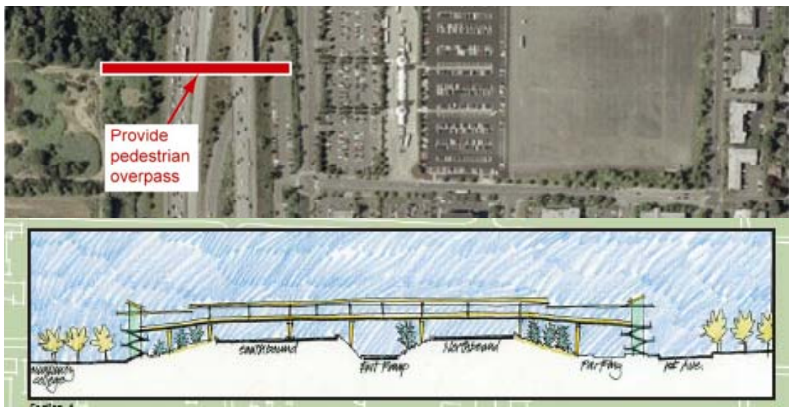
Figure 5-10. Sidewalk Projects on NE 100th Street and Sidewalk and Bicycle Projects on 1st Avenue NE (F-6 and F-7)

Cross-Freeway Connection. Construct a pedestrian and bicycle bridge over I-5 to connect the community west of I-5 (and particularly North Seattle Community College) with the Metro Transit Center and future light rail station. The bridge should be located between NE 100th Street and NE 103rd Street. A sketch of the pedestrian overpass is shown in the Planning Commission's Open Space and Pedestrian Plan, which is copied as **Figure 5-11.**

This project poses considerable design, construction, and funding challenges. Meeting drainage requirements and accommodating elevation differences are two of the critical issues that would need to be addressed. In addition, implementing the project would require a long-term partnership involving the City, Washington State DOT, North Seattle Community College, King County/Metro,

Sound Transit, and the neighborhood residents and businesses adjacent to this new bridge.

Figure 5-11. Pedestrian Bridge Over I-5



Source: Northgate Open Space & Pedestrian Connections, 2004

NE 130th/125th Street Corridor

This east-west principal arterial provides I-5 access to and from the south and connects with Aurora Avenue N on the west and Lake City Way NE on the east. Located at the northern boundaries of the CTIP study area, it is one of only three east-west arterial corridors that cross I-5; the others are NE Northgate Way and NE 92nd Street.

Key Transportation Issues

Reviewing the existing and future traffic data and comments received from the public, the CTIP study identified the following transportation issues within this corridor:

- Since this is one of the three arterial corridors that provide east-west arterial services for vehicles to cross I-5, adequate road capacity over I-5 is needed. The intersections of the I-5 on-ramp and NE 130th Street, and NE 130th Street and 5th Avenue NE, do not have left turn pockets that would allow continuous two-lane operation for the east-west traffic movements in this corridor.
- The intersection of N 130th Street and Meridian Avenue N has a high traffic crash rate: an average of 10 collisions per year and 1.23 crashes per million entering vehicles annually.
- The mid-block traffic collision rate on NE 125th Street between 8th Avenue NE and Roosevelt Way NE is high: an average of 2.35 per million annual vehicles.

- The unsignalized intersection of the I-5 northbound off-ramp and 5th Avenue NE operates at a low level of service. The I-5 off-ramp movement was LOS F in 2004, which will worsen in future years. During the PM peak hour, vehicles getting off I-5 are blocked from making right turns at the 5th Avenue NE and Roosevelt Way (NE 130th Street) intersection by long vehicle queues on 5th Avenue NE.
- King County Metro Route 41 travels on NE 125th Street between 5th Avenue NE and Roosevelt Way NE, including the unsignalized intersection at NE 125th/Roosevelt Way NE and the signalized intersection at Roosevelt Way NE/10th Avenue NE. The narrow roadway and absence of sidewalks on NE 125th Street and the unusual intersection geometry makes this a difficult corridor for pedestrians as well as transit operators and other drivers.

Transportation Improvement Concepts

The following transportation improvement concepts address the transportation issues identified above:

A-1. Add left turn pockets on all approaches at the N 130th Street/Meridian Avenue N intersection (see **Figure 5-12)**.

Figure 5-12. Intersection of N 130th Street and Meridian Avenue N (A-1)

A-2. Add a westbound left turn pocket at the I-5 southbound on-ramp and NE 130th Street intersection.

A-3. Add an eastbound left turn pocket at the 5th Avenue NE and NE 130th Street intersection.

A-4. Signalize the I-5 northbound off-ramp and 5th Avenue NE intersection, coordinate this signal with the 5th Avenue NE/NE 130th Street intersection signal, and connect/coordinate all signals

along NE 130th Street/NE 125th Street corridor. The A-2, A-3, and A-4 projects are in the same vicinity. These projects would require collaboration with WSDOT and widening of the overpass over I-5.

Figure 5-13 shows the locations of the three intersection improvement concepts.

Figure 5-13. N 130th Street / I-5 Vicinity (A-2, A-3, A-4)

A-5. Upgrade the intersection of NE 125th Street/Roosevelt Way NE/10th Avenue NE and include the stop-controlled NE 125th Street intersection as part of one signal-controlled intersection (see **Figure 5-14**).

A-6. Provide curbs, gutters, and sidewalks on both sides of NE 125th Street from 5th Avenue NE to Roosevelt Way NE. The location of this improvement concept is shown in **Figure 5-15**.

A-7. Upgrade the existing traffic signal at the NE 125th Street /15th Avenue NE intersection to include poles/mast arms and vehicle detection.

Figure 5-14. Intersection of NE 125th Street and Roosevelt Way (A-5)

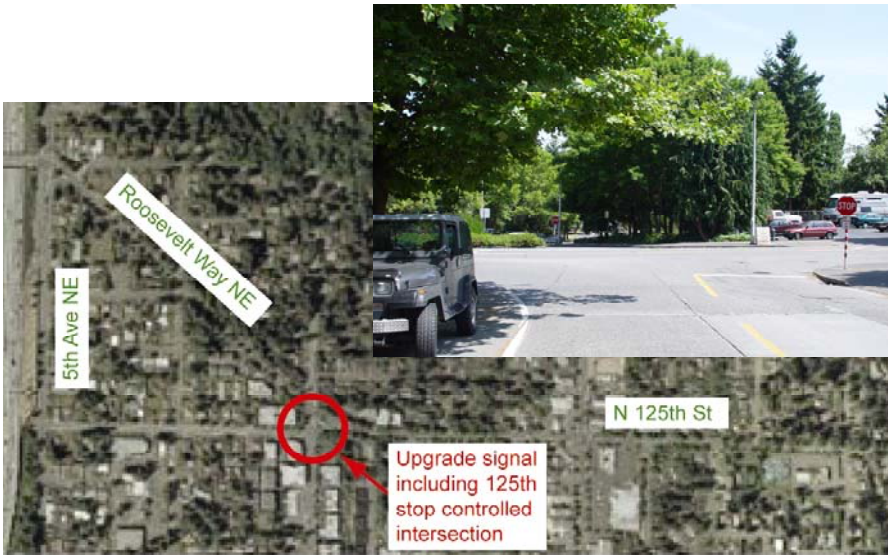


Figure 5-15. Sidewalk on NE 125th Street: 5th Avenue NE to Roosevelt Way (A-6)