

# The City of Seattle is proposing a Station Area Overlay District for the Capitol Hill Light Rail Station Area

**The Overlay District is intended to help achieve the neighborhood plan vision of a lively, mixed-use center on Capitol Hill**

## Background & Intent of Overlay

This pamphlet summarizes the intent and features of the Capitol Hill Station Area Overlay District (SAOD). These actions will achieve the intent of the Capitol Hill Neighborhood Plan and Station Area Planning recommendations to take advantage of public investment in the area and enhance the “south anchor” of Broadway’s business district.

The legislation is intended to achieve a number of neighborhood and City goals regardless of when light rail is constructed.

## Capitol Hill Neighborhood Plan Recommendations for the Station Area

The Capitol Hill Neighborhood Plan, adopted in March 1999 by Seattle City Council (Resolution #29903) includes a South Anchor Key Strategy that identifies public investments (Lincoln Reservoir Park, the expansion of Seattle Central Community College and the Sound Transit Light Rail station) that will be catalysts for new commercial and residential development. To make the most of these investments, the community and city will continue to work together to implement land use goals, Urban Design Guidelines, a parking strategy, street and sidewalk improvements, and housing that meet community needs .

Specific recommendations from the neighborhood plan in support of the SAOD are as follows:

- B Modify land use codes to support new development that enhances neighborhood character and compatibility of land uses.
- B2 Involve the community in a process to clarify rezone options for Lower Broadway
- B6 Integrate a station entry into new SCCC development

## Concept–Level Recommendations for the Capitol Hill Station Area

The Concept-Level Station Area Planning Recommendations, adopted in September 2000 by City Council (Resolution #30165), encourage the following changes to the Land Use Code:

- Establish a Station Area Overlay to encourage well-designed development that achieves the vision of the Neighborhood Plan, supports light rail and bus



The “South Anchor” strategy in the Capitol Hill Neighborhood Plan encourages housing development and making the most of public investments, such as new facilities at SCCC.

ridership, discourages auto use, promotes pedestrian and bicycle activity, and encourages a diverse range of housing and new businesses.

- Prevent strip development with large surface parking lots, and encourage a walkable community, with buildings that have retail shops at street level, affordable housing, and parking located away from the street or underground.
- Establish policies that prioritize parking for residents and retail and discourage commuter parking, and allow shared parking among developments.

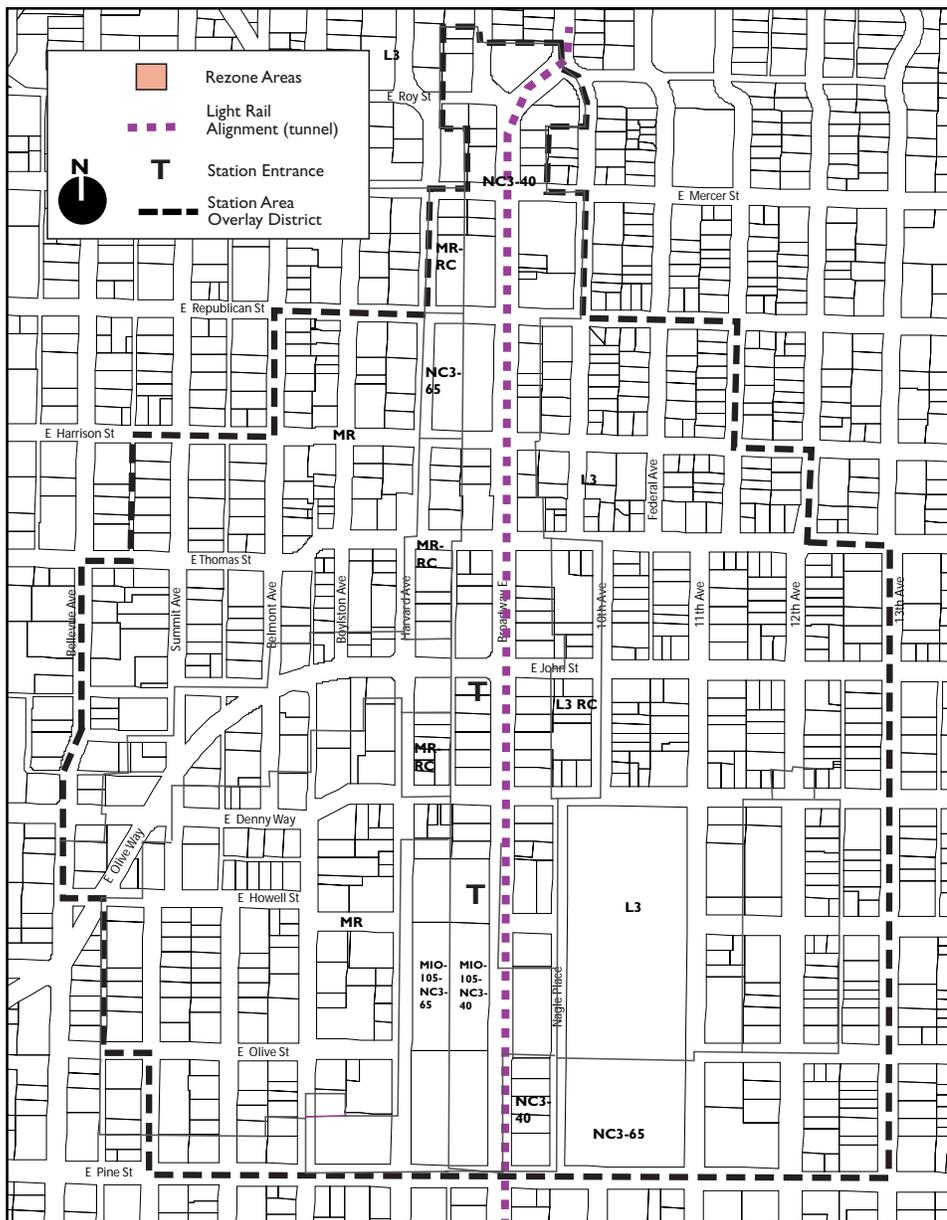
The elements of the SAOD are intended to discourage auto-oriented development and increase opportunities for housing development near the future light rail station.

The City will not develop property in the Capitol Hill Station Area. This proposal is intended to set a zoning framework for property owners who may redevelop their property in ways that balance neighborhood desires with their own goals.

While market and site conditions will be major factors in determining the pace and extent of redevelopment in the neighborhood, this proposal is intended to help the neighborhood achieve its vision for the Capitol Hill urban village core.



# Station Area Overlay District and Existing Zoning



**Note:** The alignment and station locations for Sound Transit's Capitol Hill Station indicated on this map reflect the Sound Transit Board's November 1999 decision. They are not final locations. A Nagle alignment is also being evaluated by Sound Transit.

## Existing Zones

### Neighborhood Commercial 3 (NC3-40 and 65)

A pedestrian-oriented shopping district serving both surrounding neighborhood and larger community or citywide clientele with a wide range of retail businesses as well as offices and business support services. Residential uses are also permitted.

### Midrise (MR and MR-RC)

Concentration of housing in pedestrian-oriented urban neighborhoods with convenient access to transit and to a full range of services and amenities, and opportunities to be within walking distance of employment. The RC designation allows for limited commercial use.

**Height Limit:** 60 feet + 5 foot pitched roof

### Lowrise 3 (L3)

Moderate scale multifamily housing compatible with existing mix of houses and small to moderate scale apartment structures.

**Height Limit:** 30 feet + 5 foot pitched roof

### Pedestrian Overlay (P1)

A pedestrian overlay can be applied to any neighborhood commercial zone along pedestrian oriented streets. The overlay preserves and encourages a pedestrian oriented shopping district by requiring a minimum front setback (no more than 10 feet), reduces retail parking requirements, and directs the location of parking lots and their access.

### Major Institutional Overlay (MIO)

The Major Institution Overlay establishes a boundary around colleges, universities and hospital/medical centers, and a process whereby these institutions must plan for future growth and development with surrounding communities. In return, institutions may achieve higher heights than would otherwise be allowed in the zone, and development standards applicable to institution uses and structures.

## Proposed New Zones

There are no proposed new zones. The City is considering future zoning changes to encourage redevelopment as envisioned in the neighborhood plan and station area planning recommendations.



Midrise



Neighborhood Commercial (NC3-40)



# Overlay Recommendations

## Action

This proposal does not contain any rezone recommendations for the Capitol Hill Station Area.

## Overlay District Features

### Supporting Existing Businesses

All existing legal businesses and uses would be allowed to remain and maintain existing structures and sites. For areas of the city where the real estate market may not support new development in the near future, the SAOD will allow for a one-time expansion of certain existing businesses made “non-conforming” by the Overlay District. This is an effort to help maintain the viability of businesses that are already established in the SAOD until the market makes redevelopment a more attractive option.

### Shared Parking Provisions

The Station Area Overlay District will allow buildings to provide off-site residential parking by leasing parking on nearby sites. This helps lower the cost of new housing by reducing the amount of on-site parking an individual building must construct and pooling off-site parking resources in the area.

The Station Area Overlay District will allow parking for residential and non-residential uses to be located on a lot within the SAOD and within comfortable walking distance of the site to which it is accessory. Off-site parking will not be allowed outside of the SAOD and the number of required parking spaces will not be reduced.

### Prohibited Uses

All existing legal businesses and uses would be allowed to remain and maintain existing structures and sites. The following type of new development will be prohibited in the Station Area Overlay District:

Principal use long-term non-residential parking	General manufacturing	Warehouse	Vessel repair
Drive-in businesses	Sales, service & rental of commercial equipment & construction materials	Outdoor storage	Marine service station
Vehicle repair	Sale of heating fuel	Sales & rental of motorized vehicles	Salvage & recycling
Towing services	Mini-warehouse	Dry storage of boats	Spectator sports facilities
Car wash		Sales & rental of large boats	Wholesale showroom
Heavy commercial services			Work-release centers



# ...helping achieve the neighborhood's vision for a thriving South Anchor to Capitol Hill's Broadway District

The vision for an active, lively South Anchor to Capitol Hill's Broadway District can be achieved by increasing opportunities for housing development in Capitol Hill's core. Our proposal removes two obstacles from the land use code for housing development.

## Housing Development Flexibility In Commercial Zones: Allowing Single-Purpose Residential Use

As part of the Station Area Overlay District proposal, single-purpose residential structures would be permitted outright in certain locations. Single-purpose residential (SPR) structures are apartment or condominium buildings in commercial zones. These buildings could include housing at the street-level, either permanently or until the market is ready to support more businesses. When the market could support more commercial development, the street-level use could be converted to commercial use.

This proposal provides flexibility and acknowledges market realities for developing either housing or businesses on the ground floors of buildings (on commercially zoned property on the edges of the neighborhood business district). This proposal would apply to all NC3 zones within the Capitol Hill SAOD, except for those with Pedestrian Overlay (P1) designations.

## More Housing Without Raising Height Limits: Removing 64% Upper Level Coverage Limits

There are some places in the city where multifamily buildings can use the entire lot area on all levels for residential units. The zoning in the Cascade and Belltown neighborhoods allow these kinds of multi-family buildings. This is also the way many of the historic buildings in older Seattle neighborhoods, such as Queen Anne, Columbia City, Ballard, and Georgetown were built.

But in many other places, a coverage limit reduces the area that can be developed for housing on upper levels (64% of the size of the lot for residential buildings in a commercial zone-there is no limit for the size of upper levels for commercial buildings). By removing this "upper-level coverage limit" imposed on residential buildings in station areas, we can help encourage additional housing that is so vital to the lively neighborhood center envisioned by the Neighborhood Plan, and in a way that is working in other parts of the city.

Existing requirements for building setbacks will still apply where residential buildings in commercial zones border residential zones. These required setbacks, along with lowrise building setbacks, promote transition between buildings in different zones. Architectural features such as bays, courtyards, and building details reduce the appearance of the bulk and scale of these buildings, and allow dwelling units access to light and air. These features address one of the main goals of the original 64% upper-level coverage limit.

Also, the required Design Review Program, which was instituted after the upper-level coverage limits were put in place, provides an additional way to address and modify the bulk and scale of new buildings during the design and permitting process.



Example of development which can accommodate ground floor housing or commercial use. Street-level residential in SPR structures can be converted to commercial use when the market is ready.



Example of new development in the Cascade neighborhood without the 64% Upper Level Coverage Limit. The Design Review Program addresses bulk and scale issues during the design and permitting process.



Example of transitioning using upper level setbacks. Existing building setback requirements still apply where residential buildings in commercial zones border residential zones.