



# PIONEER SQUARE 2015

A Strategy for Seattle's First Neighborhood



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## A Strategy for Seattle's First Neighborhood

### ( Overview )

The Pioneer Square Commercial District Revitalization Project is an initiative to improve the overall business health of Pioneer Square.

The project began in December 2009 with an analysis of Pioneer Square's economy and the neighborhood's major business needs and opportunities. Over the next six months, members of the Pioneer Square business community met to discuss these priorities and the actions needed to create a vibrant and robust commercial business district.

The outcome was a set of actionable community and city strategies to address key issues around business retention and growth, retail mix, and business capacity in Pioneer Square, released June 2010 as *Pioneer Square 2015, A Strategy for Seattle's First Neighborhood*.

This is a one-year highlight of the City's progress to date in the following community goal areas, and lays out the City's priorities for the rest of 2011:

- 1) Support Pioneer Square's Historic Buildings and a Positive Development Environment
- 2) Provide Economic Development Support and Investment
- 3) Provide Supportive Utility, Parking, and Transportation Infrastructure
- 4) Ensure an Environment of Public Safety and Civility
- 5) Looking Ahead

# 1

City Actions

## Support Pioneer Square's Historic Buildings and a Positive Development Environment

CITY ACTIONS

### A. Facilitate Development and Adaptive Reuse Incentives

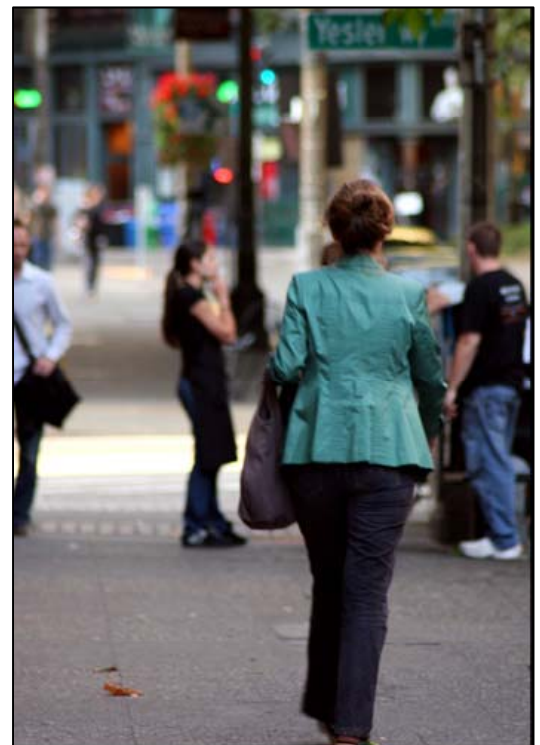
- South Downtown rezone legislation was adopted on April 25, 2011 to increase residential density.
- North Lot mixed-use development project is under consideration for New Markets Tax Credits financing. This funding will dramatically improve the financial feasibility of the project.
- City restoration of the King Street Station is fully funded (\$50 million) and the final phase is underway.

### B. Address Vacant and Blighted Buildings

- The Department of Planning and Development (DPD), the Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs (OACA), and the Office of Economic Development (OED) collaborated with the Alliance for Pioneer Square (APS) on the Storefronts Seattle project – putting art in vacant retail spaces to enliven neighborhood streetscapes, make spaces more attractive to prospective tenants and provide opportunities for artists to display their work.

### C. Implement Supportive Building and Energy Code Provisions

- DPD is working with the Preservation Green Lab (PGL), a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, to develop performance-based energy codes for existing and historic buildings. PGL is looking for a pilot project to test performance-based approaches, and it is very interested in a project in Pioneer Square. Building owners can realize reductions in operating costs with an easier pathway to investing in deep energy efficiency retrofits and save operating dollars.



# 2

City Actions

## Provide Economic Development Support and Investment

CITY ACTIONS

### A. Identify New and Emerging Clusters; Recruit Complementary Businesses

- The Office of Economic Development (OED) awarded a \$100,000 grant to the Alliance for Pioneer Square (APS) to implement its economic development strategies including supporting business and retail development by:
  - Attracting businesses through a retail attraction plan and materials, and
  - Helping the businesses organize themselves and sustain these activities by improving the Business Improvement Area (BIA) assessment and boundaries.
- Pioneer Square broadband infrastructure improvement will retain and attract high tech businesses

### B. Align the City's Business and Economic Development Activities to Support Pioneer Square's Business Climate and Activity

- The Office of Economic Development's grant to the Alliance for Pioneer Square includes strengthening the attractiveness and appeal of the neighborhood through clean and safe programs and marketing and promotion activities such as:
  - Organize and advertise events to draw people into the district: Art in the Park, Salsa Saturdays, Holiday retail promotion, Alley events, Seattle Square Market and more
  - Complete the neighborhood branding with new website and materials
  - Replace historic sidewalk lights
- The Department of Neighborhoods (DON) provided \$85,000 in Neighborhood Matching Funds to support the community's Trail to Treasure historic walking tour.



### C. Support Economic Activity Data Collection Efforts

- OED has prepared a survey and inventory of Pioneer Square's businesses and currently provides a summary of the B&O activity in the neighborhood by business category annually.

# 3

City Actions

## Provide Supportive Utility, Parking, and Transportation Infrastructure

CITY ACTIONS

### A. Ensure Effective Utility and Technology Systems

- The City installed conduit along First Avenue for future use by the City and King County Metro. The City is making the excess capacity in the conduit available to internet service providers.
- The City issued a Request for Proposal aimed at internet service providers interested in leasing the excess conduit space in order to offer fiber based broadband Internet in Pioneer Square. The Request for Proposal process resulted in a proposal from Comcast to install fiber and offer fiber based internet services along First Avenue South in Pioneer Square. The City will begin negotiations with Comcast and anticipates service to be available in fall 2011. Pioneer Square businesses and residents will now have the ability to obtain dramatically faster internet services which creates opportunities to enhance the economic environment.
- Seattle City Light (SCL) has committed to completing routine street light repairs within 10 working days. For more complicated repairs, City Light will provide estimated repair times. Customers can track progress online at [www.seattle.gov/light](http://www.seattle.gov/light)
- City Light is improving power service and reliability to Pioneer Square and the downtown core through its replacement of transmission and distribution cables. In 2010, Pioneer Square underground vaults were upgraded in anticipation of new distribution lines.
- City Light is providing additional performance improvements with shortened service connection scheduling for those customers who need service installation or service improvements.

### B. Support Transportation Improvements and Mitigation

- First Hill Streetcar line will serve Pioneer Square, providing a link to the Chinatown/International District, Yesler Terrace, First Hill and Capitol Hill.
- Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) has started a community engagement process about how to activate King Street Station along with other development projects (King Street Station Transportation Multimodal HUB Area planning).

### C. Effectively Manage Parking Supply and Demand

- SDOT is currently updating its 2010 parking study to assess the effects of the recent parking rate changes. The goal is to achieve an average of one to two available spots per block, to create parking turnover to help business customers. SDOT will use this data to determine if rate adjustments are needed in 2012.
- Extended paid parking into the evening in Pioneer Square will be delayed until 2012, to allow SDOT to collect additional data in 2011.
- E-Park launched in September 2010 in the Commercial Core and will expand to Pioneer Square in 2011-2012.
- The Pioneer Square/Commercial Core rate boundary will be moved from Yesler Way to Columbia Street, in recognition of the traditional neighborhood boundary. This will lower rates at about 20 pay stations to \$3.50/hour from \$4/hour.

# 4

City Actions

## Ensure an Environment of Public Safety and Civility

### A. Improve Public Safety Experience and Perceptions

- The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) and the Alliance for Pioneer Square (APS) have convened a community task force to explore public restroom options, a community priority.
- Artsparks – Seattle Parks Department and Seattle’s Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs (OACA) continue highly successful programming in Occidental Park.
- Seattle Police Department (SPD) increased its walking patrols at the beginning of April 2010. SPD routinely conducts undercover drug operations at Fortson Square and other locations in Pioneer Square, resulting in the arrest of chronic drug dealers.
- Nighttime amplified noise regulations were recently established targeting chronic offenders while finding a good balance between residents and business owners.

### B. Improve Human Services Programs and Strategies

- The Mayor’s Office, DPD, Human Services Department (HSD) and SPD worked with APS, Real Change, and the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness to address chronic camping issues at Masin’s Furniture.
- DPD and APS have convened a roundtable forum to better engage human service providers in the Pioneer Square neighborhood. HSD and the Compass Center are co-chairing.



CITY ACTIONS

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# ( Looking Ahead )

- A. The City will support a successful North Lot development through its financing and permitting tools.
- B. The City will designate an individual to coordinate communications with City departments and the community about construction impacts on parking availability.
- C. The City will examine parking usage and rates and adjust according to data collected.
- D. The City will re-examine feasibility of a public restroom in Pioneer Square, including Fire Station 10.
- E. The City will work with Comcast to expand broadband in Pioneer Square.
- F. Street Car service will start in 2013.
- G. The City will work with Pioneer Square artists to prioritize the retention of artists workspace in the neighborhood.