

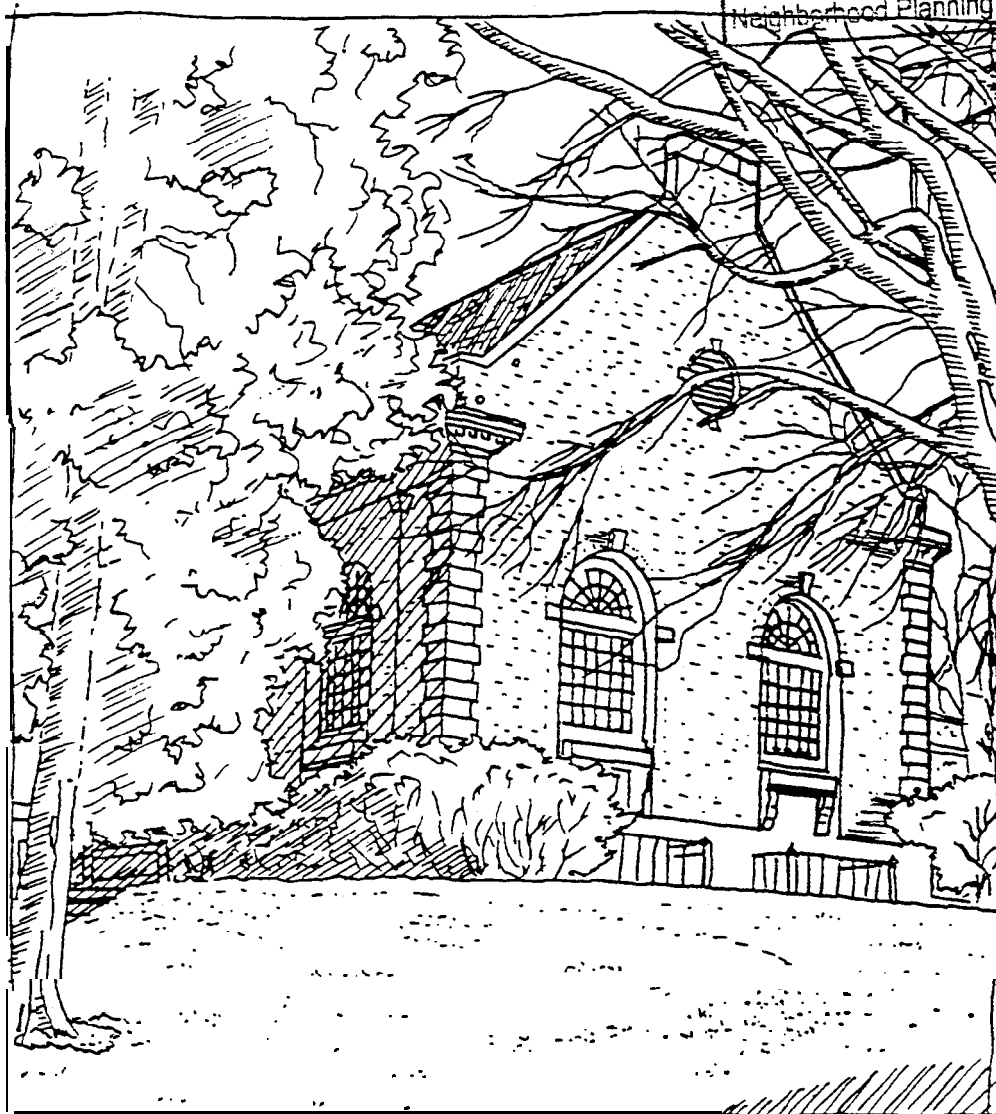
Columbia City • Hillman City • Genesee *Neighborhood Plan*

February 1999

Genesee
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TO FILE: _____
Neighborhood Planning Office



Prepared for:

Columbia City • Hillman City • Genesee Planning Committee

Prepared by:

MAKERS architecture and urban design

Sponsored by:

City of Seattle Neighborhood Planning Office

Columbia City/ Hillman City/ Genesee


Neighborhood Plan

February 1999

Planning Team:

A team of consultants provided technical expertise to assist the Planning Committee in developing the neighborhood plan. City of Seattle staff provided administrative and strategic support as well as in-depth review of the neighborhood plan during its development.

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Planning Committee:

The Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee Planning Committee is responsible for ensuring that the entire community has the opportunity to participate in the neighborhood planning process and that identified stakeholder groups are involved in the review of planning products. To this end the committee has taken responsibility for providing community forums for involvement throughout the whole process and for making planning documents available and accessible to the public.

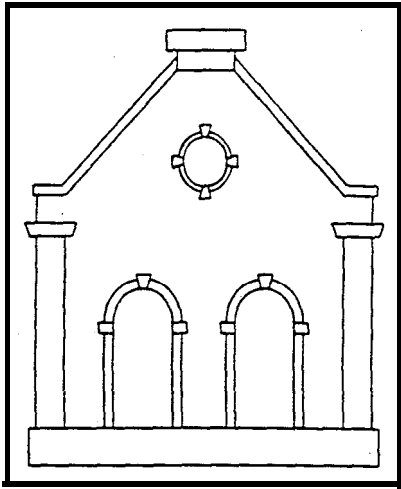


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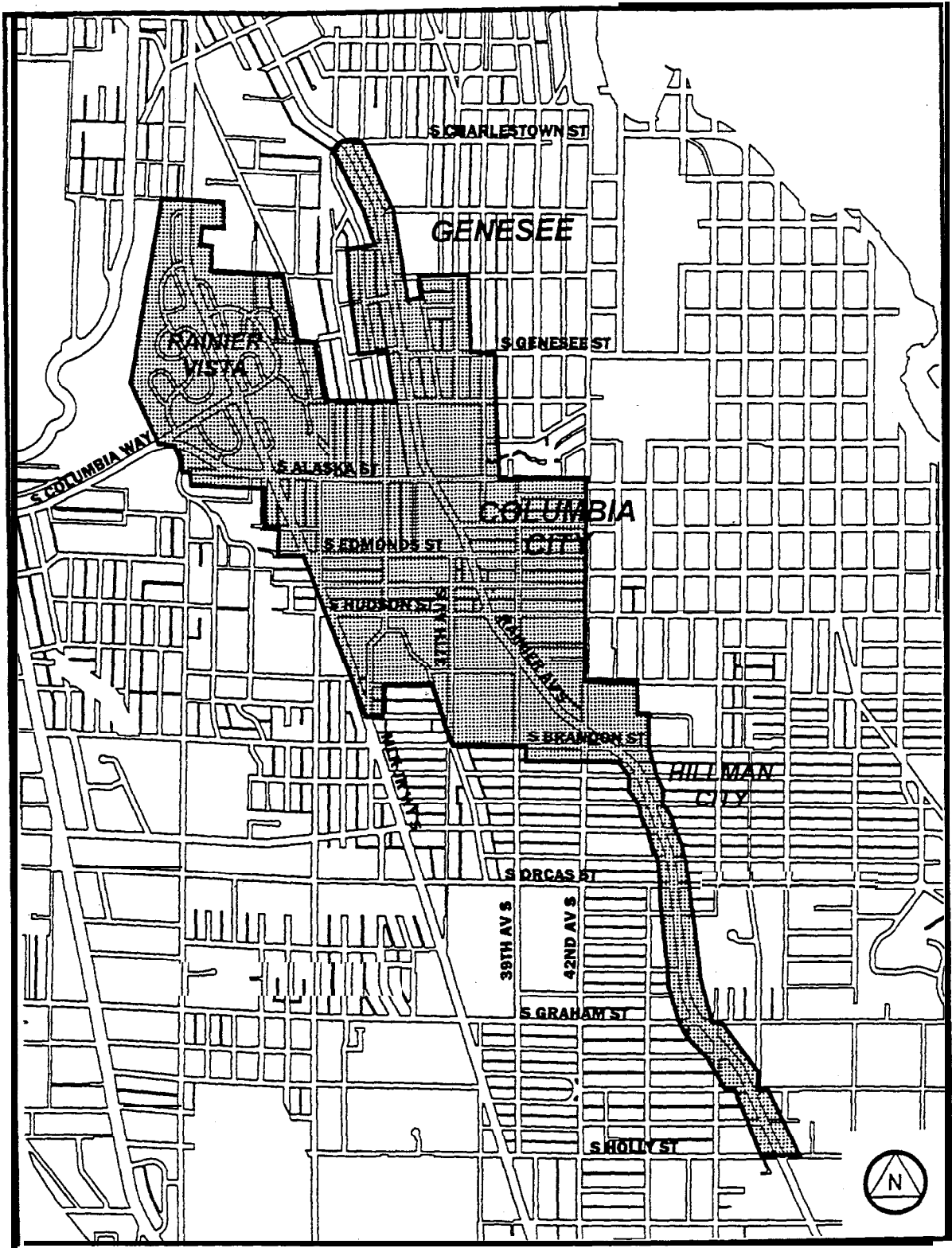
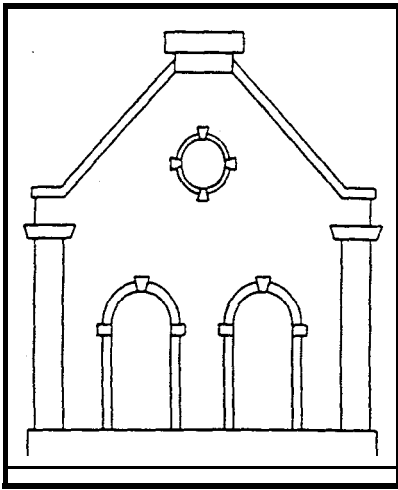


figure 1: Planning Area Boundaries



Executive Summary

A. Vision Statement

Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee is envisioned to be:

- **Attractive:** *A clean, attractive community where both public and private property is well maintained, parks and open spaces are preserved and enhanced, and recreational and cultural opportunities are many.*
- **Healthy:** *Streets with pedestrian walkways and bike paths that are safe, attractive, maintained, and well lit; a stable, healthy residential neighborhood where people choose to stay and raise families and housing is affordable.*
- **Vibrant:** *Interesting, attractive, and vibrant commercial areas linked through transit to other neighborhoods and employment centers within Seattle and the greater area; a community in which reinvestment and entrepreneurship are ongoing and apparent.*
- **Diverse:** *A community that takes pride in the ethnic and economic diversity of the Rainier Valley and promotes a stabilization of the community that retains diverse households.*
- **Connected:** *A strong connection among neighbors, with increased access to living-wage job opportunities for local residents.*

The vision statement above, formulated by the Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee Planning Committee during Phase I of the planning process and refined in Phase II, summarizes the founding principles on which this plan is based. The plan itself translates the ideals expressed in the vision statement into a set of implementable goals, policies, and (most specifically) actions that the City, community, and other participants will take to achieve the vision. In translating their general vision into specific recommendations for action, planning participants identified overarching strategies which serve to organize the individual actions.

B. Key Strategies

Throughout the two-year neighborhood planning process, the community identified the themes and priorities that are most critical to the Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee neighborhoods. These principles are the basis of all of the Neighborhood Plan's recommendations. In order to achieve the community's goals, the neighborhood plan's recommendations focus on integrated geographic district plans and key projects and programs. These priorities are:

1. **Strengthen the Columbia City Core as a historic, mixed-use, pedestrian oriented community focus.** Columbia City is the oldest neighborhood in the Rainier Valley and has the opportunity to be South Seattle's premier community-based center for cultural and commercial activity. The plan recommends actions to strengthen this role while maintaining the "small town" historic scale.
2. **Enhance the Rainier Corridor as a series of commercial districts and neighborhood centers along an efficient transportation corridor.** The plan's actions encourage the development of new housing between the cores while strengthening the commercial districts and activity centers. Street improvements are intended to identify and celebrate the individual districts, promote pedestrian activity and safety, and retain transportation efficiency.
3. **Strengthen the quality of existing residential areas and provide opportunities and incentives for market rate housing.** The housing actions focus on stimulating new multifamily housing development which are assets to the community, and which support the revitalization and strengthening of commercial centers.
4. **Optimize opportunities to make Sound Transit's rail line a positive community asset.** In recognizing the proposed rail line's likely far reaching impacts, the community established route selection criteria relevant to the Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee Vision Statement, recommended an alignment (37th Avenue S. tunnel), light rail mitigation measures, and specific transportation strategies to enhance circulation and mobility.
5. **Improve the appearance of the MLK corridor while retaining its function as an efficient transportation corridor.** Plan recommendations aim to reverse the pattern of disinvestment along the corridor by encouraging new housing construction, enhancing pedestrian access, and improving safety.
6. **Stabilize and enhance the Columbia City area as a safe and clean neighborhood in which to live, work, and recreate.** Actions and measures such as improving street lighting in business districts, aggressive enforcement of nuisance codes, and restoring community-based policing are high neighborhood priorities directed towards improving the image and livability of the area.



MLK Corridor

Improve the appearance of the MLK Corridor while retaining its function as an efficient transportation corridor:

- Streetscape and pedestrian improvements.

Housing

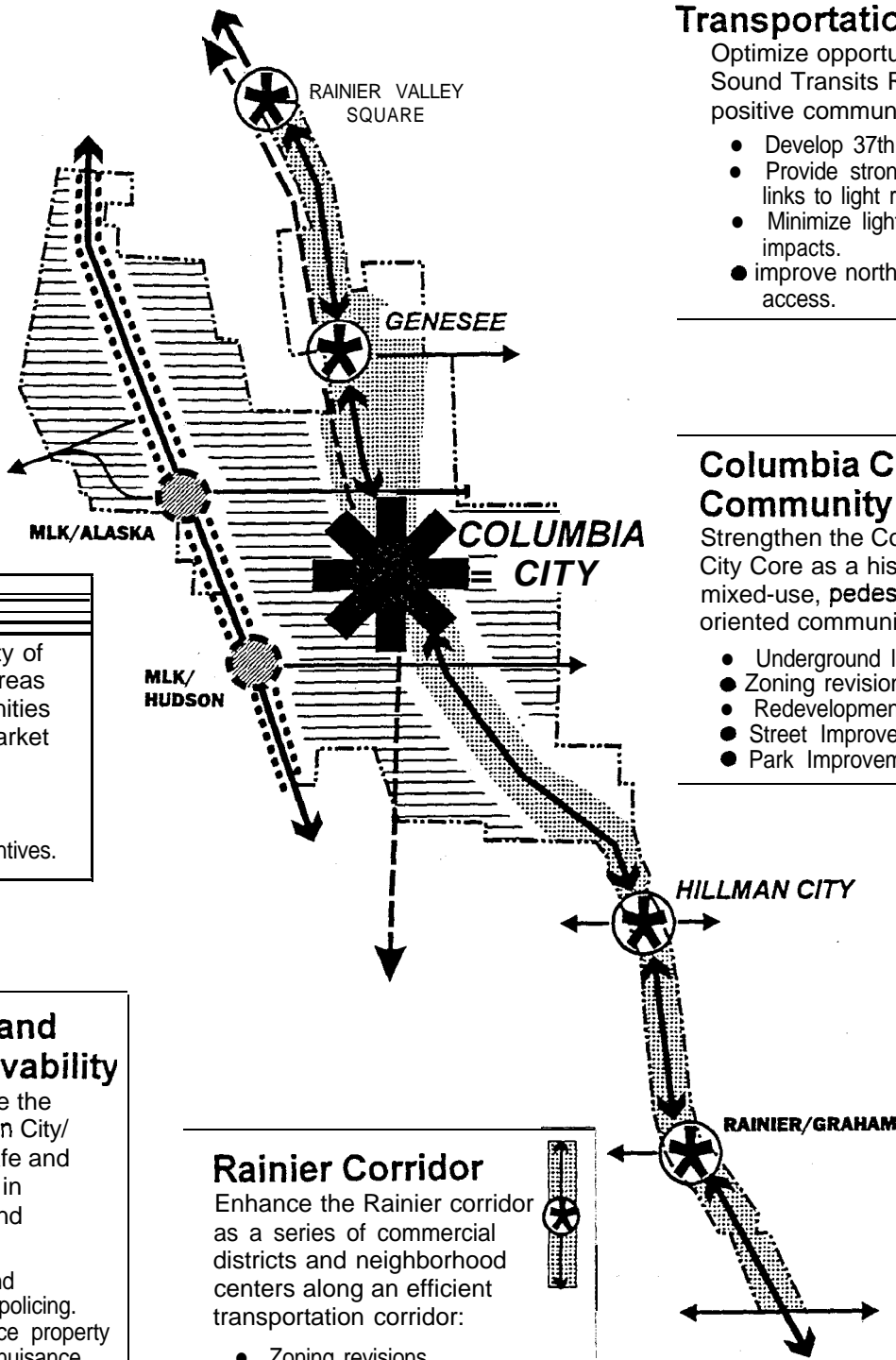
Strengthen the quality of existing residential areas and provide opportunities and incentives for market rate housing:

- Zoning revisions.
- Housing programs.
- Development incentives.

Public Safety and Community Livability

Stabilize and enhance the Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee areas as safe and clean neighborhoods in which to live, work, and recreate:

- Restore and expand community-based policing.
- Aggressively enforce property maintenance and nuisance codes.
- Support local arts activities and programs.



Transportation

Optimize opportunities to make Sound Transits Rail Line a positive community asset:

- Develop 37th Ave tunnel route.
- Provide strong neighborhood links to light rail system.
- Minimize light rail construction impacts.
- improve north-south bicycle access.

Columbia City Community Focus

Strengthen the Columbia City Core as a historic, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented community focus:

- Underground light rail station.
- Zoning revisions.
- Redevelopment of key sites.
- Street Improvements.
- Park Improvements.

Rainier Corridor

Enhance the Rainier corridor as a series of commercial districts and neighborhood centers along an efficient transportation corridor:

- Zoning revisions.
- Redevelopment.
- Gateway features.

Figure 2: Key Strategies

C. Station Area Planning Recommendations

The development of a Sound Transit light rail transit (LRT) corridor and station within Columbia City will be the community's most important revitalization opportunity in the early 21st century. To realize this opportunity, the community and the City, in cooperation with Sound Transit, must plan a focused set of actions that minimizes the intrusive aspects of the LRT corridor and maximizes the positive redevelopment and transportation related benefits.

The Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee Neighborhood Plan has been prepared prior to Sound Transit's selection of an LRT corridor alignment or station location. Because of the uncertainty regarding a critical element in the community's future, the plan's recommendations for the Columbia City core and the MLK corridor have necessarily been less specific than if there were a solid corridor and station design proposal. However, the top priority for community and City efforts during the next several years must be to continue to plan, fund, and construct the civic improvements and private redevelopment to complement the LRT station for the benefit of the community. To this end, the following recommendations assume highest priority. Some recommendations are to be accomplished regardless of the station location, while others depend on a specific station site. In general, if the station is sited at the Columbia City core, the focus of efforts should be to construct the indicated public improvements and joint development projects in the core and to improve the MLK streetscape residential community along that corridor. If MLK is selected as a station site, substantially more extensive traffic, aesthetic, and environmental improvements, as well as redevelopment projects, will be needed along the MLK corridor, and substantially more extensive public investment must be made in the core to maintain the community's commercial and civic focus.

Key station area actions regardless of which station site is selected:

- Redevelop the Columbia Plaza site.
- Provide curb, gutter, sidewalk, and street tree improvements on residential streets within the Columbia City core.
- Improve pedestrian access between Rainier Vista and the Columbia City business district.
- Strengthen Columbia Park and expand the Columbia City Library.
- Give special consideration to private property loss compensation and assist in relocating residents.
- Facilitate the following zoning changes:
 - Areas zoned L-2 and L3-RC west of Rainier Avenue, between S. Lilac Street and S. Genesee Street, to LDT.
 - Reduce the height limit at the Columbia Plaza/Seafirst Bank site from 65 to 40 feet.
- Develop car/bus drop-off sites close to the transit station.
- Conduct a detailed transportation analysis of all major north-south transportation corridors.
- Develop a bus loop system connecting area neighborhoods to the transit station.
- Maintain current mobility standards along Martin Luther King Jr. Way.
- Improve bicycle access on Martin Luther King Jr. Way or Rainier Avenue.



Key station area actions if the Columbia City station site is selected:

- Integrate the primary station entry into the redevelopment of the Columbia Plaza site.
- Create station entries at 37th Avenue S./S. Edmunds Street and off Rainier Avenue S.
- Preserve historic streetfront buildings in Columbia City.
- Provide streetscape improvements on 37th Avenue S. (above the transit alignment), including street trees, curbs, gutters, new sidewalks, street furniture, signage, etc.
- Develop a linear park with separated pathways along the west side of Rainier Avenue north of Alaska.
- Improve the streetscape and residential community along MLK.

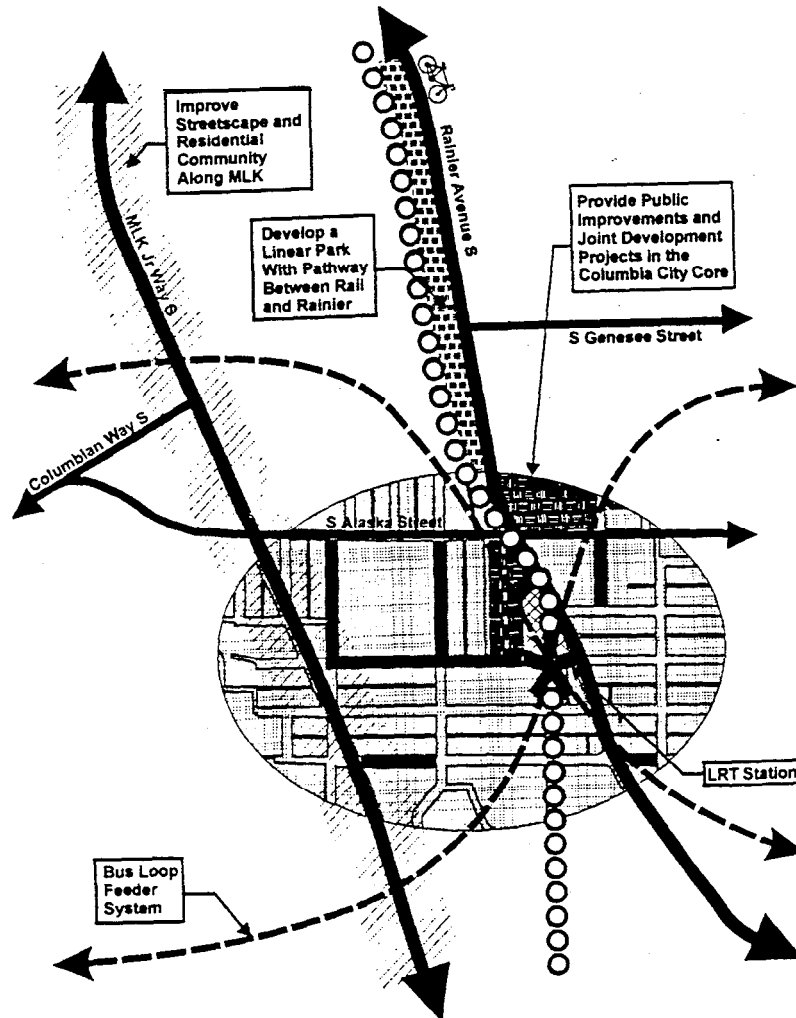


Figure 3: Columbia City Station Area Strategies

Key actions if one of the MLK station sites is selected:

- Coordinate the development of the station and alignment with the redevelopment of the Rainier Vista public housing garden community.
- Provide for streetscape and pedestrian improvements, such as widened sidewalks, landscaping, street trees, and improved sidewalks on MLK, to mitigate for rail alignment and limited street crossings.
- Provide for effective signalization and traffic control at the MLK/Alaska intersection to enhance pedestrian safety while maintaining good mobility standards.
- Explore the option of closing off 3 1 st Avenue S. between Alaska and MLK to increase redevelopment opportunities.
- Explore opportunities to create a small park/open space area near the southeast corner of MLK and Alaska in conjunction with condemnation for alignment and possible closure of 3 1 st Avenue S.
- Develop a stairclimb/pedestrian access from the Beacon Hill area towards the transit station.
- Add bicycle and pedestrian improvements on Columbia Way/Alaska Street west to Beacon Hill.

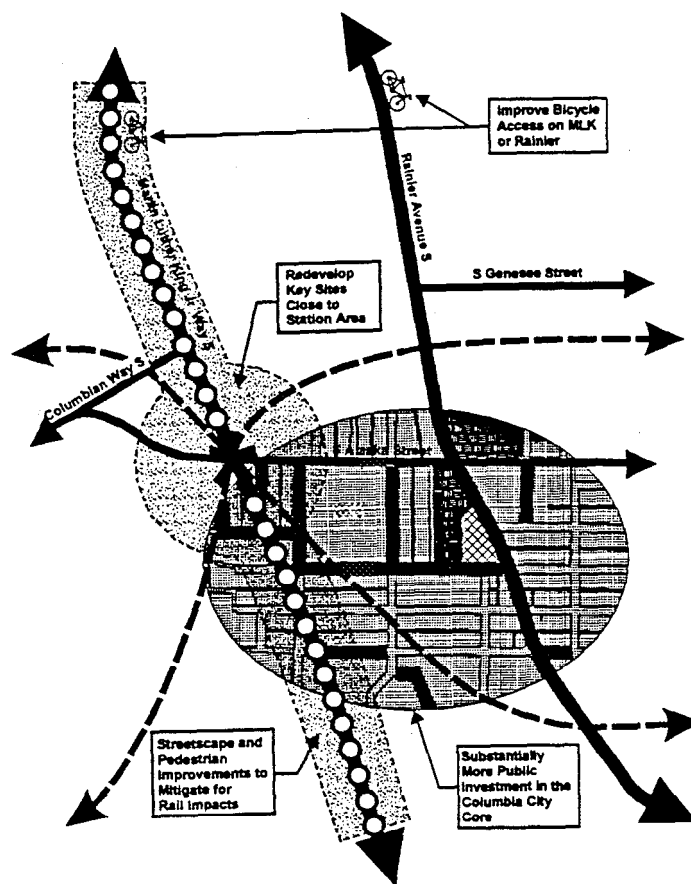
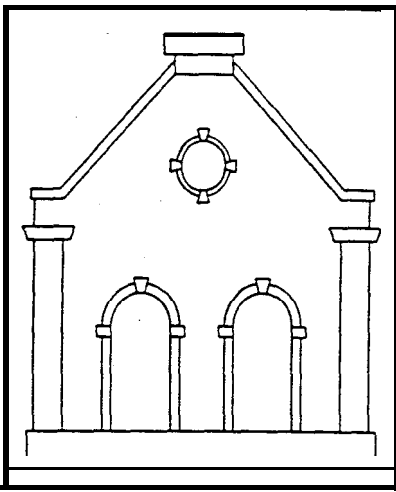


Figure 4: ML K Station Area Strategies



I. Introduction

A. Background and Purpose

History

The Rainier Valley was first settled in the last part of the 19th Century. The area's exceptional timber stands led to the construction of timber mills, farming, and residential and commercial development. In response to the need to rebuild Seattle after the 1889 fire, J.K. Edmiston constructed a railway into Rainier Valley in 1890 to improve freight hauling in the area. The original Seattle, Renton, and Southern Railway ran seven miles from Seattle to Columbia City, in the heart of the Rainier Valley. Lumber was shipped to Seattle, while finished goods were sent back to Columbia City and the Rainier Valley. The railroad also had the effect of encouraging more settlement into the area. Columbia City was incorporated as a city in 1893 and later annexed into the City of Seattle in 1907. The area saw tremendous growth from 1900 to 1907, when a number of commercial buildings were constructed along Rainier Avenue and summer homes were built near Lake Washington to the east. Although the rail tracks were taken out in 1936 due to conflicts with the automobile, the area continued to grow with the rest of the city. In 1978, the Columbia City Landmark District was established by the City of Seattle, and in 1980 the district was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

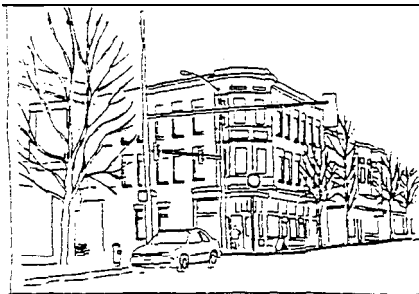


Figure 5: Historic Columbia City

The population of the neighborhood, while primarily African American, Southeast Asian, and white, includes all of Seattle's ethnic groups. Recognized as the area with the greatest cultural diversity, Southeast Seattle currently attracts more immigrants than

any other part of the city. This diversity, however, also means that many residents confront cultural and language barriers to employment and self sufficiency.

In the 1970's and early 1980's, the Rainier Valley suffered the loss of major retail and commercial businesses, including basic retail and grocery stores. The area's economy slowed, and increasing poverty further eroded the commercial base. Over time, these conditions have contributed to a negative image and a perception that the entire Rainier Valley is an unsafe place. While disinvestment persists in locations throughout the area, recent development projects and trends provide reason for optimism. Examples include the Rainier Valley Square development in the *Genesee* area and new businesses and interest in Columbia City. The *Seattle Times* noted in an article on Columbia City on January 3, 1999, that "suddenly people are using words like 'up and coming' and 'trendy' to describe an ethnically diverse, mostly working class district that was all but forgotten until a few years ago.

Growth Management and Neighborhood Planning.

Since early 1995, neighborhoods throughout Seattle have been engaged in **planning** for their future development. These neighborhood planning efforts represent an innovative, grass-roots approach to growth management that encourages neighborhood residents, business owners, and other community members to plan for their own future.

Seattle's neighborhood planning program stems from the Washington's Growth Management Act (GMA), passed by the state legislature in 1990. GMA requires Washington communities to prepare a twenty-year comprehensive plan for their growth. In response to this mandate, the City created Seattle's Comprehensive Plan: *Toward a Sustainable Seattle*, commonly referred to as the Comp Plan. Adopted by the Seattle City Council in 1994, the citywide Comp Plan proposes concentrating growth within the city's existing neighborhoods. The Comp Plan establishes guidelines that allow neighborhoods to develop plans and accommodate growth in ways that protect a neighborhood's existing character, provide for its needs, and enhance its livability.

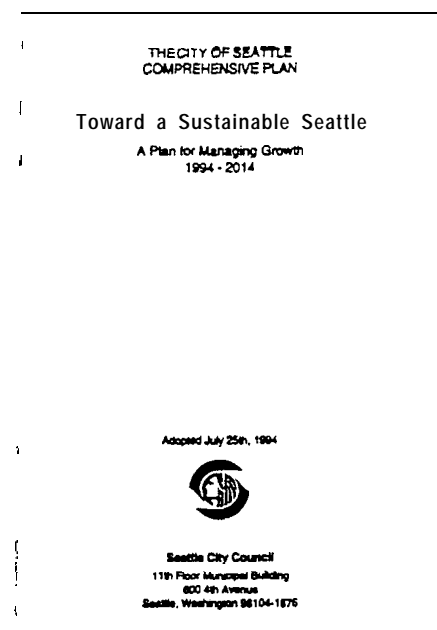


Figure 6: Seattle's Comprehensive Plan established guidelines to allow neighborhoods to develop plans.



Urban Villages and Urban Centers

A basic tenet of the Comp Plan is a concept that concentrates future growth in areas designated as either “urban villages” or “urban centers.” Urban villages are the commercial and residential cores of historically distinct neighborhoods. Urban villages are intended to be relatively dense, walkable communities, served by local shops and services and well connected by transit systems.

Urban centers are larger districts that sometimes encompass several urban villages in dense, pedestrian-oriented communities with direct access to regional high-capacity transit. The University Community is an example of an urban center.

Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee has been designated as an urban village, with planning area boundaries generally encompassing properties along tinier Avenue South from S. Charlestown Street to S. Holly Street, residential areas surrounding the Columbia City business district, and the Rainier Vista Garden Community on Martin Luther King Junior Way South.

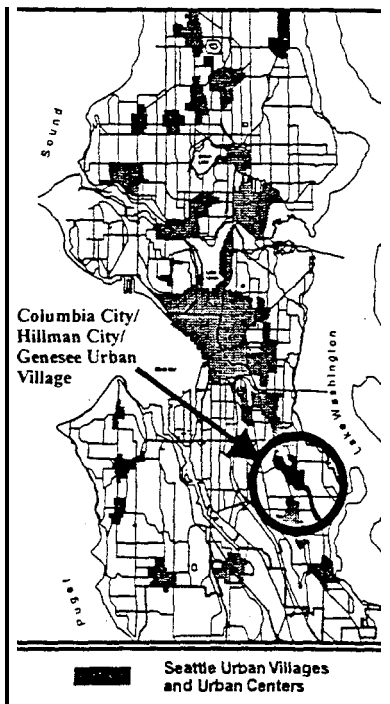


Figure 7: Designated Urban Villages and Urban Centers in Seattle

According to growth targets contained in Seattle’s Comprehensive Plan the Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee neighborhood is expected to absorb approximately 740 additional housing units by 2014. This document outlines the neighborhood’s objectives and priorities for meeting those growth targets while enhancing its unique character and livability. Beyond meeting growth management and Comp Plan objectives, the Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee Neighborhood Plan presents an opportunity for the community to define its vision for the future and the actions needed to carry this vision into the 21st Century.

This Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee Neighborhood Plan will be submitted to City Council for adoption in early 1999. The adopted neighborhood plan will guide future City policies and the allocation of capital improvements resources in the neighborhood.

	EXISTING	NEEDED	TOTAL BY 2014
Households	1,450 households	740 households	2,190 households
Open Space	21.99 acres	1.25 – 2.5 acres	23.24 – 24.49 acres

Figure 8: Growth Targets Designated by Seattle’s Comprehensive Plan

B. Process

The Neighborhood Planning Office

In 1995, the Seattle Neighborhood Planning Office (NPO) was established as a temporary executive office of the City charged with assisting 37 individual neighborhoods with the neighborhood planning processes. The NPO began working with the Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee community leaders and interested citizens to initiate their planning effort in 1996.

Past Planning Efforts

Prior to the current neighborhood planning process, there have been several recent plans prepared for this area, including:

- **Southeast Seattle Action Plan, 1991.** A steering committee made up of a diverse array of neighborhoods prepared this plan with a neighborhood matching grant from the City of Seattle. The plan focused on actions and strategies to improve the physical and economic climate in Southeast Seattle.
- **Rainier Main Street Strategic Economic Action Plan, 1996.** This plan provided recommendations and strategies for business enhancement, retention, and recruitment for Genesee, Columbia City, and Hillman City business districts.
- **Southeast Seattle Revitalization Plan, 1991.** Landscape architecture students at the University of Washington prepared this plan in cooperation with the Rainier Chamber of Commerce and SEED. It included design recommendations for paths and open spaces, streetscapes, redevelopment pockets, and historical and cultural amenities.

Phase I

The Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee Urban Village formally began the first phase of its neighborhood planning effort in early 1997. The purpose of Phase I was to appoint volunteers to organize and prepare the physical plan for the neighborhood's future, and to get as many people involved in the process as possible through outreach activities. Since there have been a number of planning activities in Southeast Seattle over the last 15 years, the first task of the volunteer Organizing Committee was to prepare an issues summary of all the past plans that affected the Columbia City area. The Organizing Committee acknowledged that the Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee Neighborhood reaches beyond the urban village boundaries identified by the

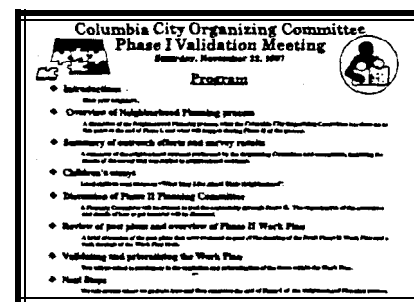


Figure 9: Public Notice for Phase I Workshop



City's Comprehensive Plan. Phase I outreach efforts included people who live and work within a mile radius of the residential urban village boundaries. Outreach activities included:

- Interviews with the business community conducted by the Columbia City Revitalization Committee;
- A community-wide survey completed by over 400 people;
- A speaker's bureau aimed at informing non-English speaking and other hard-to-reach groups about the planning process;
- A youth neighborhood photography project whereby youth, ages 8-16, were asked to take photos of places in the neighborhood they felt needed to be improved and what they would recommend to be done to make positive change happen;
- An issues forum attended by approximately 80 people;
- Validation event attended by approximately 80 people.

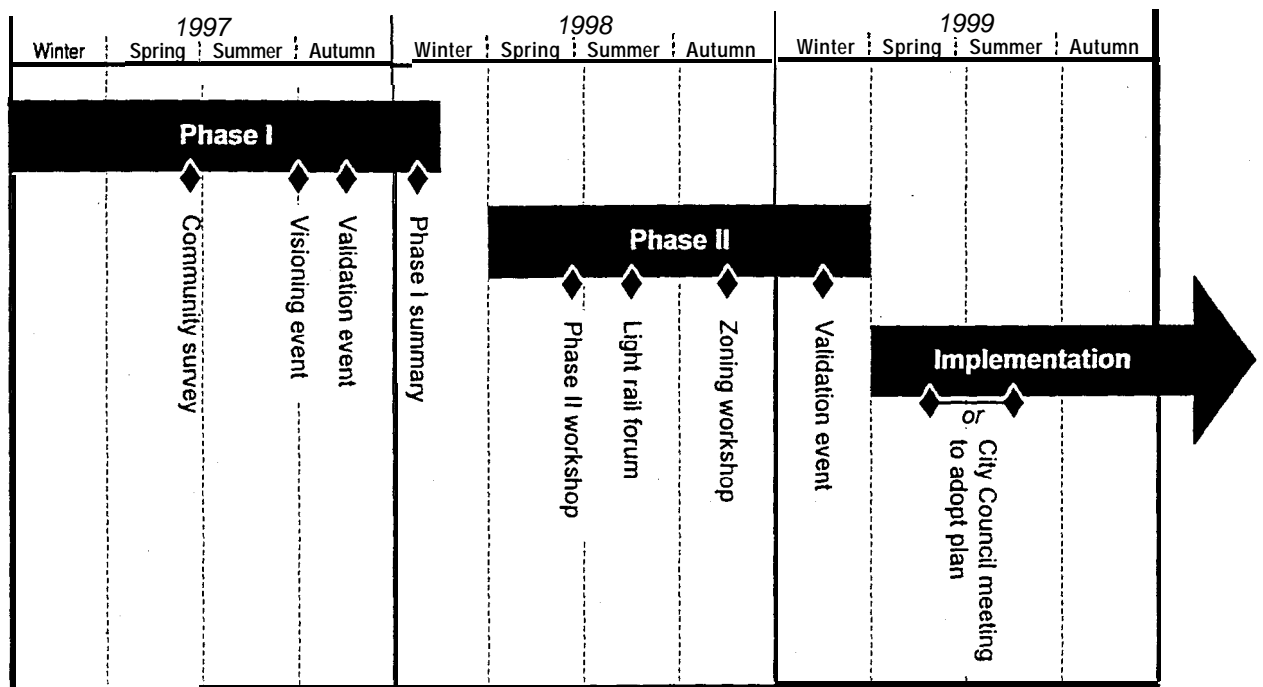


Figure 10: Timeline for Columbia City Neighborhood Planning Process

Through these activities, approximately 500 people were involved in determining the priority issues within the Columbia City area. The business interviews involved 50 businesses, social service, and community groups. The Columbia City questionnaire was completed by 422 people and was followed up by an issues forum with 80 people in attendance. Phase I culminated in November, 1997, with the Validation Celebration, which was attended by over 80 people of all ages.

From this work, the Organizing Committee developed a vision statement, decision process and criteria, and overriding goals and principles.

Phase II

Phase II began in May 1998 with the formation of the Planning Committee and Housing Subcommittee to develop the major elements and strategies of the plan. A public workshop in June began shaping those issues into specific proposals for the neighborhood. During July, the Planning Committee conducted a Light Rail Forum to discuss the constraints and opportunities associated with several light rail route and station alternatives. In November, the Planning Committee conducted a zoning workshop based on ideas generated at the June public workshop and by the Housing Subcommittee. The feedback from all of these meetings has helped to further define the priorities and strategies of the plan.

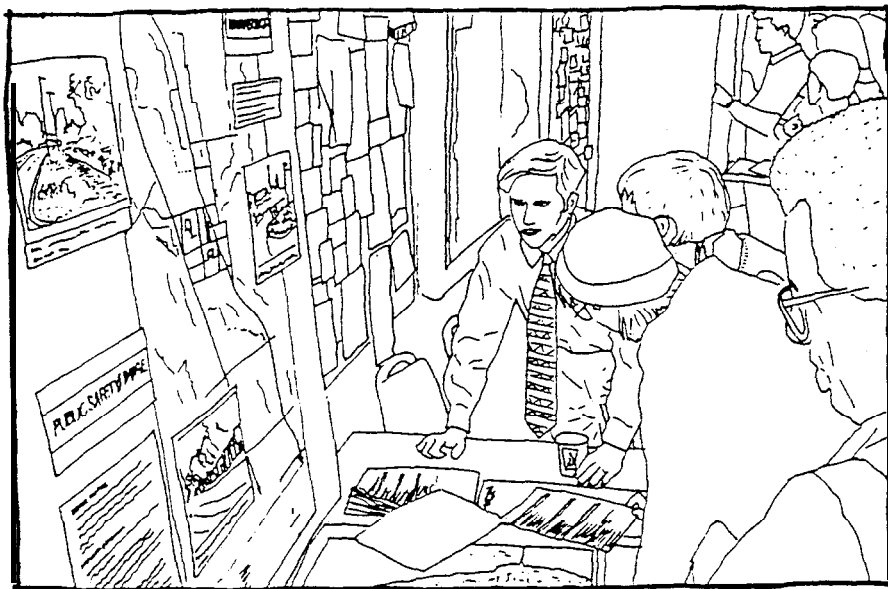


Figure 11: Phase II Public Workshop



The Planning Committee and consultants conducted two open house “Validation Events” in January, 1999, to culminate the second phase. Both events were very successful, with approximately 70 people attending. Both events included short presentations of the plan, question and answer periods, and open house periods. Merchants and residents were given opportunities to voice their opinions on the proposals both at the validation event and through surveys on the validation mailers that were sent out to all mailing addresses within the Planning Influence Area (which includes all properties within the planning area boundaries and other properties within close proximity to the planning area). The public input from the validation event and surveys predominately “validated” the plan’s recommendations; only minor changes to the plan were necessary as a result of the community’s response.

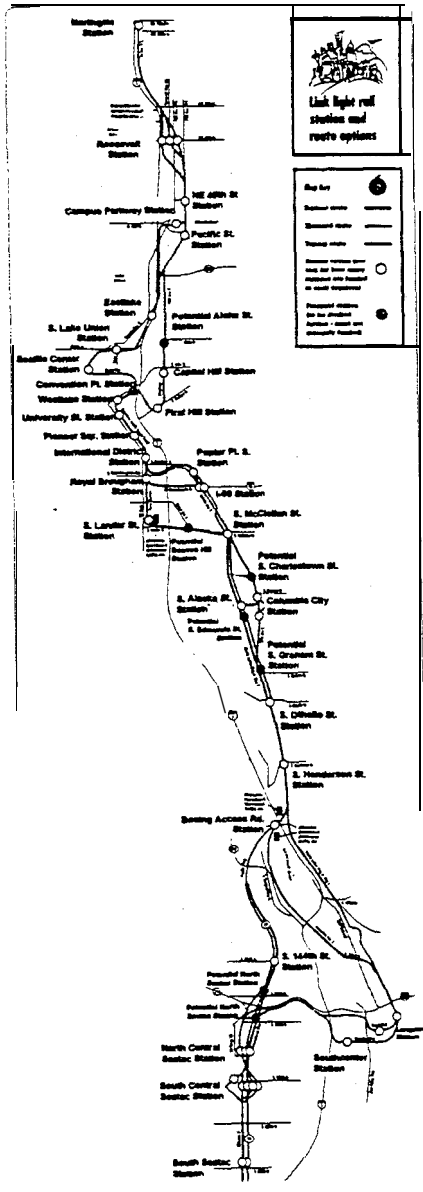


Figure 12: Sound Transit Light Rail System Options

Light Rail Transit Planning

Implementation planning began in May 1998 for a regional transit system, including a planned light rail line with a station to be built in the Columbia City area. The Columbia City area is unique among all other station area communities in that there have been numerous alignment alternatives and station locations. The Planning Committee conducted the following activities in response to the transit alternatives:

- Met with Sound Transit representatives to review alternatives.
- Developed a set of criteria based on community goals and objectives for Sound Transit to utilize for their route/station selection.
- Identified transportation and land use options, potential impacts, and mitigation measures associated with each of the light rail transit alignment and station alternatives.
- Conducted a light rail forum to evaluate how each of the light rail alternatives meet the criteria established by the committee.
- Provided results of the light rail forum along with community recommendations.

The Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee Neighborhood Plan identifies important planning concerns that will need to be considered as the detailed station area planning process takes place in 1999. With the exception of the underground Columbia City transit station location (Edmunds/37th Avenue), this plan does not include specific zoning recommendations associated with the alternative station locations. Should a station be constructed within the MLK corridor or at Genesee or Charlestown, specific zoning recommendations should be made in conjunction with the detailed station area planning process. The goals, policies, and strategies of this plan should be utilized in the station area planning decision making process.

Unlike this neighborhood planning effort, which was community-driven, the Station Area Plan is led by Seattle's Strategic Planning Office and a citizens' advisory board consisting of community stakeholders.

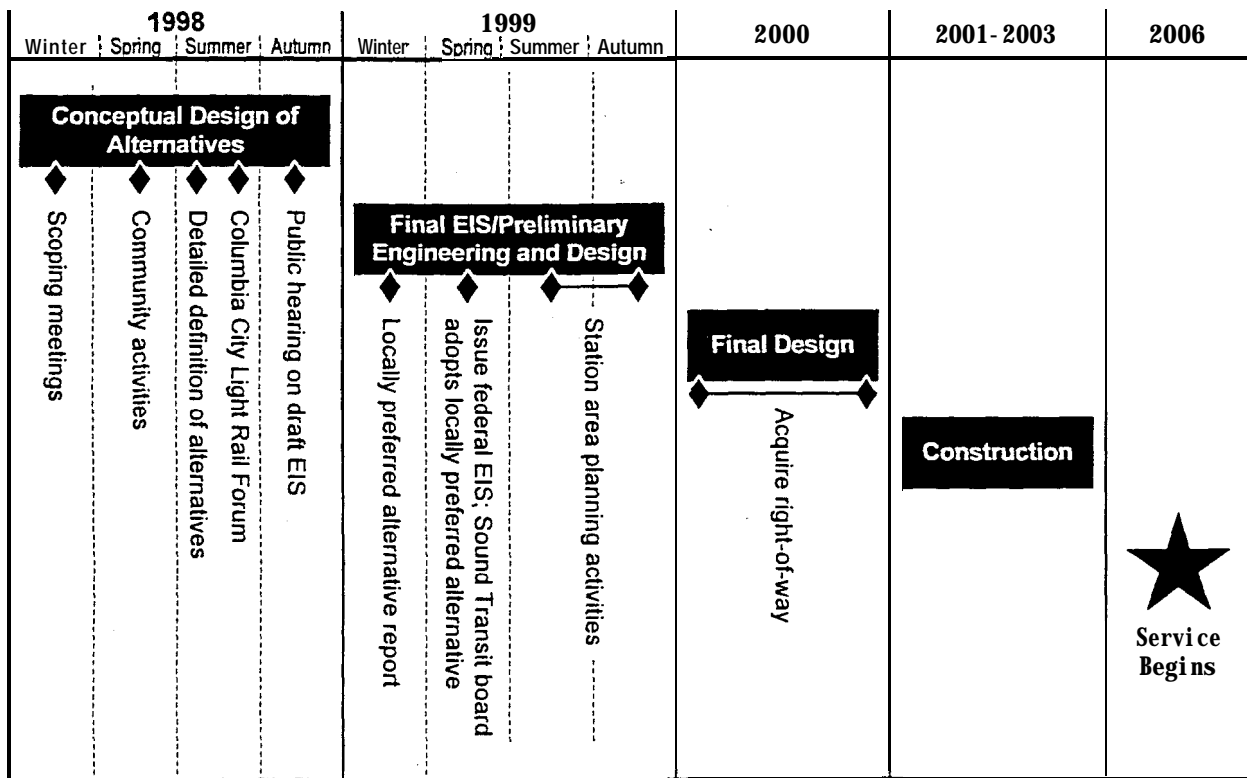
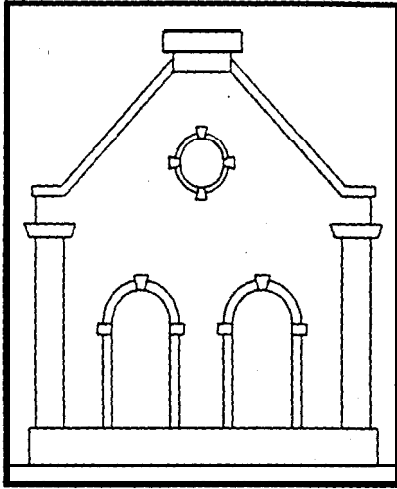


Figure 13: Sound Transit's LRT Timeline



II. Goals and Policies

A. Transportation

Goals

1. A **community** with a safe, effective, and attractive transportation system that provides residents multi-modal access to employment opportunities within the region.
2. A community served by a light rail transit system which also is a catalyst for transit-oriented housing and commercial development within the station area.
3. A community with transportation **infrastructure** necessary to ensure public safety, efficient access to services, and general quality of life.

Policies

- P1 Strive to make the Columbia City area safe and efficient for bicycles and pedestrians.
- P2 Seek to improve east-west transit service that allows access to multiple employment centers and educational services.
- P3 Maximize community benefits through the management of parking around the light rail station.
- P4 Seek to replace and rehabilitate failed elements of the transportation system.
- P5 Improve pedestrian safety and convenience along Rainier Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Way.
- P6 Strive to make bus stops and transfer points safer, more visible, comfortable, and efficient through the use of

- CPTED techniques and providing real-time transit information.
- P7 Maximize economic development and revitalization objectives through appropriately designed station area development.
- P8 Maintain current standard of goods mobility along Martin Luther King Jr. Way S.

B. Economic Development

Goals

4. A community with healthy businesses and healthy employment levels.
5. A community with retail and service businesses that serve community needs, particularly pedestrian-oriented commercial development.
6. A neighborhood that promotes entrepreneurship within the community.

Policies

- P9 Encourage mixed-use and pedestrian scale development projects within the Columbia City and Hillman City business districts.
- P10 Support the continued work of the Rainier Main Street program.
- P11 Strive to retain and build upon the unique pedestrian-friendly qualities of the Columbia City, Hillman City, and Genesee business districts.
- P12 Strive to establish commercial zoning compatible with the primary uses, activities and market demands within the commercial centers.
- P13 Develop methods to foster business incubator opportunities and local business ownership within the community.
- P14 Assist residents in gaining access to employment services, information technology, and centers of employment.
- P15 Encourage the development of businesses that will increase the number of local jobs with opportunities for advancement and more highly paid professional, technical, and managerial positions (such as high technology businesses).



C. Housing

Goals

7. A community with healthy and attractive single-family residential areas.
8. A community with a variety of available housing options for a mix of income levels and household sizes.
9. A community that provides opportunities for owner-occupied housing among existing community residents.

Policies

- P16 Pursue the repair and rehabilitation of older housing whenever possible.
- P17 Strive to develop and employ neighborhood design guidelines to ensure that new multifamily housing has an appropriate scale and character and is transit-oriented, where appropriate.
- P18 Support the realization of **HomeSight's** Home-ownership Zone proposal in the vicinity of Columbia City.
- P19 Support the increase in housing density through securing the required infrastructure as density increases.
- P20 Maximize light rail related investments to ensure the development of quality housing with appropriate community amenities.
- P21 Utilize public private partnerships to develop quality affordable housing.
- P22 Encourage housing as part of mixed-use development projects such as live/work spaces and artists lofts within the business districts and on vacant or abandoned lots.
- P23 Provide incentives for new housing development near high capacity transit facilities.

D. Cultural/Human Resources

Goals

10. A community with adequate open space for the residential population.
11. A community with a library that serves community needs.

12. A community where social service needs are addressed in an efficient and non-invasive manner.

Policies

- P24 Identify and develop sites for new P-patches.
- P25 Promote the incorporation of public art into the development of public and community facilities.
- P26 Strive to improve library services to better serve the Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee community.
- P27 Seek to involve the Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee community in planning efforts for the siting and use of essential community and public facilities in the Planning Area.

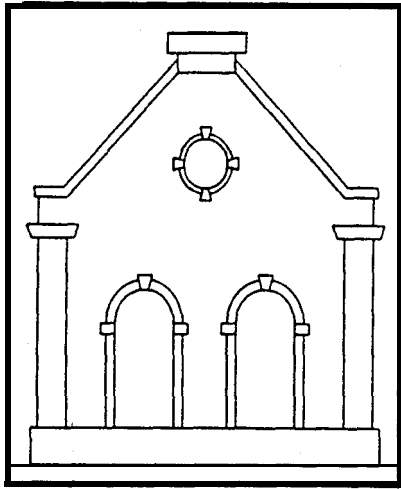
E. Public Safety/Image

Goals

13. A neighborhood with strong community-based policing efforts.
14. A neighborhood with property and human rights protection for all residents.
15. A neighborhood with an attractive physical appearance and a positive image.

Policies

- P28 Support police service funding that keeps pace with population growth and changes in crime statistics.
- P29 Seek housing incentives for police officers to live within the community.
- P30 Develop tools to combat generalized negative media portrayals of the surrounding area.
- P31 Develop strategies to ensure more regular pick-up of street litter and elimination of graffiti within the commercial centers.
- P32 Strive to improve security lighting near schools, parks, public facilities, parking lots, and in alleys.
- P33 Support the continued availability of HOME improvement and building facade improvement funds, while strictly enforcing exterior maintenance codes.
- P34 Promote a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) program in the neighborhood.



III. Plan Elements

A. Columbia City Community Focus

Strengthen the Columbia City Core as a historic, mixed-use, pedestrian oriented community focus.

Columbia City has the opportunity to be South Seattle’s premier community-based center for cultural and commercial activity. To achieve this, the plan recommends intensification of commercial and residential uses while maintaining the “small town” historic scale, integrating the transportation system, and improving community services. Because the core is the community’s central focus, pedestrian connections reaching outward are a high priority, as are the improvement of Columbia Park and the greening of the Columbia Elementary’s (Orca) westside playfield. Public/private efforts should be undertaken to develop key parcels within the core to help ensure quality and contributing development.



Figure 14: Columbia City Historic District

Background

Few areas in Seattle still retain an individual identity or consistent architectural or historical character as Columbia City. Columbia City contains a significant number of buildings that embody distinctive characteristics of turn of the century modest commercial and residential architecture. Together, these structures contain the qualities of a small American community or town in the early 20th Century. The City of Seattle formally recognized these qualities in 1978 by designating Columbia City as a Landmark District.

The core, or “Community Focus” of Columbia City contains a mixture of commercial buildings, churches,, apartments, civic uses,

single-family residences, and schools. At the community's north entrance is the historic Carnegie Library and Columbia Park, a small village green also known as "Columbia Green." The majority of the district's businesses lie on Rainier Avenue South. Most of these structures are two stories, with the tallest buildings at three stories. Columbia City is noted regionally for its rich diversity of ethnic foods, with restaurants ranging from Sicilian to Ethiopian. Side streets off of Rainier contain a mixture of small businesses, parking lots, vacant structures or lots, apartment buildings, churches, and offices. Very little new development or revitalization has occurred on these side streets in the past 20 years. One block beyond Rainier, the majority of uses are single-family residential. As within the business district, these structures represent the small, modest scale of small town, turn of the century development.

Problems

The biggest constraint in achieving the community's vision for the neighborhood involves overcoming the area's negative perceptions. Rainier Main Street's *Strategic Economic Action Plan* addressed this in 1996 and indicated that addressing the perception/reality of crime and creating a positive business environment must be a top priority if the area is to achieve success. Despite a recent resurgence revolving around the opening of a handful of new businesses in the historic district, conditions that contribute to a poor image persist. These conditions include:

- Lack of rehabilitation and revitalization on the business district's side streets just off of Rainier.
- Lack of newer, contributing, market rate multi-family housing. Most multifamily housing within the area was built during the Boeing boom years of the 1960's and constructed as quickly and cheaply as possible.
- Deteriorating or nonexistent infrastructure. A number of streets within the neighborhood developed without curb, gutter, and planting strip improvements. This condition contributes to a perception of disorderliness.
- Lack of property maintenance and a general look of disinvestment. Although order is predominately maintained along Rainier Avenue within the business district, a significant number of properties remain in poor repair and/or are abandoned. Excessive litter and weeds, graffiti, and abandoned cars persist and further contribute to the negative image.

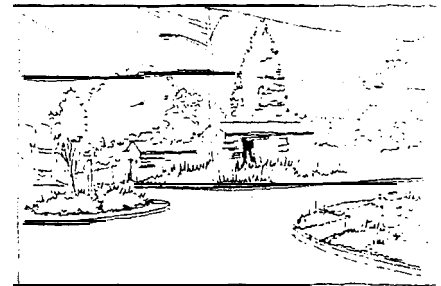


Figure 15: Side Streets on the Outside Edge of the Business District

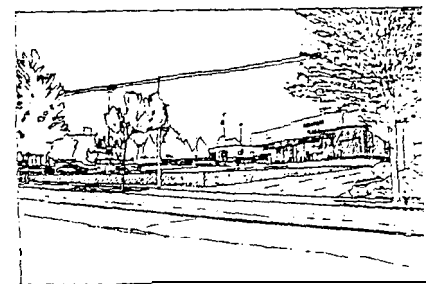


Figure 16: Columbia Plaza



An integrated approach is needed to address these issues and achieve the community's vision. The Public Safety and Community Livability element contains recommended actions addressing safety and cultural issues throughout the entire Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee planning area. This element focuses on zoning and physical oriented actions specific to the Columbia City core area.

Implementation Strategy

Collectively, the proposed actions direct Columbia City towards its vision as an interesting, attractive, and vibrant commercial and residential community linked through transit to other neighborhoods and employment centers within Seattle and the greater area. The development of Sound Transit's light rail transit system into the area will likely be the single most important planning event for Southeast Seattle in the next 25 years. The 37th Avenue tunnel light rail route with the Columbia City transit station provides the strongest long term community and economic development opportunities of the four alternatives. (See *Figure 17, page 22.*) The major positive factors associated with this transit option include:

- The station area's centralized location
- Ability to draw people into the business district
- Pedestrian orientation
- Limited negative traffic impacts
- Increased likelihood of stimulating new housing
- Limited potential noise impacts

While a community recommendation may not guarantee the Columbia City station at Rainier and Edmunds and the fact that the operation of the transit system itself is more than ten years away, the neighborhood's top immediate priority is to make some zoning changes. These zoning changes aim to:

- Encourage market-rate, multifamily housing around the business district's edges (NC2 to NC2/R zone changes),
- Provide landowners more choices in developing their land (NC2 to NC2/R).
- Stabilize and strengthen historic single-family residential uses on Edmunds Street and 35th Avenue (L3 to LDT, unless the selected transit station is at the Edmunds/MLK site).
- Maintain existing small town scale and atmosphere in the business district by limiting heights predominantly to 40 feet (from 65') and limiting intrusive uses on the properties

within the Post Office's block (NC3-65 to NC2-40 and NC2/R-40).

- Preserve street front commercial uses on Rainier Avenue within the business district (NC3-65 to NC2-40).

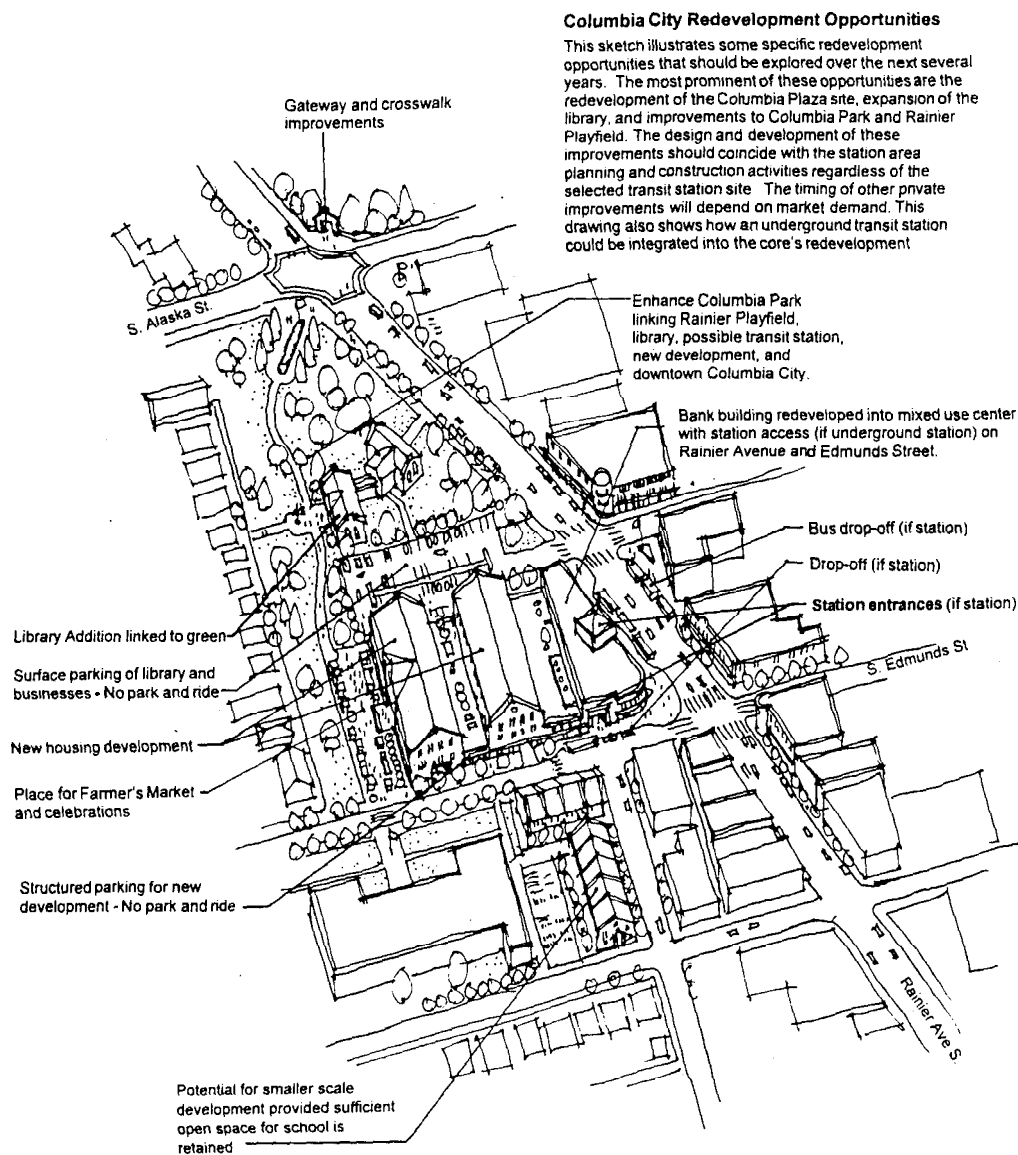


Figure 17: Columbia City Redevelopment Opportunities.

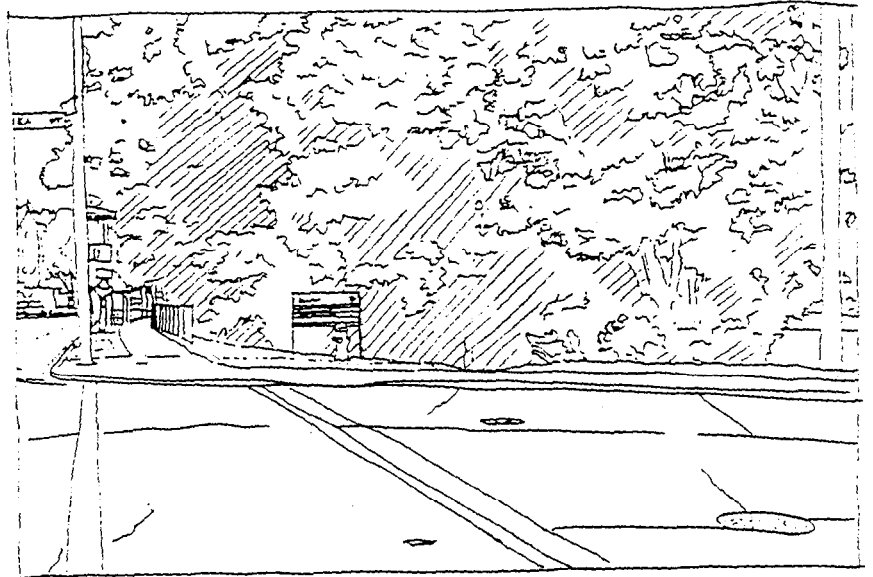


Figure 18: Existing Entrance to Rainier Playfield at Rainier Avenue and Alaska Street

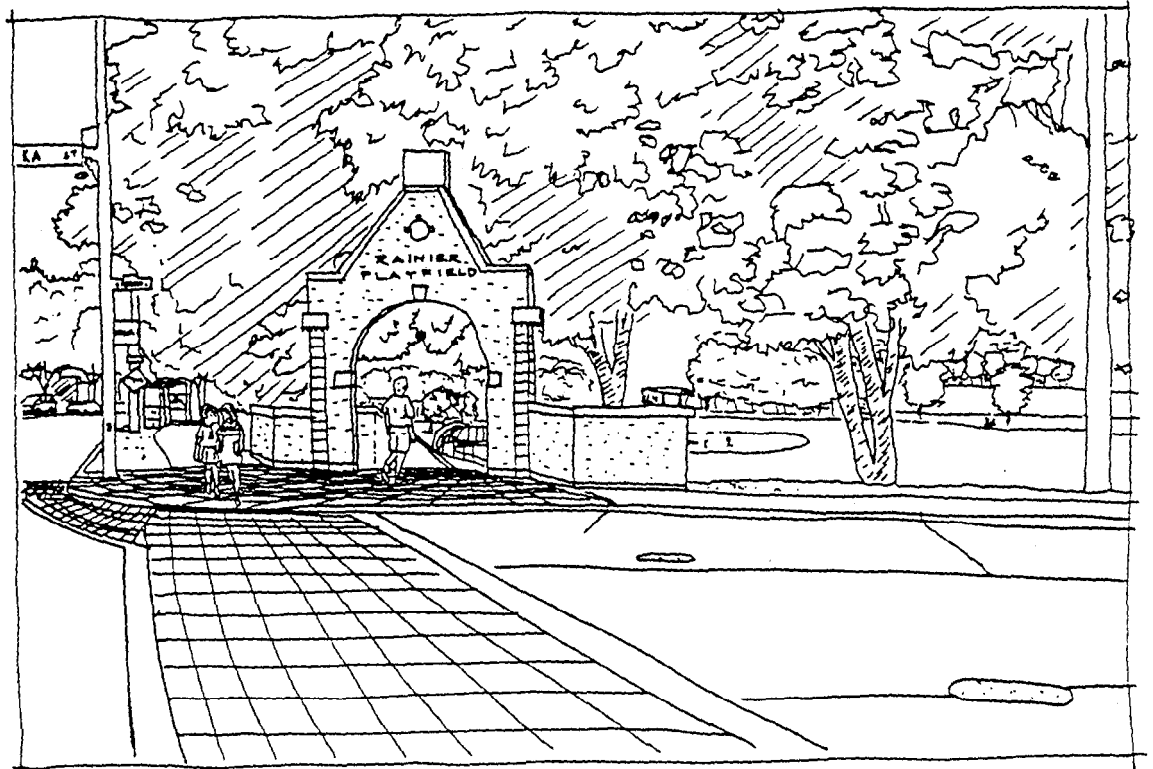


Figure 19: Rainier Playfield with Entryway Improvements

The most important of these changes is the NC2 to NC2/R change on most of the side streets of the business district. While a resurgence is occurring on Rainier's streetfront, the side streets are still struggling. New multifamily housing is needed here for a multitude of reasons, among them to provide increased pedestrian

activity and a stronger market for local retail uses. Existing NC zoning directs landowners and developers towards retail uses while the proposed NC/R tends to provide more options for property owners and developers. The NC/R zone encourages residential uses while still permitting a great variety of commercial uses.

The highest priority physical improvements involve anchoring the historic district's north end. Redevelopment of the adjacent Columbia Plaza with a mix of uses, including **streetfront** retail with offices above and residential uses towards the park, is one of the highest community priorities. Constructed in 1957 as a supermarket, this structure ignores both the historic streetfront retail pattern and the Columbia Park at the rear. Considering the location of the site (adjacent to the library, park, Rainier Avenue, and Edmunds Street) and the relatively large size, the redevelopment of this site represents an opportunity to make a major positive impact on the district. The site's redevelopment should also incorporate a permanent location for the Farmers Market (connected to Columbia Park). Residents prioritized the improvement of Rainier **Playfield**, particularly the visible entryway at the northeast corner of Rainier Avenue and Alaska Street. Expansion of the **adjacent Columbia City Branch Library** has long been sought to more adequately serve the area's educational needs. In conjunction with the redevelopment of Columbia Plaza and the library **expansion**, the plan recommends improvements to Columbia Park (a.k.a. Columbia Green). The purpose is to enhance the park as the community gathering spot and primary site for community events, such as the Farmers Market and the Heritage Festival.

Curb, gutter, and planting strip improvements and street tree planting are essential to stabilize and improve the image of the neighborhood's single-family residential areas. A number of streets within the neighborhood were developed without these amenities. Without such improvements, these streets are likely to maintain their general look of disinvestment, with unkempt yards, deteriorating housing, and cars parked randomly on the sidewalks and lawns. Landscaping or "Greening" Orca School's bleak asphalt playground and parking lot is another action that should be taken to improve the image of the neighborhood.

Other recommendations to enhance the core include reducing the number of travel lanes on Rainier Avenue S. down to two and improving the response time of pedestrian activated street signals. The plan also recommends actions to maximize the core's on-street parking efficiency, such as adding angled parking to select streets



off Rainier. All of these aim towards building upon the many positive aspects of the historic district by improving the pedestrian environment, and increasing the parking capacity for businesses.

Top Priority Columbia City Community Focus Actions

1. Develop the 37th Avenue S. tunnel light rail transit (LRT) route with an underground transit station at 37th Avenue S. and S. Edmunds Street to provide a centralized transit station and build upon Columbia City's opportunity to become South Seattle's premier community-based center for cultural and commercial activity. If an MLK station is chosen, provide substantially more public and private investment in the Columbia City core.
2. Make zoning changes to preserve the small town character of the historic district, encourage the development of new multifamily housing on the side streets within the business district, and stabilize single-family residential areas.
3. Encourage the redevelopment of the Columbia Plaza site to strengthen the north end of the Historic District.
4. Provide curb, gutter, sidewalk, and alleyway improvements to stabilize and strengthen single-family residential areas.
5. Enhance Rainier Playfield by improving park entryways and accessibility.
6. Green Columbia Elementary School's (a.k.a. Orca) playground to improve the image and appearance of the neighborhood.
7. Improve the pedestrian connection between Rainier Vista and Columbia City's business district.
8. Provide enhancements to Columbia Park (a.k.a. Columbia Green) to help stimulate a positive image for Columbia City.
9. Enhance the pedestrian connection between Rainier Vista and Columbia City by providing pedestrian-oriented improvements on Alaska Street and Edmunds Street between MLK and Rainier.
10. Extend the signature streetscape elements of the Historic District along Rainier Avenue to the side streets within the business district.

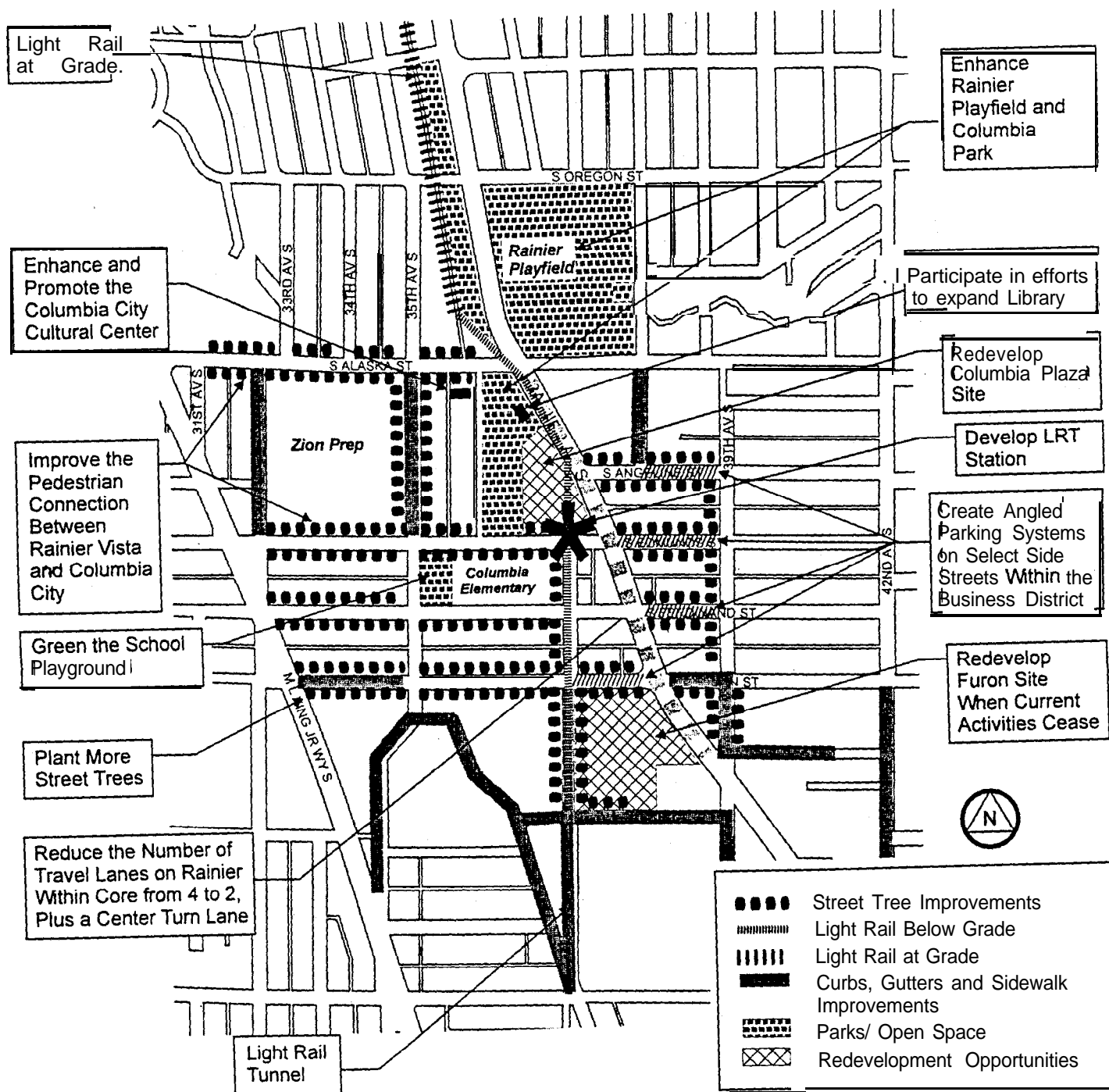


figure 20: Columbia City Community Focus Improvements

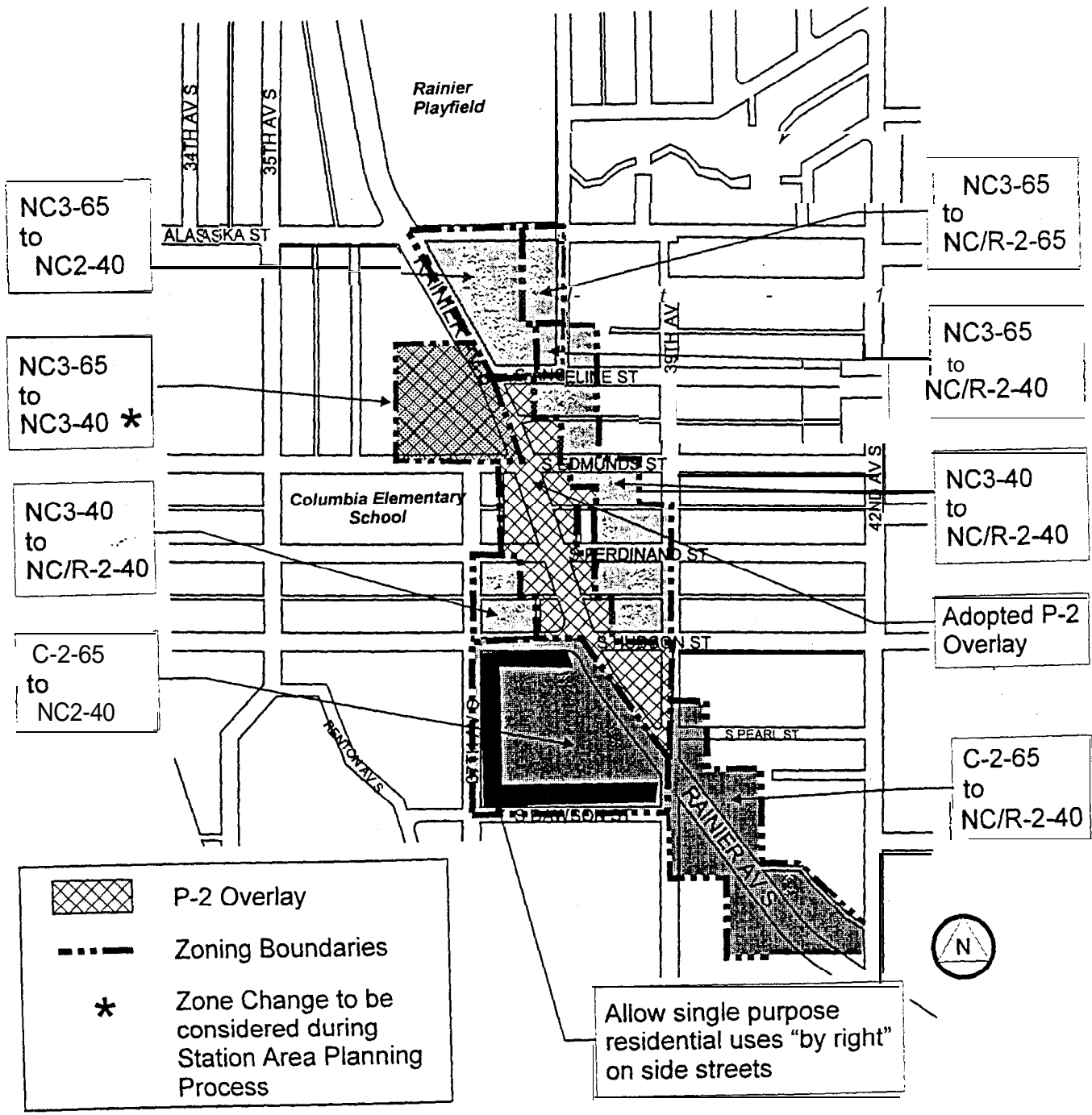


Figure 27: Columbia City Community Focus Regulatory Measures

B. Rainier Corridor

Enhance the Rainier Corridor as a series of commercial districts and neighborhood centers along an efficient transportation corridor.

Rainier Avenue is often thought of as an homogenous commercial corridor, when in fact there are several individual districts segments that each have their own character and opportunities. The fundamental strategy of the Rainier Corridor is to focus on these specific areas by recommending regulatory activities and capital improvements that reinforce and strengthen their identity.,

Background

Rainier Avenue South is the principle north-south arterial street in Southeast Seattle. It runs the length of the Rainier Valley and beyond, from the City of Renton northward to Seattle's Central Area. The 2½ mile-long segment of Rainier Avenue within the planning area (from S. Charlestown Street in the north to S. Holly Street in the south) connects the neighborhood centers of Genesee, Columbia City, and Hillman City with each other and points north and south. King County/Metro's bus line #7, which utilizes Rainier, maintains some of the highest ridership numbers of any of the routes within its system.

One of the corridor's biggest assets is the rolling terrain and its gently shifting alignment. Although sometimes seen as a constraint to the valley's commercial development, its terrain and alignment contribute to the strength and character of the neighborhoods along the corridor. They also contribute to interesting views and provide cues to one's sense of arrival to and departure from a "place."

Similar to other Southeast Seattle communities, poor perceptions and a pattern of disinvestment are major barriers to the improvement of the neighborhoods along the Rainier Corridor. Heavy auto traffic and poor roadway conditions along Rainier have also served as barriers to the corridor's investment. Several reasons for optimism persist, however, with successful new developments such as the QFC grocery store and Eagle Hardware to the north of the planning area and Rainier Valley Square in the Genesee area.

Corridor Neighborhoods

Of the three neighborhoods along the corridor, Genesee is the least defined, but the most economically successful according to Rainier

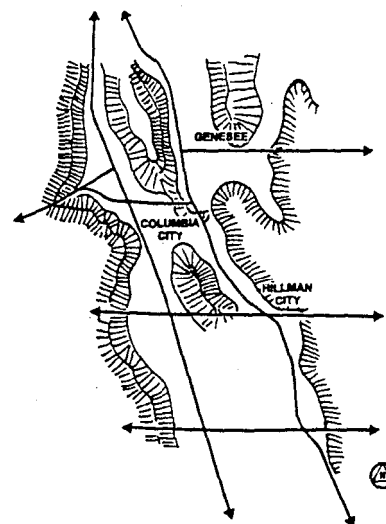


Figure 22: Rainier Corridor Terrain



Main Street's *1996 Strategic Economic Action Plan*. Much of this success is attributable to the recent Rainier Valley Square development (between S. Charlestown Street and S. Andover Street), with anchor retailers such as **Safeway**, Starbucks, and Hollywood Video. Occupying the north end of the corridor, the remainder of Genesee's business district contains a combination of large-parcel, auto-oriented commercial uses, a dairy factory, small lot residences and fringe businesses, and a number of vacant buildings and parcels. Although the district does not have a strong, identifiable focus or core, the vacant and under-utilized properties at the **Rainier/Genesee** intersection present an opportunity to develop a nodal area or focus for the neighborhood. On the east edge of the intersection is a vacant supermarket building (with current plans for its reuse as a mini-mall) and an entire vacant block.

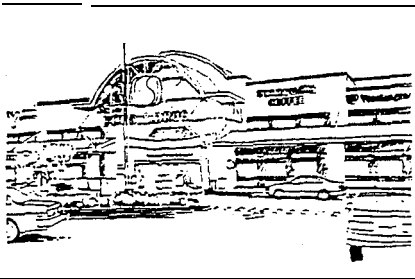


Figure 23: Rainier Valley Square in the Genesee Business District

Previously discussed Columbia City, immediately south of Genesee, is clearly the most identifiable neighborhood along the corridor. Between Columbia City and **Hillman City** lies a transitional area with a mixture of auto-oriented service uses and health/retirement service-related uses. This area also contains a number of redevelopable sites. Historic **Hillman City**, located at a crest in the valley, is commonly described by residents as deteriorating and depressed. However, with a near continuous facade of streetfront buildings and a modest pedestrian scale, **Hillman City** has the opportunity, many believe, to become an attractive neighborhood center. With several vacant and underutilized buildings for sale or lease, the community has substantial square footage available for a variety of commercial uses. A mixture of single-family and multifamily residential uses predominate south of **Hillman City**, except for the small neighborhood commercial node at Graham Street. The property on the northwest corner of this intersection is vacant and available for commercial or mixed-use development.



Figure 24: Hillman City Business District

Implementation Strategy

As with Columbia City, the top priority immediate action is to make zoning changes. The corridor contains a large surplus of underutilized commercial land, particularly between the commercial cores. Through changes to zoning and other programmatic incentives discussed in the Residential Neighborhoods and Housing element, the community substantially improves its chances of developing/redeveloping vacant and run down properties along the corridor. More housing in the transitional areas between the business district cores not only creates a larger

Transit Routes West of Rainier:

Parkland and Redevelopment Opportunities

This sketch illustrates some general parkland and redevelopment opportunities that might occur over the next several years. It is not intended to illustrate specific park or development proposals. The size and location of redevelopment projects may vary considerably. Timing of the projects will depend on market demand. The drawing is intended to help public participants visualize the way Sound Transit's light rail transit system could integrate with community goals.

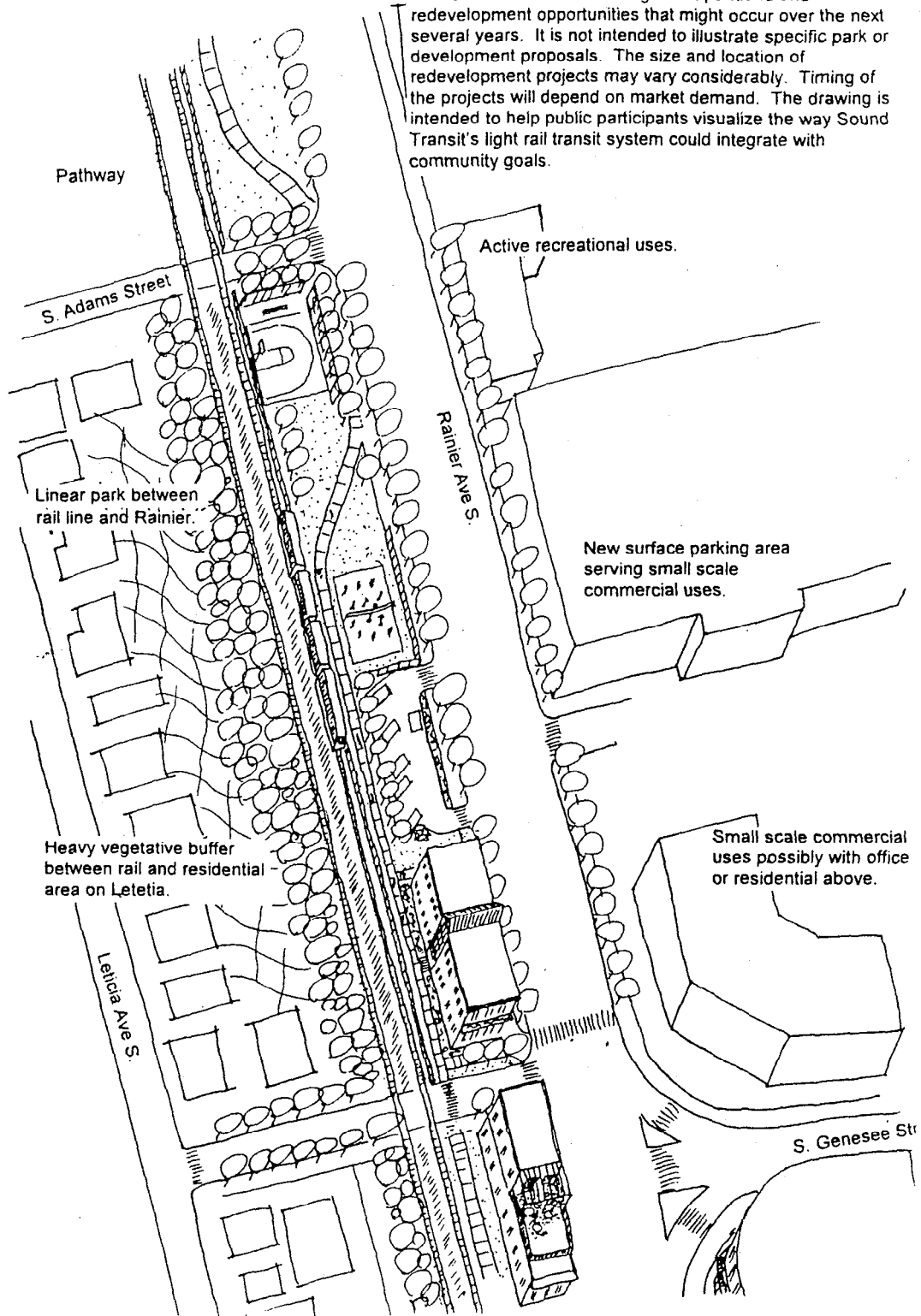


Figure 25: Parkland and Redevelopment Opportunities Associated with a Rainier Transit Alignment



market for those commercial uses, but helps to further define and identify the commercial districts. By focusing multifamily uses along the corridors, residents have easier access to public transit and services, and thus limiting the need for automobiles.

Enhancing the physical condition of the surface of Rainier Avenue is a high neighborhood priority. Residents and merchants cited a number of problems such as excessive standing water on the roadways and lack of adequate curb heights. Common results include illegal parking on the planting strips and harsh pedestrian conditions due to the continuous splashing of waves of water from the adjacent roadway. The plan, therefore, recommends a complete resurfacing of Rainier Avenue with concrete. Despite the high initial cost, this will reduce the long term maintenance cost, particularly considering the heavy volume of bus traffic, and improve pedestrian conditions.

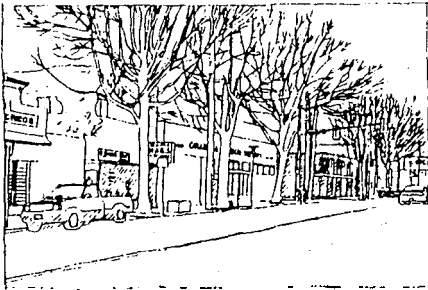


Figure 26: Existing Conditions in Hillman City

Complimentary to the zoning changes are the recommendations for gateway and streetscape improvements in the Hillman City and Genesee business district cores. The intent of these improvements is to add definition and character to these districts. Streetscape improvements are particularly important in Hillman City, where the City just established a pedestrian overlay zone within the district to promote pedestrian-oriented uses. Creating decorative gateway features at strategic locations to identify and celebrate the districts is also a high priority of the community. Gateway-oriented improvements cost less than district-wide street improvements, and thus can be implemented sooner.



Figure 27: Hillman City with Streetscape Improvements, Facade Enhancements, and Redevelopment

In conjunction with the community's recommendation for the 37th Avenue tunnel LRT alignment, the plan seeks the development of a linear park adjacent to the transit line and Rainier Avenue in the Genesee area. The linear park, occupying a +/- 70 foot strip of land immediately west of Rainier Avenue S., could include separated bicycle and pedestrian pathways and a combination of active and passive recreational spaces. Coordinated with the linear park and pathway would be sites available for pedestrian-oriented redevelopment opportunities. An example location would be adjacent to the S. Genesee Street intersection. Since the LRT alignment follows the west side of Rainier and thus requires property condemnation, strong measures should be taken to compensate and assist effected property owners in relocation.

Top Priority Rainier Corridor Actions

1. Make zoning changes to encourage the development of quality housing along the corridor and neighborhood-friendly commercial uses in the business districts.
2. Develop/redevelop vacant and run down properties along the corridor.
3. Create gateway features incorporating public art at the major entries to Genesee and Hillman City.

Make traffic signals more pedestrian friendly.

Improve the visibility of crosswalks.

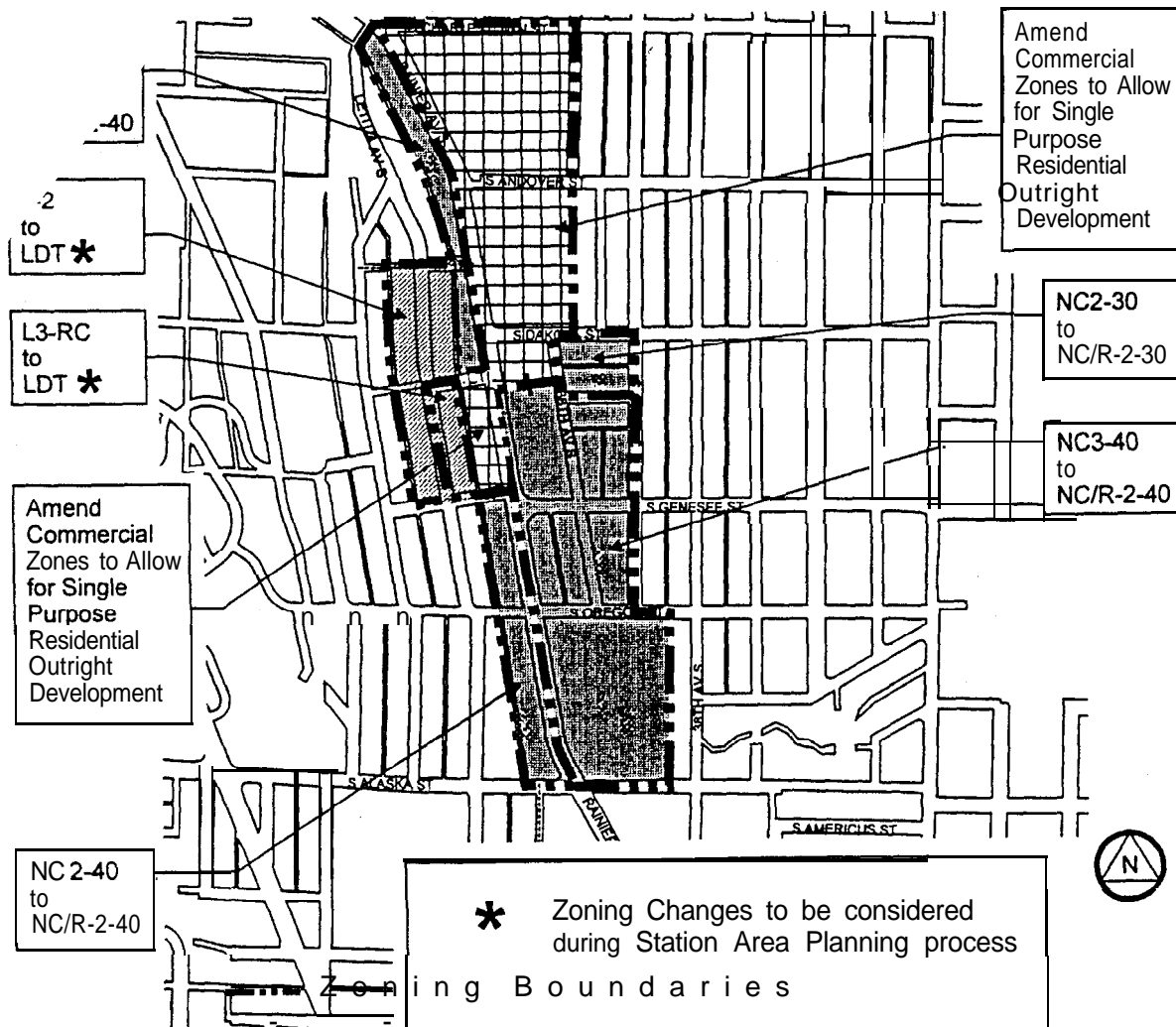


Figure 28: Proposed Zoning Changes in the Genesee Area

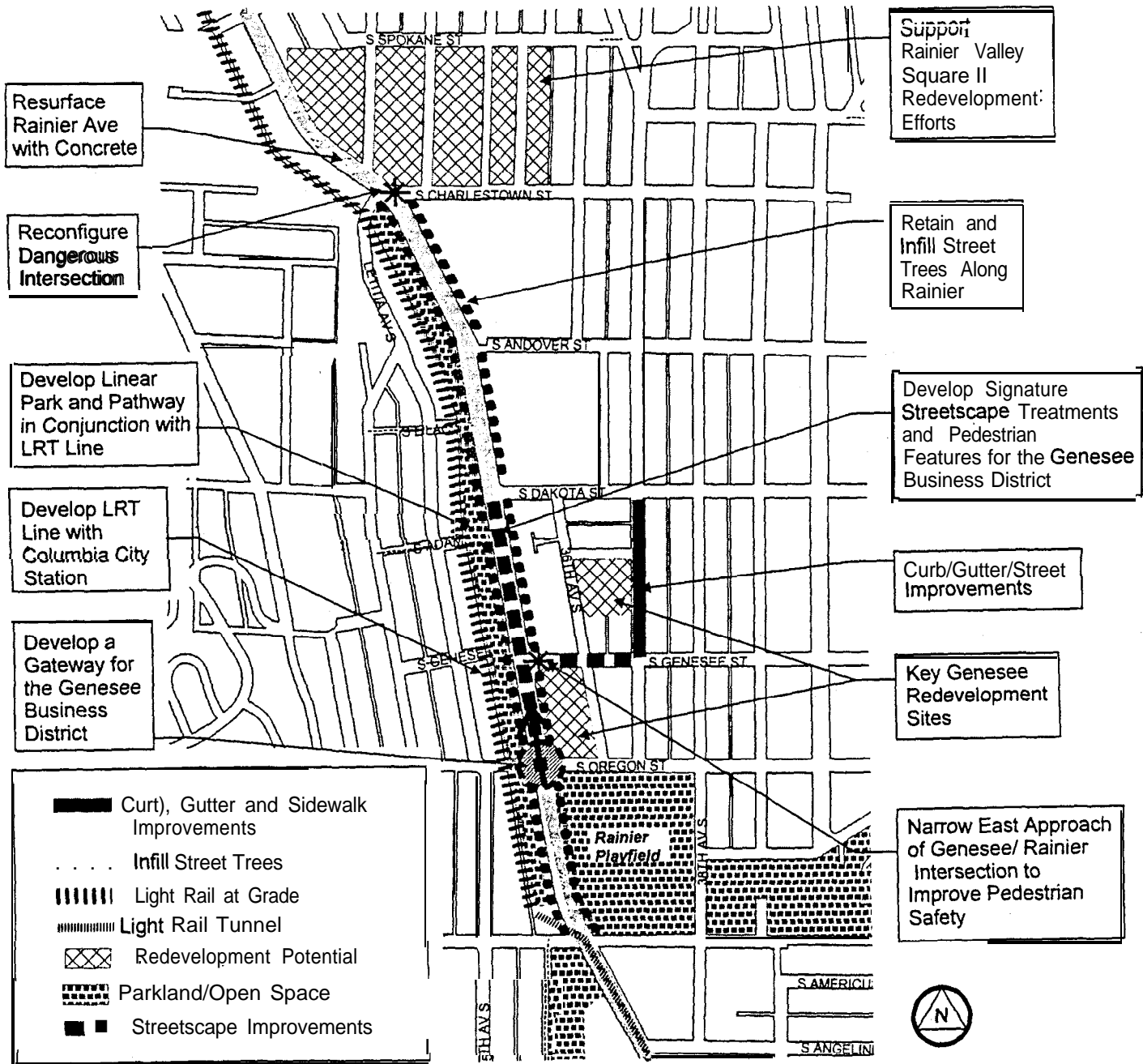


Figure 29: Proposed Genesee Area improvements

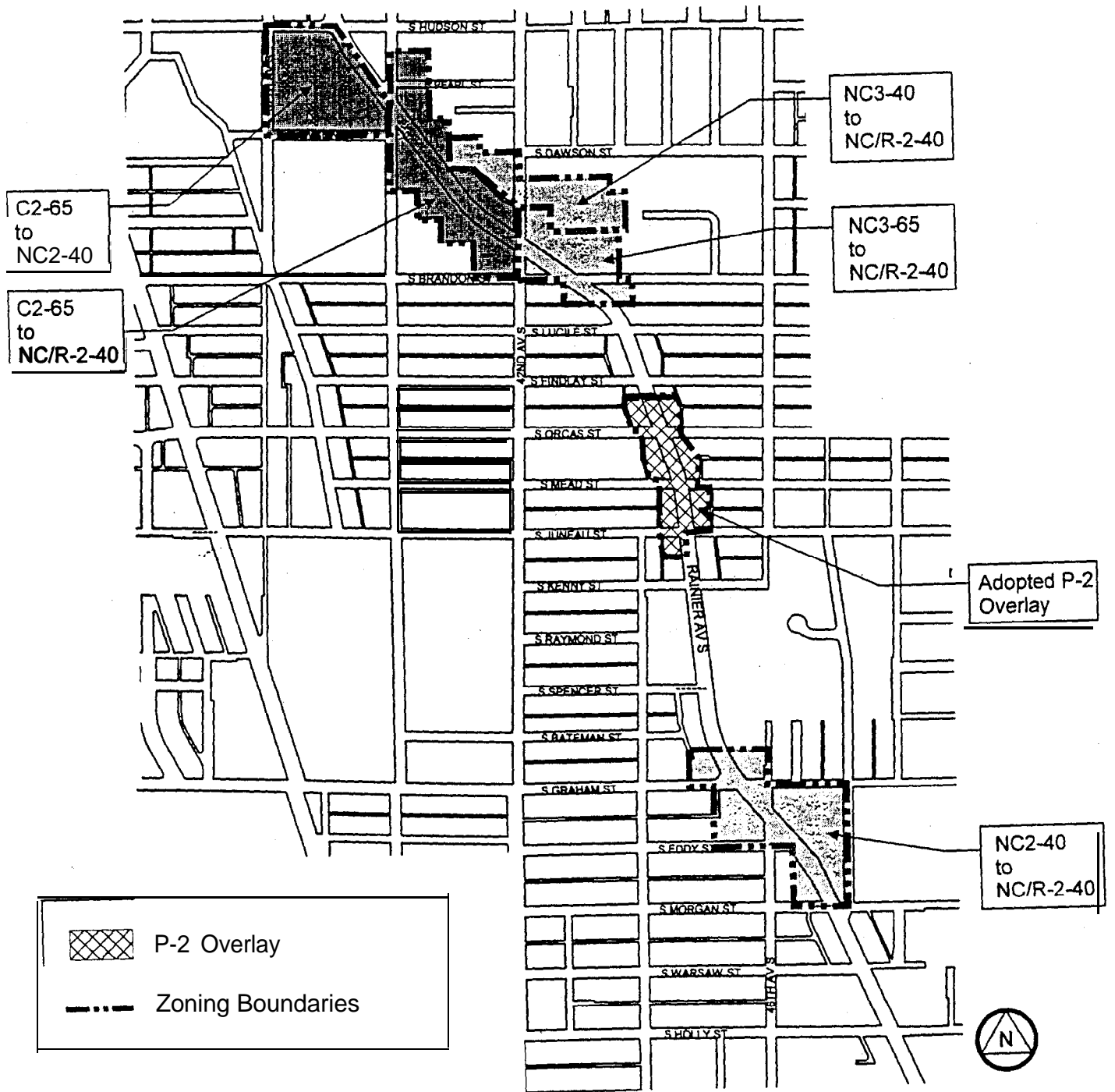


Figure 30: Proposed Zoning Changes in the I-II/Man City Area

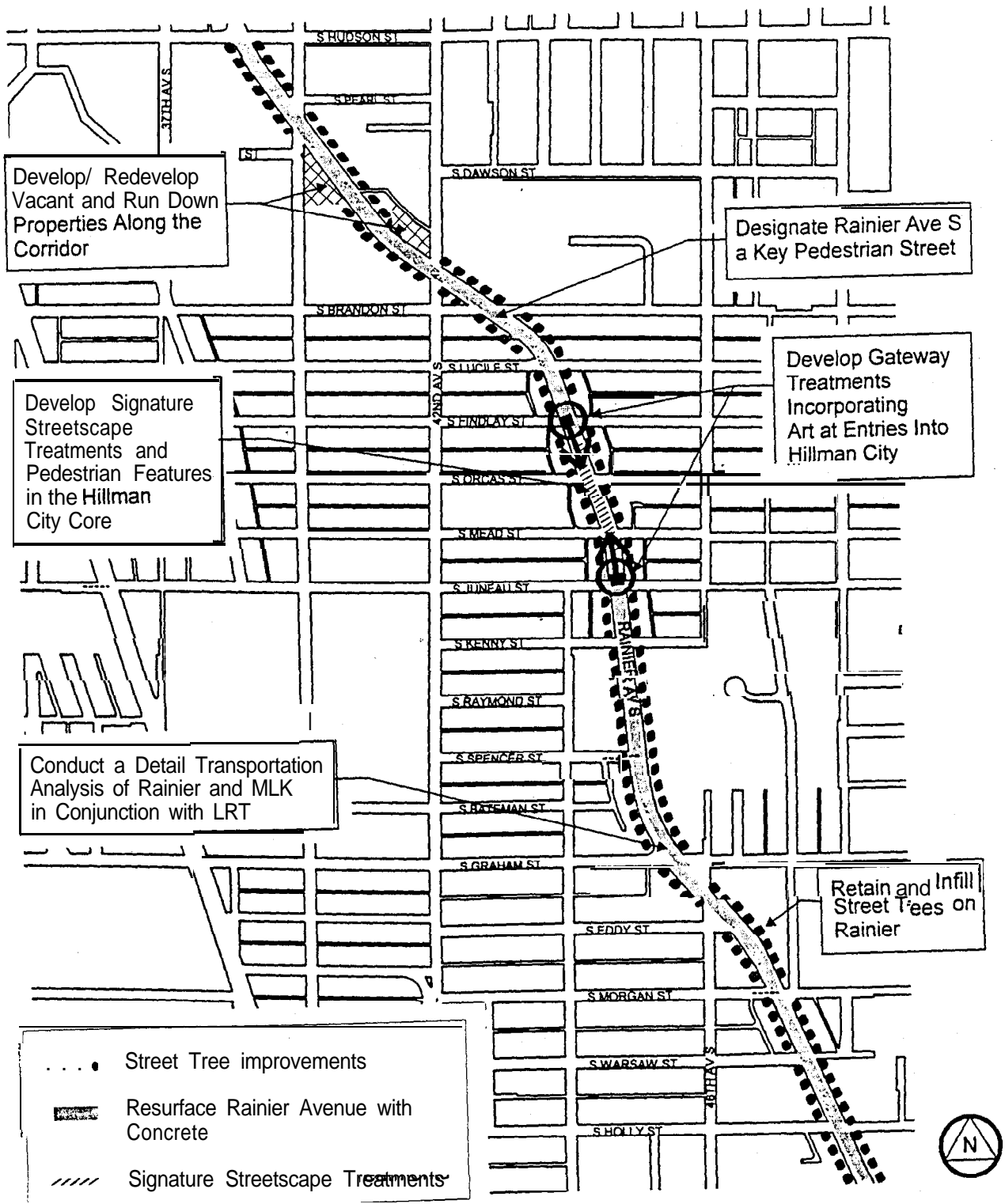


Figure 31: Proposed Hillman City Area Improvements

C. Residential Neighborhoods and Housing

Strengthen the quality of existing residential areas and provide opportunities and incentives for market rate housing.

Columbia City housing development is lagging far behind Seattle's Comprehensive Plan housing growth projections. Only 11% of the 20 Year growth estimate, or 5 units of housing a year, have been added since 1994. Without (1) changes in zoning, (2) addition of new tools to stimulate development, and (3) demonstration of successful market rate multifamily housing development, new multifamily housing development is likely to be nearly nonexistent in the foreseeable future. This plan recommends a set of integrated strategies, meant to stimulate new multifamily housing developments which are assets to the community, and which support the revitalization and strengthening of commercial centers. Existing single-family housing is the heart and soul of the Columbia City planning area and must be protected and improved. This plan also recommends strategies which would accomplish this goal.

Background

Many studies have been done about existing conditions in this planning area. New demographic and market analyses were not conducted to prepare this plan. There was a feeling in the community that the area had been "studied to death" and now was the time to move to activities that would have visible results in the community. However, several key facts about the area provide the context for the housing recommendations which are made in this plan.

- Forecasts of population, household, and housing unit growth for the next 20 years made by the City of Seattle indicate that the area is expected to experience growth at rates lower than rates of growth expected for the city as a whole.
- The numbers of households and housing units are expected to grow by just 5 percent over the two-decade period, compared to a 15 percent increase citywide.
- The Comp Plan estimates that 740 households will be added to this planning area in 20 years, a growth of about 37 units a year. However, since 1994, when the Comp Plan was adopted, only 5 units a year have been added. This is 11 percent of the growth estimate.

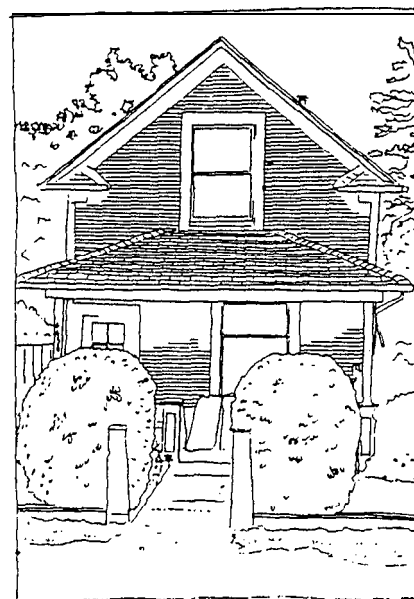


Figure 32: Existing Housing in Columbia City

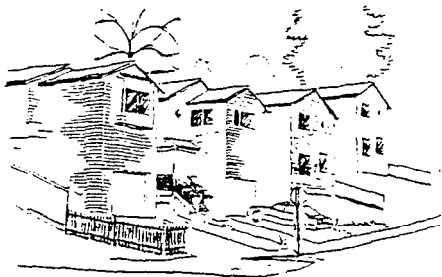


Figure 33: New Single-Family Residences Near MLK

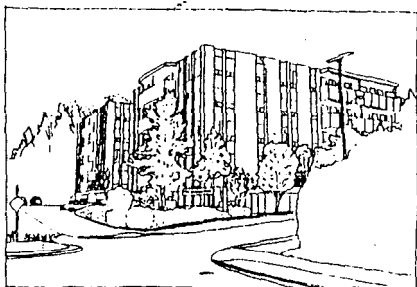


Figure 34: Existing Multifamily Development In Columbia City

- Average rents are \$551 in large buildings and \$619 in small buildings for two-bedroom, one-bath units. (Spring 1998) These rents are well below those found in other urban villages. For example, the same units in the Central Area rent for \$879 and \$696. The rents are not high enough to attract new development or cause reinvestment in older buildings.
- Vacancy rates have fallen significantly to 0.6 percent. This area has historically had the highest vacancy rates in the city.
- A high percent of existing rental units are directly or indirectly subsidized: 51 percent.
- While new development is occurring in the form of single-family infill development, long-term abandonment of single-family housing is also occurring, especially in the area between Rainier Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Way.
- There has been no significant market rate multifamily housing built on Rainier Avenue or Martin Luther King Jr. Way since the 1960s.
- Much of the property that could be utilized for new housing development is zoned for commercial use. Much of the property is occupied by blighted, vacant, or underutilized commercial uses.
- **Infrastructure**, streets, sidewalks, alleys, and street trees are substandard.

These conditions suggest that if active intervention in the basic zoning and market conditions that exist in the Rainier Valley do not occur as suggested in this plan, very little significant housing development will occur.

Existing Resources

This planning area is fortunate to have a number of **neighborhood-based** volunteer and not-for-profit organizations that work to provide services to the area and to assist in community vitalization and safety.

Three organizations are especially influential in housing activities and can play a **very** important role in future housing approaches: Southeast Effective Development (SEED), HomeSight, and Seattle Housing Authority. Each is a not-for-profit organization with a well-defined mission, success in housing development, and a strong role and presence in the community.

Implementation Strategy

Zoning will have to be altered to allow housing outright along the MLK and Rainier corridors if housing is to develop. Multifamily housing development is not occurring in the planning area. The only places where significant land is available for development of multifamily housing are located along the commercially zoned Rainier Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Way corridors.

The bulk of the zoning on these corridors is either Neighborhood Commercial (NC) or Commercial (C). The purpose of “NC” zones is to create pedestrian-oriented shopping districts. The purpose of “C” zones is to create auto-oriented commercial areas that allow a broad range of uses, including auto retail sales and services, fast food restaurants, and mini warehouses. Residential buildings are allowed only as a conditional use or as part of a mixed-use development in both zones. The current zoning has **resulted in** underutilized auto-oriented commercial strips along Rainier and MLK. Some of the current commercial activities are incompatible with residential development, uses such as auto repair shops, manufacturing, and fast food restaurants.

Several areas where the land use is predominantly single-family are zoned for multifamily uses. This zoning frequently causes disinvestment in single-family homes and possible demolition of single-family homes for multifamily structures. The single-family neighborhoods that are part of the planning area need to be protected and stabilized. Areas that are “over-zoned” need to be downzoned to discourage redevelopment of single-family homes.

The plan suggests 23 specific zoning and regulatory changes necessary to make the area more friendly to housing development while preserving neighborhood objectives to support existing commercial centers and to have new housing be safe, attractive, and highly livable.

A capital improvement plan for the existing single-family neighborhood should be developed in conjunction with home ownership zone strategies for new housing and preservation of existing housing. Many streets within the low- and moderate-income single-family areas of Columbia City are in poor repair.

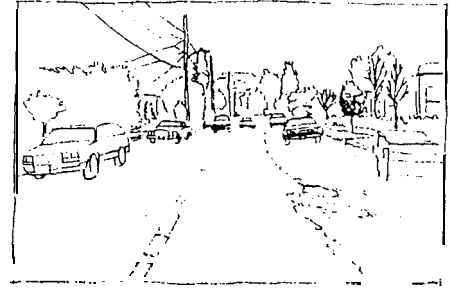


Figure 35: One of the Many Neighborhood Streets Without Basic Infrastructure Improvements

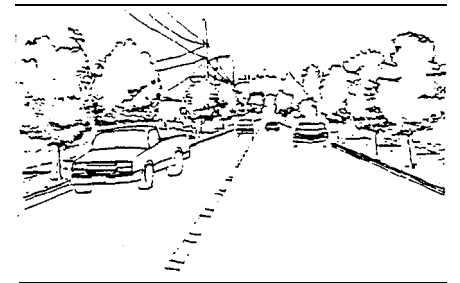


Figure 36: 32nd Avenue S. With New Curbs, Gutters, Planting Strips, and Street Trees

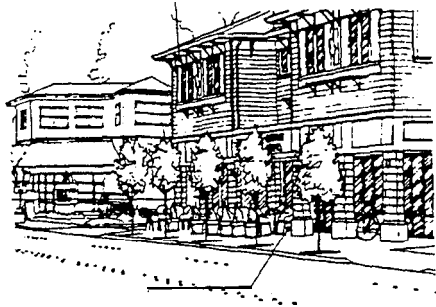


figure 38: Example of Mixed-Use Development Appropriate for Corridors



Figure 37: Single-Purpose Residential Development Appropriate for Corridors

Sidewalks, curbs, and gutters do not exist or are deteriorated. Alleys are not paved or are in poor repair. Neighborhood residents do not have the resources to make improvements through local improvement districts. City investment in infrastructure would contribute to the appearance, longevity, and stability of the area and could help attract new **infill** development.

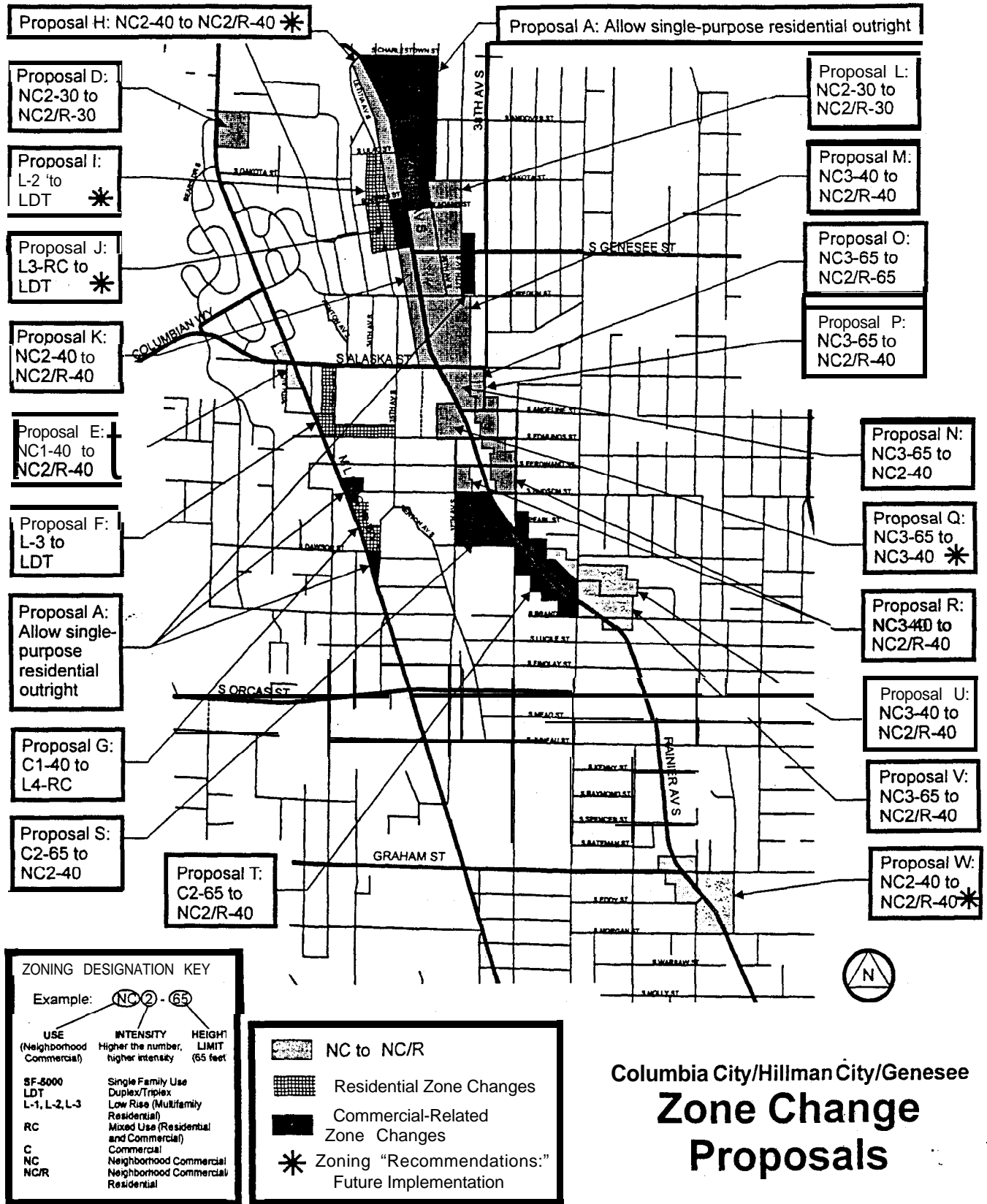
The street and other infrastructure improvements described in this plan for Rainier Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Way are also important in drawing new housing development to these corridors.

Zoning changes alone may not attract new market rate development to the planning area. Other incentives will be needed, *at least initially*, to entice developers to build the attractive, market rate housing the neighborhood desires. Incentives and subsidies must be used carefully to create market rate, mixed-income, mutual housing, and home ownership. The neighborhood continues to feel undue impacts from concentration of subsidized housing and from a concentration of rent subsidy certificates. Another negative housing impact identified by the community is the very large and dense apartment buildings along Rainier Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Way, which have been poorly maintained. These buildings make the community fearful of the impacts of new residential development, even when development is desired. Programs that respect this history and context, but encourage new housing and protect and preserve existing housing, are needed.

Housing success stories are badly needed in the Rainier corridor to build a new vision of a marketplace for modern, safe, attractive places for people to live. Homeownership projects are a high priority, but rental housing is also needed and encouraged. Several projects are on the drawing board: HomeSight’s Noji Gardens, a homeownership project, and rental housing at SEED’s Rainier Valley Square II. In addition to these projects, the development of successful new rental or ownership housing on Rainier and MLK, within the planning area, is important. At least three development projects should be built: one on Martin Luther King Jr. Way, one in or near Columbia City, and one in Hillman City. This activity would enliven and revitalize these areas and demonstrate the look and marketability of new housing.

Top Priority Housing and Residential Neighborhood Actions

1. Make zoning changes to encourage the development of quality multifamily housing along the corridors and preserve existing single family residential areas.
2. Provide street, sidewalk, street tree and alley improvements to strengthen existing single-family neighborhoods.
3. Develop a land banking and market rate and mixed-income housing development program.
4. Establish a neighborhood revitalization area which allows flexible use of federal funds for specific and achievable community revitalization objectives.
5. Support the activities of the Home Ownership Zone proposed by HomeSight and established by City Resolution.



Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee Zone Change Proposals

Figure 39: Proposed Zoning Changes

D. Integrated Transportation System

Optimize opportunities to make Sound Transit's rail line a positive community asset.

The development of Sound Transit's light rail transit system into Southeastern Seattle will likely be the single most important planning event for the area in the next several decades. Sound Transit's decision of which LRT alignment and station location to choose will likely have far reaching impacts on the direction of future development within the Columbia City/Genesee/Hillman City planning area. Coordination with Sound Transit on the utilization of their route/station selection criteria will be critical to ensure that the goals of the community are being considered in the selection of the LRT route and station location. Columbia City represents the only historic/traditional neighborhood center considered as a possible station location along the light rail route south of the International District. The Columbia City station—37th Avenue tunnel route has been recommended by the Planning Committee not only for its unique pedestrian qualities, but also due to its limited transportation impacts, significant community development opportunities, its centralized location, and ability to efficiently serve riders. Despite the Columbia City station recommendation, the community must prepare mitigation measures and recommendations for each of the LRT proposals since the community recommendation by itself will not guarantee the ultimate route selection. There are a number of transportation strategies that exist regardless of the LRT route and station location. The highest community priorities include enhancing north-south bicycle access, retaining existing mobility standards along MLK Jr. Way S., developing a bus loop system providing residential areas efficient access to the LRT station, providing a stronger link between Rainier Vista and Columbia City's business district, improving bus service and facilities, and enhancing pedestrian safety.

Background and Problems

The Rainier Valley communities continually provide King County/Metro with the highest ridership numbers in the system. With a significant number of buses and increasing automobile traffic on the limited number of through north/south routes, traffic congestion is a growing concern among the valley neighborhoods. Sound Transit's Light Rail Transit proposal, therefore, offers a major opportunity to improve the area's accessibility.

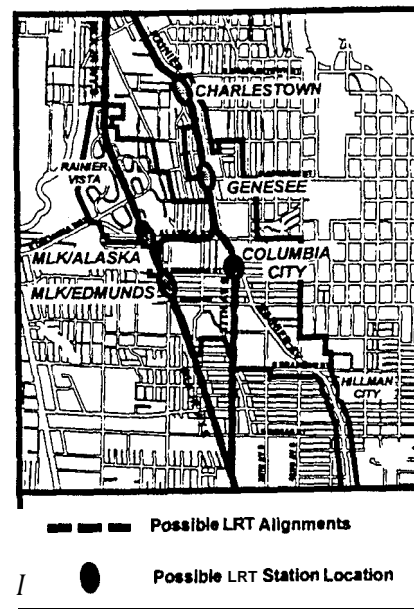


Figure 40: Columbia City Area Light Rail Alternatives



Currently, there are four alignment options within the planning area being considered by Sound Transit. Two of these utilize Martin Luther King Junior Way South; an at-grade alignment and an above-grade alignment. Both would be in the center of the street and utilize transit stations at the S. Alaska Street intersection. Both of the other alternatives run along the west side of Rainier Avenue through the Genesee area at-grade. One option turns westward, at-grade, at Alaska towards MLK, then south (referred to as the “S” curve route). The other route begins to submerge just prior to Alaska Street and continue southward in a tunnel under 37th Avenue until daylighting just prior to MLK. The “S” curve route has several transit station alternatives, including possible locations at MLK/Hudson Street, Rainier/Genesee, and Rainier/Charlestown. The 37th Avenue tunnel route’s station would be at S. Edmunds Street and 37th Avenue S. A Charlestown Street station is also possible in addition to the Columbia City station.

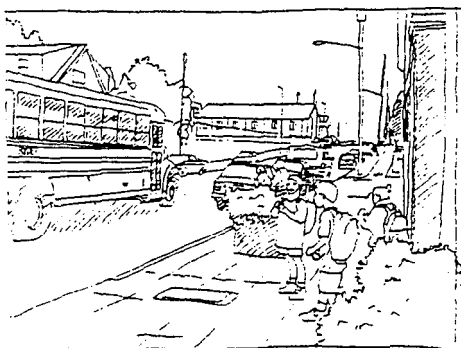


Figure 4 1: Improving pedestrian access and safety is a high priority.

A number of other transportation issues and concerns were identified during the planning process. Among these are pedestrian access and safety. Parents are concerned about school children crossing MLK or Rainier, which have inadequate crosswalks. Columbia City residents complain about the extended waiting time at the traffic signals waiting to cross Rainier Avenue. Bicycle safety is a glaring problem. The flattest and most direct routes in the area, MLK and Rainier, are also two of the most dangerous streets to ride on in the entire city. Both streets have little or nonexistent shoulders and heavy traffic which includes numerous trucks and buses. Speeding on MLK and within residential areas is also a concern. Additional transit related concerns involve the lack of east-west bus routes and improving bus stop facilities.

Top Priority Transportation Actions

1. Develop 37th Avenue Tunnel Route with Edmunds/37th Ave. transit station to provide a centralized transit station and limit negative traffic and noise impacts.
2. Provide bicycle facilities on MLK or Rainier in conjunction with light rail.
3. Develop a bus loop feeder system providing neighborhoods with efficient access to transit.
4. Conduct a comprehensive transportation analysis of all major north-south transportation corridors within the influence area in conjunction with light rail.

5. Provide Rainier Vista residents with strong links to the new light rail station.
6. Minimize construction impacts associated with the light rail line.
7. Create residential parking zones (RPZ) in residential neighborhoods adjacent to light rail stations.
8. Improve east-west transit service.
9. Improve bus stops, particularly those that function as transfer stations.
10. Improve bicycle access on S. Alaska Street (west of Rainier) and S. Columbian Way up to Beacon Hill.

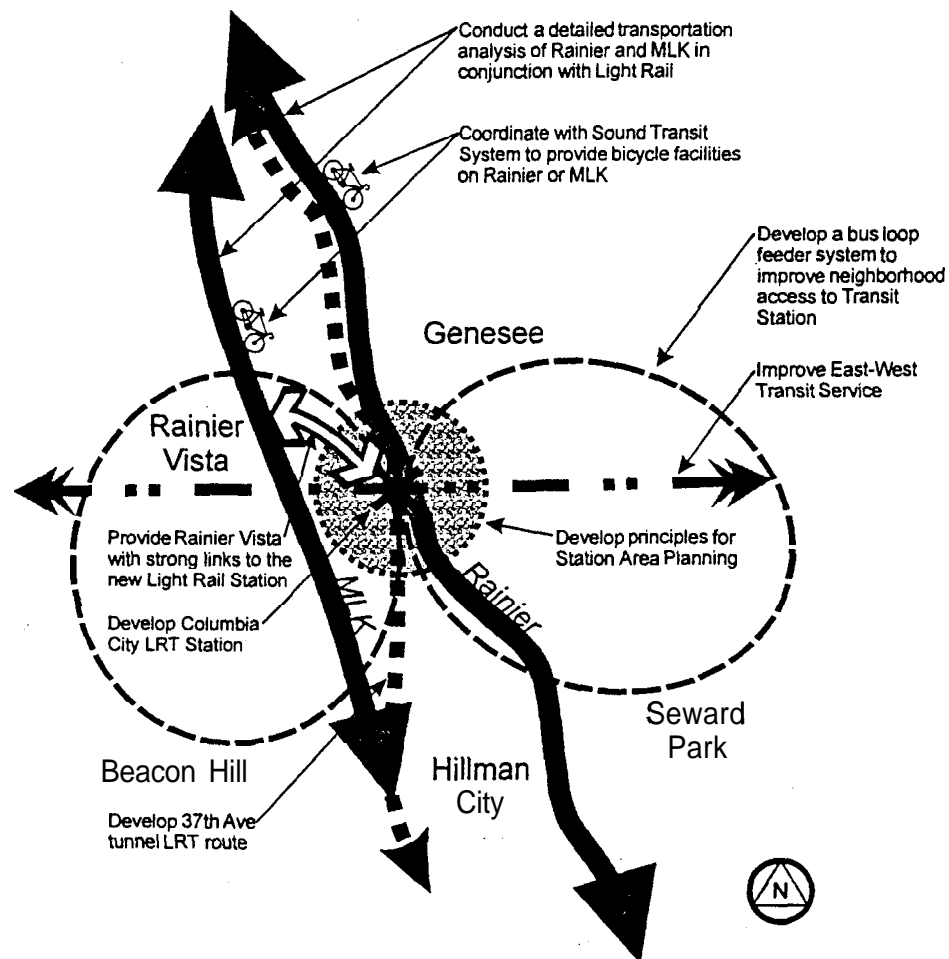


Figure 42: Transportation Strategies



Station Area Plans

Despite the strong recommendations for the underground transit station and the subsequent 37th Avenue light rail alignment, three additional alignment alternatives existed during the Phase II planning process, and thus, were acknowledged by the community as true possibilities. The Columbia City /Hillman City/Genesee Planning Committee conducted the Light Rail Transit Public Forum on July 30, 1998, to discuss problems and opportunities associated with each of these alternatives. Groups also discussed how well each of the alternatives rate against specific criteria developed by the Planning Committee, such as potential housing impacts or pedestrian connections. While this plan does not make specific zoning recommendations (with the exception of the underground Columbia City station) involving the development of transit stations, schematic plans for each of the station areas were created. (*See Figures 17, 2.5, 43, 44, 45, 46, and 47.*) Should a station be constructed within the MLK corridor or at Genesee or Charlestown, specific zoning recommendations should be made in conjunction with the detailed station area planning process. The goals, policies, and strategies of this plan should be utilized in the station area planning decision making process.

The schematic plans on the following five pages were prepared for the neighborhood's light rail forum conducted in July. These plans highlight problems, opportunities, and mitigation measures associated with each of the applicable light rail alternatives. They helped to facilitate discussions on how well each plan met the siting and design criteria developed by the Planning Committee. Detailed strategies for individual station area alternatives are listed in the "Implementation Activities" chapter beginning on page 76.

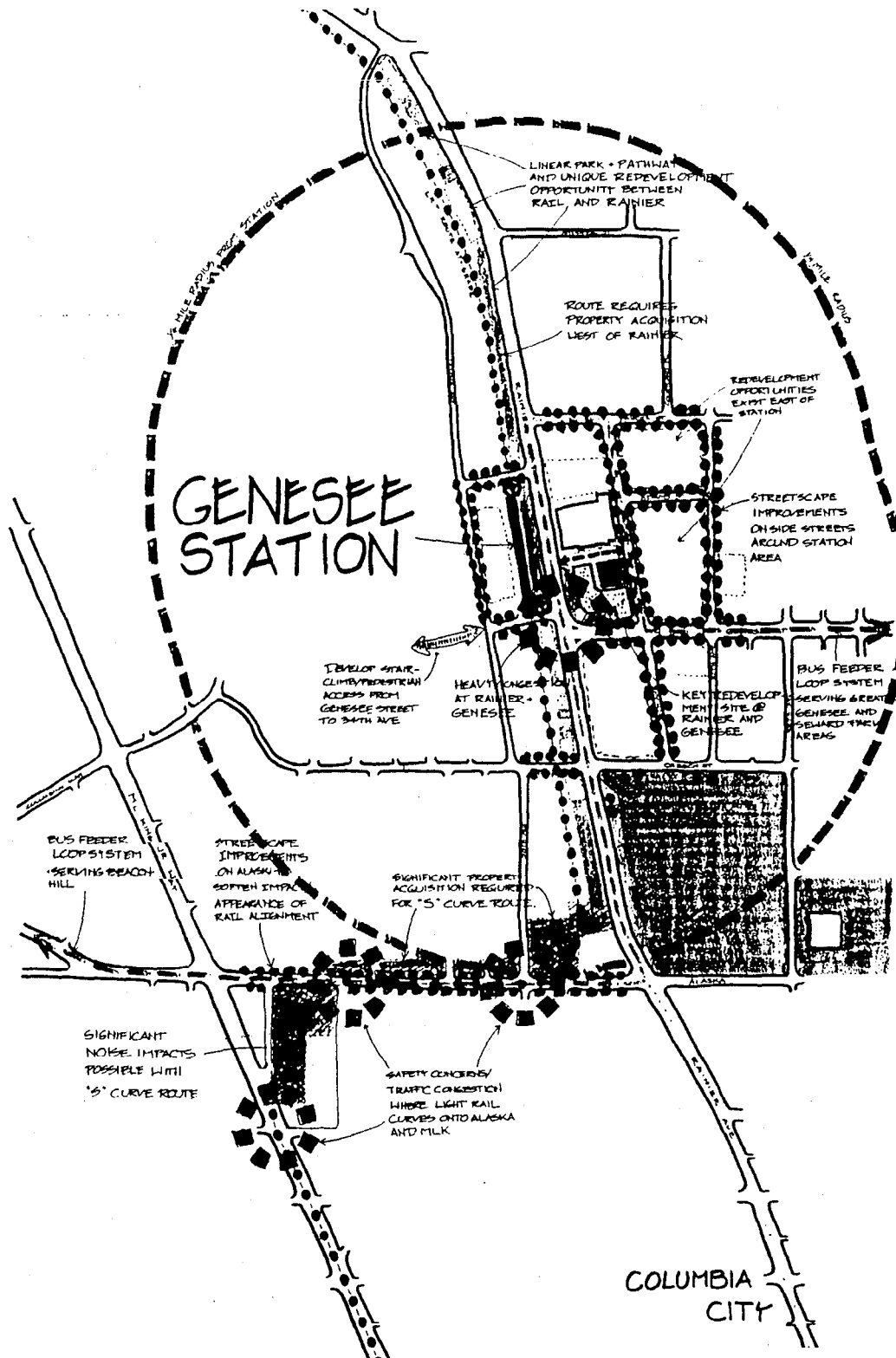


Figure 43: Schematic Plan for the Genesee Light Rail Station

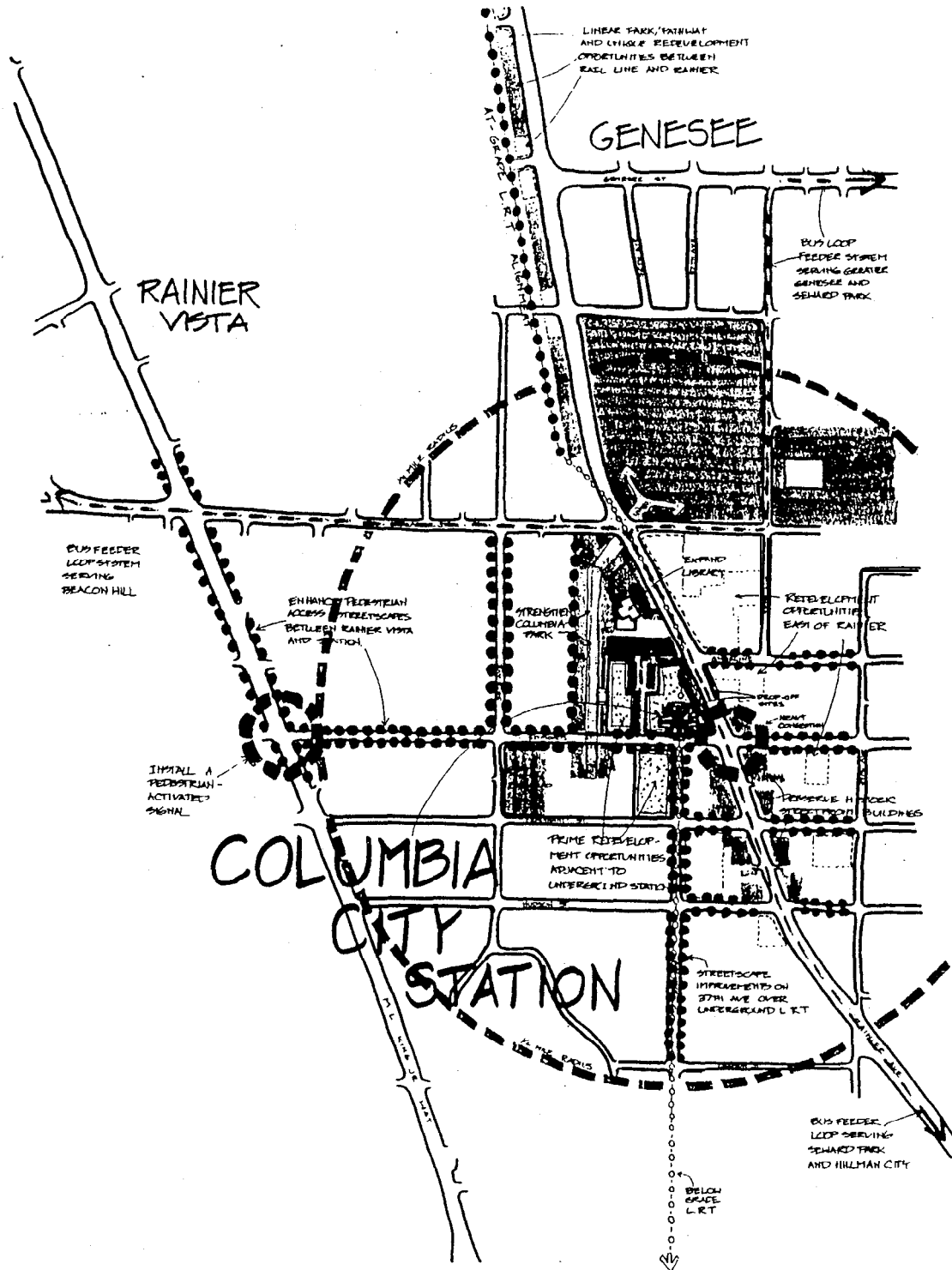


Figure 44: Schematic Plan for the Columbia City Underground Transit Station

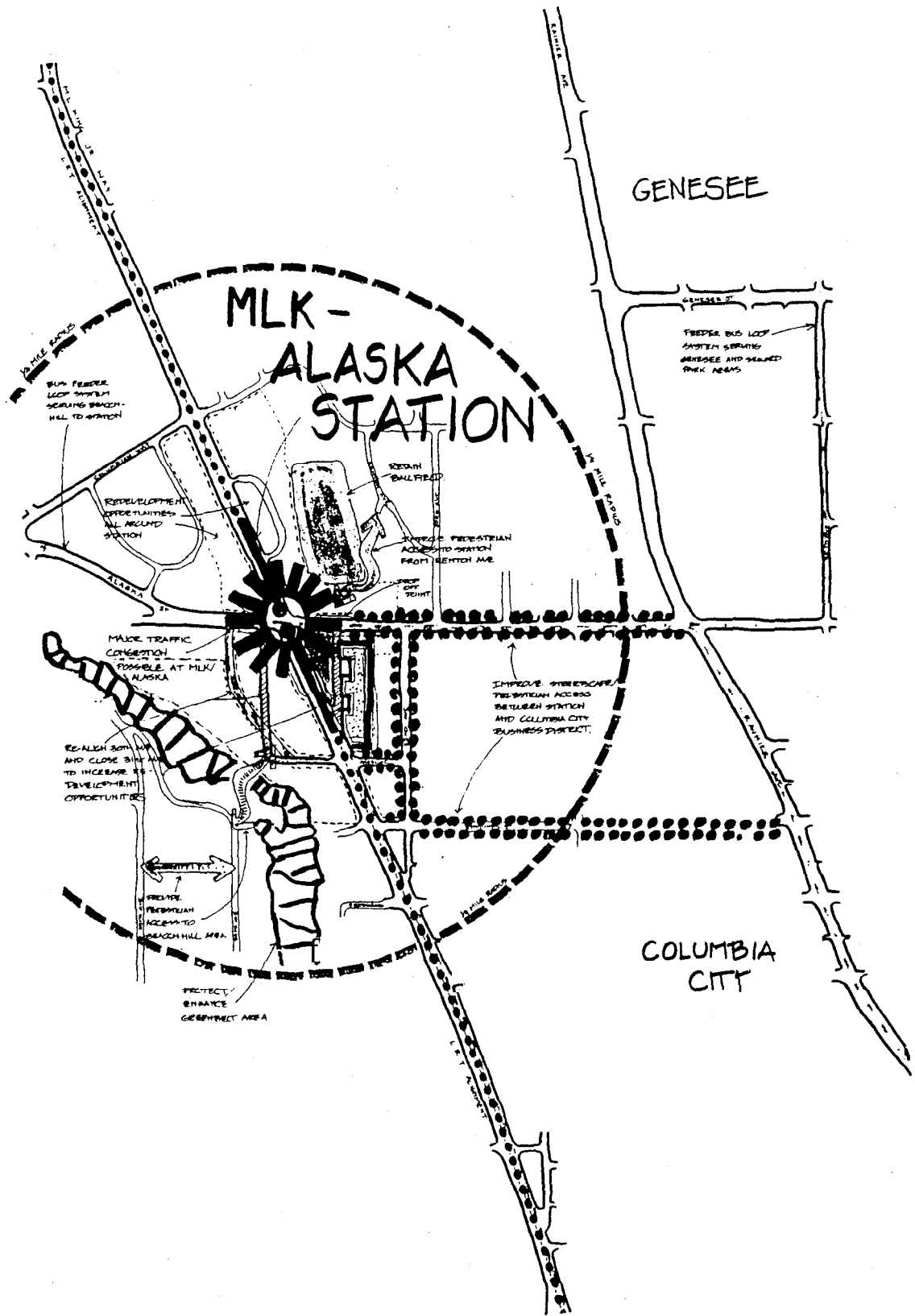


Figure 45: Schematic Plan for the MLK-Alaska Light Rail Station



MLK At-Grade Transit Station: Station Area Redevelopment Opportunities

This sketch illustrates some general redevelopment opportunities that might occur over the next several years. It is not intended to illustrate specific development proposals. The size and location of redevelopment projects may vary considerably. Timing of the projects will depend on market demand. The drawing is intended to help public participants visualize the way Sound Transit's light rail transit system could integrate with community goals.

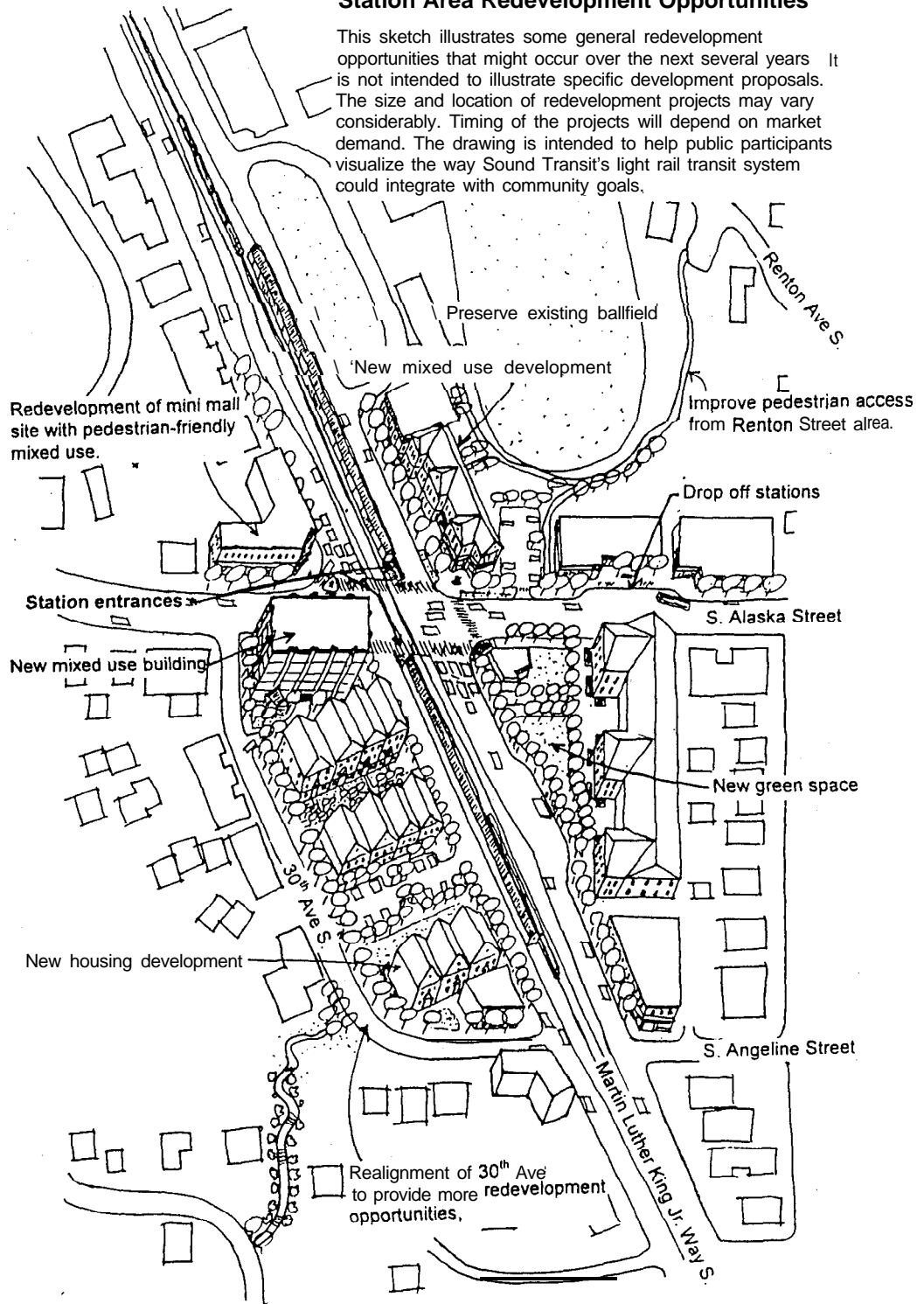


figure 46: Station Area Redevelopment Opportunities at MLK/Alaska

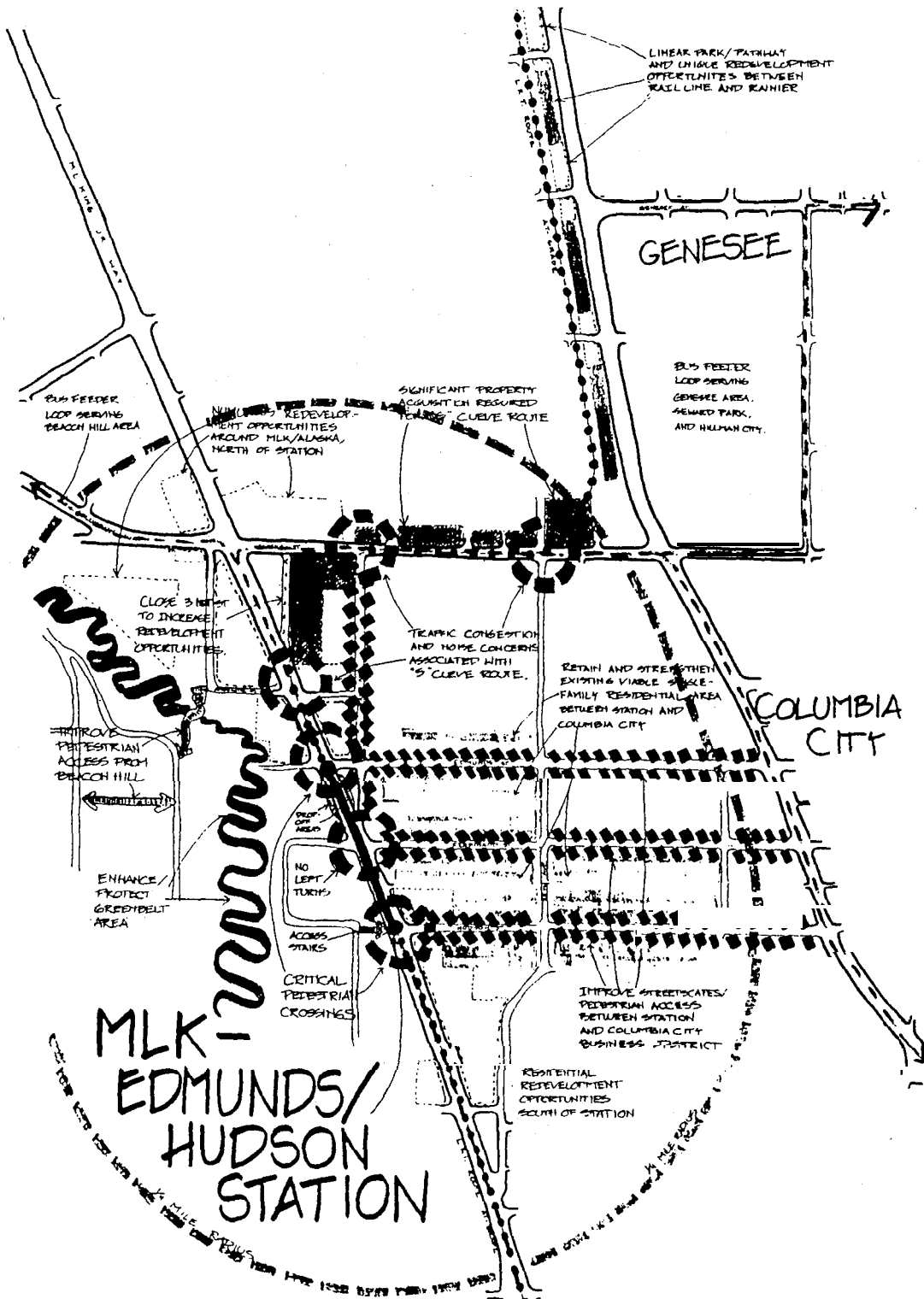


Figure 47: Schematic Plan for the MLK/Edmunds Light Rail Station



E. Martin Luther King junior Corridor

Improve the appearance of the MLK corridor while retaining its function as an efficient transportation corridor.

Martin Luther King Junior Way was originally designed to serve as an efficient high speed transportation corridor providing alternative north-south access to Rainier Avenue. To this day, MLK retains this valuable function. However, efforts to mitigate the negative impacts the heavy traffic has on adjacent property and pedestrian activity, have largely been insufficient. Moreover, the continued emphasis of commercial zoning along the MLK corridor, particularly south of Rainier Vista, has had a deleterious effect on the visual quality of the corridor. The overall consequence has been a general pattern of disinvestment and lack of property maintenance. The plan recommends activities that improve the appearance of the corridor, increase pedestrian safety while maintaining traffic capacity, and encourage new or redevelopment of vacant or blighted properties.

Implementation Strategy

Enhancing pedestrian access and improving the MLK streetscape are the highest priorities for strengthening the corridor. A unified streetscape design should be created to create a continuous, attractive, and safe route. This should include improved sidewalks, new street trees, marked crosswalks, and improved lighting. In light of Sound Transit's light rail proposals, conducting a detailed analysis of MLK and Rainier is essential for ensuring that good standards of mobility are retained within the corridor.

Recommended zoning revisions emphasize strengthening the existing pattern of residential uses and commercial nodes. This plan does not include specific zoning recommendations involving the development of a light rail station on Martin Luther King Junior Way S. Should a station be constructed within the MLK corridor, specific zoning recommendations should be made in conjunction with the detailed station area planning process.

The plan recommends integrated strategies to stimulate both the construction of new multifamily developments and the rehabilitation of existing residential uses (see *Residential Neighborhoods and Housing*, page 36). Additionally, the plan recommends measures to protect and enhance the greenbelt along the eastern edge of Beacon Hill as a valuable community asset. This includes developing a pathway or stairclimb from the 30th Avenue/Mountainview Drive in Beacon Hill down towards MLK, near Angeline Street.



Figure 48: Streetscape Improvements are Needed Along MLK

Top Martin Luther King Junior Corridor Actions

1. Install pedestrian-activated signals along MLK at Edmunds (or Ferdinand) and Dawson and at Rainier Vista, north of Columbian Way to improve safety.
2. Enhance Martin Luther King Junior Way streetscape to improve the appearance and image of the corridor.
3. Make zoning changes to encourage new multifamily construction, stabilize existing residential areas, and strengthen commercial nodes.
4. Support the redevelopment of the Rainier Vista public housing garden community.
5. Provide decorative gateway features along MLK to direct travelers to Columbia City's historic business district.

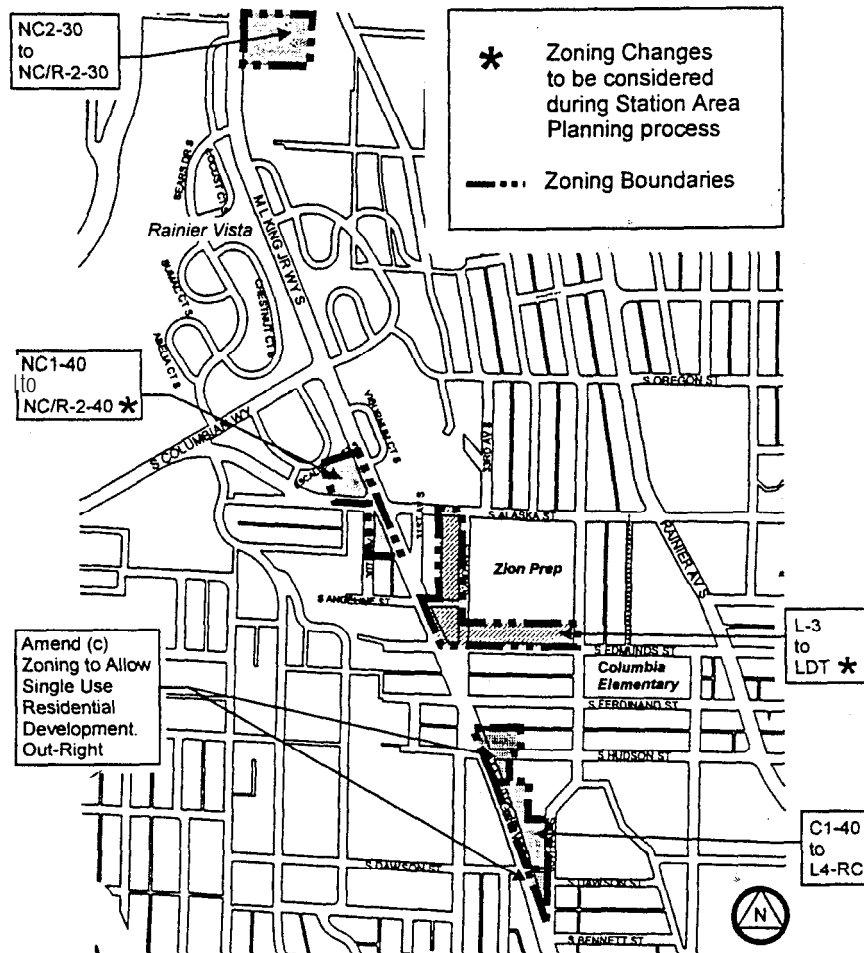


Figure 49: Proposed Zoning Changes Along the MLK Corridor

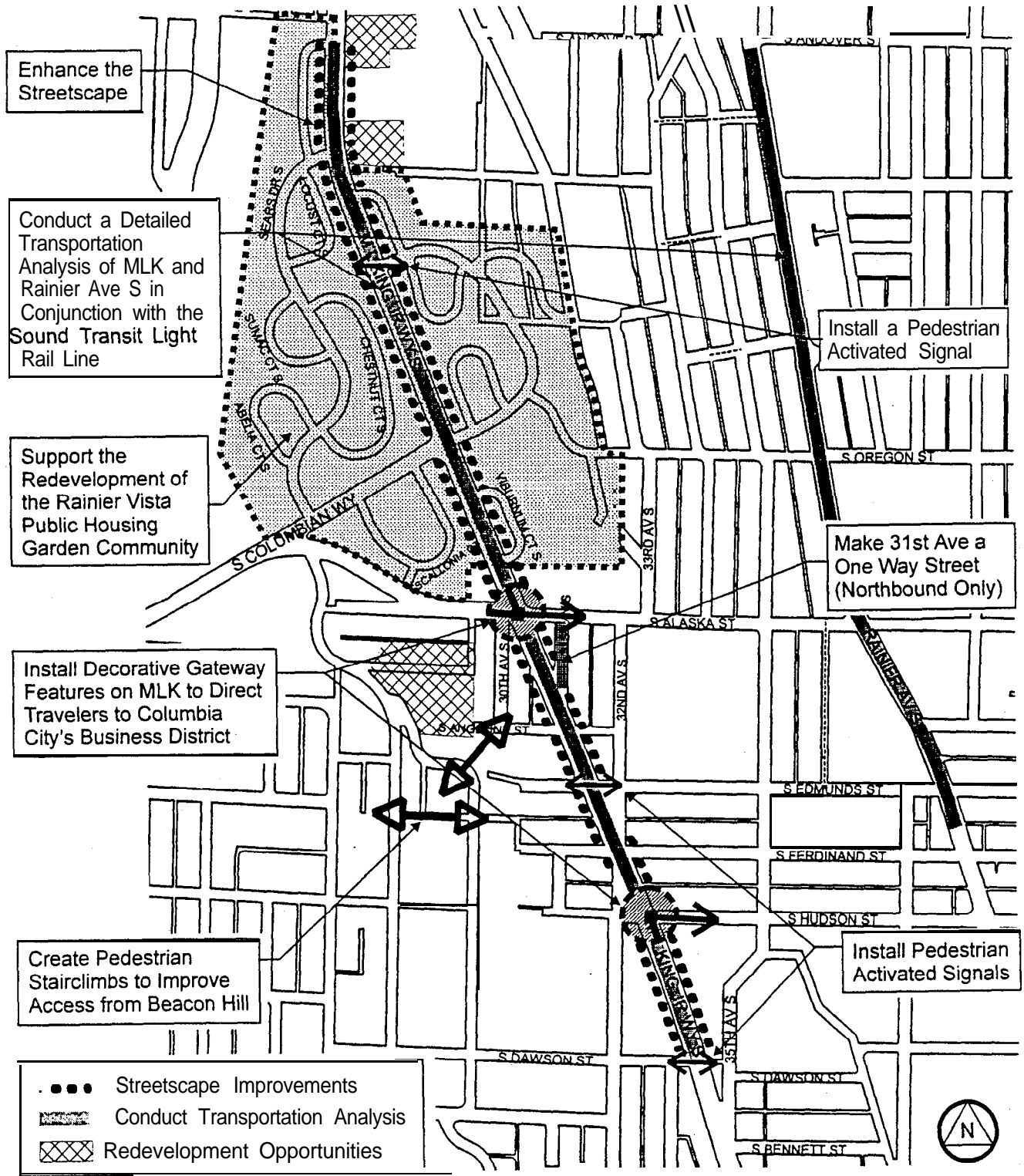


Figure 50: Martin Luther King Jr. Way Corridor Improvement3

F. Public Safety and Community Livability

Stabilize and enhance the Columbia City area as a safe and clean neighborhood in which to live, work, and recreate.

Three attributes are critical in improving the area's livability. They include enhancing the area's physical attractiveness, improving standards of law and code enforcement, and strengthening community identity and pride related programs and activities.

Background

The historical perception that the entire Rainier Valley is an unsafe place to be has been a major impediment in instilling community pride and attracting private investment in the Columbia City/Genesee/Hillman City area. As a result of decades of higher than average crime rates, including gang and drug related violence that have occurred throughout the whole valley, the image and livability of the planning area has suffered. While a number of recent achievements by local groups such as the Southeast Crime Prevention Council and local merchants groups have indicated progress, the negative image persists.

While vacant, overgrown, and littered lots, abandoned cars, and security bars on business windows persist and further contribute to this negative image, recent development projects and trends provide reason for optimism. Streetscape improvements in addition to the success of local arts and cultural programs and community events have helped reinvigorate historic Columbia City. The success of new developments such as Rainier Valley Square in Genesee's business district have caused reason to support the continued economic development strategies of Southeast Effective Development (SEED).

The Southeast Seattle Arts Council has been responsible for several neighborhood improvement projects, such as the new mural on the Darigold building. The Comp Plan denotes the need for an additional 1.25 to 2.5 acres of small parksites or P-patches within the planning area. Lack of facilities for toddlers has been referenced throughout the planning process, as has the need to control the placement of new social services and to improve security lighting near schools, parks, public facilities, parking lots, and alleys.

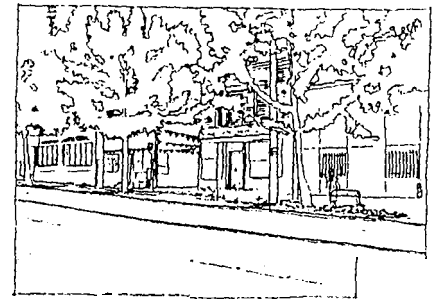


Figure 51: Dilapidated and vacant buildings contribute to negative perceptions of the area.

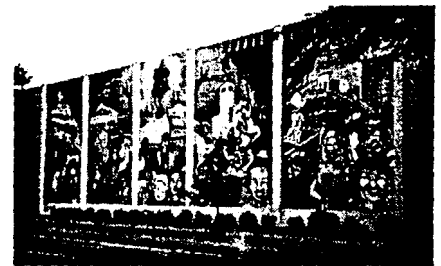


Figure 52: Murals, such as this new one on the side of the Darigold facility, add character and pride to the neighborhood.



Implementation Strategy

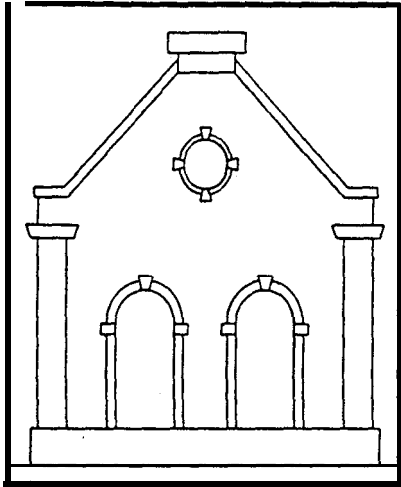
The improvement in standards of law and code enforcement is necessary to maintain a sense of order in the neighborhood.

Restoring and expanding community based policing, therefore, is a high priority goal in maintaining order and improving the image of the area, as are activities to rid the neighborhood of abandoned cars and weed and litter choked lots.

Identifying and prioritizing physical improvements such as the improvement of the Columbia Green, planting more street trees, and constructing curbs, gutters, and sidewalks on residential streets are very important to stabilize and enhance the community. The plan supports the continued activities and efforts of the Southeast Seattle Arts Council and the development of a “Toddler” gym.

Top Public Safety and Community Livability Actions

1. Aggressively enforce property maintenance and nuisance codes to maintain order in the neighborhood.
2. Ensure that the South Precinct funding keeps pace with population growth and changes in crime statistics to ensure adequate police protection.
3. Restore and expand community-based policing with a visible presence via foot patrol and bicycle patrol, particularly in the commercial core areas.
4. Support the efforts of the Southeast Seattle Arts Council (SESAC) in adding murals, sculptures, and other visual art that contribute to the community.
5. Improve security lighting around schools, parks, public facilities, parking lots, and alleys to increase safety. Such security lighting, however, should be consistent with the character of the area and sensitive to adjacent residents.



IV. Implementation Activities

A. Columbia City Community Focus

AI – Capital Infrastructure

Note: Refer to Figure 20, page 26, for a map of the recommended improvements.

- AI-a Develop the 37th Avenue S. tunnel light rail transit (LRT) route with an underground transit station at 37th Avenue S. and S. Edmunds Street to provide a centralized transit station and build upon Columbia City’s opportunity to become South Seattle’s premier community-based center for cultural and commercial activity.** If a Martin Luther King Jr. Way route is chosen, provide substantially more public and private investment in the Columbia City Core
- AI-b Provide street, sidewalk, street tree and alley improvements in existing single family neighborhoods.** A capital improvement plan for the existing single family neighborhood should be developed in conjunction with home ownership zone strategies for new housing and preservation of existing housing. Many streets within the low and moderate income single family areas of Columbia City are in poor repair. Sidewalks, curbs and gutters do not exist or are deteriorated. Alleys are not paved or are in poor repair. Neighborhood residents do not have the resources to make improvements through local improvement districts. City investment in infrastructure

would contribute to the appearance, longevity and stability of the area and could help attract new infill development.

- AI-c Enhance Rainier Playfield.** Develop unique park entryway features at both Rainier Avenue S. entrances, particularly at Rainier and Alaska Street to improve the connection with Columbia City, Columbia Green, and the Genesee Business District. Enhance crosswalks at both intersections to improve safety and visibility. Develop landscaped stairclimbs at both Rainier entrances to enhance neighborhood access to the park. Develop a pathway around the interior of the park. Improve the pedestrian connection between the park and the community center.
- AI-d Enhance Columbia Park (a.k.a. Columbia Green).** Although one of the community's most valued assets, Columbia Park is underutilized and in need of improvements. Hire a landscape architect to work with the community and create an improvement plan for the park
- AI-e Improve the pedestrian connection between Rainier Vista and Columbia City.** Provide sidewalk, landscaping, street trees, lighting, and signage improvements to Alaska and Edmunds streets from Martin Luther King Jr. Way to Rainier Avenue.
- AI-f Provide streetscape improvements in the business district core.** Extend the signature streetscape pattern/elements of Columbia City's Historic District on Rainier Avenue S., northward from S. Edmunds Street to S. Alaska Street and on side streets just off of Rainier, as streetfront redevelopment occurs. This includes brick paving patterns, street lights, landscaping, and street furniture improvements.
- AI-g Reduce the total number of travel lanes on Rainier Avenue S. within Columbia City from four to two, plus a center turn lane.** Although this would serve as a traffic calming measure, it can improve efficiency by moving left-turning vehicles out of the through lanes. It may also provide additional space for bicycle lanes. The implementation is contingent upon further study that this measure will not substantially reduce Rainier Avenue's vehicle capacity and efficiency.
- AI-b Create angled parking on side streets within the business district core.** This will help to provide more parking for Columbia City businesses. The streets include



east of Rainier; S. Ferdinand, on the east side of Rainier; and on S. Hudson, one block west of Rainier. In conjunction with these improvements, enhance the existing angled parking area on S. Hudson, east of Rainier, by providing paving and striping improvements. Ensure, however, that all parking revisions do not conflict with other recommendations, including sidewalk, landscaping, and other streetscape improvements. A study on the project's feasibility is essential.

A2 – Regulatory Measures

Note: Refer to the activities under C2, Residential Neighborhoods and Housing for zone change recommendations. Refer to Figure 21, page 27, for a map of the recommended zoning changes.

A2-a Develop measures to inform prospective businesses owners within Columbia City of the Historic District designation. This is essential at the business license stage to inform businesses of the requirements for signage, exterior work, etc., within a historic district.

A3 – Programs

A3-a Develop a parking management plan for Columbia City. Seek formal approval for public use of the area's private parking lots. Manage employee parking in ways that reduces impacts on customer/visitor parking availability.

A4 – Special Opportunities

A4-a Redevelop the Columbia Plaza site. Originally the Tradewell Supermarket, this structure, built in 1957, ignores both the historic pattern of streetfront buildings on Rainier Avenue and Columbia Park in the rear, and detracts from the ambiance of neighborhood. Redeveloping this key site consistent with the neighborhood's traditional historic pattern not only would strengthen the appearance of Rainier Avenue S. and Columbia Green, but could provide a vibrant mix of uses including retail, housing, and offices. The site's redevelopment should also incorporate a permanent location for the Farmers Market (connected to Columbia Park).

- A4-b Green Columbia Elementary School's (Orca) Playground.** The playground on the west side of the school currently looks like an abandoned parking lot with its of cracked asphalt and a chain link fence. Breaking up the starkness of the playground with "green" elements would contribute to improving the image of the neighborhood.
- A4-c Find a permanent home for Columbia City's Farmers Market.** Incorporate provisions for a Farmers Market site in the redevelopment of the, Columbia Plaza site and Columbia Park improvements.
- A4-d Participate in efforts to expand the Columbia City Library.** Work with the Seattle Library to develop an expansion plan for the Columbia City branch library. Special attention will be paid to the needs of school age children, residents of Rainier Vista, and the blind. Retain architectural integrity of historic structure with expansion.
- A4-e Enhance and promote the Columbia City Cultural Center.** Provide improvements such as new **signage**. Integrate the events of the cultural center into the community.
- A4-f Open an art gallery on Rainier Avenue in Columbia City.** **This is** a high priority of Southeast Seattle Arts Council (SESAC). Provide gallery space at the street level with artist live/work space above.
- A4-g Redevelop the Furon site if existing activities cease.** **Furon**, an aerospace, medical, and computer components manufacturing industry, occupies the largest piece of property under single ownership along Rainier Avenue S., within the Columbia City area (*approximately 4.5 acres*). Although **Furon** has been a valuable source of employment in Columbia City since 1955, the site represents a valuable redevelopment opportunity should **Furon's** activities cease in the near future. If this occurs, combination of pedestrian oriented neighborhood services, retail, office, and residential uses would be appropriate at this location. Redevelopment here would be an opportunity to substantially improve the streetscape of Hudson and Dawson streets, and 37th Avenue, in addition to the Rainier Avenue streetfront.



B. Rainier Corridor

B1 – Capitol Infrastructure

Note: Refer to Figures 29 and 31, pages 33 and 35, for a maps of recommended improvements.

- B1-a Resurface Rainier Avenue S. with concrete to reduce the need for maintenance, increase the life expectancy of the street, and improve the pedestrian environment.** Heavy bus and truck volumes and poor road conditions, particularly in the Hillman City and Darigold areas, are increasing the need to substantially improve the surface of Rainier Avenue. Poor drainage contributes to a harsh pedestrian environment due to splashing water from passing cars onto sidewalks. Where possible, restore curbs to 6' height to enhance pedestrian safety and discourage cars from parking on the sidewalks.
- B1-b Develop gateway treatments incorporating public art at the major entries to Genesee and Hillman City.** For Hillman City, install gateway features near Lucile Street S. in the north and Juneau Street S. in the south. For Genesee, install a gateway. feature at its southern end near Oregon Street S.
- B1-c Make traffic signals more pedestrian friendly. The** present traffic signal cycles on Rainier Avenue S. are so long that they cause pedestrians to be restless and cross the street illegally. Reducing the response time for pedestrian activated signals and including automatic WALK signals for each cycle will increase safety and promote pedestrian activity in Columbia City.
- B1-d Improve the visibility of crosswalks.** Improving pedestrian crossing designs, such as brick, textured concrete, or cobblestone crosswalks promotes pedestrian activity and improves safety. Add new crosswalks where appropriate.
- B1-e Develop signature streetscape treatments and pedestrian features for Genesee and Hillman City business district cores.** Include local artwork, kiosks, bus shelters, and signage that can help identify and distinguish the districts.
- B1-f In conjunction with the Rainier/Columbia City LRT alignment, develop a linear park with separated pathways along Rainier Avenue S. north of Alaska.** The park would lie within the strip of land between the LRT

line and Rainier Avenue. Also provide opportunities for redevelopment in key locations that compliment the park, pathways, and Genesee business district activities.

- B1-g Designate Rainier Avenue S. a Key Pedestrian Street.**
This can help set priorities for pedestrian-related improvements throughout the corridor.
- B1-h Limit curb cuts along Rainier Avenue S., from S. Charlestown Street to S. Orcas Street to one per site.**
Encourage adjacent sites to share driveways and possibly parking lots.
- B1-i Reconfigure intersections with wider than normal approaches along Rainier Ave S. to shorten pedestrian walking distance.** This includes intersections at obtuse angles and/or more than one cross-street that increase the amount of street that pedestrians must cross. (e.g., Lucile, Charlestown/Letitia).
- B1-j Narrow the east (Genesee) approach at the intersection of Rainier Avenue S. and S. Genesee Street. This is a potentially hazardous intersections where cars turning to or from Genesee have the impression that they do not need to stop and pedestrians are unsure when to cross to/from the islands.--** Reduce the curb radius to a standard dimension, remove islands, maintain **sufficient** room for buses and trucks to turn.
- B1-k Plant more street trees.** Most of the Rainier Avenue S. corridor has a softening canopy of street trees. Continue this pattern by infilling street trees where absent.
- B1-l Provide more pedestrian-oriented street lighting along the Rainier Corridor.** Many areas along Rainier are dark and intimidating, and thus deter pedestrian activity. Specific sites include the core of Hillman City and sidewalks adjacent to Rainier Playfield and the Darigold facility.

B2 – Regulatory Measures

Note: Refer to the activities under C2, Residential Neighborhoods and Housing for zone change recommendations. Refer to Figures 28 and 30, pages 32 and 34, for a map of the recommended zoning changes.



B4 – Special Opportunities

- B4-a Develop/redevelop vacant and run down properties along the corridor.** Work with SEED or other community organizations, property owners, realtors, and developers to target properties within the Rainier corridor for acquisition, redevelopment or co-development.
- B4-b Support the Rainier Valley Square II development as a mixed-use (commercial and residential) project with a pedestrian focus along Rainier Avenue S.** (See Activity C4-b for more details.)
- B4-c Promote the development of artists lofts and galleries in Hillman City.**

C. Residential Neighborhoods and I-housing

CI – Capitol Infrastructure

Note: Refer to Figures 20, 29, 31, and 50 on pages 26, 33, 35, and 53, respectively, for maps locating specific improvements in the Columbia City Core and along the Rainier Avenue and Martin Luther King Junior Way corridors.

- CI-a Provide street, sidewalk, street’tree, and alley improvements in existing single family neighborhoods.** In addition to the Columbia City single family area (see *A1-c*), provide improvements on 37th Avenue S. between Genesee and Dakota streets and 30th Avenue S. between Alaska and Angeline streets.
- CI-b Identify options for City of Seattle utility incentives for new development.** Identify methods of City provision of offsite improvements and utilities normally required of housing developers such as sidewalks and street improvements. Developers of new market rate multifamily housing in the Rainier and Martin Luther King Jr. are virtual pioneers in this market.

C2 – Regulatory Measures

Note: Refer to Figure 39, page 41, for a map of all recommended zoning changes.

- C2-a Create a P-2 pedestrian overlay zone along Rainier Avenue in the Columbia City core (*this has been adopted*).** This will help strengthen and reinforce Columbia City as a pedestrian-oriented neighborhood center. The P-2 Overlay Zone will reduce parking requirements for businesses and limit uses to those that generally create pedestrian activity.
- C2-b Create a P-2 pedestrian overlay zone along Rainier Avenue in the Hillman City core (*this has been adopted*).** This aims to strengthen and reinforce Hillman City as a small, pedestrian-oriented neighborhood center. The P-2 Overlay Zone will reduce parking requirements for businesses and limit uses to those that generally create pedestrian activity.
- C2-c Amend all Commercial (C) zones in the planning area to allow single purpose residential development outright, except where a particular property is needed to support light rail stations.** This change would not prohibit any commercial use now possible, but would give a property owner more choices for development of a particular property and may encourage some residential development.
- C2-d Allow single purpose residential development outright on all proposed (NC/R) Neighborhood Commercial/ Residential zones in the planning area.**
- C2-e Relax the storefront commercial requirements for mixed use structures in all NC/R zoned areas within the planning area.** Specifically, this means not requiring the 80% nonresidential facade coverage for mixed-use structures, while allowing for unlimited residential density in mixed-use structures (unlimited density is already provided for in single purpose residential uses in the NC/R zone).
- C2-f Change all NC zoned areas to NCR-2/40, with some exceptions noted below.** This change does not change the potential for a broad range of single purpose or mixed commercial uses. The effects are: (1) more choices for property owners, (2) increased potential for residential single purpose or mixed use buildings, (3) a mix of commercial uses more compatible with neighborhood pedestrian oriented business districts and residential areas, and (4) height maximums for the Rainier Corridor of 40 feet. The 65 feet allowable heights are generally out of



scale with existing and planned uses along the Rainier corridor. The potential for very dense, large scale development would detract from the vision of a low to medium scale commercial and residential area which makes immediate and sensitive transitions to adjacent single-family neighborhoods. A “small town” scale is desired, rather than a dense, urban, “downtown” feel. Exceptions:

- Retain the 65 foot height limit on the west side of 38th Avenue adjacent to Alaska Street, which lies at a lower elevation and immediately across from an existing ±60 foot high multi family residential building (rezone from NC3-65 to NC/R-2-65).
- Retain the existing 30 foot height limit on the property bounded by S. Dakota Street, 36th Avenue S., S. Adams Street, and 37th Avenue S.
- Retain existing zoning within the P-2 overlay zones in Hillman City (NC2-40) and Columbia City (NC3-40).
- Retain existing zoning (NC3-40) on properties bounded by Edmunds, Ferdinand, 37th, and the Columbia City P-2 overlay zone boundary.
- Retain existing zoning (NC3-40) on the first parcel immediately east of the P-2 overlay zone boundary, on the north side of Ferdinand.
- Retain the NC designation on parcels fronting Rainier Avenue (rezone from NC3-65 to NC2-40) on the east side of the street between Alaska and Angeline streets.
- Reconsider the zoning on the NC1 zoned property adjacent to the S Alaska Street/Martin Luther King Jr. Way S. intersection during the station area planning process should a LRT station be selected to be built within the immediate area on MLK.

NOTE: Proposed NC/R zone changes outside of the designated Urban Village boundary shall be recommendations only. These zone changes include proposed NC/R areas north of S. Lilac Street and south of S. Lucile Street. Currently, properties lying outside of designated urban village boundaries are ineligible for the NC/R zoning. The plan, therefore, recommends either a future amendment to the Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee Urban Village Boundary to match the designated Planning Area boundary referenced in the plan

or a policy change by the City to allow for the NC/R designation within non urban village areas or neighborhood planning area boundaries.

C2-g Rezone the Commercial-2 (C-2) zoned area south of Columbia City to Neighborhood Commercial 2 (NC-2/40) (west of 39th Avenue S) and Neighborhood Commercial/Residential 2 (NCR-2/40) (east of 39th Avenue S). Allow single purpose residential uses by right on the those portions of the proposed NC2-40 zoned property that front on S Dawson Street, S. Hudson Street, and 37th Avenue S. This selects commercial zoning classifications for this planning area which prohibit auto oriented uses. The effects of this action are to: (1) discourage large-scale auto-oriented commercial uses at the south end of the historic district, (2) to increase the potential for single purpose residential development (except on the portion of the property that fronts on Rainier Avenue west of 39th Avenue, where nonresidential uses are required unless through a conditional use permit), and (3) to continue to encourage a broad range of commercial uses compatible with neighborhood commercial districts. Reduce the maximum allowed height to 40 feet from 65 feet. The 65 feet allowable heights are out of scale with existing and planned uses along the Rainier corridor. The potential for very dense, large scale development would detract from the vision of a low to medium scale commercial and residential area which makes immediate and sensitive transitions to adjacent single-family neighborhoods. A “small town” scale is desired, rather than a dense, urban, “downtown” feel.

C2-h Rezone currently Lowrise-3 (L-3) zoned areas on south and west of Zion Prep to Lowrise Duplex/Triplex (LDT). These areas are mostly in single-family use, with some duplex/triplex structures and one apartment building. Preservation of the single family residential character is highly desirable and the existing high intensity multifamily zoning causes disinvestment and pressure for redevelopment. Changing the zoning to Lowrise Duplex/Triplex reflects the existing use and better encourages reinvestment in single-family houses, (especially, in concert with other planned single-family efforts in the neighborhood). Should a transit station be built on Martin Luther King Jr. Way S. on land between S. Alaska Street and S Edmunds Street, the zoning for this



property should be reconsidered during the station area planning process.

- C2-i Rezone the area east of Martin Luther King Jr. Way starting one lot deep from Hudson Street southward to Dawson Street to Lowrise 4 – Residential/Commercial (L-4 RC) from Commercial (CI-40).** This area is currently in multifamily residential use. This zoning change would preserve existing residential and encourage new residential. Single purpose apartment buildings would be allowed. A limited number of commercial uses, which are compatible with residential uses, would be allowed outright or in mixed use buildings including: personal and household retail, medical services, restaurants without cocktail lounges, offices, food processing and craft work. This idea should be considered going southward on MLK outside of the Columbia City planning area for the same reasons.
- C2-j Rezone currently Lowrise 2 and Lowrise 3-Residential/Commercial zoned areas along Letitia Avenue S. between S. Lilac Street and S. Genesee Street to Lowrise Duplex/Triplex (LDT).** This area contains limited existing infrastructure, lies on relatively steep slopes, and contains mostly single family residential uses. Surrounding zoning is SF-5000 on nearly all sides. Consider zone change during the station area planning process regardless of selected LRT route and station.
- C2-k Create specific multi-family residential and commercial development guidelines.** Use the design review process to assure that neighborhood goals for compatible design and attractive buildings are achieved for both residential and commercial projects, including rehabilitation of existing structures.

C3 -Programs

- C3-a Develop a land banking and market rate and mixed income housing development program.** Private developers are not purchasing land along Martin Luther King Jr. Way and Rainier Avenue for mixed use or single purpose housing because current zoning makes housing development difficult and because the market for new multifamily rental housing in these corridors is unproven. When sites are purchased and developed, the use is usually a single purpose commercial development dependent upon automobile traffic. SEED or other community development organizations should be

capitalized to purchase key land parcels with housing development potential on MLK Jr. Way and Rainier Avenue. These parcels could then be readied for housing development (rezones, and other regulatory issues resolved) and then re-marketed to housing developers or mixed use developers who are willing to develop market rate housing which meets community objectives for scale, design, amenities, and economic development.

C3-b Establish a neighborhood revitalization area which allows flexible use of federal funds for specific and achievable community revitalization objectives. Activities would include infrastructure, economic development, housing development and rehabilitation (*this has been adopted*).

The City's Office of Economic Development is in the process of identifying and planning neighborhood revitalization areas. This program will result in regulatory flexibility, and could result in access to new funds for neighborhood based efforts which meet neighborhood plan objectives

C3-c Support the activities of the Home Ownership Zone proposed by HomeSight and established by City Resolution. HomeSight is a non-profit Community Development Corporation (CDC) with a mission to revitalize neighborhoods through affordable home

ownership. HomeSight plans to construct up to 100 new homes, provide 40 down payment assistance loans, provide home buyer education, advise owners about rehabilitation resources, and coordinate home ownership activities with capital improvements. City funds should be invested to support home ownership zone activities

Q - d Make planning area (including the homeownership zone) eligible for the City's Multifamily Tax Abatement Program (*this has been adopted*). State law, RCW 84.14,

allows Seattle to offer a property tax exemption as an incentive for the development of new multi-family housing, both ownership and rental. The neighborhood places a high value on use of the program for condominium projects.

C3-e Target the City REACH program for repairs to single-family houses to the area. The City's 1989 Housing

Condition Survey shows Southeast Seattle to be among those neighborhoods with a high proportion of "Deteriorated" and "Dilapidated" housing. The City offers a low interest rate program for home repairs to low and moderate income households to enable them to make home repairs they



normally could not afford. The City should market this program to all single-family homes within the planning area boundaries through concerted, house to house marketing activities including workshops, mailing, signage, publicity, etc.

- C3-f Use light rail station(s) as an opportunity to encourage new housing development.** Station(s) should be located to support neighborhood community development objectives including the development of housing in the immediate vicinity of the stops. While encouraging the development of new housing, protection of existing housing from the impacts of transit stations should also be a high priority. Residents whom are displaced because of transit related condemnation of their homes should receive the most generous relocation benefits possible, including “last resort” housing which is housing financed by transit funds to provide replacement housing which fully meets the financial and physical needs of the families displaced.
- C3-g Create a program for owners of existing buildings with affordable rents to obtain assistance with building improvements.** This planning area has hundreds of rental units built in the 50’s and 60’s which are in poor repair and unsafe condition. This “blight” affects the personal safety of the residents and negatively affects the community’s interest in new housing. Property owners will not reinvest in properties with depressed rents. In the recent past, the City had housing programs which provided funding for private owners of rental housing to obtain low-interest financing to make property repairs, particularly code repairs. A new below-market loan assistance program should be made available to Rainier and MLK corridor rental property owners.
- C3-h Create a mixed income housing financing program to assist community based housing developers to build or buy and rehabilitate existing housing in the Rainier and MLK corridors.** The Rainier Valley has a high percentage of units for very low-income families, estimated to be 5 1% of all rental units, (Southeast Seattle Impact Area). While public investment in housing development and rehabilitation is necessary for the revitalization of the area, the community feels the funds must be invested to further community revitalization and neighborhood plan goals. Within these parameters, additional funding must be made available to this community for housing development and rehabilitation.

C4 – Special Opportunities

C4-a Support the Noji Gardens Home Ownership Project.

The first project proposed in the home ownership zone by HomeSight is Noji Gardens, which is located along South Juneau Street. Up to 100 new construction home ownership units are projected. This plan is supportive of the project and encourages provision of the necessary funding to assure the project is successful.

C4-b Support the Rainier Valley Square II development.

At the north end of the Columbia City planning area, SEED proposes to develop a mixed-use commercial and residential project. The project would reinforce the existing successful Rainier Valley Square commercial center, would develop new housing, and would provide retail services in the Rainier corridor to Southeast Seattle residents.

C4-c Develop market rate multifamily housing projects through a nonprofit/for profit partnerships. The

community is lacking in successful, attractive, multifamily housing in the Rainier and Martin Luther King Jr. Way corridors. Using the land banking mechanism (see *Activity C3-b*), or other resources available to nonprofit agencies, such as City of Seattle Block Grant Float 'Loan, or foundation funds, a nonprofit/ for profit developer partnership could jointly purchase and develop a market rate multifamily property. The development should complement existing commercial centers, utilize good design principles, and strengthen pedestrian and transit links. Demonstration of successful new rental or ownership housing on Rainier and MLK, within the planning area, is important. At least three development projects should be built, one on Martin Luther King Way Jr. Way, one in or near Columbia City and one in Hillman City. This activity would enliven and revitalize these areas and demonstrate the look and marketability of new housing.

C4-d Support efforts at Rainier Vista to provide employment access to residents, and to plan for community improvements. The

496 unit Rainier Vista garden community is on the northwest end of the planning area on Martin Luther King Jr. Way. Rainier Vista has been designated one of six public housing developments in the country as a “Jobs Plus” site. SHA has established a target of tripling the number of residents who are employed. The remainder of



the community and the City should support this effort to improve the lives and resources of the residents.

C4-e Support the redevelopment of the Rainier Vista public housing garden community. The Rainier Vista public housing community was built in the 1940's to house World War II factory workers. Although some physical improvements have been made to Rainier Vista buildings and infrastructure, extensive improvements will be required within the next ten years. Preliminary planning to address existing or imminent problems with the housing units, the site and the supportive facilities at Rainier Vista has begun. The availability of resources to address these problems will heavily influence the type of improvements made. SHA should be encouraged to continue to master plan Rainier Vista and to actively pursue resources to implement the master plan once finalized.

C4-f Support the creation of home ownership opportunities for working households with incomes at or below 50% of the area's median income. A large number of Rainier Vista public housing residents are actively pursuing economic self-sufficiency actions which will lead them to permanent employment. Existing down payment assistance programs assist households with incomes above 50% of median income, incomes which are still above the levels of most Rainier Vista working households. SHA is providing incentives to working residents to save for down payments. This plan encourages the creation of a special program for Rainier Vista residents with good credit and other qualifications for home ownership which working residents could afford.

D. Integrated Transportation System

D1 – Criteria for LRT Route/Station Selection.

D1-a Coordinate with Sound Transit to have them utilize the following criteria created by the Columbia City Planning Committee for their route/station selection:

- Choose the LRT station/route that has the best opportunity for positive community development effects.
- The light rail station should be centrally located in order to serve the most people. It should be within

easy walking distance of Columbia City's Business District.

- The LRT station should have the ability to draw people into the Columbia City Business District.
- The light rail station should be supported by strong local transit connections (both east-west and north-south).
- Construction impacts should be minimized and mitigated.
- Parking impacts to surrounding neighborhoods should be minimized.
- Traffic impacts such as congestion, safety hazards, and the creation of neighborhood barriers should be minimized.
- Pedestrians and bicyclist should have safe, inviting, and convenient access to the LRT station and along the LRT route.
- Development should be concentrated near the station.
- Rainier Vista residents should be provided with strong links to the new light rail stations.
- **The station** itself should be developed on sites which are blighted or deteriorating, rather than on sites with viable commercial or residential uses.
- Impacts to viable single family housing in the neighborhood should be minimized.
- Opportunities for green space in connection with the station and route should be considered.
- The Columbia City Branch Library expansion should be coordinated with the LRT station planning and development.
- The station should be designed to ensure public safety.
- The station should include public art.
- The LRT station/route should have minimal noise impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods.



D2 – Community LRT Route/Station Recommendations.

D2-a The Columbia City/Genesee/Hillman City Planning Committee and community participants at the July 30, 1998, Light Rail Forum recommend the 37th Avenue S. tunnel alignment with the Columbia City station.

Preference is due to greater transit-oriented development potential, the centralized location, and lesser potential negative traffic and noise impacts. Additional reasons include:

- Ability to draw people into the Columbia City Business District.
- Fewer potential traffic impacts such as congestion, safety hazards, and the creation of neighborhood barriers.
- Better pedestrian and bicycle access.
- Concentrated development near the station.
- This station is more likely to stimulate new housing.
- Station location presents an opportunity to redevelop existing intrusive development.
- Best opportunity to enhance existing parks.
- Best access to the Columbia City Branch Library.
- Station will not be located in the middle of a busy arterial.
- Best opportunity to incorporate public art.
- Least potential noise impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Station is close to a variety of public services and amenities.

D2-b The option for the Martin Luther King Jr. Way S. at-grade alignment is undesirable while the aerial alignment is unacceptable. The community has identified the following reasons the MLK alternatives not be chosen:

- The station will not be centrally located.
- The LRT station will not have the ability to draw people into the Columbia City Business District.
- Unacceptable possible traffic impacts such as congestion and safety hazards (at-grade alignment)

only).

- Unacceptable neighborhood barriers created (severely restricted street crossings).
- Pedestrians and bicyclist access is poor.
- Development is not concentrated near the station.
- The station location in the middle of MLK presents a safety concern and will detract usage.
- Greater noise impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods than the 37th Avenue tunnel.
- Unacceptable view blockage (aerial alignment).

D2-c The option for the “S” curve alignment (Rainier Avenue S. and Martin Luther King Jr. Way S. at-grade) is unacceptable. Possible station locations associated with this station are at MLW S. Edmunds Street or Rainier Avenue S. /Genesee Street S. The community has given the following reasons the “S” curve alignment not be chosen.

- The route does not involve the station location within Columbia City.
- The LRT station will not have the ability to draw people into the Columbia City Business District.
- Unacceptable possible traffic impacts such as congestion and safety hazards.
- Unacceptable creation of neighborhood barriers.
- The most significant potential noise impacts.

D3 – Transportation Strategies (regardless of selected LRT route/station).

Note: Refer to Figure 42, page 44, for a map of transportation strategies.

D3-a Coordinate with Sound Transit to provide bicycle facilities on, or adjacent to Martin Luther King Jr. Way S. or Rainier Avenue S. Bicycling on either road is currently extremely dangerous. Non-existent shoulders and heavy traffic discourage bicycle use, not to mention pedestrian use. Since almost no reasonable alternatives exist for north-south bicycle access due to topography and the area’s street pattern, measures to accommodate bicycle access along the light rail corridor are essential.



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- D3-b Develop a bus loop system connecting area neighborhoods to the LRT station.** This will be essential to effectively, serve the residential areas that lie beyond 1/4 mile from the station (Seward Park, Beacon Hill, etc.).
- D3-c Conduct a detailed transportation analysis of all major north-south transportation corridors within the influence area in conjunction with the Sound Transit light rail line.** This includes Rainier Avenue S., Martin Luther King Jr. Way S., Lake Washington Boulevard, and the Wilson/50th/Seward Park corridor. Analyze potential options for the improvement of MLK/Rainier and the corresponding potential impacts on traffic flow, chatmelization, signalization, bicycle and pedestrian access, and adjacent uses, in addition to potential impacts to other important transportation corridors. The overall intent is to ensure that if traffic revisions are made to one of the corridors, it doesn't come at the expense/degradation of the other corridors.
- D3-d Minimize construction impacts of LRT system to surrounding residents, businesses and traffic flow.** Take precautions to reduce negative impacts to businesses, adjacent residences, and traffic.
- D3-e Maintain current standards of mobility along Martin Luther King Junior Way S.**
- D3-f Develop principles for station area planning.** Develop principles that will preserve and enhance the neighborhood character, reduce and mitigate impacts of transit-oriented development, and incorporate public amenities in station area developments.
- D3-g Provide Rainier Vista residents with strong links to the new light rail station.** Since car ownership is relatively low at Rainier Vista, residents need effective public transportation links to job opportunities. Therefore, the establishment of strong and convenient links, to the new light rail transit stations for Rainier Vista residents, is important.
- D3-h Create residential parking zones (RPZ) in adjacent residential neighborhoods adjacent to the selected transit stations to discourage commuter parking in such neighborhoods.** Since the proposed station areas have a very limited capacity for parking facilities that may be associated with the transit station, the creation of an RPZ in adjacent residential areas is critical.

- D3-i Improve east-west transit service.** Particularly important is the access to Lake Washington and West Seattle. At a minimum, improve the transfer between Route #39 and West Seattle routes.
- D3-j Improve bus stops, particularly those that function as transfer stations.** Provide necessary benches, shelters, lighting, and transit information. Incorporate public art around stops.
- D3-k Improve bicycle access on S. Alaska Street/ S. Columbian Way, west of Rainier Avenue S.** Although the steep hill east of MLK discourages most cyclists, this is one of the only through east-west roads in the immediate area and thus is important, particularly for those who commute to work or school by bike. Improvements could include adding a bicycle lane or providing shoulder improvements (west of MLK).

D4 – Strategies for Individual Station-Area Alternatives

- D4-a Columbia City Station.** As a top priority, develop the underground Columbia City Station at 37th Street S. and S. Edmunds (*see Figure 44, page 47 for schematic plan*). Consider:
- a Integrating the primary station entry into the redevelopment of the Columbia Plaza site.
 - a Create station entries at 37th Avenue S./ S. Edmunds Street and off of Rainier Avenue S.
 - a Preserve historic streetfront buildings in Columbia City.
 - a Special consideration should be given towards private property loss compensation and relocation assistance.
 - a Develop car/bus drop off sites on Rainier south of Edmunds.
 - a Provide streetscape improvements on 37th including street trees, curbs, gutters, new sidewalks, street furniture, signage, etc.
 - Improve pedestrian access from Rainier Vista to station via Alaska and Edmunds.
 - ⊗ Strengthen Columbia Park.
 - ⊗ Expand the Columbia City Branch Library consistent



with architectural integrity.

- Provide streetscape improvements on 35th Avenue S. between Edmunds and Alaska (curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and street trees).

D4-b Genesee Station. If the station and subsequent alignment is chosen despite community recommendations, provide substantially more extensive traffic, aesthetic, and environmental improvements, as well as redevelopment projects along the MLK corridor, and substantially more extensive public investment must be made in the Columbia City core than if the underground station is proposed (see *Figure 43, page 46 for schematic plan*). Consider the following:

- Special consideration should be given towards private property loss compensation and relocation assistance.
- Develop a linear park with separated pathways along Rainier Avenue S. north of Alaska.
- Develop car/bus drop off sites on Rainier near station.
- Incorporate the redevelopment of the Columbia Plaza site into the station area plans.
- In conjunction with proposed linear park and pathway, provide for redevelopment opportunities between the LRT rail and Rainier. Provide streetscape improvements on 37th and 38th avenues including street trees, curbs, gutters, new sidewalks, street furniture, **signage**, etc.
- Provide streetscape and pedestrian improvements on Alaska and MLK to mitigate for rail alignment and crossings.

D4-c MLK/Alaska Station. If the station and subsequent alignment is chosen despite community recommendations, provide substantially more extensive traffic, aesthetic, and environmental improvements, as well as redevelopment projects along the MLK corridor, and substantially more extensive public investment must be made in the Columbia City core than if the underground station is proposed (see *Figures 45 and 46, pages 48 and 49 for schematic plans*). Consider the following:

- Coordinate the development of the station and alignment with the redevelopment of the Rainier Vista public housing garden community. Although some physical improvements have been made since

Rainier Vista was built in the 1940's, extensive improvements will be required within the next ten years. Preliminary planning to address existing or imminent problems with the housing units, the site, and supportive facilities has begun. A MLK/Alaska station will nevertheless have a major impact on the master plan for Rainier Vista. Working with the neighborhood, the Seattle Housing Authority should be encouraged to coordinate the master planning of Rainier Vista with Sound Transit on new transportation improvements.

- Provide for streetscape and pedestrian improvements such as widened sidewalks, landscaping, street trees, and improved sidewalks on MLK to mitigate for rail alignment and limited street crossings.
- Provide for effective signalization and traffic control at the MLK/Alaska intersection to enhance pedestrian safety while maintaining good mobility standards.
- Explore the option of closing off 31st Avenue S between Alaska and MLK to increase redevelopment and open space opportunities.
- Focus on mixed use redevelopment opportunities at or near the intersection of MLK and Alaska, while focusing on multi family residential redevelopment opportunities on vacant or underutilized property in other areas within close proximity to the station.
- Improve pedestrian access from Columbia City's business district to station. This includes streetscape improvements such as landscaping, street trees, sidewalk improvements, signage, and lighting for Alaska and Edmunds streets between MLK and Rainier Avenue S.
- Incorporate the redevelopment of the Columbia Plaza site into the station area plans.
- Provide car/bus drop off points near Alaska and MLK.
- Explore the option of realigning 30th Avenue S. and S. Angeline Street from Alaska to MLK to increase redevelopment opportunities.
- Retain the existing ballfield at Rainier Vista.
- Develop a pedestrian pathway from Renton Ave S., southwesterly around the ballfield to near the



MLK/Alaska intersection to improve access to the station. Develop a **stairclimb/pedestrian** access from Angeline southwesterly to Mountainview Drive S./30th Avenue S.

- Develop a **stairclimb/pedestrian** access from 30th Avenue westward to 29th Avenue S.

D4-d MLK/Edmonds Station. If the station and subsequent alignment is chosen despite community recommendations, provide substantially more extensive traffic, aesthetic, and environmental improvements, as well as redevelopment projects along the MLK corridor, and substantially more extensive public investment must be made in the Columbia City core than if the underground station is proposed (see *Figures 47, page 50 for schematic plan*). Consider the following:

- Give special consideration towards private property loss compensation and relocation assistance.
- Provide substantial streetscape and pedestrian improvements such as widened sidewalks, landscaping, street trees, lighting, and **signage** on MLK Jr. Way S., 32nd Avenue S., and S. Alaska Street (*with “S” curve route*) to mitigate for the effects of the rail line and rail street crossings.
- Develop a linear park with separated pathways west of Rainier Avenue (between the rail line and the street) north of Alaska Street (*with “S” curve route*).
- Provide streetscape improvements on Edmonds, Ferdinand, and Hudson streets, such as improved sidewalks, landscaping, street trees, lighting, and **signage**, to improve access between the LRT station and Columbia City.
- Explore the option of closing off 31st Avenue S between Alaska and MLK to increase safety and improve redevelopment and open space opportunities.
- Incorporate the redevelopment of the Columbia Plaza site into the station area plans.
- Retain and strengthen single family residential areas between station and historic district.
- Provide for effective signalization and traffic control at the **MLK/Alaska** intersection to enhance pedestrian safety while maintaining good mobility standards.

- Focus on mixed use redevelopment opportunities at the MLK/Hudson and MLK/Alaska intersections, while focusing on residential redevelopment opportunities on vacant or underutilized property in other areas within close proximity to the station.
- Provide car/bus drop off points on MLK near the station.
- Develop a stairclimb/pedestrian access from Angeline southwesterly to Mountainview/30th Ave.

E. Martin Luther King Junior Corridor

EI – Capital Infrastructure

Note: Refer to Figure 50, page 53, for a map of recommended improvements.

- EI-a Install pedestrian activated signals along Martin Luther King Jr. Way S. at Edmunds (or Ferdinand) and Dawson streets, and at Rainier Vista, north of Columbian Way.** Include pedestrian islands to enhance safety.
- EI-b Enhance the Martin Luther King Jr. Way Streetscape.** Develop a unified streetscape design that creates a continuous, safe, attractive pedestrian route. Include widened sidewalks, street trees, marked crosswalks, pedestrian lights, vegetated boulevards and other landscaping.
- EI-c Provide decorative gateway features along MLK to direct travelers to Columbia City’s historic business district.** Without such an informative feature, motorists and other travelers may be unaware that the unique business district exists. For northbound traffic, install feature just south of S. Hudson Street. For southbound traffic, install feature just prior to S. Alaska Street.
- EI-d Reconfigure intersections with wider than normal approaches along Martin Luther King Jr. Way to shorten pedestrian walking distance.** This includes intersections at obtuse angles and/or more than one cross-street that increase the amount of street that pedestrians must cross.
- EI-e Close direct access from MLK to 31st Ave S.** Make 31st Avenue a one way street (northbound only) and provide



curb bulbs to slow down traffic. This eliminates dangerous short cuts from Alaska to MLK.

- E1-f Improve pedestrian access from Beacon Hill to the MLK area/Columbia City.** This can be accomplished by developing a stairclimb from 30th Avenue S./S. Mountainview Drive to S. Angeline Street. Provide landscaping at the stairway entryways. Complimentary to the development of the stairclimb, preserve and enhance the greenbelt area.

E2 – Regulatory Measures

Note: Refer to the activities under C2, Residential Neighborhoods and Housing for zone change recommendations. Refer to Figure 49, page 52, for a map of the recommended zoning changes.

E4 – Special Opportunities

- E4-a Support the redevelopment of the Rainier Vista public housing garden community.** (See Activity C4-e for more details.)

F. Public Safety and Community Livability

F1 – Capitol Infrastructure

- F1-a Improve security lighting around schools, parks, public facilities, parking lots, and alleys.**
- F1-b Identify and develop sites for new P-patches, particularly in areas with predominately multifamily residential uses.**
- F1-c Work with the Rainier Community Center to develop a new “Toddler” gym.** While the planning area has a much higher concentration of children under the age of 5 than the city as a whole, there are no applicable community facilities for them.

F2 – Regulatory Measures

- F2-a Aggressively enforce property maintenance and nuisance codes.** Pay special attention to the condition of storefronts, abandoned vehicles, and graffiti.
- F2-b South Precinct funding should keep pace with population growth and changes in crime statistics.**
- F2-c Develop measures to control the siting of new social services in the planning area.** The large number of human service agencies operating within the area have led to community concerns that the continued concentration of these facilities will undermine redevelopment and stabilization efforts. Concern has been expressed over the proximity of some facilities to local schools and business districts, such as Hillman City, which are struggling to redevelop.

F3 -Programs

- F3-a Establish and maintain a visible police presence via foot patrol and bicycle patrol within the planning area's commercial centers.**
- F3-b Restore and expand community-based policing.** Foster a more cooperative relationship between residents, businesses, and public safety officials.
- F3-c Increase SeaTran's budget for Southeast Seattle to improve all services, including street sweeping, litter and garbage service, landscaping maintenance, etc.**
- F3-d Support the continued activities of the Rainier Main Street Program.** Administered by Southeast Effective Development (SEED), the Main Street Program is a business retention, promotion, and attraction program that works with small businesses located in the community, or potential businesses and investors interested in the community. As an image related measure, continue to explore alternative security measures to the security bars on business windows.
- F3-e Secure the ongoing funding for the Good Neighbor Fund (GNF) which includes a facade improvement program and consulting assistance for businesses.** This program is part of the Rainier Main Street Program that provides matching grants for exterior improvements. Beyond funding, additional needs and priorities for the



GNF involve more promotion of the program and technical assistance with facade design.

F3-f Support the continued efforts of the Southeast Seattle Arts Council (SESAC) in adding murals, sculptures, and other visual art to the community. Specifically:

- Support efforts of community cultural groups with facilities in which to work, perform, exhibit, and teach.
- Integrate cultural development with other community development efforts.
- Expand municipal funding for cultural programs, services and development efforts.
- Develop cultural programs, instruction, classes and residencies for children and special needs populations.

F3-g Support the continue activities of the Rainier Chamber of Commerce. Assist in Chamber's biannual neighborhood cleanups. Support the Chamber's anti-graffiti efforts and the Rainier Valley Rose Project, which aims to deter vandalism while beautifying the area.

F3-h Develop and distribute informational brochures/flyers on graffiti, litter, and weed removal tactics. Such a brochure or flyer could include contact numbers (Department of Construction and Land Use and the Rainier Chamber of Commerce), applicable City codes, and graffiti removal tips. Post brochure/flyers at neighborhood bulletin boards, kiosks, public facilities, and local businesses, with permission.

F3-i Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques. This involves the siting of buildings to allow for security and surveillance.

F3-j Develop a design assistance program for new and existing community business through pro-bono work by local architects and artists. This could involve assistance in the design of new signage, building facade improvement, or interior design elements.