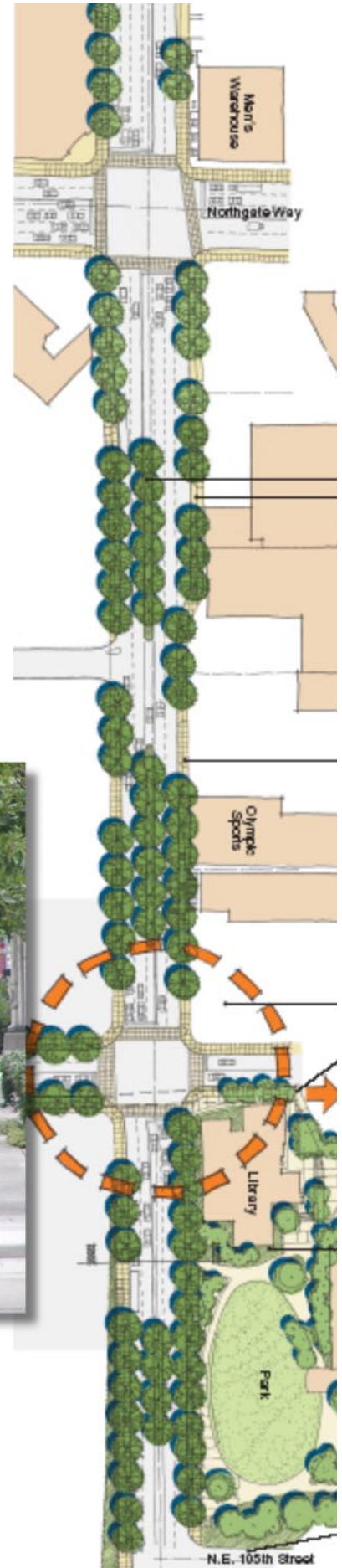




City of Seattle
Department of Planning & Development
and Seattle Planning Commission

Northgate Open Space & Pedestrian Connections Draft Plan



Fall 2004

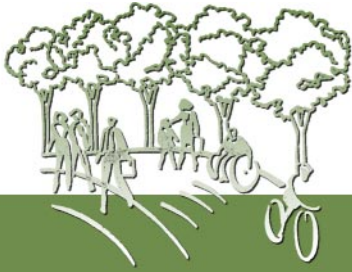


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Northgate Open Space & Pedestrian Connections Plan

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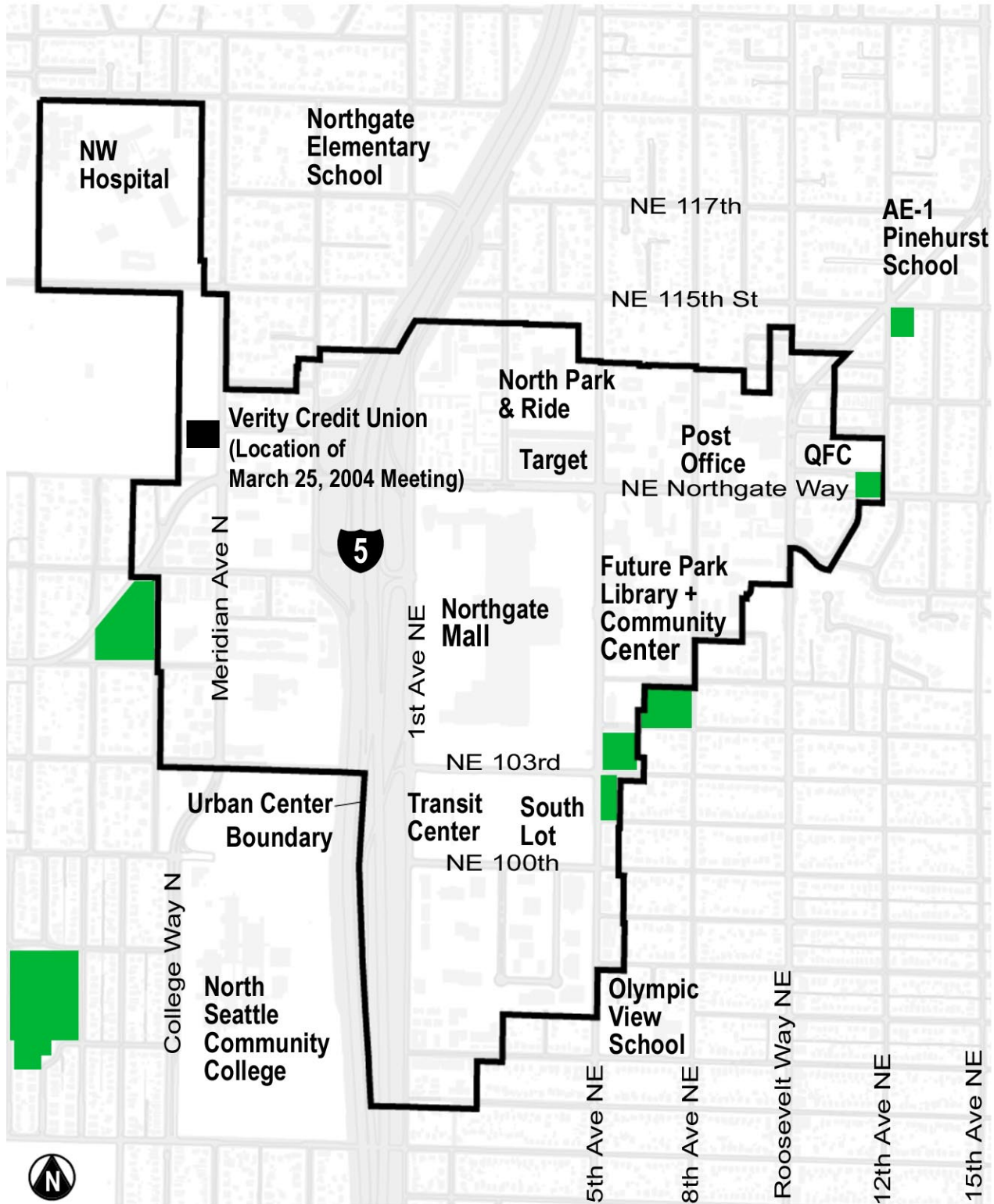
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Concept Map and Concept Drawings insert

I. About the Plan

Northgate Area Boundary Map



I. About the Plan



Creating a pedestrian oriented community and adding open space have been key priorities for the Northgate area for many years, as reflected in the Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan (NACP) and support for additional open space in the 2000 Pro Parks Levy. Council Resolution 30642 (adopted December 2003) recognizes the importance of focusing these priorities by calling on the City's departments and the Planning Commission to produce a plan to "increase open spaces, create and enhance pedestrian connections, and improve the pedestrian and bicycling environment in the Northgate Urban Center."

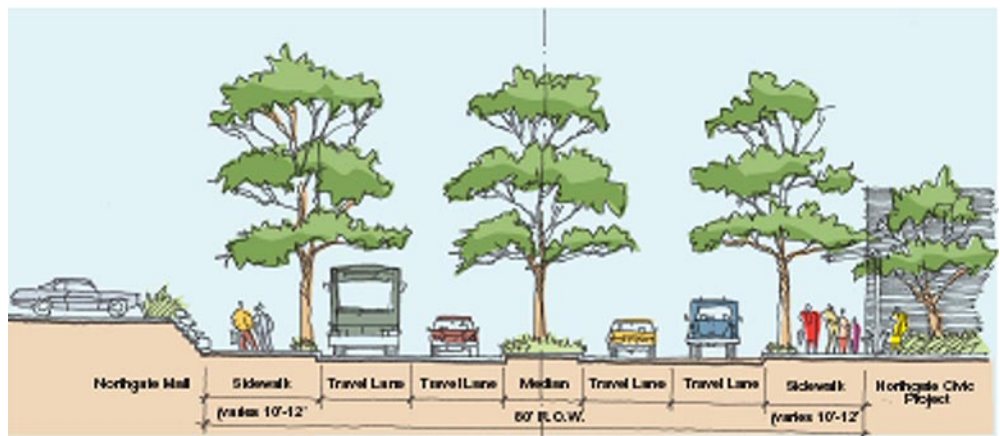
Development of the Northgate Open Space and Pedestrian Connections Plan was launched with a Planning Commission workshop (March 25, 2004). It built on the Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan (NACP), earlier workshops that focused on town center concepts, the South Lot, and 5th Avenue NE as a pedestrian corridor. At this workshop community

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I. About the Plan

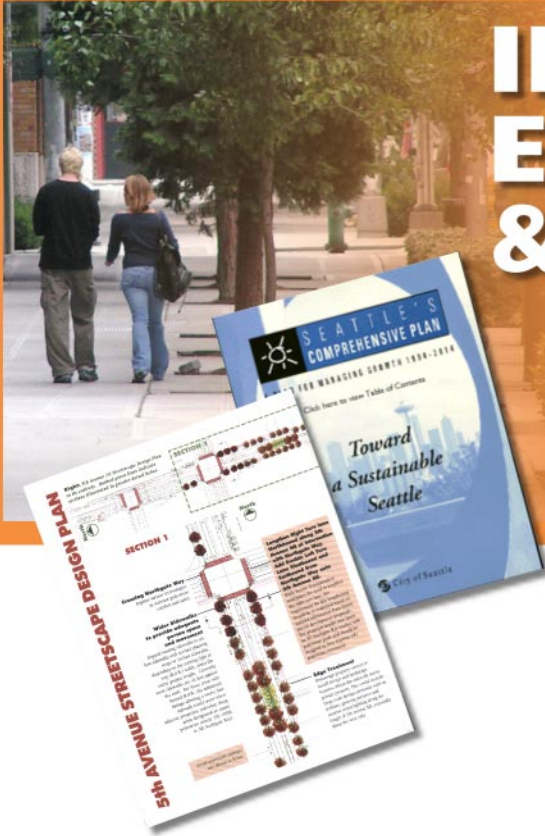
members identified key destinations, current and desired pedestrian connections and open spaces. Their work was informed by previous plans and workshops, a community survey and work by UW students.

This Plan begins by highlighting existing policies, guidelines and regulations, focusing on how they shape development to provide pedestrian and open space amenities. The Plan then outlines key findings from the Planning Commission workshop. The final chapter, Recommendations and Implementation, gives direction to these findings and highlights implementation steps.



5th Avenue NE Streetscape Improvement Vignette

II. Existing Policies & Regulations



History of Promoting Pedestrians in Northgate

In 1993, the Seattle City Council approved the Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan (NACP) after a two year planning process with the community and stakeholders. While its adoption preceded the City's Comprehensive Plan (1994), both documents place a significant priority on the need for **open space** and **creating a more pedestrian-oriented environment** in the city's densest areas.

The policies in the NACP laid the groundwork for the pedestrian and open space regulations and design concepts articulated in the City's Land Use Code (Northgate Overlay District; Chapter 23.71) and the 5th Avenue NE Streetscape Design Plan.

The following chapter summarizes guiding principles for both citywide and Northgate area pedestrian-oriented development and open space.

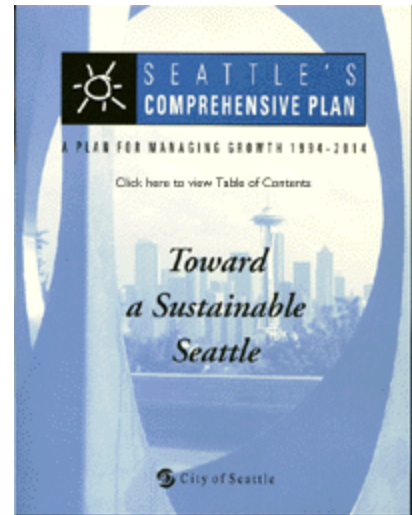


II. Existing Policies & Regulations

Existing Policies

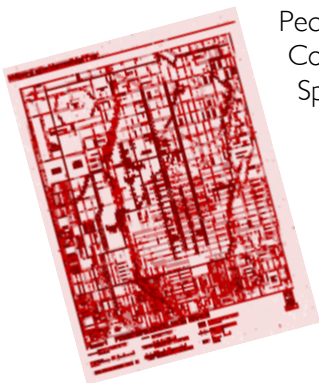
City of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan

- Seeks to create a superior pedestrian environment for the city by several means.
- Designates areas to be *Urban Villages* of mixed-use development in an effort to better balance the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and car users.
- Establishes *Pedestrian Districts* with pedestrian-oriented development standards that recognize different characteristics and conditions of Seattle's diverse neighborhoods.
- Encourages multi-modal transportation and prioritizes a network of pedestrian connections linked to open spaces that "provide Seattleites with light, air and visual relief" in addition to contact with natural beauty and opportunities for interaction.



Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan (NACP)

- Contains sixteen policies and associated implementation guidelines that
 - reflect the community's vision for the Northgate area,
 - integrate with the Seattle Comprehensive Plan, and
 - support current city-wide planning initiatives.
- The NACP recommends a combination of Major Pedestrian Streets, Interior-Block Pedestrian Connections, Green Streets, Urban Trails, and Special Landscaped Arterials.
- While this report focuses on policies 8 and 12, it is worth noting that policies 3, 6, 7 and 9 also address elements of pedestrian connections and related design.





NACP Policy 8

NACP Policy 8 states, “Increase pedestrian circulation with an improved street level environment by creating pedestrian connections that are safe, interesting and pleasant.”

- Implementation Guideline 8.1 calls for the development of a Pedestrian Circulation System through private and public actions. (see *footnote 1*)
- Interior-block pedestrian connections can (a) supplement the existing street grid, (b) facilitate pedestrian circulation, and (c) provide a more human scale to the overall development pattern. The NACP states that “the exact location of the interior block pedestrian connections shall be at the discretion of the property owner.”
- Implementation Guideline 8.3 seeks to enhance pedestrian safety and reduce conflict with vehicular traffic through various means, including:
 - reviewing new development plans for on-site pedestrian safety measures, and
 - minimizing curb cuts generating interior block pedestrian connections.

This guideline also prioritizes safe and convenient pedestrian crossings at several key locations. (NACP IG 8.3)

NACP Policy 12

NACP Policy 12 states, “A system of open spaces and pedestrian connections shall be established to guide acquisition, location, and development of future open space and to establish priorities for related public improvements.”

- The implementation guidelines to Policy 12 identify a framework for determining the appropriate size, location, character, function and distribution of open spaces throughout the Northgate area.
- The NACP augments open space created by the City by requiring open space for commercial development. This will be further discussed in the next section. (NACP IG 12.2)
- Several implementation strategies for enhancing open space in Northgate are highlighted:
 - A Town Square somewhere in the urban core
 - Multiple Urban Plazas to be located adjacent to buildings with at least 300 employees
 - An Active Park on the existing Metro Park-and-Ride lot at 5th Avenue NE and NE 112th Street, several Passive Parks, and
 - Type VI Green Streets and an Urban Trail along Thornton Creek. (Appendix I: NACP IG 12.1)

FOOTNOTE 1

Discussion notes on the NACP identify several purposes of the Pedestrian Circulation System: (to) reduce the dependence on using a vehicle to travel within the Northgate area; increase access by providing pedestrian links to and between major destinations; improve pedestrian connections between the core and surrounding neighborhoods; make it easier and more attractive to walk between transit service and the residential and commercial areas (NACP, IG 8.1)

II. Existing Policies & Regulations

Existing Regulations

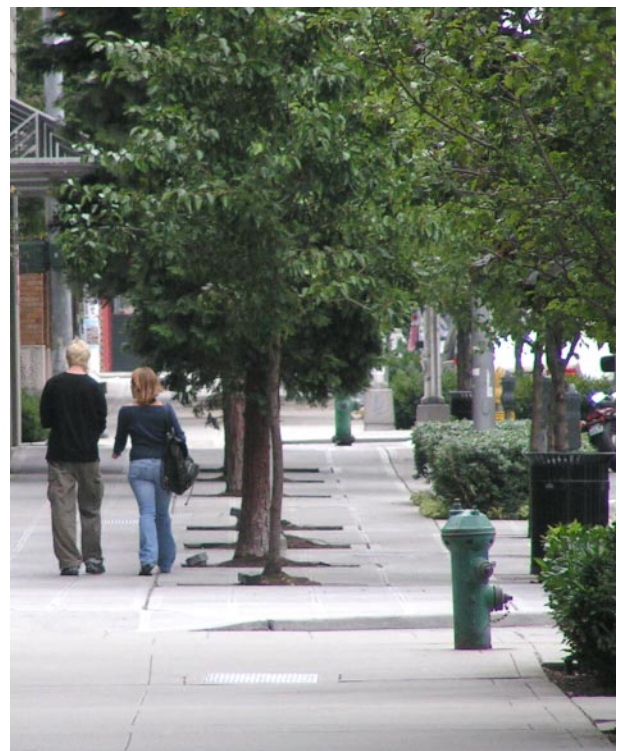
Northgate Overlay District

The Northgate Overlay District was adopted by the City Council in 1993, Chapter 23.71 (SMC). This action was consistent with Policy I, which states “A Northgate Overlay District shall be created to address the special characteristics of development in the area.”

The Northgate Overlay District applies use requirements and development standards that are in addition to citywide development regulations governing commercial and multi-family development.

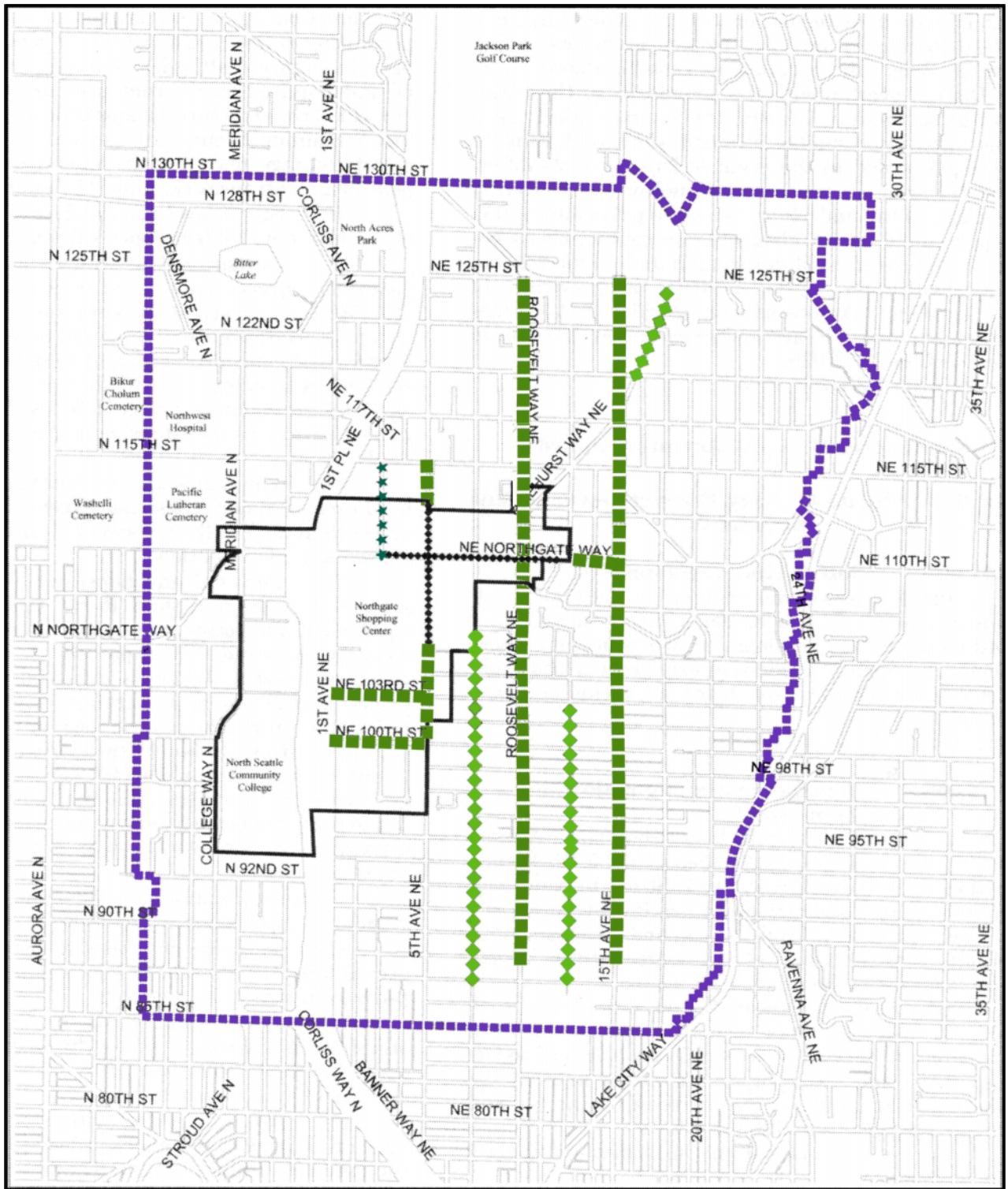
Since the 1993 adoption of the Northgate Overlay District, the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) has applied these regulations to new development proposals. The Northgate Overlay District establishes boundaries that divide the Northgate planning area into two principal sub-areas:

- 1) the core, consisting of the Northgate Shopping Center and surrounding high-density multifamily and commercial zones, and
- 2) the remainder of the Northgate area outside the core. (The boundaries of the Northgate area are the same as the **Northgate Overlay District**.)



II. Existing Policies & Regulations

Northgate Overlay District Map (Map A - Seattle Municipal Code [SMC] 23.71.004)



II. Existing Policies & Regulations

The **Major Pedestrian Street** designation (NE Northgate Way from 3rd Avenue NE to 11th Avenue NE and 5th Avenue NE from NE 113th Street to NE 105th Street) requires future development to provide ground-level street-front uses geared toward pedestrians. New development will provide amenities such as street trees, benches, fountains, artwork, landscaping, special pavers, or lighting that can enhance the pedestrian experience. (See Map A, page 11, Seattle Municipal Code [SMC] 23.71.004)

Green Streets - Calls for a system of **Green Streets**, which give priority to pedestrians, bicyclists and transit patrons over passenger vehicles. (Map A, SMC 23.71.004)

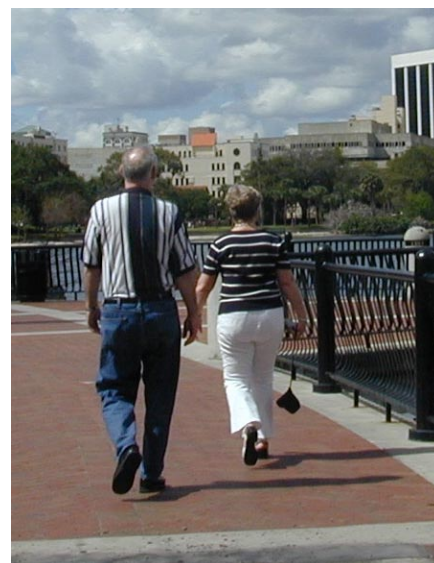
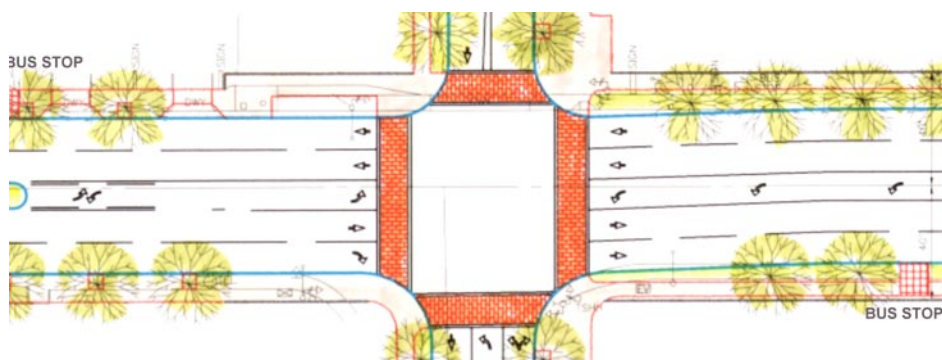
Open Space - Regulations require commercial development to provide a certain percentage of open space, partially in "Usable Open Space" and partially in "Landscaped Open Space." The open space requirement is 15% of lot area or gross floor area for zoned heights of forty feet or greater. Examples of how developers may meet the requirements include:

- interior meeting space on-site,
- on-site town square or plaza,
- above-ground terraces on-site.

Special Landscaped Arterials - Calls for certain streets to provide additional sidewalk width and pedestrian amenities to recognize the dual role the arterial plays in carrying a high volume of traffic and serving large numbers of pedestrians. Like **Major Pedestrian Streets**, certain right of way treatments are described. Examples of these may include public art, lighting fixtures, fountains, bicycle racks, planters, or street furniture. (Map A, SMC 23.71.004)

The Northgate Overlay District regulations require new development on Major Pedestrian Streets to include:

- Certain pedestrian-oriented uses at the street front
- Screening of parking away from the pedestrian street
- Street trees, wide sidewalks and street furniture, such as planting boxes
- Transparent facades and overhead weather protection



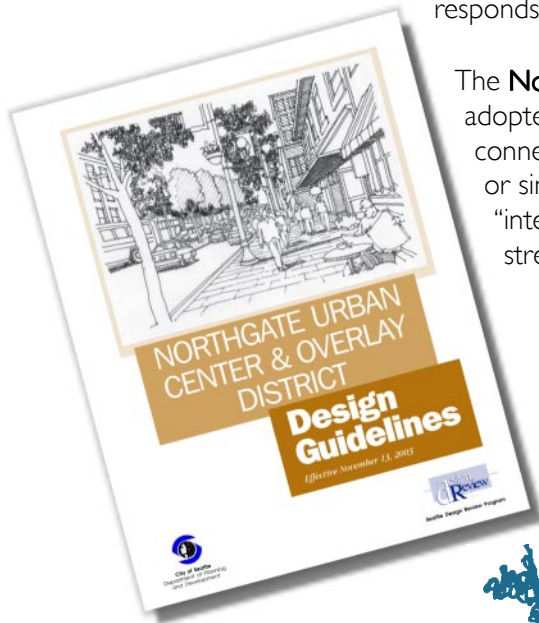
Aspects of pedestrian environment addressed by Citywide Design Guidelines:

- Pedestrian open spaces and entrances
- Blank walls
- Retaining walls
- Design of parking lots near sidewalks
- Visual impacts of parking structures
- Screening of dumpsters, utilities and service areas
- Pedestrian safety

Summary of Design Review Program

The City's Design Review Program is a tool for a neighborhood and a developer to create a better project through good design. The design review program allows community members and DPD staff to prioritize certain design guidelines appropriate to the project. The developer uses these guidelines in formulating the project and incorporates them in the application for a Master Use Permit. As a flexible tool, design guidelines offer an alternative to prescriptive zoning requirements, allowing new development to respond better to the distinctive character of its surroundings.

Citywide Design Review Guidelines address the pedestrian environment by shaping aspects of development such as pedestrian open space, entrances and safety. **Citywide Design Review Guidelines** are augmented by specific neighborhood design review guidelines, including Northgate, to ensure that local development responds to community design goals.



The **Northgate Urban Center and Overlay District Design Guidelines**, adopted in 2003, specifically address the issue of open spaces and pedestrian connections. For example, **Guideline C** suggests that it is “critical” to create or simulate “an urban street grid through [existing] sites” and to create “interior-block pedestrian connections through sites and the surrounding street system.”

Northgate Design Guidelines also address:

- Human scale
- Parking lots
- Building facades



II. Existing Policies & Regulations

5th Avenue NE Streetscape Design Plan

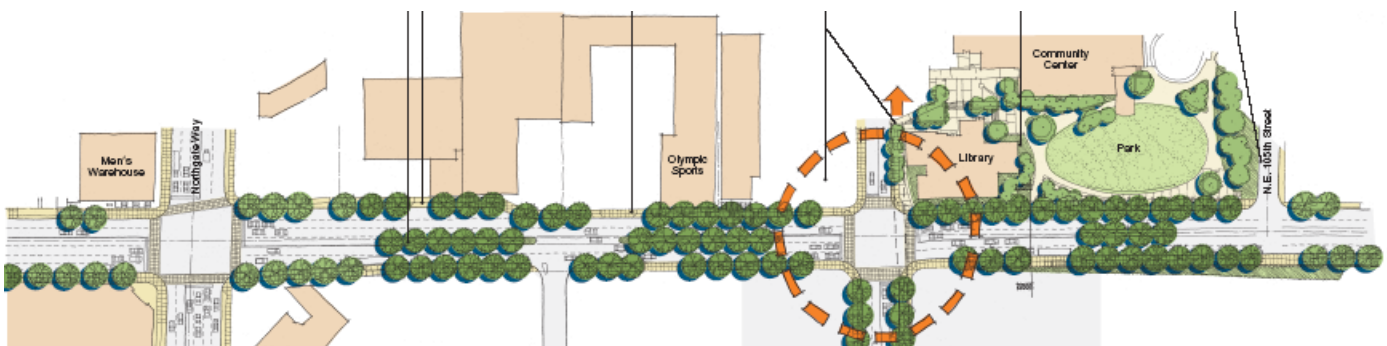
The City Council accepted the 5th Avenue NE Streetscape Design Plan as a reflection of the community's vision in Resolution 30596. This 2003 resolution directed Seattle's transportation and planning departments to "incorporate the appropriate elements of the 5th Avenue NE Final Streetscape Design Concept" into their plans for the redevelopment of 5th Avenue NE from NE 100th Street to NE 112th Street. That Design Concept calls for sidewalks and crossings that allow for generous walking movement and an increase in width at key corners. Inviting spaces will encourage sociability along retail frontage. Street trees and pedestrian-scaled lighting will line the sidewalk, providing visual continuity while defining the public realm. Landscaped medians at appropriate locations will further define the character of the street, creating a 'boulevard' effect.

The Streetscape Design Concept

The 5th Avenue Design Plan envisions a stimulating, comfortable pedestrian promenade along 5th Avenue NE, while combining a variety of elements into two major design themes:

- (1) improving pedestrian mobility, and
- (2) improving the definition of the pedestrian environment.

These elements include wider sidewalks connecting key destination points, clearly defined street crossings and increased buffering of the pedestrian from traffic. Plan elements also specifically address the Library/Community Center as well as pedestrian connections through Northgate Mall.



III. Public Involvement



The Northgate community has been actively planning the area's growth to benefit the immediate neighborhood, the urban center, and the region as a whole. Creating a pedestrian-friendly environment has been a priority for the community for many years. This chapter includes a recent chronology of public involvement efforts in addressing pedestrian connections in the Northgate area; major themes from the Planning Commission sponsored March 2004 Workshop, including a map of the workshop results; and some important opportunities and ideas which emerged from the community.



III. Public Involvement

Recent Pedestrian Oriented Public Involvement

May 2000

Northgate Town Center Charrette sponsored by the Seattle Planning Commission: Members of the Northgate community explored potential town center concepts within the context of siting a new library and community center. Several findings and recommendations focused on open space and the pedestrian environment.

Fall 2000

Two workshops sponsored by the City focused on the development of the South Lot. Many pedestrian connections emerged as important priorities for the community.

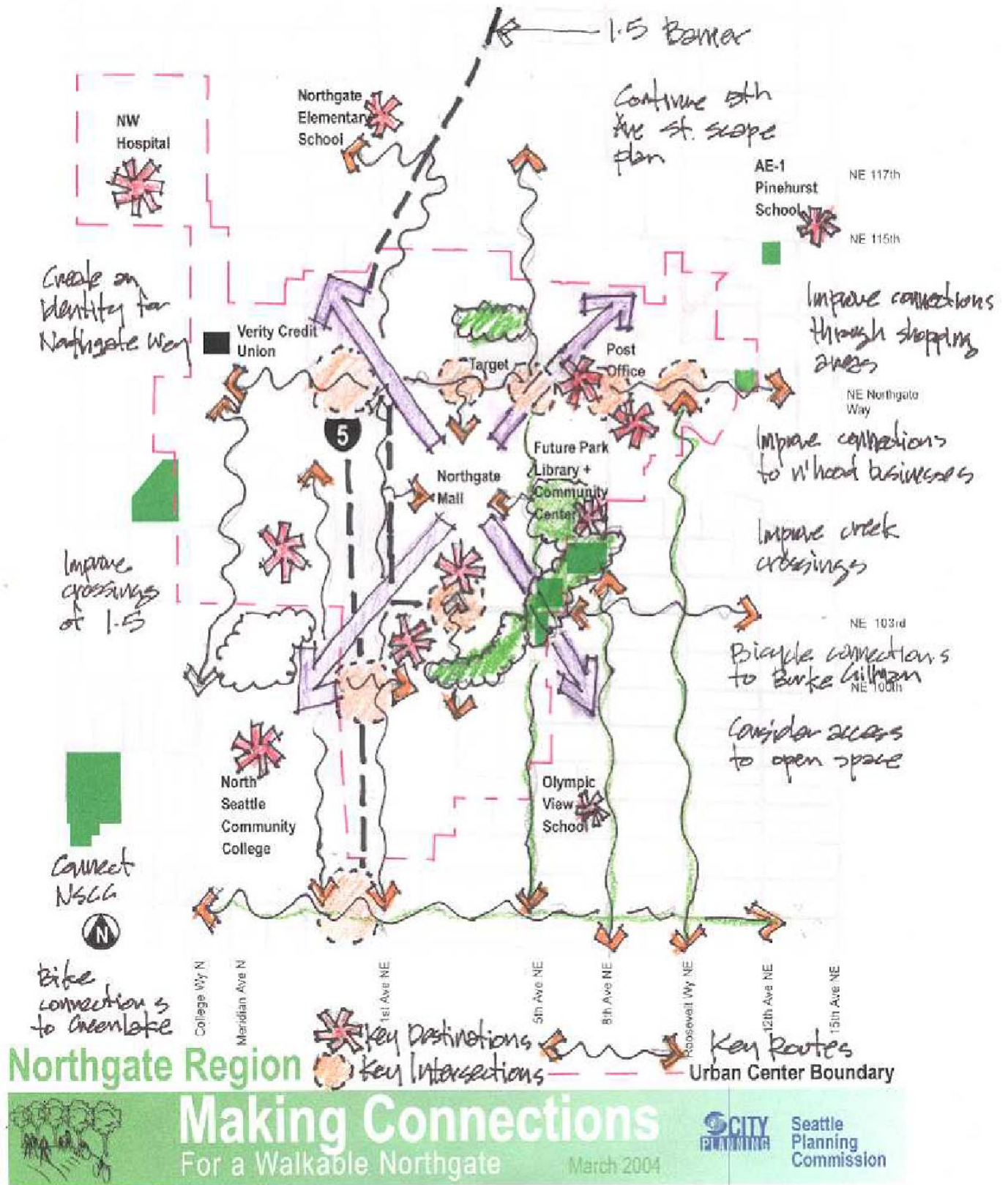
September 2001

5th Ave Streetscape Design Public Workshop sponsored by the Seattle Planning Commission: The community gave input into improving 5th Avenue NE, a first step in creating a definitive vision for transforming Northgate into a regional urban center. The final Design Concept was acknowledged by City Council Resolution 30596.

March 2004

Pedestrian Connections Workshop hosted by the Planning Commission: Northgate community members shared information about key destinations, how they get around their community and their priorities for future pedestrian connections.





Workshop Results Map (from March 25, 2004 Workshop)

III. Public Involvement

Major Themes from the March 2004 Workshop

At the workshop 3 major themes emerged:

- 1) Destinations
- 2) Connections & Connectivity, and
- 3) Pedestrian Dependent Populations

1. Destinations

There are a number of major destinations in the Northgate Urban Center besides the Northgate Mall. These include North Seattle Community College, Northwest Hospital, the Metro Transit Center, and the U.S. Post Office, as well as the planned City library, community center and park.

2. Connections & Connectivity

There is a desire for a more finely grained network of pedestrian connections and pathways in the core area, including movement into, out of, and through the Mall site. Informal pathways in the larger urban center should be identified and reinforced to increase pedestrian access and mobility. People who live in the Northgate area want and need access to neighborhood-serving businesses more frequently than to the Mall's regional retail stores.

Pedestrian connections are important throughout the entire Northgate area. East-west connections are important both north and south of NE Northgate Way. North-south connections are important east of 5th Avenue NE and west of I-5.

3. Pedestrian Dependent Populations

The Northgate Urban Center has a diverse population, including a relatively high population of elderly and youth.

The needs of these distinct population groups should be specifically addressed. These include:

- i. community members who live in retirement facilities and condos in the urban center core;
- ii. students who live in the neighborhood, work and attend school at NSCC or other nearby educational institutions; and
- iii. community members who attend elementary through high school in the area and will be important patrons of the new community center and library.



Barriers and Limiting Factors

Workshop participants also identified barriers and limiting factors that impede pedestrian connections and a safe and pleasant pedestrian environment.

Barriers include:

- i. major traffic corridors,
- ii. the pervasive lack of sidewalks on neighborhood streets and also on some arterials, and
- iii. the 'super-block' configuration of much of the area.

Interstate-5 borders Northgate Mall to the west, dividing the neighborhood



Major Traffic Corridors:

- **I-5 is the most significant barrier**, effectively cutting the Northgate area into two areas east and west that have little visual or physical access to one another, particularly for pedestrians.
- The immensity of **Northgate's transportation facilities** pose many challenges for bridging the divide. Any solution will need to connect students and workers to transit, while improving access to the hotels and Northgate Mall.
- **NE Northgate Way is another significant pedestrian barrier**. While certainly not at the scale of I-5, it carries constant fast-moving traffic with few safe or convenient pedestrian crossings. The volume and speed of traffic discourages pedestrian use of the sidewalks along NE Northgate Way, as does the lack of pedestrian-oriented uses.
- **5th Avenue NE**, identified as a key pedestrian corridor in the Northgate Plan, carries a significant amount of bus and auto traffic, is unattractive and has few pedestrian crossings or pedestrian-oriented development to encourage walking.

Super-block Configuration:

The **large block configuration of much of the commercial core** makes creating a pedestrian-scale environment challenging. This configuration, in conjunction with the steep topography of the southern part of the core, continues to be a barrier to pedestrian circulation through the neighborhood.



III. Public Involvement

Important Opportunities and Ideas

I. Key Destinations

Community members identified several key destinations for pedestrians in the neighborhood.

Opportunities and Ideas

- Create pedestrian access from all directions to the new library/community center/park complex.
- Improve pedestrian access to major institutions and commercial destinations such as Northwest Hospital, Northgate Transit Center, North Seattle Community College and neighborhood commercial areas.
- Expand the system of pedestrian paths to, from and through the Northgate Mall and other superblock locations, making them easy to navigate.
- Look for catalyst projects on key pedestrian corridors to set the example for future pedestrian-oriented development and pedestrian improvements.



2. NE Northgate Way

NE Northgate Way is a major vehicular and pedestrian corridor central to connectivity to and through this urban center. Workshop participants identified many improvements that make this corridor more accessible to pedestrians.

Opportunities and Ideas

- NE Northgate Way can and should be made more accessible and safer for pedestrians to cross at key locations. These include 3rd Avenue NE (or further east near Target), 5th Avenue NE and 8th Avenue NE.
- There are opportunities to create a more clearly defined Northgate identity through unifying streetscape features (pedestrian lighting, banners, etc.) along major corridors (including streets perpendicular to major corridors).
- New development along NE Northgate Way offers opportunities:
 - to create more density so that pedestrian connections work more effectively,
 - to design buildings and sites at a scale that is welcoming to pedestrians, and
 - to improve the streetscape for pedestrians.
- Improve NE Northgate Way to make it an attractive and safe pedestrian corridor – under I-5, along the Northgate Mall and east of 5th Avenue NE to Roosevelt Way NE. Include improvements such as lighting, planting strips, medians where appropriate, and consistent retail and business activity along the entire corridor.
- Create improved pedestrian crossings on NE Northgate Way, 3rd Avenue NE, 5th Avenue NE, Roosevelt Way NE and 15th Avenue NE that safely connect housing, retail, and services.

3. Pedestrian Network

The workshop, the survey and the results from the UW's Landscape Architecture Studio identified a number of secondary connections throughout Northgate that people desire or use. These are important to consider in both future public investments and private development.

Opportunities and Ideas

- Create a fine-grained pedestrian network throughout residential areas including some privately developed paths. Provide alternative pathways to busy streets at logical places where a pedestrian might seek connections between businesses and residences.
- Develop clear, strong pedestrian connections between major destinations and open spaces throughout the Northgate area.
- Natural features in the Northgate area offer opportunities for pedestrians to enjoy natural areas (wetlands at NSCC and along I-5; the South Lot, Thornton Creek east of 5th Avenue NE).
- Recognize the importance of commercial areas outside Northgate Mall and the core – improve pedestrian access to the Post Office and other community-serving businesses from surrounding residential uses.
- Pay attention to Roosevelt Way NE as a reliable and safe pedestrian route.
- Identify some streets and areas where pedestrians come first.
- Improve pedestrian connections and environment on 8th Avenue NE, connecting residential areas to the business area.
- Connect green spaces through the riparian corridor and take advantage of the Thornton Creek watershed wherever possible.
- Develop a clear system of bike routes and pathways through the area. Connect partial bike routes within the area and ultimately connect to biking destinations such as the Burke Gilman Trail and Green Lake.



III. Public Involvement

4. Access to and through Northgate Mall

The topography and super-block configuration at Northgate Mall create challenges for pedestrians. However, the Mall's prime location within the Urban Center makes improved pedestrian access and circulation imperative. Community members identified many opportunities and ideas for such improvements.

Opportunities and Ideas

- Open the Mall at key entrances – east, south, west and north – that are equally inviting and accessible to pedestrians and vehicles.
- Opening 3rd Avenue NE through the South Lot and into the south and north ends of the Northgate Mall may offer significant opportunities to humanize the scale of the grid in those significant super-block areas. This connection could eventually extend to the future park to the north. Such entrances and connections at the south and north borders of the Mall would open up the Mall and create a clear and welcoming entrance for pedestrians.
- The commitment to connect the Mall to the library and community center with a significant 5th Avenue NE/NE 106th Street entrance offers an exciting opportunity to create a gateway into the Mall, connecting the Mall more visibly to the community to the east. Integrate the Mall by creating a clearly defined network of pedestrian pathways to invite pedestrians to enter and move through the site. This would allow the Northgate Mall and its associated parking to become an integral part of the area-wide pedestrian network.
- The City should facilitate cooperative efforts between Simon Properties and adjacent property owners and developers to develop design concepts that create more accessible pedestrian connections between their respective developments.
- Apply the Northgate Design Guidelines to provide explicit encouragement and guidance for pedestrian access at major entry points to large development sites such as the Northgate Mall, the Transit Center, the Lorig development and other large sites that may (re)develop in the future.



Bellevue Square has scaled entryways to be inviting to pedestrians.



Open Space and Pedestrian Connections Map from Planning Commission workshop on March 25, 2004

5. Crossing I-5

Crossing I-5 is a challenge, but not an impossible one. It is essential to knitting the east and west portions of the Northgate area together.

Opportunities and Ideas

- In the short term, the existing crossings over I-5 at NE 92nd Street, NE 117th Street, and under NE Northgate Way could be improved in many ways to make them safe, attractive and more convenient for pedestrians.
- In the long term, the City, Metro-King County, area institutions and organizations should advocate with the Washington State Department of Transportation to include a grade-separated pedestrian crossing in any I-5 reconstruction or reconfiguration plans for the facility (most likely connecting NSCC with the Transit Center).
- Fill in gaps in sidewalks and paved walkways from NSCC to the Transit Center, across NE 92nd Street and along 1st Avenue NE.
- Improve lighting and general physical appearance of Northgate/ I-5 underpass (painting pillars, etc.) to make it more attractive and safe for pedestrians.

6. Transit Connections

Excellent transit connections are critical to the future viability of the Northgate Urban Center. These include connections to and from the Transit Center as well as transit service throughout the Northgate area.

Opportunities and Ideas

- Sound Transit's future light rail station offers an opportunity to create a pedestrian bridge from the station to Northgate Mall – an idea that came from earlier station area planning.
- Take advantage of the transit center to create multi-modal connections that serve the Northgate community as well as the region.
- Consider a transit circulator that would serve the Northgate Urban Center and the five surrounding neighborhoods.
- Create strong pedestrian connections to the Transit Center, along NE 103rd Street and NE 100th Street, through the South Lot development, the Northgate Mall and the office park south of NE 100th Street.



5th Avenue NE at NE 100th Street

Seattle Planning Commission Conclusions and Recommendations

The Seattle Planning Commission has been involved with efforts at Northgate since 2000, holding public forums and charrettes, providing expertise and analysis and advising elected officials. The Commission has offered its assistance and leadership over the years to help facilitate Northgate as an important regional growth center for housing and employment, and to ensure that the goals of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan for managing growth are achieved.

The Commission's conclusions and recommendations for improving pedestrian connections at Northgate are based on analysis of the results of the Pedestrian Connections workshop, a citizen survey of over 150 residents, workers, students and business owners; the University of Washington's landscape architecture studio design work; and Commissioners' previous work on Northgate planning issues. The Commission's conclusions and recommendations are meant not only to inform the Open Space and Pedestrian Circulation Plan developed by the City, but also to inform future planning and development efforts including the Coordinated Transportation Investment Plan and other Northgate efforts and initiatives.

The inserted "Concept Plan Map" is the visual blueprint for the Northgate Open Space and Pedestrian Circulation Plan. This map, along with the more detailed illustrations, highlights many ideas that emerged at the March 2004 Pedestrian Connections Workshop, as well as from feedback gained from the larger public involvement process. The Seattle Planning Commission, the Northgate Stakeholders group and small working groups of area business owners commented on and made significant contributions to these documents.

I. Nine Recommendations for Open Space and Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

1. Provide a clear framework for public and private investments that creates or improves pedestrian connections between major destinations and open spaces and throughout the larger Northgate community.
2. Affirm a commitment to the future creation of a park at the current Metro Park and Ride site at 5th Avenue NE and NE 112th Street. This will provide an important open space close to existing dense residential areas and serve future residential development in the area.
3. Use mapped data from the survey and workshop as well as information regarding proposed public and private projects to develop specific short-term solutions.
4. Place a high priority on the creation of well-defined pedestrian entrances and connections within as well as to and from the South Lot developments, Northgate Mall, and the library/community center/park complex. Include specific pedestrian improvements in the Coordinated Transportation Investment Plan's list of priority capital improvements.



5. In addition to paying attention to pedestrian access to major destinations, clearly identify the opportunities for a more finely-grained pedestrian network throughout the larger Northgate area, including taking advantage of natural features.
6. The City, the community and property owners should look for opportunities to create small publicly accessible open spaces in future private mixed-use and residential developments, particularly in the Urban Center core.
7. The City should create a Northgate Urban Center Core Urban Design Plan to guide public and private investments as this area develops into a more dense mixed use Urban Center. This should be closely coordinated with the Coordinated Transportation Investment Plan (CTIP) so that specific transportation improvements incorporate and reflect the urban design goals and concepts.
8. The City should set a long-term goal for a future pedestrian I-5 crossing to connect North Seattle Community College and the Transit Center. The City should commit to getting support from major players (NSCC, Metro-King County) and communicate this goal clearly to the State. In the short term the City should work with key stakeholders to improve existing I-5 crossings for pedestrians – at NE Northgate Way, NE 92nd Street and 117th Avenue NE.
9. The Northgate Mall and South Lot are active, central areas that are a major attractor. When the transit center and park are taken into account, this area presents a lot of opportunity to bring about a positive change. In particular, projects related to the core redevelopment and transportation improvements present numerous prospects for enhancing pedestrian connectivity. The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) should review the current guidelines and add more specific language to ensure that new Mall and South Lot development maintains and improves the internal and external pedestrian circulation in this area.

III. Public Involvement

II. Three Conclusions and Recommendations for the Coordinated Transportation Investment Plan (CTIP)

1. The City and in particular Seattle Department of Transportation must make pedestrians as high a priority as vehicles in framing and carrying out the Coordinated Transportation Investment Plan (CTIP). If this is not a clear foundation for the CTIP, the community and City will lose the opportunity to really change Northgate from an auto-oriented to a pedestrian-oriented community.
2. The CTIP should make a strong statement about creating a pedestrian-friendly environment – not about which mode is most important, but rather elevating the pedestrian mode as an important means of mobility throughout this developing Urban Center. CTIP efforts should involve carrying out a detailed analysis of pedestrian movements in the key sub-areas of Northgate — NE quadrant (North of NE Northgate Way from I-5 – Roosevelt Avenue NE); SE quadrant (South of NE Northgate Way from 5th to 15th Avenues NE); west of I-5; and the crossovers of I-5 (NE 92nd Street and NE Northgate Way). While it is difficult to create a level of service regarding pedestrian movement, this data will allow for a much better informed assessment of the location and type of pedestrian improvements to be incorporated into the CTIP.
3. The CTIP analysis should consider alleys, parking lots, spaces between buildings, and the riparian corridor along I-5 as opportunities for pedestrian pathways.



IV. Recommendations & Implementation



Based on the input, recommendations and policies described in Chapters II and III, the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) developed the following open space and pedestrian connection action recommendations. These proposed actions will likely occur incrementally through a variety of potential implementers. It is anticipated that many components will be completed in the short term and others over the next two decades. A matrix summarizing all of these recommendations and implementers can be found on pages 36 and 37.

The Pedestrian Connection and Open Space plan on the enclosed foldout is a synthesis of community, Planning Commission and DPD recommendations. On the opposite side are drawings which illustrate concepts based on community ideas and recommendations.

IV. Recommendations and Implementation

Department of Planning & Development Recommendations

OPEN SPACE

Seattle's Comprehensive Plan calls for open space "that enhances environmental quality by providing Seattleites with light, air and visual relief through natural beauty and interaction with others." The Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan identifies a lack of quality open space and calls for actions to address this deficiency. Several initiatives are currently underway to address open space needs in Northgate. These include a new park adjacent to the planned Northgate Community Center and Library, the Thornton Creek open channel on the "South Lot," and the planned 5th Avenue NE streetscape improvements.

Development of formal and natural, active and passive open spaces should continue to be a high priority for the City. Specifically the following actions should be taken:

- Acquire and develop land for a park on the site bordered by NE 112th Street between 3rd and 5th Avenues NE.
- Leverage existing natural open space including wetlands, Thornton Creek and area parks by creating a pedestrian network that connects them.
- Strengthen the partnership with NSCC to realize opportunities there for additional open space and pedestrian connections.
- Reinforce and find ways to implement the Open Space and Pedestrian Connections recommendations in the Northgate Overlay District, and the Northgate Design Guidelines.

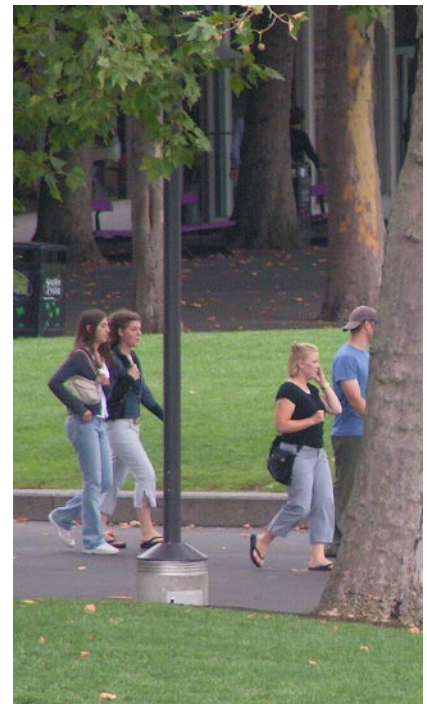
PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

Northgate is home to one of the first exclusively auto-oriented shopping centers in the United States. Subsequent development patterns in the surrounding area have followed this auto-oriented design, resulting in a poor pedestrian environment. The following recommendations are made to both create and improve the pedestrian environment.

I. Improve Pedestrian Corridors

Northgate's arterial streets have the potential to serve both as quality pedestrian corridors and attractive open spaces.

- Improve NE Northgate Way as a pedestrian corridor (from Meridian Avenue NE to Roosevelt Way NE).
- Use Design Review for projects on key pedestrian corridors.
- Continue 5th Avenue NE Streetscape Plan improvements (NE 113th Street – NE 100th Street).





2. Address Super-blocks

Northgate's large block sizes limit both vehicular and pedestrian connectivity. Pedestrian conditions are degraded by large volumes of traffic being channeled onto a limited street grid. The long block lengths in Northgate's core increase the distance between traffic signals, further degrading pedestrian access.

- Improve pedestrian access and internal circulation through Northgate Mall and all superblocks with additional pedestrian entrances.
- Provide similar internal connections through mini-mall developments along NE Northgate Way, 5th Avenue NE and the business park south of NE 100th Street.
- Develop the South Lot with a new 3rd Avenue NE connection north to the mall and south to the business park.
- Create better pedestrian links along the west side of I-5, north of NSCC.

3. Improve Pedestrian Access Across I-5

The Northgate community is divided by the region's main north/south transportation corridor, Interstate 5. The freeway presents a nearly impenetrable pedestrian obstacle. Interstate 5 can be crossed at only three locations. The most central crossing location, NE Northgate Way, is dark, noisy, and aesthetically bereft.

- Improve NE Northgate Way crossing and the pedestrian crossings at NE 92nd Street and NE 117th Street.
- Over the long term, provide a grade-separated crossing connecting NSCC with the Northgate Transit Center (potentially when I-5 revisions are completed).

4. Create Neighborhood Links

The Northgate core is ringed by a mix of well-defined neighborhoods. Linking these neighborhoods to retail, recreation and transit service is critical to making Northgate pedestrian-friendly. Many non-arterial streets lack basic curbs and sidewalks. Poorly defined walking areas and haphazard vehicle parking hamper the pedestrian experience.

- Improve essential residential streets; give high priority to proposals for pedestrian improvements on streets that can serve as good residential connectors such as 8th and 12th Avenues NE and NE 92nd and 95th Streets.
- Improve pedestrian crossings over and along Thornton Creek where possible.



IV. Recommendations and Implementation

5. Consider a Northgate Way Pedestrian Overpass

The Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan calls for a pedestrian overpass at NE Northgate Way and 5th Avenue NE. More recently suggestions have been made for an overpass at or near 3rd Avenue NE. This solution to safe pedestrian access across NE Northgate Way should be considered, but with recognition that pedestrian improvements along NE Northgate Way are essential to safe pedestrian access along this dense mixed use corridor.

- Improve pedestrian crossings along NE Northgate Way at 3rd, 4th and 8th Avenues NE and at Roosevelt Way NE.
- Consider a pedestrian overpass over Northgate Way, incorporating it into (future) development on either side of the street.

BICYCLE CONNECTIONS

Bicycling provides a viable, affordable and environmentally responsible transportation alternative to the car. Federal transportation statistics indicate that 48% of all car trips are less than 3 miles in length – a distance easily traveled by bicycle. Yet many communities like Northgate lack the necessary bicycle connections to safely accommodate bicycle trips.

The Northgate community has recognized the need to improve and expand Northgate's bicycle network, identifying in the NACP and the March 25th, 2004 pedestrian connections workshop specific strategies to improve bicycling conditions and connections.

SPANNING I-5

Both pedestrian and bicycle connections need to be improved across I-5. High vehicular speeds and multiple freeway on- and off-ramps make crossing under I-5 at NE Northgate Way particularly perilous. While crossings over the freeway are possible at NE 92nd Street, both pedestrian and bicycle conditions need to be improved. The future expansion of the Northgate Transit Center — to accommodate light rail and mixed use development and continued growth of North Seattle Community College and other office and residential development west of I-5 — calls for another crossing of I-5.

- Develop a new grade-separated crossing at NE 100th Street to connect the Transit Center and Mall with the Community College and developments west of I-5. Include in this a designated bicycle connection.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTORS

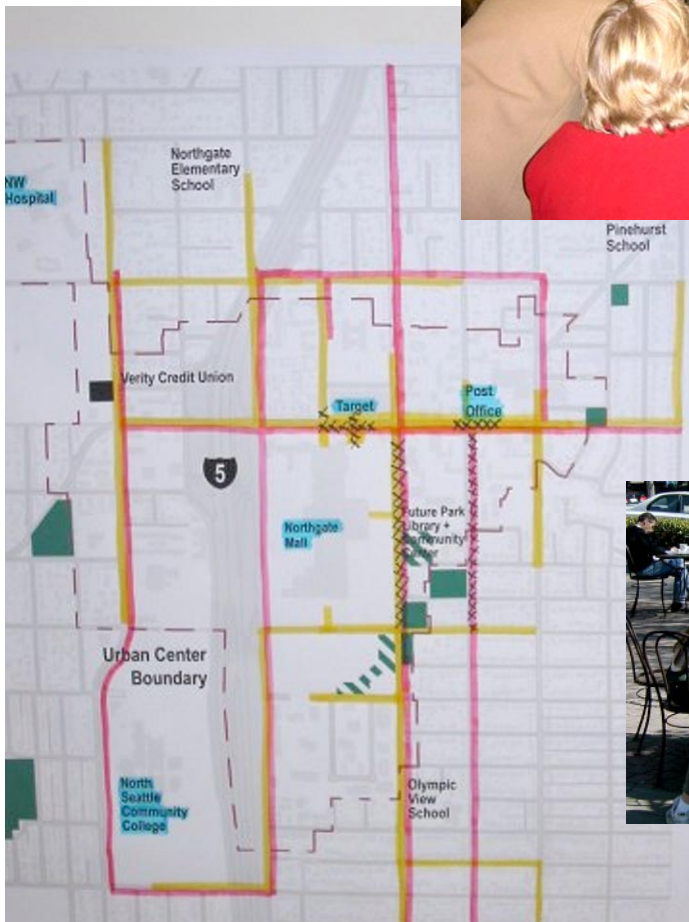
Bicycle connections through the neighborhoods surrounding the Northgate Urban Center core are important to creating continuous bicycle access in the area.

- Improve neighborhood connector streets to safely accommodate bicycles; these streets include Meridian Avenue North from NE 122nd to NE 92nd Streets, and 8th Avenue NE from NE 117th to NE 92nd Streets.

REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

Bicycle access to regional bicycle routes and systems should be strengthened to better encourage bicycle use.

- Install clear signage in the Northgate area to regional bike facilities including the Burke Gilman Trail and Green Lake.



IV. Recommendations and Implementation

Implementation

Good things are already happening in Northgate!

Projects in the Planning Stages and Already Underway

Northgate Library, Park & Community Center

Seattle Public Library and Seattle Parks and Recreation are building a new library, community center and park on 5th Avenue NE. The Northgate urban center will now have access to new open space and a variety of programs and services previously unavailable. This joint facility is funded by the voter-approved Pro Parks, Community Center Levy and the Libraries for All Levy.

5th Avenue NE Streetscape Improvements

A new pedestrian streetscape project will be built on 5th Avenue NE. These improvements will provide a safe, attractive public environment and a better pedestrian link between Northgate Mall and the new Northgate Library, Park and Community Center. The project includes a new signal, crosswalks, pedestrian lighting, street-trees and a landscaped median. Simon Properties will build an attractive pedestrian entryway to the Mall on 5th Avenue NE that will link the new Northgate civic center project and the shopping center.

Coordinated Transportation Investment Plan (CTIP)

This transportation plan is designed to identify current and future Northgate transportation needs and multi-modal improvements that better balance automobile traffic and public transit, pedestrians and bicyclists. The CTIP improvements will also address freight mobility as well as traffic calming for residential streets. The CTIP will use the Northgate Pedestrian and Open Space Plan as a basis for proposing pedestrian and bicycle improvements.

Thornton Creek Water Quality Channel

This unique water quality project will improve the health of Thornton Creek, enhance the neighborhood's natural environment and provide new pedestrian paths. It will be planned and constructed in coordination with a new mixed-use housing and retail project on 2.7 acres of the Northgate South Lot. The new Thornton Creek Channel will improve water quality and become an attractive public open space.

North Link Light Rail Station

Sound Transit has proposed a light rail station near the existing Metro/King County Transit Center as part of the preferred alignment for the proposed north light rail extension. When complete, the light rail project will connect Northgate to the University of Washington, Downtown, and SE Seattle.



The planned library and community center are among the many neighborhood destinations in the Northgate area.

IV. Recommendations and Implementation

Metro/King County Transit-Oriented Development

Metro/King County is planning a mixed-use transit-oriented development and a redeveloped high-capacity transit center that will accommodate future light rail and bus transit. The transit center will have good pedestrian connections to adjacent development projects and neighborhoods.

Thornton Creek Park Acquisitions

Seattle Parks and Recreation continues to acquire key properties along Thornton Creek. These acquisitions, funded by Pro Parks Levy monies, will provide additional riparian areas for creek protection and open space.

Mineral Spring Park Renovation

The old North Seattle Park officially became Mineral Springs Park in late 2001 and has been renovated with over \$700,000 in Pro Parks funding. The new park has enhanced landscaping, art and recreational improvements.

Next Steps For Northgate

Council Resolution 30642 clearly states that “the Plan should be used in design review as a supplement to the neighborhood specific design guidelines. The Plan may also result in proposed amendments to the neighborhood specific design guidelines and/or the Overlay District development standards, as appropriate.” Just as the solutions needed to improve Northgate’s open space and pedestrian environment are numerous and varied, implementation of the Plan will likely rely on a variety of strategies with a combination of short-term and long-term implementation timelines. Potential implementers include:

The Coordinated Transportation Investment Plan (CTIP)

CTIP will review these recommendations as well as current and future transportation needs in Northgate and prioritize specific multi-modal improvement projects and programs to meet those needs. These will include pedestrian, bicycle and other forms of transportation projects.

City of Seattle Departments

As part of routine capital improvements, City departments including the Seattle Parks Department, Seattle Public Utilities, and the Department of Neighborhoods can implement priority open space and pedestrian connections.

Metro King County Transit

Metro King County is currently working to improve pedestrian connections to and from the south lot park-and-ride. An example includes proposed improvements to 3rd Avenue NE and NE 100th Street. As opportunities for transit-oriented development increase, Metro King County will play an important role in improving the pedestrian realm.

IV. Recommendations and Implementation

Washington State Department of Transportation

Long term plans to completely reconstruct Interstate-5's roadbed could provide the opportunity to expand and improve east-west connections over and under the Interstate.

Private Development

As private property owners redevelop, existing land use regulations and Design Review Guidelines can help ensure pedestrian-friendly design.

Sound Transit/Seattle Monorail

While a high capacity transit system (either monorail or light rail) is still being planned, connections to future transit stations could further strengthen Northgate's pedestrian environment.

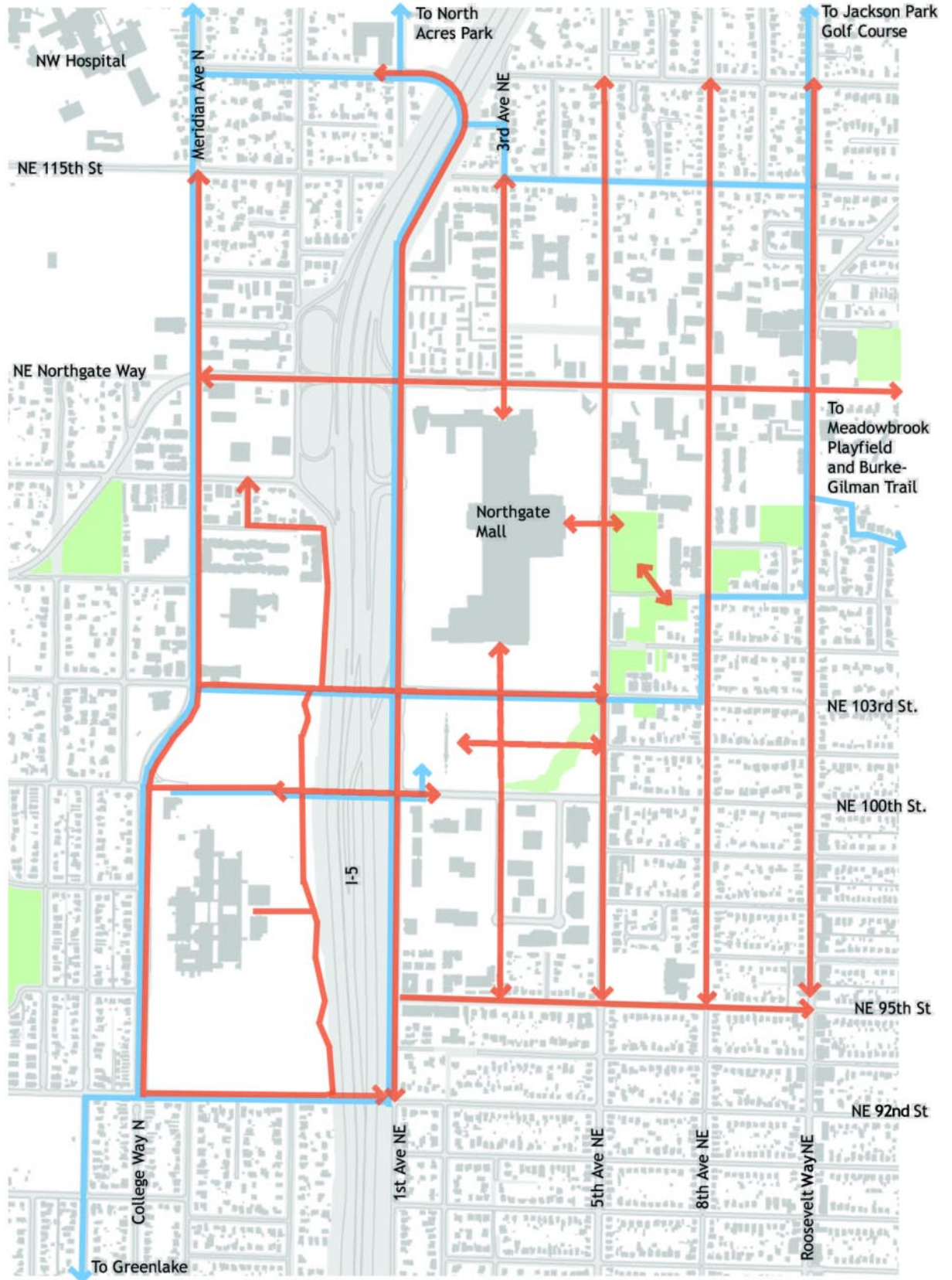
Local Community Initiatives

Local initiatives, such as developing a visual identity for the Northgate Way retail core, could be spearheaded by the community. In coordination with the City and property owners, community members also play a key role in the review of private development through the City's Design Review Program.

Department of Planning and Development

DPD will review the existing Northgate State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) Policies (Ordinance 116770) relating to open space and pedestrian safety and mobility. The goals are to honor the intent of the policies and to place them in an appropriate regulatory framework. DPD will consider changes to the Land Use Code, SEPA Policies, and design guidelines to optimize desired open space, pedestrian connections and streetscapes. The analysis and recommendations about the existing Northgate SEPA Policies will be integrated with DPD's draft and final report prepared as part of the CTIP scope of work. The Northgate SEPA Policies in Ordinance 116770 will remain in place during this review.

IV. Recommendations and Implementation



- Key Pedestrian Routes (Proposed)
- Key Bicycle Routes (Proposed)

Pedestrian & Bicycle Routes MAP

Open Space, Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Open Space, Pedestrian & Bicycle Connection Matrix

Short Term Long Term Potential Implementers:

	City of Seattle Transportation Investment City of Seattle Coordinated Plan	City of King County Transit	WSDOT	Private Development	Community Development	Sound Transit
Tame the Superblocks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the south lot with a new 3rd Avenue, connecting north to the mall, south to the business park and west to the transit center Ensure safe, attractive pedestrian pathways along 105th (south side of library/community center site) Improve pedestrian access and circulation through Northgate Mall with additional north and south pedestrian entrances similar to that on 5th Avenue Improve internal pedestrian circulation of existing development along Northgate Way, 5th Avenue and south of 100th Street Encourage pedestrian access through superblocks as they develop in the future (Mullally, Touchstone Properties and Business Park south of NE 100th) 						
Connect Across I-5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve existing pedestrian crossings at NE 92nd, Northgate Way and NE 117th; Improve 1st Avenue NE for pedestrians from NE 92nd to Northgate Way Seek future I-5 pedestrian crossing, connecting NSCC with Transit Center 		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Neighborhood Links	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide clear, safe neighborhood connections to library, local services (Post Office, Northgate Plaza, QFC, etc.) Improve Thornton Creek crossings Enhance neighborhood pedestrian network by providing pedestrian pathways, trees and lighting along 8th and 12th Avenues Improve pedestrian network west of I-5 to institutions including North Seattle Community College and Northwest Hospital 						
Bicycle Connections						
<p><i>Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan Policy:</i> "CREATE A SAFE AND CONVENIENT ENVIRONMENT FOR BICYCLING TO INCREASE THE USE OF BICYCLES TO DESTINATIONS IN THE NORTHGATE AREA."</p>						
Recommendations:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and enhance bicycle and pedestrian routes to regional facilities such as Green Lake and the Burke-Gilman Trail Improve bicycle and pedestrian connections to major institutions and destinations west of I-5 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					

Open Space, Pedestrian & Bicycle Connections Implementation Matrix

Short Term Long Term Potential Implementers:

	City of Seattle Transportation Investment Department	City of Seattle Coordinated Plan	Metro King County Transit	WSDOT	Private Development	Community Development	Sound Transit
Open Space Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan Policy: "A SYSTEM OF OPEN SPACES AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS SHALL BE ESTABLISHED TO GUIDE ACQUISITION, LOCATION, AND DEVELOPMENT OF FUTURE OPEN SPACE AND TO ESTABLISH PRIORITIES FOR RELATED PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide access through proposed open space adjacent to South Lot development • Acquire and develop park at NE 112th Street between 5th and 3rd Avenues • Leverage existing natural open space including wetlands, Thornton Creek and area parks in developing the pedestrian network • Develop partnership with NSCC to maximize opportunities for passive open space • Continue to be opportunistic in acquiring property to link existing natural space along Thornton Creek 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Pedestrian Connections Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan Policy: "INCREASE PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION WITH AN IMPROVED STREET LEVEL ENVIRONMENT BY CREATING PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS THAT ARE SAFE, INTERESTING, AND PLEASANT."							
Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Northgate Way as a pedestrian corridor from Meridian to Roosevelt (better lighting, buffers from traffic and designated pedestrian crossings at key locations) • Design review process for projects on key pedestrian corridors to set example for future pedestrian-oriented development and improvements • Continue 5th Ave Streetscape Plan improvements from 113th to 100th Street and from 105th to Northgate Way 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	



V. Acknowledgments

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Land Use Element: L132, L133, L205

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Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan

Policy 8, Policy 12

<http://www.cityofseattle.net/dclu/Planning/comprehensive/NorthgatePlanIntro.htm#background>

Northgate Overlay District

Seattle Municipal Code

Title 23, Chapter 23.71, Northgate Overlay District

<http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/codeI.htm>

The 5th Avenue Streetscape Design Plan

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Seattle City-wide Design Guidelines

http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/dpd/Publications/Design_Review_Guidelines/default.htm

Northgate Area Design Guidelines

http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/DCLU/publications/Design_Review_Guidelines/Northgate2003.pdf



City of Seattle

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