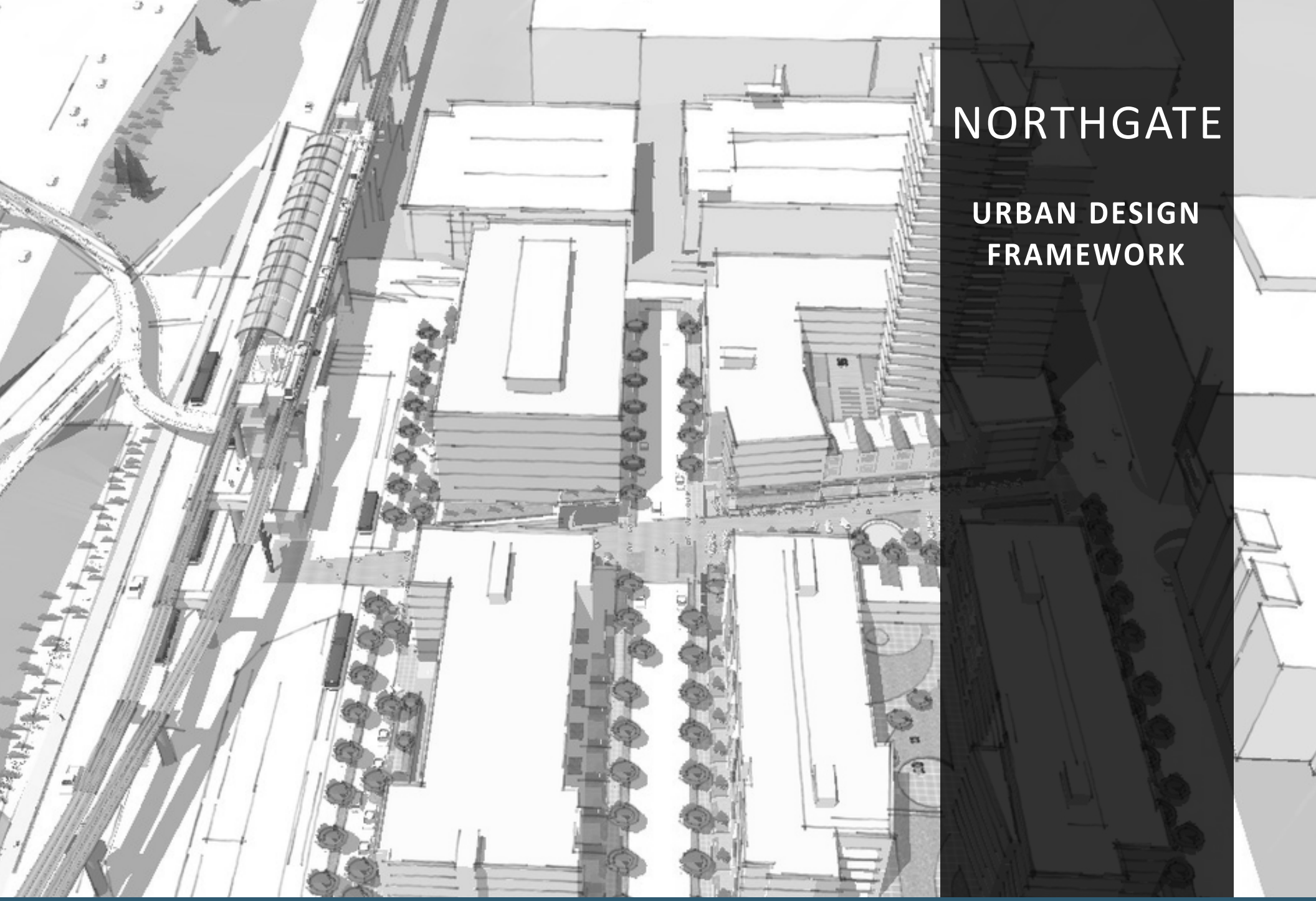

NORTHGATE

URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

City of Seattle
Department of Planning & Development

December 2013

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i. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The future vision for Northgate is as expressed in its 1993 neighborhood plan: to "transform a thriving, but underutilized auto-oriented office/ retail area into a vital, mixed-use center of concentrated development surrounded by healthy single family neighborhoods." The neighborhood plan encompasses all facets of Northgate's future, foreseeing:

- a denser community with many residents and diverse housing opportunities
- a network of parks and recreational amenities
- more community services
- more small local-serving businesses
- a healthy and sustainable setting emphasizing natural environmental values; and
- a transportation system that ideally serves users of all kinds — walkers, bicyclists, transit riders and motorists.

By gaining several new amenities in the last decade – library, community center, parks, streetscape improvements, drainage channel, and improved transit service frequency — Northgate has become a more livable and attractive place for residents and businesses. The City has continued to assist through a number of planning efforts that have defined design guidelines, future transportation investments, and other initiatives supporting future growth and realization of the vision.

This Urban Design Framework (UDF) defines a road map of strategies and recommendations for continued progress toward the Urban Center's transformation. It evaluates the top priorities for future growth and recommends several urban design improvements that will be great amenities promoting livability, a better environment and a well-functioning community. All of these actions will directly support the accomplishing of Northgate's neighborhood plan vision, especially in:

- creating a denser and vibrant mixed-use, mixed-income transit-oriented community near the Sound Transit (ST) Link and Metro Transit station;
- improving mobility and quality of facilities for pedestrians, transit riders, and bicyclists; and
- aiding the transformation from an automobile-oriented district to a better living environment throughout the Urban Center

Among the numerous benefits of a transit-oriented development approach will be:

- Increased transit system ridership and improved personal mobility
- Healthier, more walkable and livable communities supported by focused investments
- Contributes to energy conservation and climate initiatives
- Lower transportation cost burdens on households

This UDF will be used to express the preferred vision and design priorities for the future development of the Link transit station subarea. As well, further discussion and coordination with King County, Sound Transit and other agencies will inform how the vision can be realized, by influencing designs for future development and balancing transportation operational needs.

Findings

This Urban Design Framework (UDF) guides future actions that will help realize the vision identified in Northgate's 1993 neighborhood plan, calling for dramatic growth and transformation of the commercial core into a livable, walkable, dense urban center.

The UDF recommends both general and specific actions that the City will seek to implement, to achieve goals of the City's Comprehensive Plan, the neighborhood plan, and related objectives to improve Northgate as a livable and well-served Urban Center.

These include actions that support: future transit-oriented development (TOD) with high-quality public places, next to the Link transit station; enhanced transit services and operations; and investments to improve pedestrian and bicycling mobility and safety.

These can transform the Urban Center to a better living environment, enhance transit accessibility, and overcome difficulties posed by the presence of Interstate 5 as a barrier within the neighborhood, and the large "superblock" road configurations.

Planning Purpose, Process, and Guiding Principles

In the last 20 years since the Northgate Plan was adopted, much has happened – including a series of investments in public parks, facilities, streets and sidewalks, transit service, and a number of newer commercial investments and residential developments that are gradually transforming the Urban Center. Also, Link light rail is now under construction and service will begin in 2021.

This UDF provides a chance to review the neighborhood planning objectives as they relate to today's circumstances, and better define and illustrate strategies for continuing the transformation. Topics such as how neighborhood environments support public health, livability and social equity – all referenced by the original Northgate planning – are now even more prominent in present-day city planning perspectives. Regional planning efforts and federal funding have helped motivate this current effort, to ensure that everyone is doing as much as we can to achieve high-quality neighborhoods in places that are designated growth centers and will be well-served by major transit systems.

To those ends, the City has conducted a preliminary Urban Design Study in 2011/12, and conducted expanded public outreach in 2012/13 to study options and gain feedback about how future growth can best be shaped.

Land Use Planning and Growth Principles

The most important "big themes" and priorities that have been identified for achieving Northgate's vision, reflected in this UDF, are:

- Defining a compelling vision for the development of the Link station area district with a dense and attractive combination of residential and commercial land uses, and amenities and public spaces that are safe, active and successful.
- Accomplishing a socially diverse community with affordable housing, and amenities and services that better serve residents' needs and make a livable place.
- Accomplishing a targeted set of pedestrian, bicycle-oriented and transit improvements that will enhance mobility, comfort and safety for all users across the Urban Center.
- Ensuring transportation mobility options and transit services are well-integrated and efficiently available to serve the neighborhood.
- Enhancing the main corridors (Northgate Way, 5th Ave NE and Meridian Ave N), and transforming Northgate's "superblocks" throughout the Urban Center to become healthier, human-scaled and livable mixed-use districts.

Urban Design Principles

The most important urban design principles that will help improve the urban environment are:

- Providing landscaping, amenity and accessibility enhancements along key corridors to improve mobility and aesthetic quality.
- Incorporating generous public spaces, amenities and art in future development.
- Accomplishing a network of pedestrian-oriented connections across the Urban Center that will help to break up "superblocks."
- Siting and designing buildings to reinforce the pedestrian realm.
- Including environmental sustainable design features in future development.
- Ensuring and enhancing transit service frequency and reliability.

Conceptual Framework

The UDF design recommendations are organized according to a hierarchy of three geographic scales:

1. Northgate Urban Center:

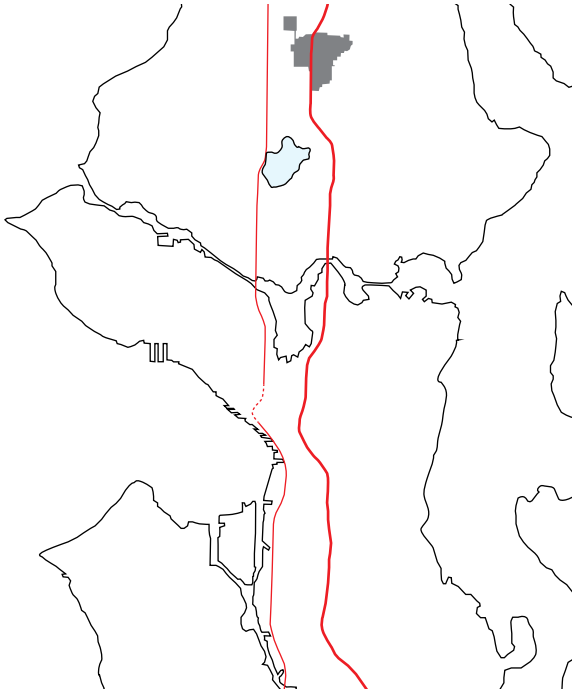
The Urban Center scale captures area-wide issues, including strategies for linkages between Northgate's subareas, housing and livability.

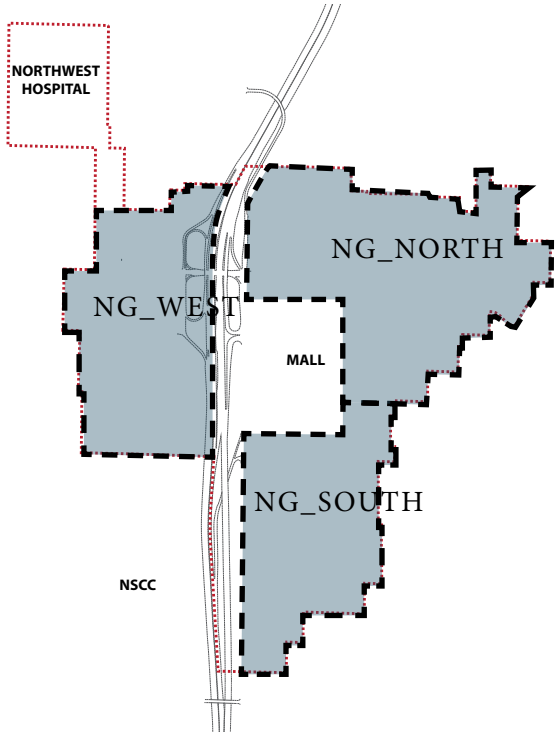
2. Northgate Subareas:

The Subarea scale explores Northgate's Urban Center in three parts, which allows a closer look at the roles and development patterns in each of these districts.

3. Northgate Superblocks:

The Superblock discussions illustrate existing issues and the future potential within several superblocks across the Urban Center. Similarly, a case study examines the future redevelopment potential within King County's Park and Ride lot south of the mall.





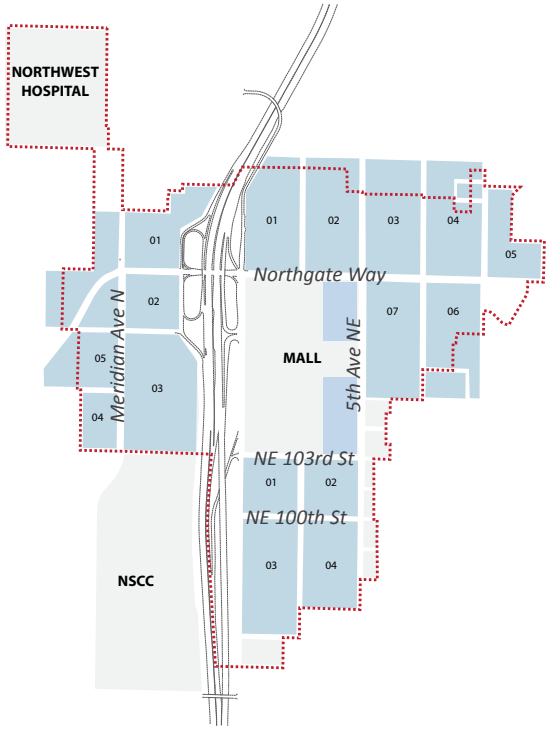


Figure 1.1 - Hierarchy of three scales of analysis

Festivities at the Hubbard Homestead Park

How Northgate Relates to Seattle and the Region

Located six miles north of downtown, Northgate is one of six Urban Centers designated in Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, and one of 27 regional growth centers designated in Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) Vision 2040 regional growth management plan. The Urban Center includes 410 acres on both sides of Interstate 5. The Urban Center is at the conjunction of several surrounding residential neighborhoods, including Licton Springs, Haller Lake, Pinehurst, and Maple Leaf, with others such as Victory Heights, Lake City and Green Lake nearby.

Northgate is one of the City's largest retail, medical and office centers outside of downtown and home to one of the City's largest hospital complexes outside of central Seattle. This reflects its location near Interstate 5 and its history as a traditional automobile-oriented commercial shopping district that also provides a variety of medical and educational services to all of North Seattle. The adjacent North Seattle Community College is a key asset with a mission to provide 21st Century education, training and services to elevate residents' competitiveness in the job market and aid Seattle's economic vitality.

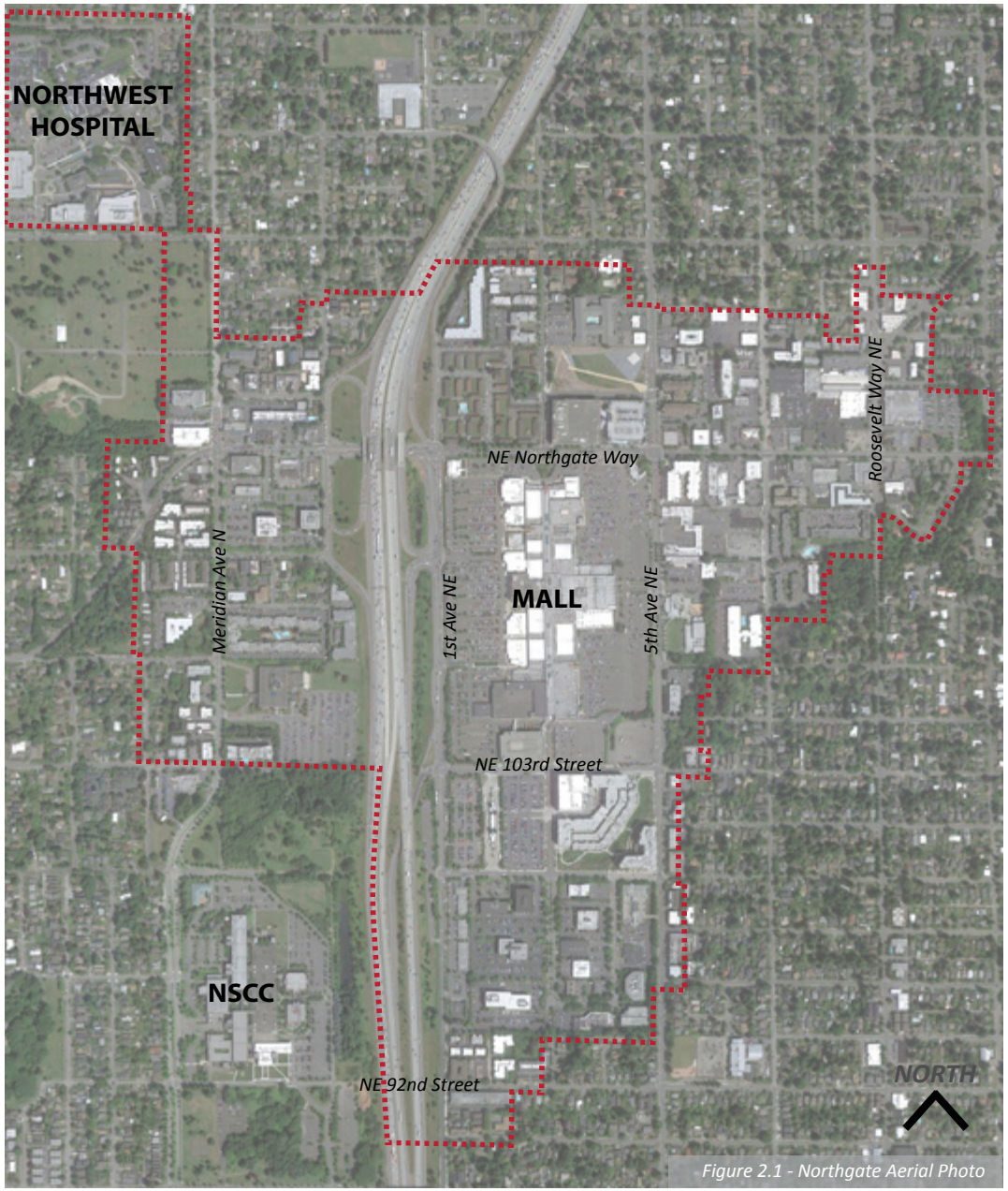


Figure 2.1 - Northgate Aerial Photo

The area includes the Northgate Transit Center, the largest in King County Metro's system, served by thirteen Metro bus routes and two Sound Transit Express bus routes, and providing 1,500 park-and-ride spaces. The new Sound Transit Link station and service, to open in 2021, will increase Northgate's significance to regional and local transit by improving transit service connectivity, speed, frequency and reliability, and is one of the best opportunities to enhance a transit-oriented community near a light rail station that fully leverages this transit investment. For this reason, it was selected as a "catalyst project" site for the PSRC's Growing Transit Communities Partnership, funded through a grant from the federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities.

Seattle's Comprehensive Plan set 20-year growth targets for the Urban Center of 2,500 new housing units and 4,220 net added jobs through 2024. Compared to the other Seattle urban centers, growth has occurred relatively slowly in Northgate: only 30% toward its housing growth target and 19% toward its employment growth target. This amounts to a net gain of 740 dwelling units and 800 jobs since 2004.

Urban Center	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Growth	Target	% of Target Met
Downtown	214	277	749	652	508	1,638	541	3	-37	4,331	10,000	**43%**
First Hill/Capitol Hill	74	67	451	127	239	484	682	(8)	1050	3,092	3,500	**88%**
University	5	135	18	139	62	456	(3)	319	205	1,331	2,450	**54%**
Northgate	-	5	22	(1)	1	699	8	3	2	739	2,500	**30%**
South Lake Union	162	151	-	614	97	735	89	-		1,686	8,000	**21%**
Uptown	111	8	212	94	173	320	46	207	105	1,165	1,000	**117%**

Table 2.1 - Northgate Urban Center Housing Growth

Urban Center	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Target	% of Target Met	Total jobs Added since 2004
Downtown	143,288	142,757	143,287	145,756	150,995	141,501	136,381	139,956	29,015	**-11%**	(3,332)
First Hill/Capitol Hill	40,015	40,425	40,910	40,699	41,538	42,181	41,637	42,696	4,600	**58%**	2,681
University	32,724	34,375	34,196	34,088	33,489	32,972	32,972	33,469	6,140	**12%**	745
Northgate	11,022	10,605	10,394	10,439	11,065	11,123	11,430	11,827	4,220	**19%**	805
South Lake Union	17,863	19,017	20,340	21,645	22,880	21,427	19,644	26,756	16,000	**56%**	8,893
Uptown	13,740	14,355	14,256	14,558	15,180	13,862	13,911	14,801	1,150	**92%**	1,061

Table 2.2 - Northgate Urban Center Employment Growth

Northgate's Existing Assets and Neighborhood Features

Physical Setting

The Urban Center is located in a valley bounded by the hillsides of Maple Leaf to the east and south, and Licton Springs to the west. Much of the Urban Center land slopes gently down toward the south. Thornton Creek provides natural drainage in ravines toward Lake Washington, including from areas west of I-5 via the wetland complex at the college. Areas such as the mall parking lot and the blocks between NE 100th and 103rd Streets have been filled in the past, covering peat soils in portions of the existing parking lots.

Gateways, Hearts, and Edges

"Gateways" are notable passages into and out of the neighborhood, "hearts" are the centers of community life, and "edges" are linear features that act as physical boundaries of subareas and the whole neighborhood.

Gateways: Northgate's rolling topography and street patterns combine to define the area's gateways on streets including Northgate Way, Pinehurst Way NE, 5th Ave NE and 1st Ave NE. The area's slopes create vistas primarily along north-south street corridors that, combined with the experience of leaving primarily single-family residential areas and entering the commercial district, provide a sense of entry.

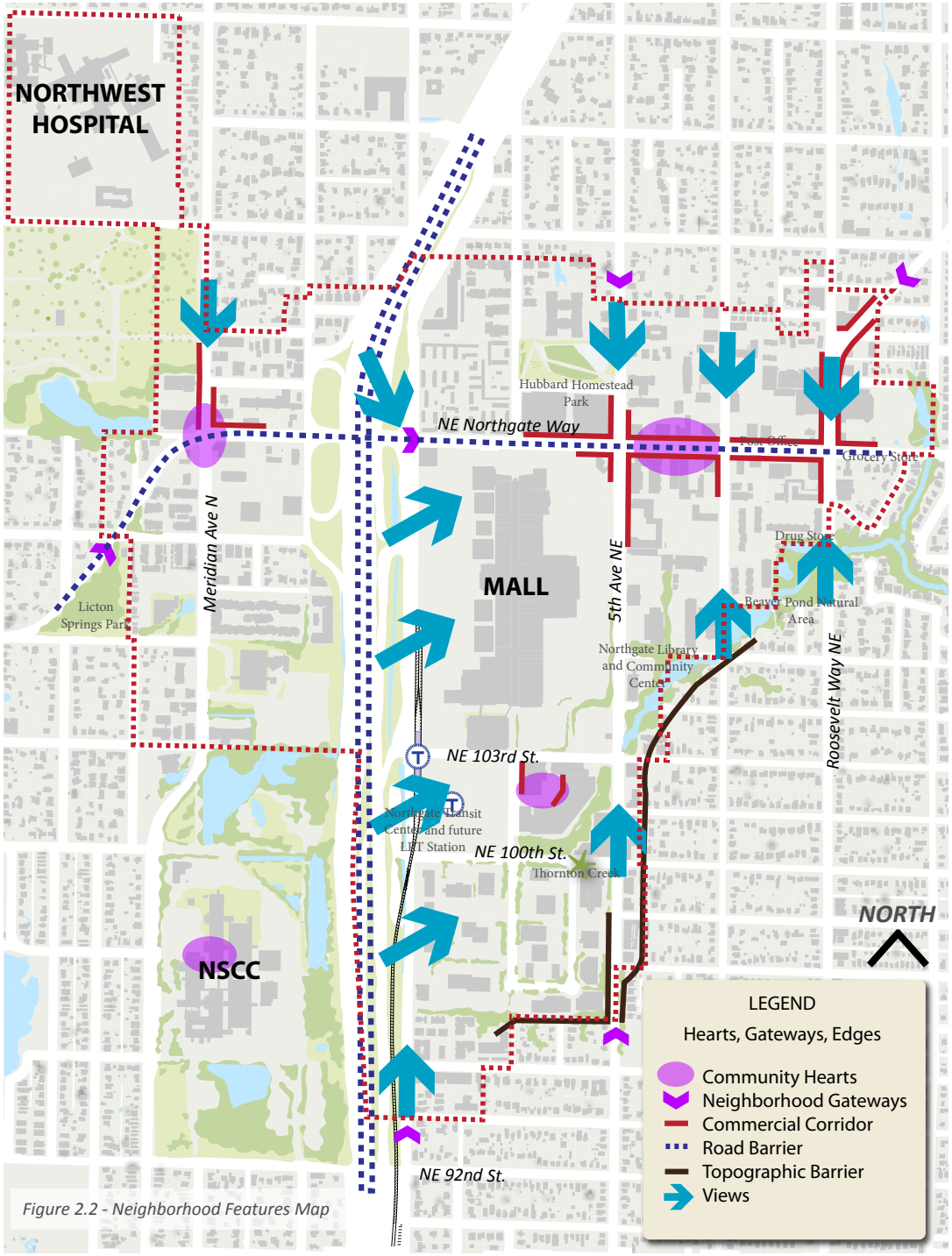


Figure 2.2 - Neighborhood Features Map

A similar experience occurs when street users pass under I-5 on Northgate Way, or exit Interstate 5 at 1st Ave NE and enter the densest shopping district. The existing Transit Center also provides a portal for entry and exit to Northgate, a function that will be emphasized even more greatly when light rail service begins.

Hearts: Heart locations are the centers of commercial and social activity within the neighborhood. They provide anchors for the community and help give form to the neighborhood.

The Northgate Mall, North Seattle Community College, Thornton Place and the commercial district near 5th Ave NE and Northgate Way are the most active centers. Yet most of these places are either internally focused (such as the indoor activities at the mall) or are experienced as primarily automobile-oriented places due to their function as traditional postwar commercial shopping districts. So, lesser overall sidewalk qualities tend to limit the attraction of pedestrians, although certain segments have newer sidewalks, and places such as the library/community center and Hubbard Homestead Park are linked by improved facilities on 5th Avenue NE.

Thornton Place is a newer kind of place that accommodates driving patrons, and has a movie theater complex but also a variety of residential opportunities as well as pedestrian-oriented plazas and open spaces.

Edges: Interstate 5 is the most important edge/barrier because it divides the western and eastern portions of the neighborhood with only a few streets that bridge the divide (N 92nd St., Northgate Way, NE 117th St.). The effects of this edge are significant upon overall traffic congestion and pedestrian accessibility – many Licton Springs residents, though physically close, must choose between only two routes that can be congested, to reach the heart of Northgate. On Northgate Way, the congested traffic itself and the wide street also create a sort of barrier or edge within the core.

Along the south and southeastern edges of the Northgate core, the steep topography of hills in Maple Leaf, and the Thornton Creek drainage, define edges that effectively limit the extent of the Northgate commercial core.

Views

Views in Northgate consist mainly of territorial views north-south along 1st Ave NE, 5th and 8th Avenues NE and Roosevelt Way NE, influenced by the rolling topography. From Maple Leaf, views westward are also possible. On Meridian Ave N., a Downtown skyline view may be seen toward the south. Motorists also experience Northgate from Interstate 5 both northbound and southbound, seeing Thornton Place, the mall, the Transit Center, the college and multifamily buildings as they pass. A southbound view toward Mount Rainier is also possible from Interstate 5.

Parks, Recreation, Open Space

The relatively recent additions of Hubbard Homestead Park, library, community center, and Thornton Creek water quality channel have improved the range of amenities serving the Northgate core.

Active recreation features are sparse, but they include the community center, an outdoor basketball court at Hubbard Homestead Park and a Frisbee golf facility at Mineral Springs Park (west of I-5). There is also a P-Patch created by the community on NE 103rd Street, and other open space such as the Thornton Creek stream ravine with an associated beaver pond marsh that provide unique features with natural values.

The college's periphery also contains several natural tracts that include wetlands that have habitat and educational value. Licton Springs Park and Northacres Park are also located nearby.

Hubbard Homestead Park

Community Center and Library on 5th Avenue NE

Figure 2.3 - Examples of neighborhood assets
Thornton Drainage Channel near 3rd Ave NE

Area Circulation and the "Superblock" Land Use Pattern

Northgate's street circulation pattern consists mainly of a limited number of north-south arterials (Meridian Ave N., 1st and 5th Aves NE, and Roosevelt Way NE) with two east-west arterials (Northgate Way and N 92nd Street) connecting to other neighborhoods. Other east-west streets include a relatively small number of local streets, most with dead-end traffic controls aimed at reducing through traffic in neighborhoods to the north and east of the Urban Center. Given its historically commercial orientation, Northgate's blocks are large, typically ranging from 650 to 1,300 feet in length.

This combination of blocks and limited number of streets creates a "superblock" configuration that tends to constrict mobility for all travel modes, from vehicles to bicycles to pedestrians. This pattern is illustrated to the right and compared to other Seattle neighborhoods that have many more streets for circulation and many more but smaller blocks.

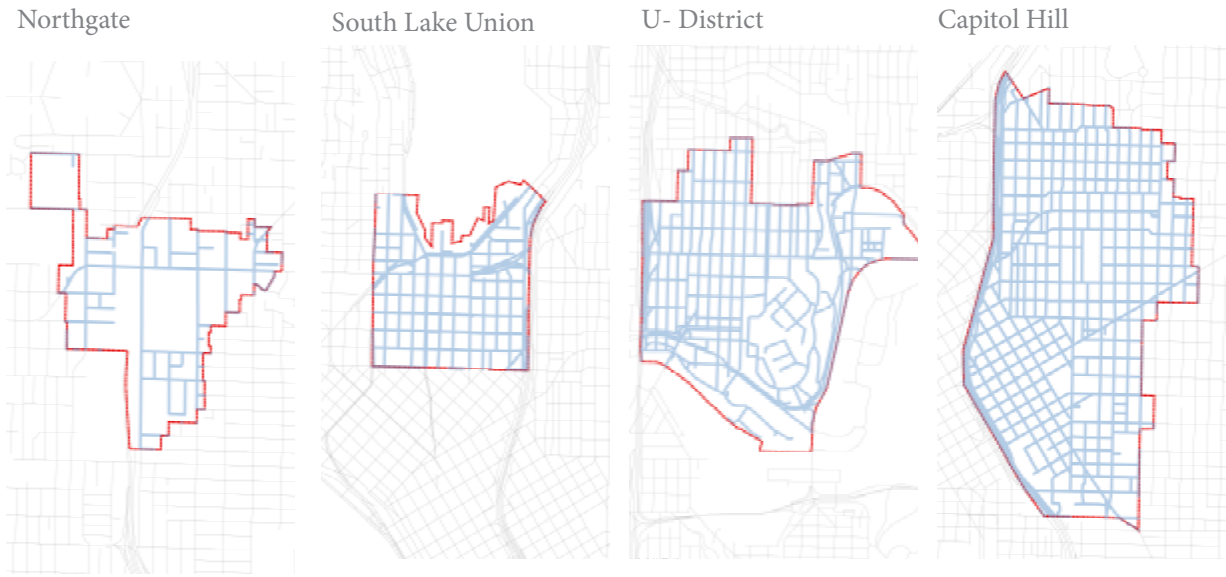


Figure 2.4 - Comparison of Seattle Urban Centers Street Density

	Acres	Block Density	Intersection Density	Typical Block Length
University District	773	12%	17%	240 x 460
Capitol Hill	913	33%	28%	330 x 420
South Lake Union	324	25%	29%	330 x 420
Northgate	410	8%	10%	1280 x 600

Table 2.3 Seattle Urban Centers Connectivity

Existing Pedestrian Facilities

Even though most streets in the Urban Center have sidewalks and some have attractive treatments, the overall quality of the pedestrian experience is affected by limitations in pedestrian facilities. These relate to the width and physical conditions of existing sidewalks, gaps in network completeness, shortfall in landscaping and street furniture, the shortage of off-street pedestrian routes, and in the presence of barriers such as Interstate 5.

Physical condition: Walkable sidewalk widths vary widely and sometimes are narrowed by utility pole placements. Typical widths range to as narrow as 3-6 feet, although most newer sidewalks are wider than 6 feet. Older sidewalks can have uneven surfaces, and intruding landscaping, cracking, and adjacency to vehicle traffic lanes can affect overall comfort and reliability.

Network completeness: Within the Urban Center, only 3rd Ave NE south of NE 100th Street lacks sidewalks entirely, which inconveniences employees in this office district. Due to a series of improvements in recent years, other streets such as 1st Ave NE and 8th Ave NE have improved or extended facilities that provide relatively complete walking opportunities across the Urban Center. However, for the adjacent Maple Leaf and Pinehurst neighborhoods to the east and north, there remain either no sidewalks on most streets or limited older isolated segments north of NE 95th Street.

Off-street Pedestrian Facilities: In the Urban Center, a shortage of defined pedestrian pathways through large lots limits overall pedestrian connectivity through the area's superblocks. The Mall property, however, does have a number of pedestrian paths on its western and southern sides. Given this shortage and a lack of mid-block connections, walkers have to pass through parking lots and otherwise feel secondary to automobile movements.

Interstate 5 Pedestrian Barrier: The I-5 right-of-way creates a significant barrier to pedestrians that hampers connectivity between Licton Springs, the college, and the main core of Northgate, including the transit center. This continues to discourage pedestrian trips. However, existing transit service helps extend the range of pedestrians and can carry them past the I-5 barrier. Three transit routes provide eight trips per weekday hour in both directions to Licton Springs via N 92nd Street, and another route travels via Northgate Way with three trips per hour in each direction. Also, the pedestrian environment along Northgate Way at I-5, including the underpass, is uncomfortable due to the combination of sidewalk quality, lighting quality, nearby vehicles, and the need to cross a number of busy streets.

The City has identified Northgate as a High Priority Area as illustrated in the City's Pedestrian Master Plan. The High Priority Areas Map identifies locations in Seattle where people need to be able to walk the most. These locations are shown as the darker orange areas on the Figure below.

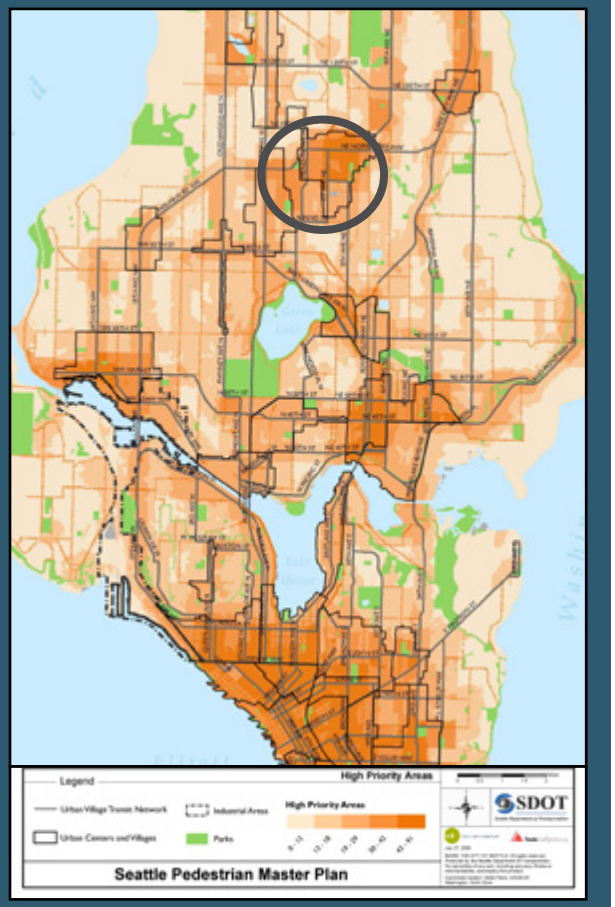


Figure 2.5 - Seattle Pedestrian Master Plan

Existing and Planned Bicycle Facilities

Bicycle connections in Northgate are compromised by the same impediments that affect pedestrian travel. Existing designated bicycle routes offer relatively little coverage for the Urban Center, consisting of "sharrows" on portions of streets including 5th Ave NE, NE 103rd Street and College Way N.

Typical bicycling routes to/from Green Lake may use N. 92nd St. as an east-west connection, and First Ave NE provides a logical routing northward toward an I-5 crossing at N 117th Street that aids connections to/from the north. First Ave NE currently lacks bicycle facilities, but a two-way 'cycle track' is proposed to be built on the west side of 1st Ave NE from N 92nd Street to NE 103rd St. Further to the north, a multi-use path is planned on the east side of 1st Ave NE, reached from the cycle track by crossing the street at NE 103rd St.

Transit Circulation

The Transit Center is the focal point for service in north Seattle and Shoreline, providing robust local and regional transit service options on several Metro and Sound Transit routes, serving places to the north, east and west of Northgate. This includes two-way all-day routes connecting Fremont, Ballard, Crown Hill, Licton Springs (including Northwest Hospital), Bitter Lake, Jackson Park, Lake City, Victory Heights, Maple Leaf, Roosevelt, U-District, Green Lake, Wallingford, and Shoreline. Also, one-way peak-only routes connect the Transit Center with First Hill, Overlake and Bellevue.

A frequent route connects Lake City to Downtown via the Transit Center and I-5. It uses the I-5 reversible lanes when available, providing good speed and reliability, with extra trips in the peak periods' peak direction. Link service will replace the Northgate-to-Downtown connection in 2021. Link will also significantly improve the connection to the U-District given rail's reliability, frequency and speed.

Some transit riders have reported a degree of accessibility challenge due to the impediments presented by Interstate 5, limited arterial street network, topography, and limitations on the quality of pedestrian and bicycle connections. Citizen feedback suggested that bus transfer times for westbound routes from the Transit Center also add extra time to a bus trip. This confirms there are various impediments that make a difference in the choice of travel options; for example, students may choose to drive to the community college even though parking is not free on the campus.

Long-term transit funding and routing choices after light rail service begins are not set, but may increase service frequency between the light rail station and surrounding neighborhoods. This might occur largely along existing routes. However, route adjustments also could occur in the future.

Reliability in future transit service will continue to depend upon agencies making good choices in future arterial street network improvements. These choices for Northgate's streets will need to balance traffic flow and transit accessibility purposes with access and safety needs for pedestrians and bicyclists. This balancing that acknowledges transit functions is important because fostering transit service frequency and minimized wait times are critical to attracting riders, especially those who transfer between routes.

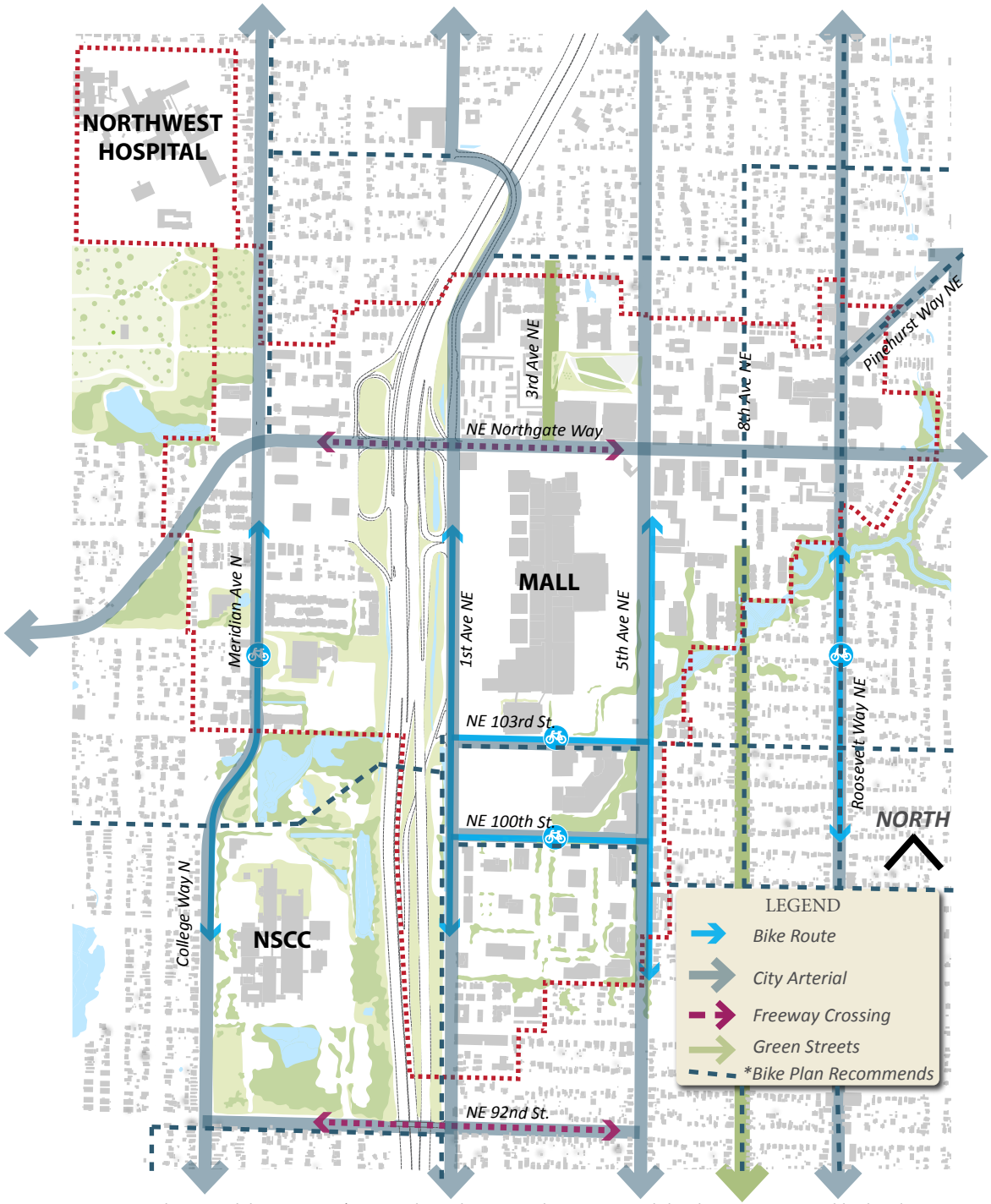


Figure 2.6 - Northgate Mobility Map

**Proposed Bicycle Master Plan recommends local connections, neighborhood greenways, and cycle tracks (1st Ave NE & Roosevelt Way), as future improvements.*

The Urban Center's Development Potential

Past development has followed a couple of general trends in where investments have been made, which may inform likely future development trends:

1. Developments of private and public facilities have clustered along 5th Ave NE. The Thornton Place, Northgate North, 507 Northgate Apartments, Library/Community Center, and Hubbard Homestead Park have occurred in the last decade or so along 5th Ave NE. This may reflect a perceived viability for development immediately surrounding the central mall location that is the heart of the Urban Center.
2. Development has also clustered along Meridian Ave N. This pattern likely reflects a consolidation of medical service and office uses along this corridor, which reinforces the strength of this local center west of I-5.
3. Thornton Place was a "pioneering" development in the southern part of the Urban Center, which has been followed recently by a hotel proposal on 1st Ave NE. Thornton Place has demonstrated the viability of a multifamily residential center in this subarea, along with a small concentration of retail uses and movie theater. This will help the prospects of future development receiving financing and continuing an infill trend.

The area's development potential also relates to the size of properties, the condition of existing buildings, and the potential offered by existing zoning. A development "propensity" analysis prepared for this UDF finds there is moderate to high potential for several properties in the Urban Center to redevelop over the long term, in each of the Center's subareas. Potentially redevelopable properties are larger in the north and south subareas, east of I-5. The overall pattern suggests much future development potential is located along the Northgate Way corridor, and in certain large tracts south of the mall, including the "TOD site" adjacent to the light rail station.

Similar to past development trends, and based on current knowledge about probable developments on certain sites, the likely trend in future infill development will be to grow first in areas surrounding the Link station and mall property, and subsequent redevelopment to be more likely further east and west along Northgate Way and further south in the south subarea of the Urban Center. Other properties, slightly removed from Northgate Way itself, could also see infill development that would continue trends initiated by developments such as the 507 Northgate Way apartment complex. Places such as the mall property's eastern edges (northeast and southeast corners) could also be attractive for long-term infill development, although the mall ownership indicates its main priority is focusing on the mall operations.

In summary, there is potential to continue trends of infill redevelopment that will continue the gradual transition in the Urban Center's land use from a traditional automobile-oriented shopping district to a denser mixed-use center. The future light rail service beginning in 2021 appears to be a significant factor that could increase the long-term prospects for such infill to occur. As the nearest area to the light rail station, the south subarea would most directly experience the locational benefits of light rail service, which should aid long-term future development prospects which would help transform that subarea.

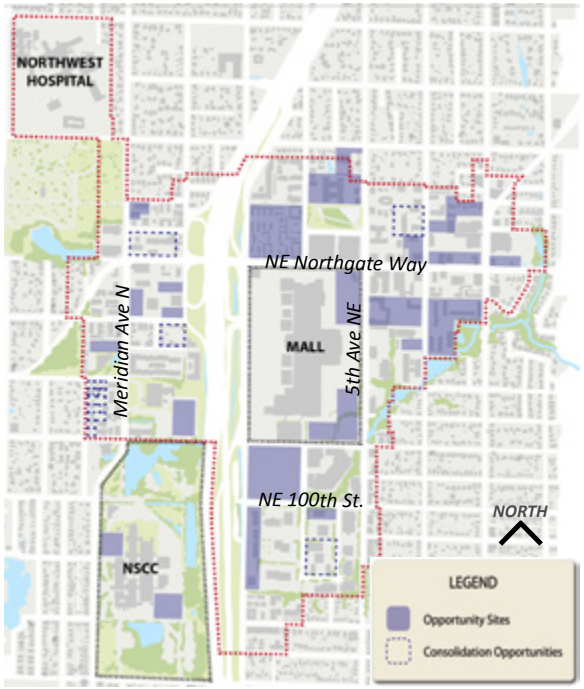


Figure 2.7 - Development Propensity

Conclusions of the Land Use/Design Analysis for Existing Conditions

Although designated as a single Urban Center, the Northgate area actually comprises three separate subareas. Each subarea has clusters of single-use automobile-oriented office, residential, retail and academic (NSCC) buildings (shown on the adjacent diagram) that are relatively independent from one another. Also, the scarcity of options to walk pleasantly within each subarea and between subareas contributes to the sense of three separated districts.

The following Urban Design recommendations are targeted to enhance the character of the three subareas through encouraging land uses that will be supportive of the neighborhood plan vision, and mobility improvements that will help reintegrate the subareas into a cohesive Northgate Urban Center.

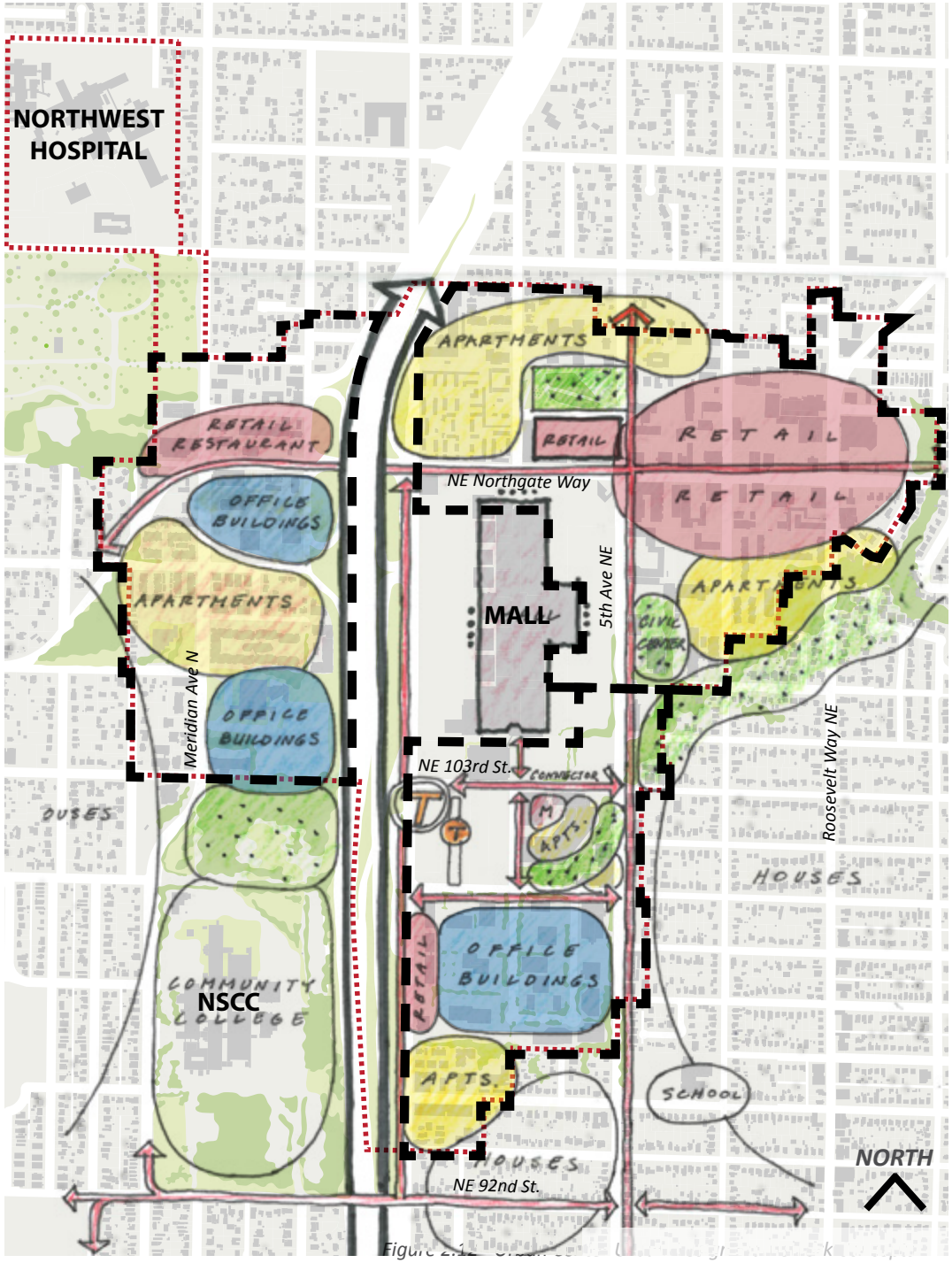


Figure 2.8 - Neighborhood Land-use Analysis Map

URBAN CENTER: Recommendations for healthy, livable, equitable neighborhood development

City staff sought input on priorities for improving Northgate's future in nearly 20 meetings that covered a broad spectrum of neighborhood residents and stakeholders, most of whom had not participated in past planning discussions. Groups included students, seniors, parents and children living in apartment housing, households newly arrived in Seattle, Christian and Muslim faith-based communities, and cultural communities including Eritrean, Somali and American Indian/ Alaska Native. Community councils were also updated, and input from business representatives, developers, and health care providers was gathered.

The product of these discussions is a better understanding that livable and healthy communities rely on neighborhood characteristics that relate to all of the following:

- Maintaining public safety for all
- Good community services and facilities
- Opportunities for improving personal health
- Quality physical environment
- Excellent transportation
- Affordable housing

The relationship of these topics to urban design and Northgate's neighborhood development is summarized as follows. This provides advisory guidance about how future growth and City efforts can effectively pursue improved public health, livability and a neighborhood that equitably serves its residents.

Public Safety

1. Ensure public safety is maintained at the Link station, transit center, I-5 pedestrian/bicycle bridge, public spaces in the TOD site, and parks throughout the Urban Center, through good lighting, sufficient law enforcement presence, enforcing civil behavior in public spaces, and providing features such as emergency call boxes.
2. Pursue design and siting of public spaces and buildings that will provide "eyes on the street" and encourage peoples' presence at most times of day, thereby discouraging uncivil behavior. Encourage environmental design techniques that will assist in crime prevention.
3. Ensure that sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic signals, and bicycle facilities are designed and operated to ensure safe conditions.

Community Services and Facilities

1. Encourage provision of more recreational facilities to support active recreation and activities such as picnicking at existing parks.
2. Encourage provision of more community facilities, such as community meeting rooms, for free or low cost, to ensure everyone can afford and make use of public facilities.
3. Encourage provision of artist studios and other arts/cultural facilities in future Urban Center development, including within the station area. Provision of space to support creative activities, cultural opportunities, and social services activities would add vitality to the mix of uses in growth areas, and would help support community needs. Places such as museums or cultural education centers could also become attractions for tourists and scholars, and would express elements of this area's identity.

Improving Personal Health

1. Encourage future development that provides greater access to fresh food.
2. Encourage future development and public spaces and facilities that support physical activity and greater social connections, through more walkable features and socially engaging places.
3. Encourage development of places that support new economic activity and entrepreneurship, including small businesses, in an equitable manner.

Quality Physical Environment

1. Ensure sidewalks are clean, maintained and passable.
2. Encourage development that avoids excessive exposure of residents to air and noise pollution that threatens healthy living.
3. Encourage inclusion of green and sustainable development features that will enhance the quality of public spaces and environmental protective performance.
4. Encourage development of buildings, facilities and public spaces that are attractive, support healthy social activity, arts/cultural activities, and provide a great sense of place.
5. Encourage inclusion of physical design themes in future development that will reflect elements of this area's identity and character, such as: native American cultural heritage, 19th and 20th Century cultural heritage, natural history and vegetation.

Excellent Transportation

1. Ensure easy transit connections, frequent and reliable bus service, good transit infrastructure, good parking accessibility, and sufficient park-and-ride capacity are available at the light rail station.
2. Ensure traffic operations are sufficiently managed, to maintain and improve mobility across the Urban Center.
3. Provide a diverse range of improvements that will improve safety and quality of facilities for walking and bicycling, including an emphasis on filling gaps and improving substandard conditions in locations serving the neighborhoods within and near the Urban Center.

Affordable Housing

1. The City (supported by citizens' preferences) encourages setting definite performance levels in provision of affordable housing that will equitably support the presence of a diverse population in vicinities near light rail stations and frequent transit service. Set performance levels likely to meet Urban Center goals of: 13% of new dwelling units serving households at 0-30% of area median income; 12% serving households between 30-50% of area median income; and 18% serving households between 50-80% of area median income.
2. Encourage provision of services and amenities that will complement the ability of households of all income levels to choose to live in the Northgate Urban Center.

Online Survey Results: Summer 2013

After the Draft UDF was published, an online survey yielded more than 200 responses. This included opportunities for written input.

The results:

--- The highest expressed priority is to achieve safe, enhanced pedestrian and bicycling conditions between the station area and surrounding neighborhoods.

--- Ensuring affordable housing presence, sufficient amounts of commuter parking, and a well-designed station area core that is safe, comfortable and an engaging 'people place' are also among the highest priorities.

--- There is also significant interest in supporting local-based small businesses, a grocery store, and achieving an attractively greened landscape using sustainable green strategies.

--- The UDF's recommendations for an attractive public realm, including park/plaza, public movement corridors, and street park on 3rd Ave NE received majority support.

Opinion was more divided on whether tall buildings should be encouraged, with a slight majority in favor. But most agreed with the recommended strategies such as tower width controls and preservation of solar access on key public spaces.

URBAN CENTER: Land Use Recommendations

Recommendations for the neighborhood are designed to inform and guide the ongoing redevelopment of the urban center.

Subareas

The recommendations support improvements that will help each subarea fulfill its role in the Urban Center:

1. Northgate North subarea as a dense retail corridor augmented with more residential uses and improved pedestrian characteristics.

2. Northgate West as an office and commercial activity center surrounded by multifamily residential uses and complemented by North Seattle Community College.

3. Northgate South as a significant opportunity area to establish a transit-oriented development district with a vibrant center adjacent to the Northgate Link station. Working together with Thornton Place and potential infill development south of 100th Street, this area will be enhanced as an exciting, people-oriented place and a key transit hub.

Break up the Superblocks

The large-block development and street pattern needs to be broken into more human-scale blocks that will foster an improved walkability. The combination of new buildings and public spaces, including streets and sidewalks will actually redefine the character of the Northgate subareas into more active, walkable and livable places.

Promote Infill Development in Parking Lots to Expand and Create Vital Cores in Each Subarea

Each subarea will be enhanced as infill development is accomplished in key locations, particularly the northeast and southeast corners of the Northgate Mall parking lot. Parking lots on the east side of the Mall contribute greatly to the automobile oriented scale of the Urban Center. To the degree that infill development can occur in areas near 5th/Northgate Way and near the corner of 5th/NE 103rd Street (as well as other parts of the east parking lots), this would create new blocks that form a better-realized core for both the north and south subareas of the Urban Center.

“Turning the corner” with development at 5th/103rd Street would also begin to accomplish a closer physical linkage between the north and south subareas that will also encourage more walking within the neighborhood.

In the South subarea, introduction of denser development with new residential opportunities in parking lots or underdeveloped properties will be important to enhancing livability in the station area.

Realize a Network of Pedestrian Routes and Linked Public Open Spaces

Along with the benefit of breaking up the superblocks, the introduction of more pedestrian routes and small streets within the superblocks will enhance overall mobility.

But just as important will be the benefits provided by a series of public plazas and parks that will be realized within each superblock. This network of amenities and movement corridors will greatly improve the perceived quality and livability of each part of the Urban Center by defining a network that is pleasant and complementary to the larger street system.

URBAN CENTER: Mobility Recommendations

Northgate Loop, Bridges, East-West Connections and Transit

This UDF proposes four primary themes for improving accessibility throughout the Urban Center:

1. The "Loop" concept to improve the continuity of access routes for pedestrians by connecting all of the subareas. Key streets in this concept are Northgate Way, Meridian Ave N., 5th Avenue NE, and NE 103rd Street. Improvements there would provide a continuity and visibility that is lacking today in sidewalk routes.

2. The "Bridges" concept that recognizes there are a handful of key places along a main loop with shortcomings that need improvement in order to support the best movements through the Urban Center. These would allow distinctive design improvements to improve linkages among the subareas, to encourage more walking, bicycling and transit use.

3. Improved quality of east-west pedestrian connections between Roosevelt Way NE and 3rd Ave NE to enhance accessibility to the Link station.

4. Maintain and improve transit service connectivity throughout the Urban Center with short headways and good transit speed and reliability.

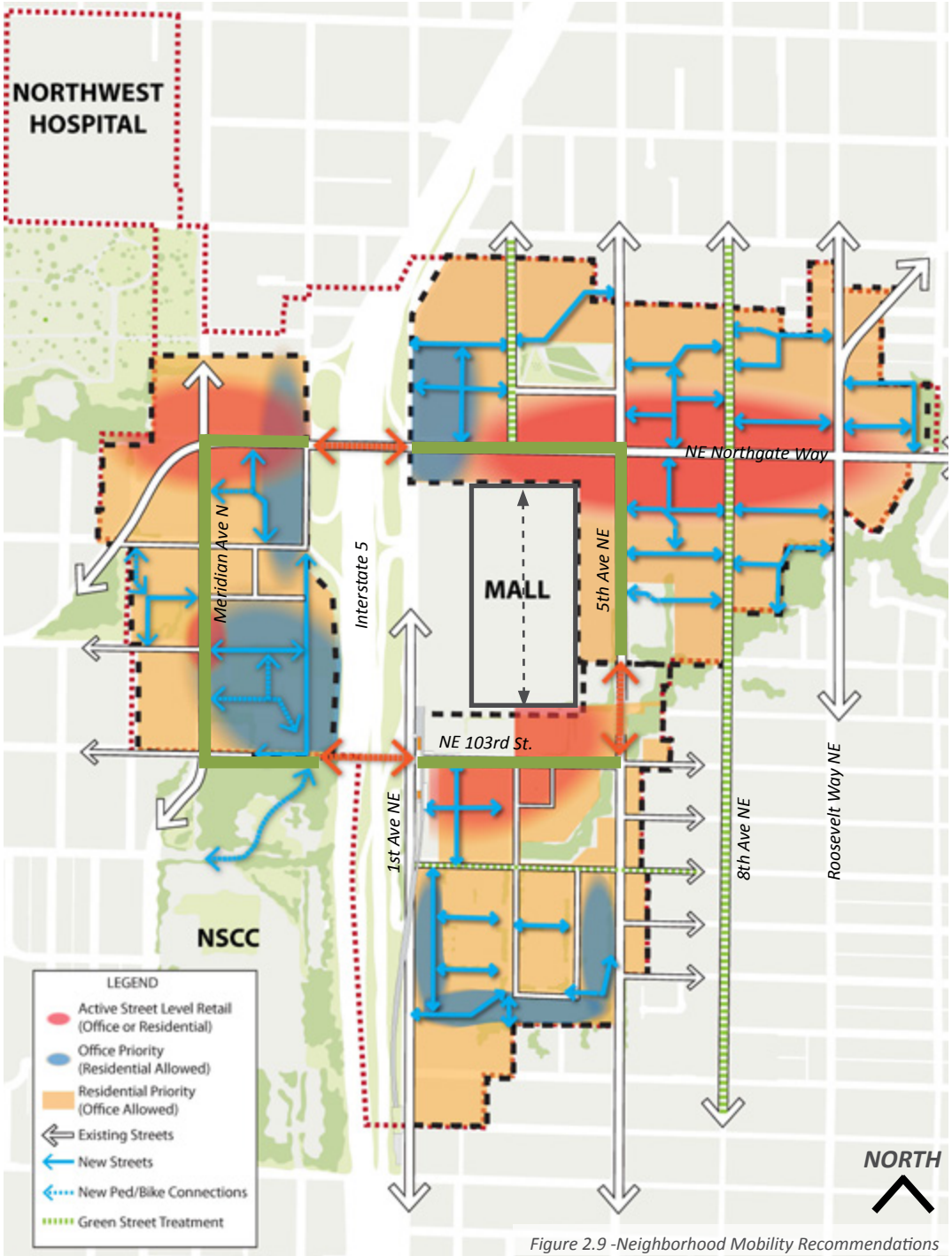


Figure 2.9 -Neighborhood Mobility Recommendations

The Northgate Loop concept

The four streets of the Northgate Loop should be improved to establish a conspicuous and identifiable route that will assist and prioritize pedestrians, bicycles and transit. Wherever possible, these improvements should share consistent design elements to provide visual indications of continuity and improve wayfinding. The following traditional urban "elements of continuity" are recommended:

- Sidewalk improvements with related reallocations of space devoted to other street functions, within the 5th Ave NE and Meridian Ave N rights-of-way
- Pedestrian lighting
- Sidewalk paving features
- Moving utility poles where they are sidewalk impediments
- Benches and trash receptacles
- Information and "wayfinding" signage
- Consistent improvements to transit stop elements
- Crosswalk design and safety features (e.g. lighting)
- Public art

Wayfinding elements

Street Furniture

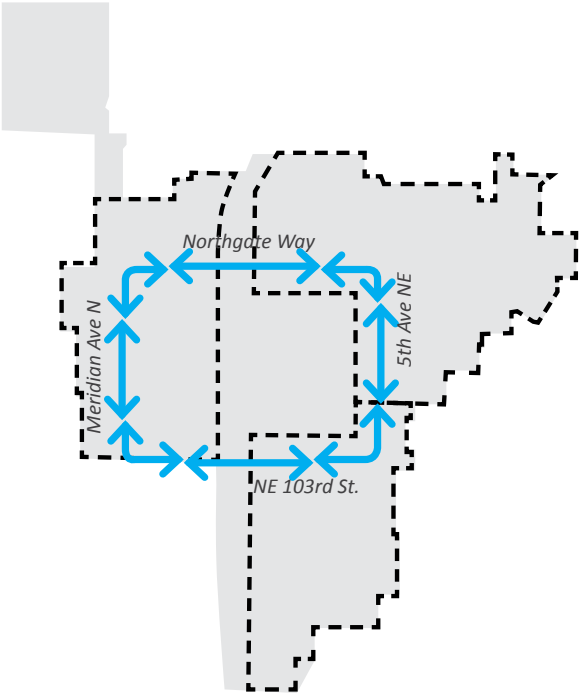


Figure 2.10 - Northgate Loop Diagram

Public space with pedestrian lighting integrated

LED lighting pavers integrated in a pathway

Weather Protection

Crosswalk design

Sidewalk Paving

Wayfinding Elements

The Northgate "Bridges": Elements of Distinction

Three specific locations in the Urban Center present obstacles to easy pedestrian travel. Since these locations occur between each of the three subareas they present a unique opportunity to create improved linkages (which could be thought of as "bridges") between each area. The three locations are:

1. 5th Ave NE between NE 103rd and NE 105th Streets (connecting the North and South Subareas)
2. The Northgate Way freeway underpass (connecting the North and West Subareas)
3. The proposed pedestrian and bicycle bridge across I-5 near NE 103rd St (connecting the South and West Subareas)

Fifth Avenue "Bridge"

Although 5th Ave NE is the primary public sidewalk connection between the North and South subareas, it is not an inviting pedestrian environment.

It presents a long walk (over 1,000 feet) on a narrow sidewalk immediately next to cars, trucks and buses. There is also an adjacent heavy foliage bank on the west side, without storefronts or other activity. The east side is constrained by narrow sidewalks, adjacent travel lanes, and utility poles in the middle of the pedestrian pathway. There is little or no pedestrian lighting, and no benches.

The two blocks between NE 103rd and 105th Streets (and NE 100th - 103rd Streets on the east side of 5th Ave NE) are important to improving the area's overall pedestrian comfort and accessibility.

The following improvements are recommended, in the spirit of completing the previously identified 5th Avenue NE streetscape improvements:

- Narrow the travel lanes to reduce traffic speeds (while still accommodating truck and bus movements)
- Provide sidewalk buffers such as planting strips
- Add pedestrian-scale lighting
- Reduce obstructions in sidewalks
- Require wider sidewalks with future redevelopment and initiate discussion with adjacent property owners to increase access
- Install crosswalks at NE 104th and 105th Streets
- Mark the entire section between NE 105th to 103rd Streets with a special lighting/art project
- Improve landscaping and landscape maintenance on adjacent properties

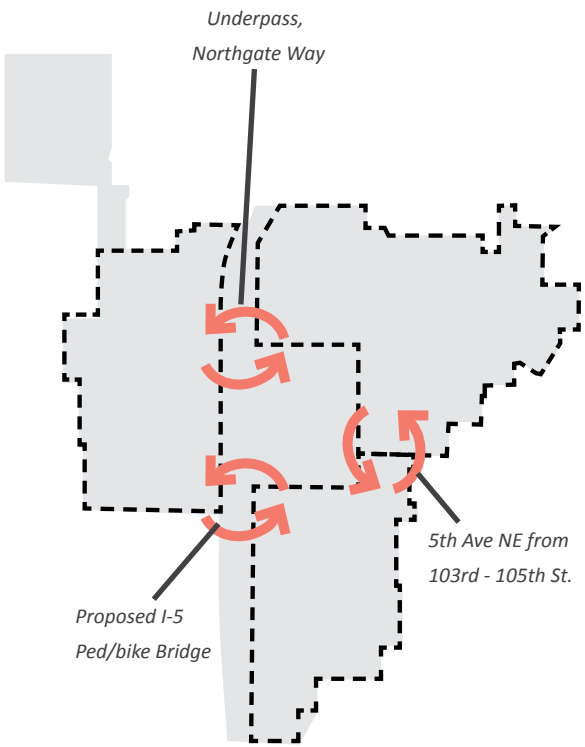


Figure 2.11 - Northgate Bridges Diagram

Northgate Way Freeway Underpass

The Northgate Way underpass is, and may continue to be, the only connection under I-5 between the north and west subareas of the Urban Center. It is currently difficult to comfortably travel by walking or cycling and transit flow is also degraded by traffic congestion. The City's 2004 Northgate Open Space and Pedestrian Connections Report recommended numerous improvements to the underpass including:

- Eliminate unused center lane and widen sidewalks
- Grade-separated sidewalks (3-4' above roadway) with decorative railing
- Reconfigure lane/intersection geometry for better pedestrian safety, appropriate to an urban center setting, including at the eastbound right turn lane from Northgate Way to 1st Ave NE to eliminate double pedestrian crossing
- Aesthetic treatments such as pedestrian lighting, special paving, gateway landscape treatment, ornamental slope improvements under bridge, decorated columns

All of the above recommendations are still relevant today and continue to be recommended by this UDF. Missing from the 2004 recommendations however, was a bicycle connection. This was presumably due to the limited width of the right-of-way. One option that the City should consider is to utilize the space behind the bridge columns.

The City's 2006 Northgate Coordinated Transportation Investment Plan (CTIP) recommended locating the sidewalks behind the bridge columns to allow for a new left turn lane under the bridge for westbound Northgate Way to turn southbound onto Corliss Ave N. This UDF recommends that the City not consider adding more vehicular capacity but rather use the space behind the bridge columns (or other in-street space if desirable) for bicycle lanes. The benefits of improving non-motorized connectivity throughout the Urban Center and to the Transit Center should be carefully understood, considered and evaluated before making further vehicular only improvements. A safe, convenient bicycle connection through the Northgate Way underpass would become a particularly important component of the bicycle network after the planned cycle track on 1st Ave NE is completed.

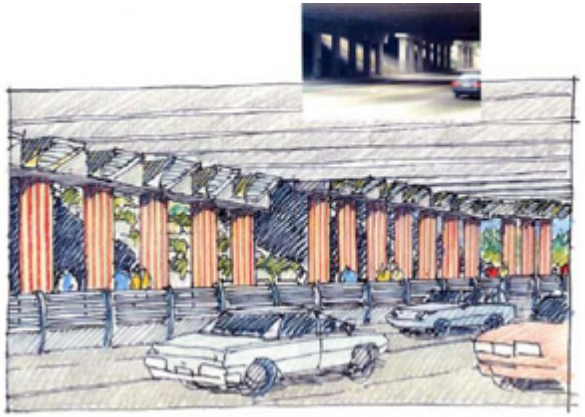


Figure 2.12 - Pedestrian Improvements concept for I-5 Underpass
Source: Northgate Open Space & Pedestrian Connections Plan

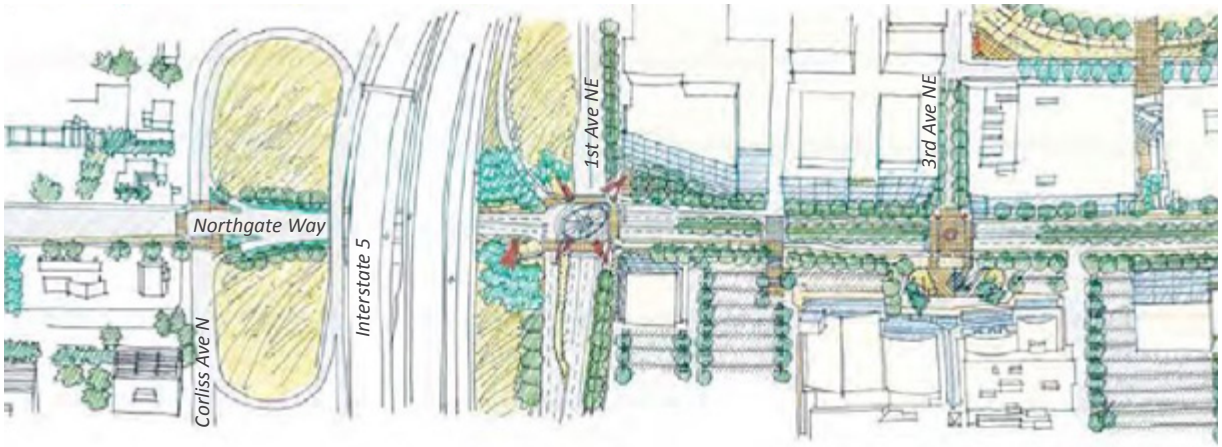


Figure 2.13 - Early Concept Drawing for Northgate Way
Source: Urban Design Workshop - Dec 2006

Northgate Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge

A bridge across I-5 is the single most important non-motorized connectivity infrastructure investment for the Urban Center. The need for a bridge has been identified in multiple previous planning efforts, including the 2006 Northgate CTIP, which stated the following:

"The Northgate Stakeholders Group expressed its strong support for a pedestrian and bicycle overpass crossing the freeway from North Seattle Community College to the Northgate Transit Center and future Sound Transit Northgate Link Light Rail Station. The crossing would make it easier for College faculty and students to use bus transit and the future light rail, reducing single-occupant vehicle trips. It would connect neighborhoods west of I-5 to the commercial area and neighborhoods east of I-5, particularly the new Northgate Civic Center and South Lot developments envisioned for Northgate. The project could cost $7–10 million and might come about through collaboration between the City of Seattle, King County, WSDOT, Sound Transit, North Seattle Community College, private property owners, neighborhoods, and others."

In 2012, King County DOT completed the Northgate Pedestrian Bridge Feasibility Study Report, which identified opportunities, issues and estimated a range of costs for a bridge. The Report found that a bridge would reduce the walking distance from the transit center to NSCC from 1.2 miles to approximately 0.25 miles. The Report cites a previous study indicating that a bridge would result in a 30% reduction in average walking time to the Northgate Transit Center and Light Rail Station, and would effectively expand the area walk shed (0.5 miles) to more than 150 buildings and bike shed (3.0 miles) to more than 3,000 additional buildings. In 2013, the City of Seattle issued a request for qualifications to complete an analysis of potential pedestrian/bicycle bridge types and alignments.

Similar results were reached by 2013's Sound Transit's Transit Access Study, which has led to a list of recommended improvements to be pursued by the City and Sound Transit.

To fully leverage the potential connectivity that the bridge could provide, this UDF recommends that the bridge entrances on both sides of the freeway be carefully configured to allow for convenient access to the widest range of destinations possible, not just the light rail station and NSCC. For example, on the east side of the freeway, a potential second entrance to the bridge from the planned cycle track on 1st Ave NE could improve connectivity to the south of the Urban Center and the neighborhoods beyond.

On the west side of the freeway, the bridge should provide convenient access to both NSCC and current and future development north of NE 103rd Street.

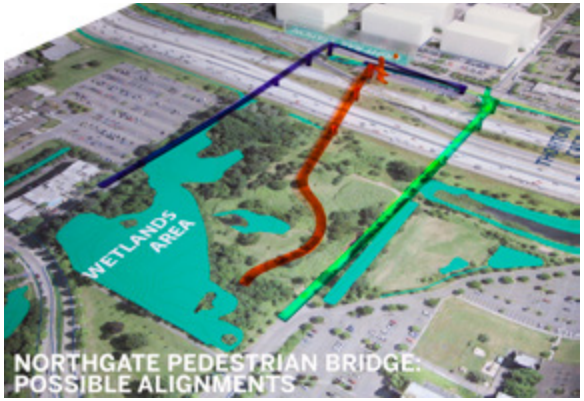


Figure 2.14 - Potential Northgate Interstate 5 Crossing (currently under study) Source: SDOT

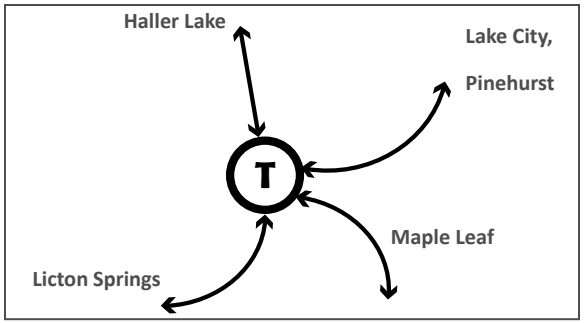
Improve east-west pedestrian connections between Roosevelt Way NE and 3rd Ave NE

To provide better and safer pedestrian connections between Maple Leaf areas to the east and the Link station, a number of pedestrian-oriented improvements are desirable. These should extend between at least Roosevelt Way NE to the east and the South Subarea core property at 3rd Ave NE.

Based on a study by City staff and Sound Transit, the recommended streets for these improvements are NE 103rd Street and NE 98th Street. However, these are not the only streets where improvements should be considered. Residents' input also suggests improvements should be considered for NE 105th Street (and residents have already drafted a design concept). Other streets that should also be considered for pedestrian improvements include 8th Ave NE and NE 100th St.

Maintain and improve transit service, connections, speed and reliability

Urban Center-wide mobility should be better served by: anticipated long-term improvements in transit service; the ability to make connections between transit routes; and maintaining and improving transit movement efficiency and reliability. Given these elements' importance in maintaining transportation system effectiveness, capacity and residents' mobility, they should be a primary consideration when evaluating possible changes in the street environment of the Urban Center.



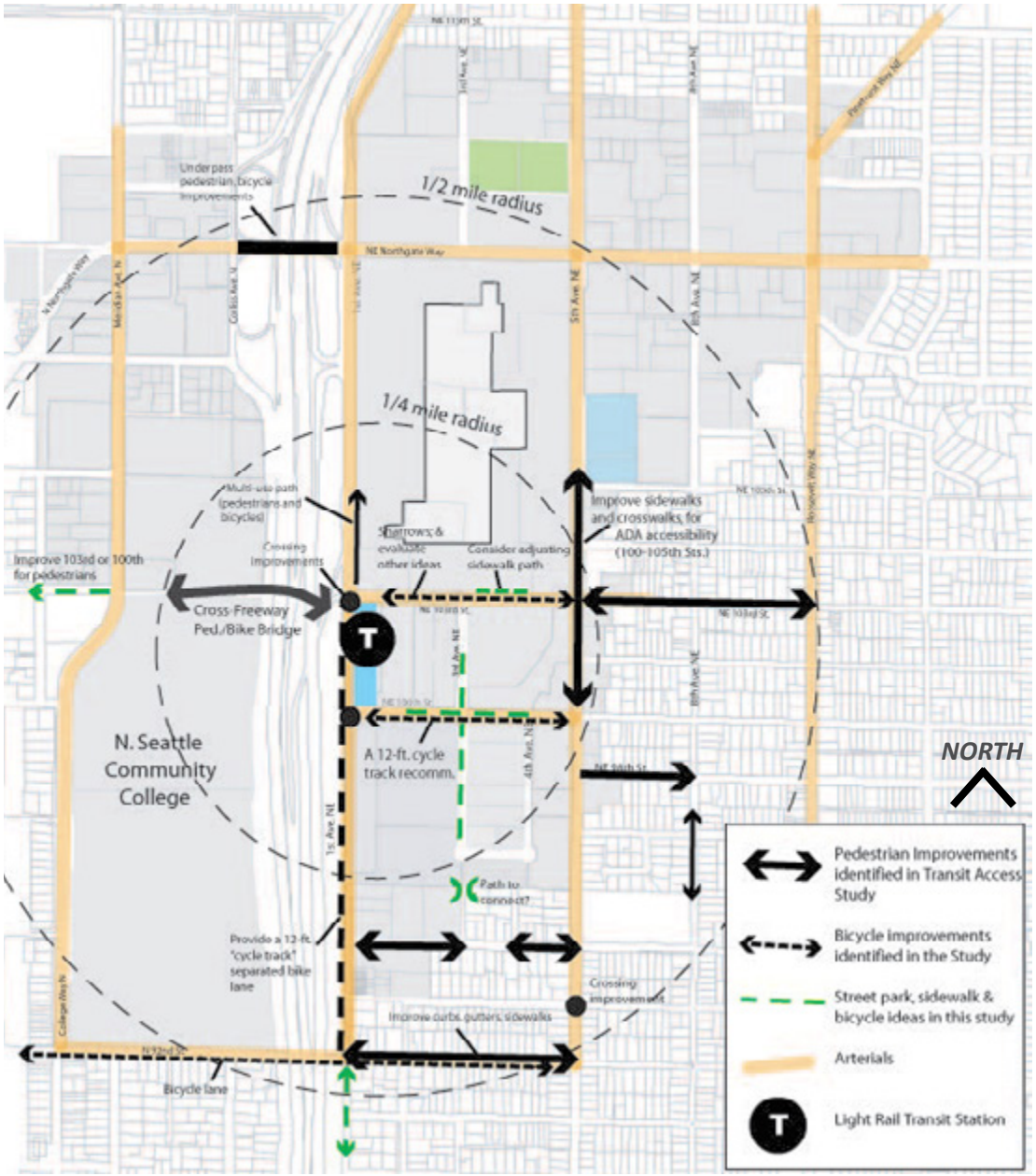


Figure 2.15 - Transit Access Study Findings: Priority Improvements

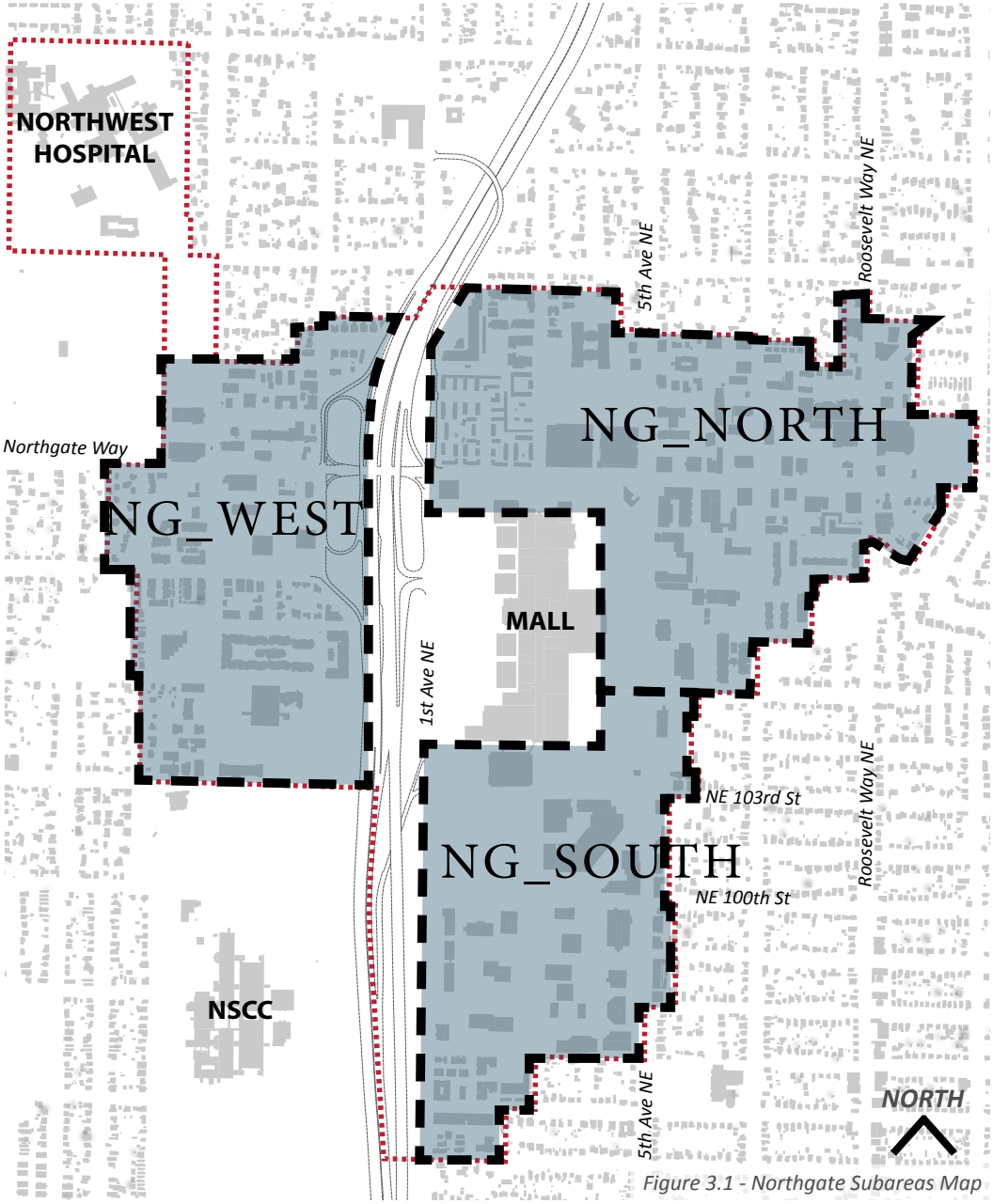


Figure 3.1 - Northgate Subareas Map

3 Northgate Subareas

The Northgate Urban Center essentially functions as three adjacent and separate subareas: North, South and West. Each subarea contains unique and regionally important functions, but none contain all the elements of a complete Urban Center environment.

For the purposes of this UDF, the Urban Center is divided into the following three Subareas, as illustrated in Figure 2.2:

- Northgate North (NGN): north and east of I-5 and the Northgate mall structure, generally between NE 105th and NE 114th Streets, with the eastern edge established by Thornton Creek. This also encompasses the Northgate mall parking lot that borders on 5th Ave NE
- Northgate South (NGS): south and east of I-5 and the Northgate Mall, between NE 95th and NE 105th Streets and extending east of 5th Ave NE
- Northgate West (NGW): west of I-5 from NE 100th to NE 113th Streets, and extending west to approximately Wallingford Ave N

Northwest Hospital and North Seattle Community College (NSCC) are each large and distinct parts of the community that are functionally and geographically separated from the heart of the Urban Center. Northwest Hospital is beyond easy pedestrian access. Accessibility to NSCC and any functional connection to the greater Urban Center is hindered by the barrier of the Interstate 5 corridor.

The Northgate mall structure and the west side of its property near I-5 are central to the Urban Center, providing retail sales attractions, indoor recreation space, and direct north-south walking connections. The Mall has a large structure surrounded by extensive parking lots. Given the Mall's interest in maintaining line-of-sight between the Mall and I-5, as well as its parking needs, these parts of the property are unlikely to change substantially over time. Thus, the Mall structure and its west side parking lots are excluded from this UDF's priority recommendations.

However, parking lots east of the mall structure are included in the North and South subareas because future infill development there would add much to core concentrations of uses in both of these subareas. Especially in the northeast and southeast corner portions, there is clear potential for future development that would activate the subareas.

As well, other UDF recommendations address the edges of the mall property's adjacent public streets.

Format of this Chapter

Subarea recommendations are provided in a consistent format. An overall analysis of both the land use and mobility issues is provided first. This is followed by several specific urban design principles meant to guide future urban design improvements primarily related to streets and mobility. Lastly, specific development and midblock connectivity recommendations are summarized for each super-block within the subarea.

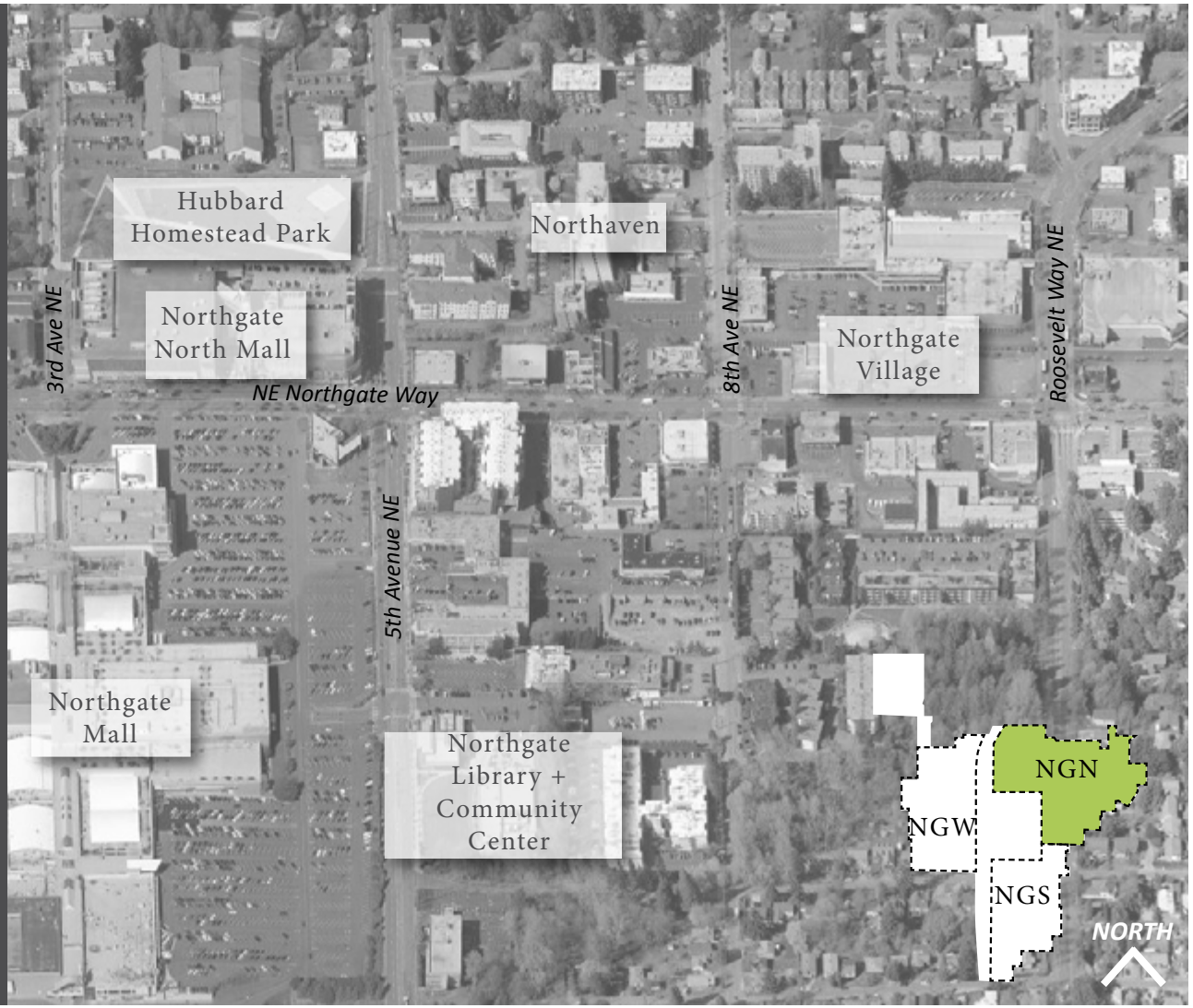
North Subarea (NGN)

Urban Design Analysis

The North Subarea near NE Northgate Way and 5th Ave NE is the most commonly identified heart of Northgate. It is approximately the same size as central Ballard or Capitol Hill. The Mall and the Northgate North retail complex are the central features of the Subarea, containing regional retail destinations and much parking.

The eastern part of the Subarea is characterized by primarily auto-related retail uses, including retail that serves community residents such as a grocery store, a drug store, and small restaurants.

The new Hubbard Homestead Park provides an exceptional new community open space for the Subarea. Residents point out that the park needs improvements to be a better active recreational space. For example, some nearby residents prefer more trees to be planted for shaded resting places, and there is also a lack of a "circuit" walking path. The Northgate Library and Community Center on 5th Ave NE serves as a local civic center and activity hub.



Pedestrian Amenities

The pedestrian environment in the North Subarea is mixed in quality. Some 5th Ave NE and Northgate Way sections have modern improvement levels, and other portions are at least six feet wide with basic amenities but mixed evenness. Also, some side streets have received recent sidewalk and curb improvements. However, a portion of 5th Ave NE south of the community center has notable impediments of utility poles in the center of sidewalks between NE 103rd and 105th Streets. Within the main part of this Subarea the only pedestrian connection to the east across I-5 is the Northgate Way underpass. The nearest alternate I-5 crossing to the south is at N 92nd St, almost a mile south of Northgate Way.

Mobility and Access

Most of the North Subarea is composed of superblocks, with lengths ranging from 650 to 1,300 feet. The I-5 freeway ramps at the western edge of the Subarea provide the primary auto connections to the rest of the City and beyond, and high traffic volumes create frequent congestion at the Northgate Way/1st Ave NE intersection. Three arterials (1st and 5th Avenues NE and Roosevelt Way NE) provide good connectivity to neighborhoods to the north, and two of those (5th Ave NE and Roosevelt Way NE) also provide connectivity to the south. Northgate Way continues east, connecting to Lake City, Kenmore, Bothell and beyond.

Transit access in the North Subarea is adequate but somewhat less frequent than is typical of Seattle's other Urban Centers. The Northgate Transit Center is over a one-half mile walk from the core of this Subarea along routes of limited pedestrian quality. The subarea is currently served by five two-way all-day bus routes providing 12 to 14 trips per hour per direction and connections with Lake City, Jackson Park, Maple Leaf, and the University District.

Development Opportunities

Of the three Subareas, the North has the greatest opportunities for redevelopment, including:

- North side of Northgate Way between 1st Ave NE and 3rd Ave NE
- North of Hubbard Homestead Park
- East of 5th Ave NE and south of Northgate Way

There are also areas with high development propensity in the northeast portion of the Mall's property.

North Subarea Principle #1

Provide Generous and Extensive Pedestrian Amenities

The CTIP identified several sidewalk and pedestrian oriented improvements to the street network. These were generally modest in scope and more extensive improvements are required to support the level of pedestrian activity required in an Urban Center. The priority locations for the following improvements are along NE Northgate Way and on 5th Ave NE. Other north-south arterials should also be evaluated for similar needs.

General improvements include:

- Provide a 5-foot minimum width landscaped buffer for sidewalks where immediately adjacent vehicular travel lanes. Where this would result in too narrow sidewalks, a raised buffer should be considered.
- 8-foot sidewalk widths adjacent any arterial or retail uses
- Pedestrian lighting, benches, trash receptacles and other amenities
- Weather-protective canopies at building edges

Weather Protection Devices

Sidewalk Design

Temporary street furnishings

Landscape Buffer

Street Furnishings

Example of a commercial oriented mid-block connection

North Subarea Principle #2

Establish new mid-block complete streets and pedestrian connections

Because Northgate has substantially fewer public streets than other Urban Centers in Seattle, a combination of new "complete" street connections, along with public and semi-public (limited public hours) pedestrian and bicycle connections are suggested to improve overall access.

Mid-block crossings may be associated with redeveloping sites. Mid-block connections may be designed as particularly attractive urban design interventions to increase pedestrian activity, as well as multiply the number of activity nodes located at corners and intersections.

North Subarea Principle #3

Create a central bus transit "signature" station with complementary enhanced bus stops

A central and primary bus stop station is proposed near the corner of 5th Ave NE and NE Northgate Way.

Station design goals include:

- Offer a unique 'Northgate North' design concept coordinated with the Metro standard as needed, and abundant lighting.
- This central station may be complemented by 'mini' versions of smaller but distinctive bus stops.

Examples of signature bus stations

Examples of surface parking treated with landscape features

North Subarea Principle #4

Define and activate the edges of the mall parking lots

An important characteristic of a pedestrian friendly urban environment is the definition of edges between public and private space. Where retail storefronts or residential frontages are not possible, landscape "fences" can also provide this definition. Since over one third of all the block faces along NE Northgate Way and 5th Ave NE are immediately adjacent surface mall parking, there is an opportunity to better define the pedestrian spaces. Although the ultimate goal is to realize storefront retail and ground related residential frontages, such development may not occur on the mall perimeter for many years. Consequently, it is important to more clearly define the edges. Edges can be defined by landscape fences. Another opportunity to define the edge would be to establish incubator businesses in temporary, but high quality smaller buildings.

The mall should also strive in future improvements to provide designated pedestrian pathways from the sidewalk through the parking lot into the mall. Ideally the entrances to these pathways would be coordinated and aligned with the current street grid pattern to reinforce orientation.

North Subarea Principle #5

Design Northgate Way as a major regional pedestrian-oriented retail street

Currently, pedestrian activity is internally focused within the mall and the NGN shopping complex. In order to support pedestrian activity throughout the neighborhood's streets, Northgate Way should be envisioned and improved as an attractive pedestrian retail street that has attractive design elements contributing toward its qualities as a key retail street and part of the loop that links all parts of the Urban Center. At a minimum, design standards should reflect the following:

- Provide a low landscape buffer between the curb lane traffic and pedestrian areas
- Update development standards to encourage ground level retail with frequent storefront entries from 1st Ave NE to Roosevelt Way NE.
- Update development standards to ensure new developments include translucent or transparent weather-protective canopies for a minimum of 80% of the street frontage.

Cambie Street in Vancouver BC is a major high-density arterial similar in scale to Northgate Way. It provides generous pedestrian amenities and retail fronting uses.

NORTH SUBAREA CONCEPT DIAGRAM

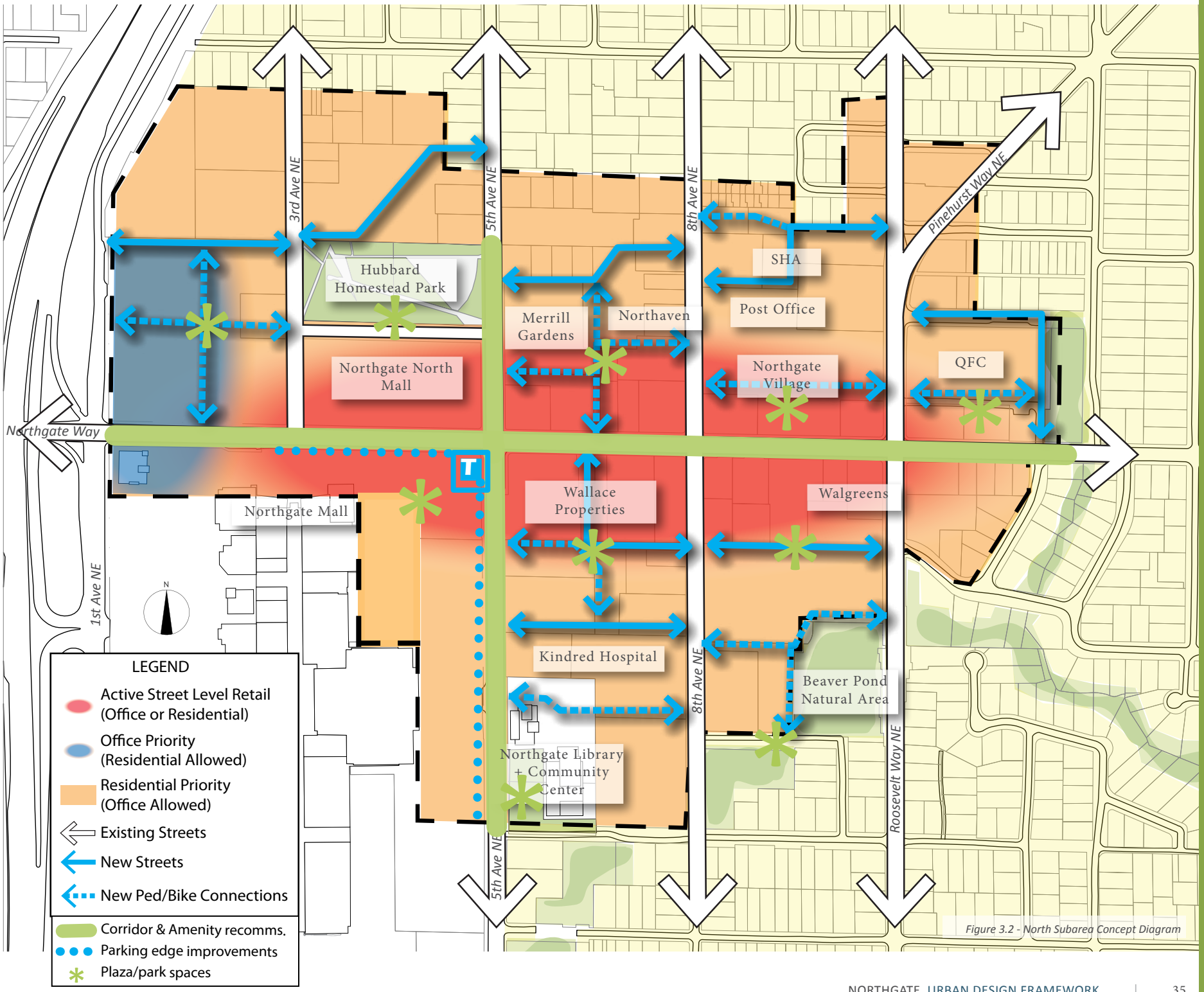


Figure 3.2 - North Subarea Concept Diagram

NORTH SUBAREA URBAN FORM DIAGRAM

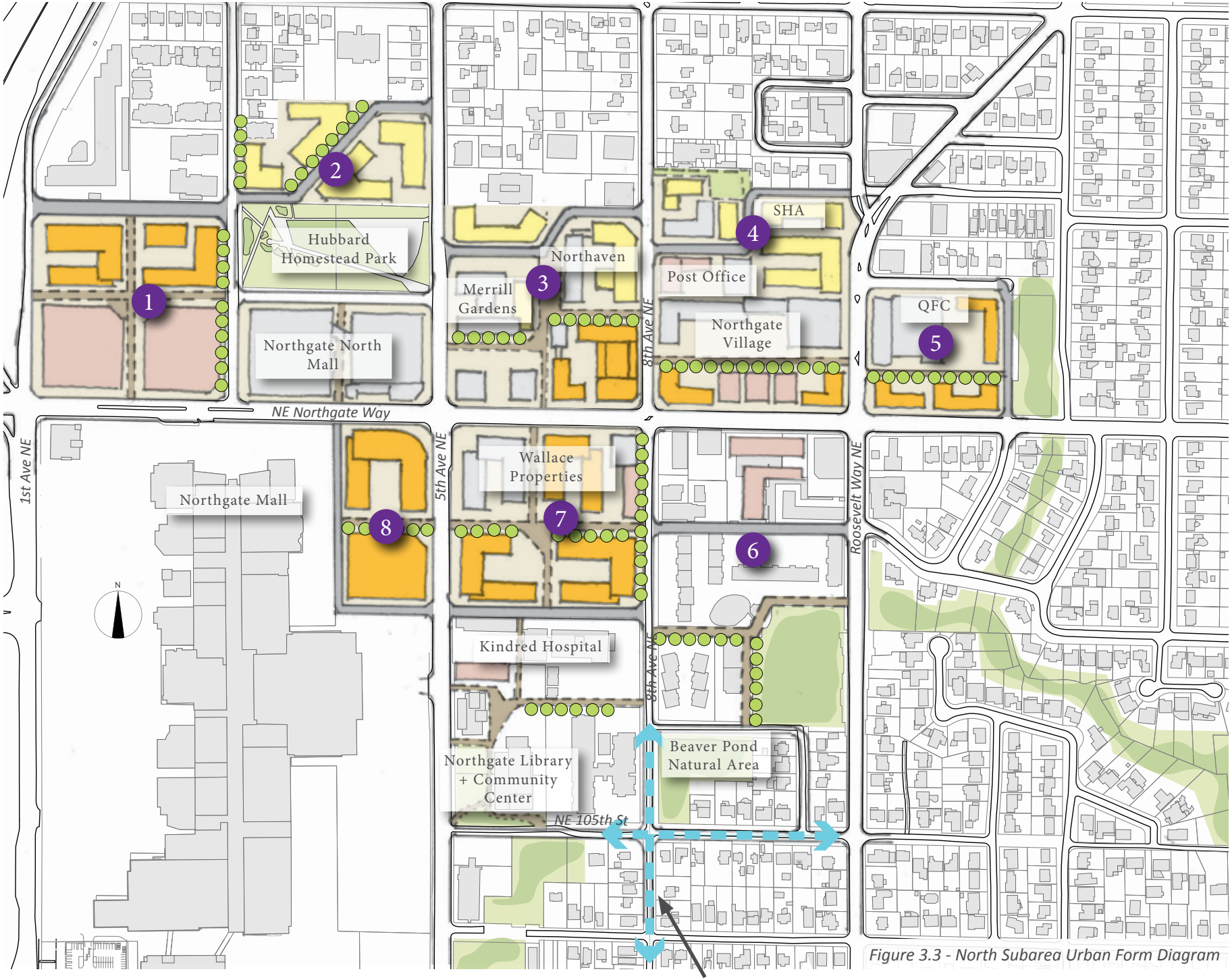


Figure 3.3 - North Subarea Urban Form Diagram

Blue-dashed lines show where possible future pedestrian improvements may occur.

NORTHGATE NORTH SUPERBLOCK RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Superblock NGN # 1.**
   Potential use: A multi-block site with freeway access, for a mix of regional retail, office and residential uses. Residential uses could be integrated with other uses throughout multiple blocks or focused in certain blocks.
   Connection & amenity opportunities: Local street connecting 1st Ave NE and 3rd Ave NE; and other local pedestrian ways, local plazas, and streets within the property.
2. **Superblock NGN #2.**
   Potential use: Infill residential development adding to existing multifamily buildings; potentially facing Hubbard Homestead Park.
   Connection & amenity opportunities: A potential new local street connection between 3rd and 5th Avenues NE.
3. **Superblock NGN #3.**
   Potential use: Expansion of the Northaven Senior Living complex, and an enlarged commercial/services hub also serving seniors at adjacent Merrill Gardens.
   Connection & amenity opportunities: Could incorporate urban plaza and other recreation spaces and amenities, along with local connector street routed carefully through the block.
4. **Superblock NGN #4.**
   Potential use: Long-term infill or redevelopment of an automobile-oriented shopping center with mixed uses; potential to explore mixed-income housing concepts for Seattle Housing Authority properties.
   Connection & amenity opportunities: East-west street and adjoining park/plaza space one block north of Northgate Way between 8th Ave NE and Roosevelt Way NE; potential to evaluate other connecting street concepts two blocks north of Northgate Way.
5. **Superblock NGN #5.**
   Potential use: Infill mixed use, mid-scale development on parcels fronting NE Northgate Way, next to QFC.
   Connection & amenity opportunities: A north-south street at the east edge of the site, connecting to NE 112th Street.
6. **Superblock NGN #6**
   Potential use: Long-term potential for infill multifamily development with retail or mixed uses fronting Northgate Way.
   Connection & amenity opportunities: Explore new pedestrian connections between 8th Ave NE and Roosevelt Way NE, perhaps feasible at the southern edge of the main multifamily properties.
7. **Superblock NGN #7**
   Potential use: Following 507 Northgate Way multifamily (two phases) with additional mixed use residential buildings in the properties just south, bordering on 5th Ave NE and 8th Ave NE.
   Connection & amenity opportunities: East-west connecting pedestrian ways and/or local street between 5th and 8th Ave NE, with adjoining plaza/park space. Would connect to north-south connection being built.
8. **Superblock NGN #8.**
   Potential use: Infill commercial, retail and/or mixed use development, adding new blocks to the NGN core.
   Connection & amenity opportunities: An improved private or public street at the perimeter, with street-facing commercial uses on at least the arterial block faces.

West Subarea (NGW)

Urban Design Analysis

The West Subarea covers approximately 83 acres and encompasses six superblocks. Isolated from the rest of the Urban Center by I-5, the Subarea has generally lower development intensity and activity levels compared to the east side of I-5. There are numerous multifamily developments, offices, and commercial buildings, and surface parking lots mostly clustered around Northgate Way and Meridian Ave N, but there is no established "Main Street" or community "heart" location. There are a few auto-oriented restaurants on Northgate Way, but no grocery or drug stores within the Subarea. North Seattle Community College (NSCC) is located immediately to the south and outside of the official Northgate Urban Center boundary, but is an important complementary major use near the West Subarea. A Seattle Police station, which will relocate in the future, is located on N 103rd St just south of the Urban Center boundary.

Pedestrian Amenities

The pedestrian environment in the Subarea is generally limited in quality, and lacks sidewalk coverage in many residential blocks except along main arterials. Within the Subarea the only connections to the east across I-5 are the Northgate Way underpass and at N 92nd St, almost a mile south of Northgate Way.

Mobility and Access

Transit service in the Subarea benefits from the presence of the NSCC campus, which is served by five Metro bus routes. Aurora Avenue with Metro Rapid Ride service is about a 0.4-mile walk from the west edge of the Subarea. Community commenters have expressed favor for a high capacity transit connection from NSCC to UW (which will be satisfied by light rail service beginning in 2021).

The I-5 exit at Northgate Way provides good regional vehicular access to the Subarea, but I-5 also limits travel to the east, the only connection being Northgate Way, which is often congested. The bulk of the Subarea's vehicular connectivity is provided to the north and south by Meridian Ave N, and to the east and west by Northgate Way. Most of the local streets are spaced at the superblock scale, reducing connectivity. Noise from I-5 affects the eastern portion of the Subarea.

A striped bike lane on Meridian Ave N and College Way leads into the NSCC campus. Bicycle connection quality via the Northgate Way underpass is poor.

Development Opportunities

Other than a handful of townhouses there has been little recent residential development in the West Subarea. Recent commercial development includes the Northgate Polyclinic (2007) and the Verity Credit Union. Planned development includes a new building at the Public Health property on Meridian Ave N. Given the presence of Northwest Hospital and other facilities, there is potential for further medical office expansion in the area around Northgate Way.

- The West subarea presents several opportunities for redevelopment. There are three sites with high development propensity and two sites where consolidation would produce an opportunity site. When the police precinct operations relocate, the police precinct station may be a candidate site as well.

There are also two significant sites with high development propensity located south of the Urban Center on the North Seattle Community College campus. Potential expansion within the NSCC campus could create development opportunities for new campus buildings, student housing, and services to support the College community, which are currently lacking in the Subarea.

West Subarea Principle #1

Improve pedestrian connection along N 100th St. to Aurora Ave N

Create generous pedestrian and cycling improvements on N 100th St to provide a better connection with Aurora Ave N.

If the I-5 crossing bridge is built, this connection would provide a direct link from the commercial areas on Aurora Ave N all the way to the light rail station. (If the pedestrian bridge alignment ends up closer to N 103rd Street, that street should also be considered for improvements.)

Develop a street concept plan for N 100th Street with a focus on maintaining its residential character. Consider incorporating it as a Greenway.

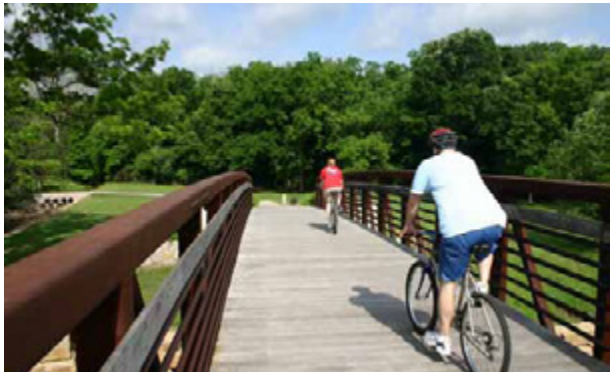
West Subarea Principle #2

Develop N 103rd St to connect to the future I-5 pedestrian bridge

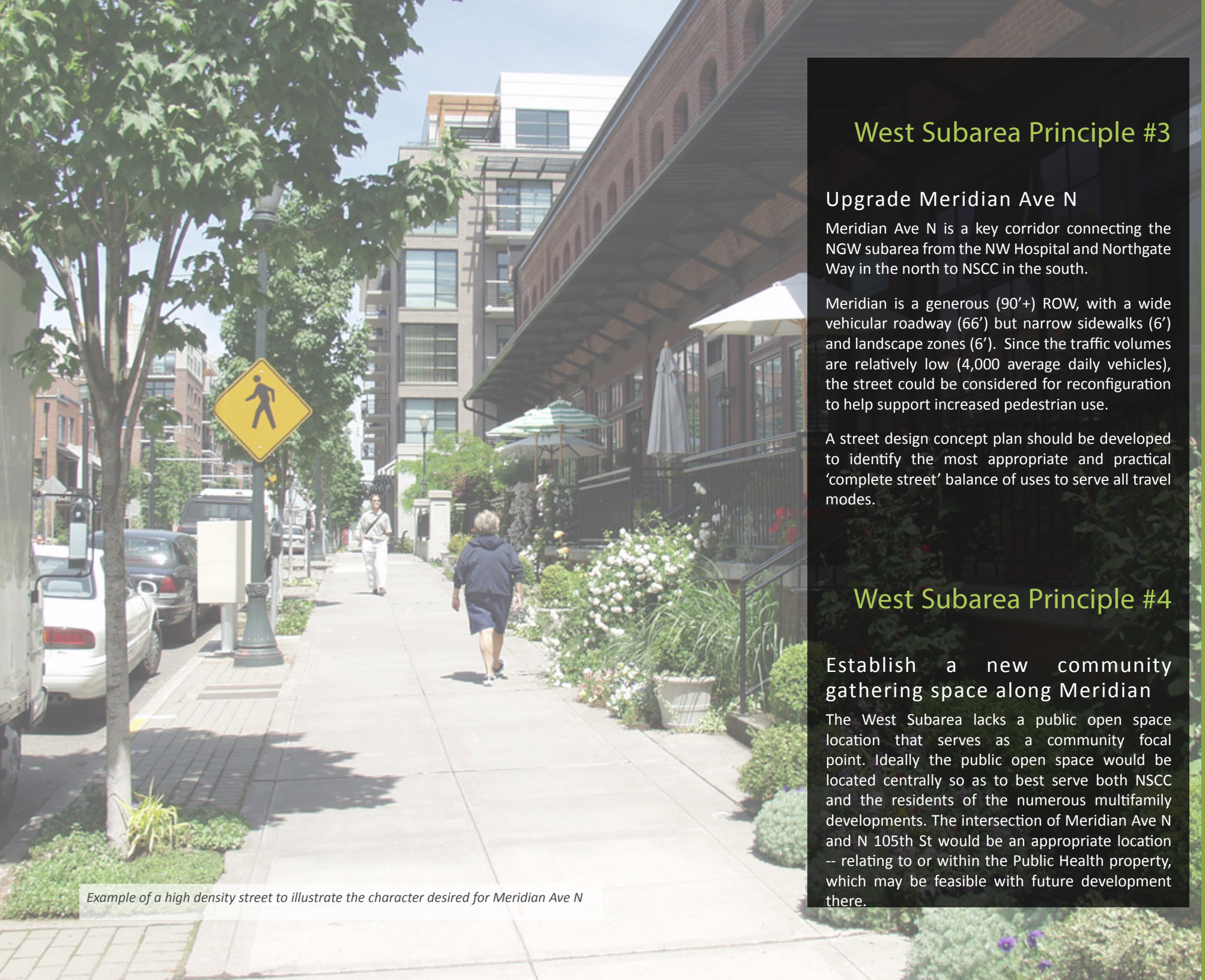
The potential benefit of a pedestrian bridge over I-5 will be better leveraged with good connections not only to NSCC, but also to the neighborhoods to the west.

NE 103rd St is a possible landing alignment of the bridge, and currently it is not fully developed east of Meridian Ave N. A complete street connection between Meridian Ave N and the bridge would create a seamless connection to the west. Special care would have to be taken in relation to wetland areas. This connection should be designed to minimize its impact on the natural areas while providing a high quality design integrated with the natural landscape.

Examples of a typical residential sidewalk with pedestrian amenities to enhance the character



Examples of bike and pedestrian routes along a natural setting. Treatment desired for the natural areas north of the NSCC



Example of a high density street to illustrate the character desired for Meridian Ave N

West Subarea Principle #3

Upgrade Meridian Ave N

Meridian Ave N is a key corridor connecting the NGW subarea from the NW Hospital and Northgate Way in the north to NSCC in the south.

Meridian is a generous (90'+) ROW, with a wide vehicular roadway (66') but narrow sidewalks (6') and landscape zones (6'). Since the traffic volumes are relatively low (4,000 average daily vehicles), the street could be considered for reconfiguration to help support increased pedestrian use.

A street design concept plan should be developed to identify the most appropriate and practical 'complete street' balance of uses to serve all travel modes.

West Subarea Principle #4

Establish a new community gathering space along Meridian

The West Subarea lacks a public open space location that serves as a community focal point. Ideally the public open space would be located centrally so as to best serve both NSCC and the residents of the numerous multifamily developments. The intersection of Meridian Ave N and N 105th St would be an appropriate location -- relating to or within the Public Health property, which may be feasible with future development there.

West Subarea Principle #5

Pedestrian connections through superblocks

The largest superblocks in the West Subarea are located between Meridian Ave N, Corliss Ave N, Northgate Way, and N 103rd St. If and when any of these blocks redevelop, the City should explore options for new mid-block connections, including both semi-private and public, as well as vehicular and non-motorized connections.

The City should continue to promote through-block connections in superblocks when properties are redeveloped. This is already embodied in the neighborhood's design guidelines.

Examples of pedestrian connections at mid-blocks

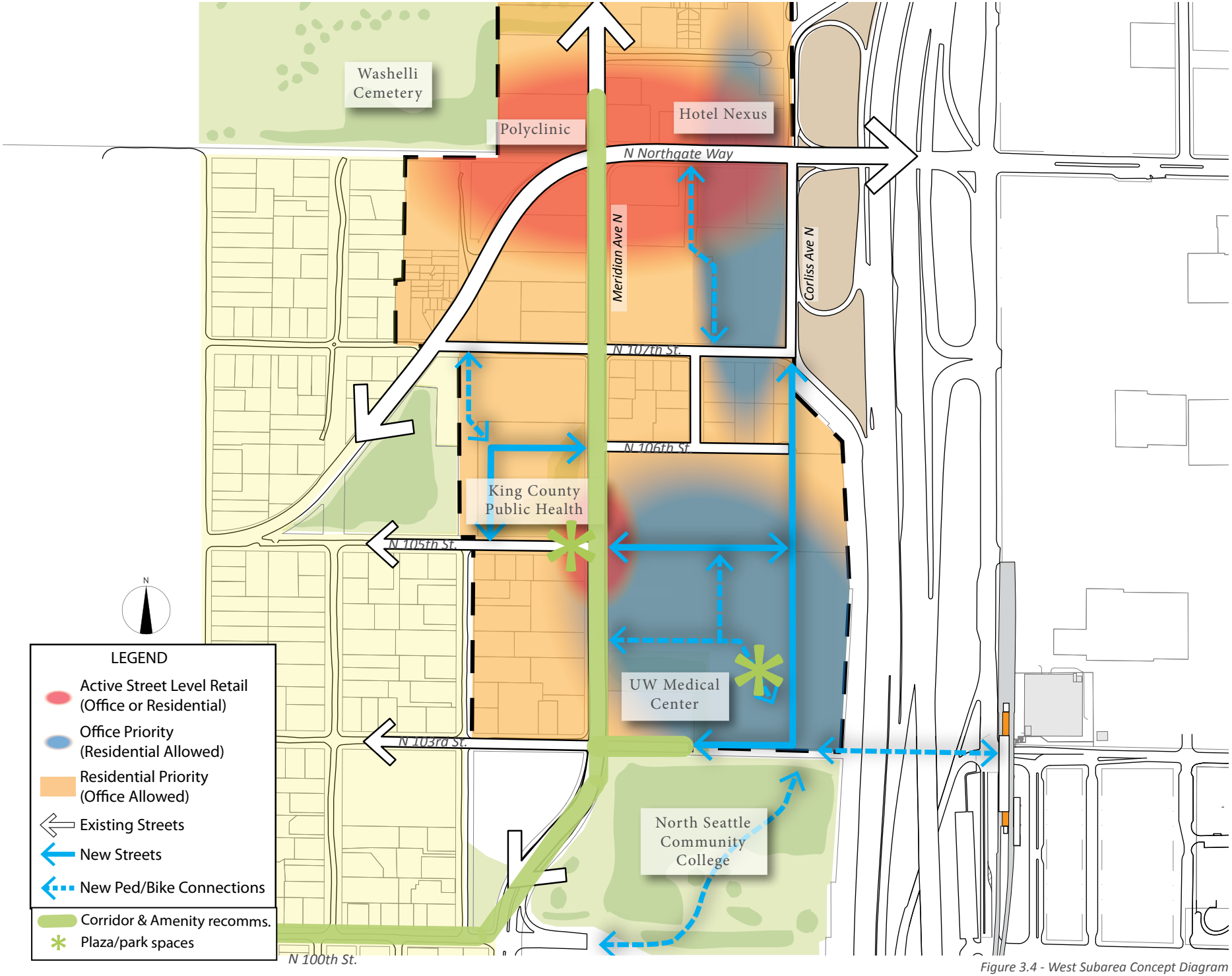


Figure 3.4 - West Subarea Concept Diagram

WEST SUBAREA CONCEPT DIAGRAM

WEST SUBAREA URBAN FORM DIAGRAM

Figure 3.5 - West Subarea Urban Form Diagram

NORTHGATE WEST SUPERBLOCK RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Superblock NGW #1.**
   Potential use: Long-term infill or redevelopment with commercial or mixed uses.
   Connection & amenity opportunities: Encourage pedestrian oriented features and streetfront retail uses.
2. **Superblock NGW #2.**
   Potential use: Long-term infill commercial or residential development; possible enhanced campus qualities.
   Connection & amenity opportunities: Encourage north-south pedestrian way or street enhancement with adjoining plaza/public square space.
3. **Superblock NGW #3.**
   Potential use: Conversion of low-density residential uses to higher-density residential uses.
   Connection & amenity opportunities: Encourage or require a public extension of Corliss Ave N to connect N 107th Street with N 106th Street.
4. **Superblock NGW #4.**
   Potential use: Encourage master planning to add medical/commercial buildings near I-5 and other infill of mixed uses, to make use of this area closely linked to the light rail station if the I-5 pedestrian/bicycle bridge crossing is built.
   Connection & amenity opportunities: Encourage new east-west pedestrian linkages to/from the I-5 pedestrian/bicycle bridge with adjoining plazas and civic open space feature(s). Also, encourage or require an extension of Corliss Ave N between N 106th Street and N 103rd Street.
5. **Superblock NGW #5.**
   Potential use: Rebuild the public health building, and consider addition of other mixed-uses at the site.
   Connection & amenity opportunities: Retain a green open space area as a public amenity, and/or other public spaces incorportated in future development phases. Consider providing as much affordable housing in mixed-use development as is practical and feasible.

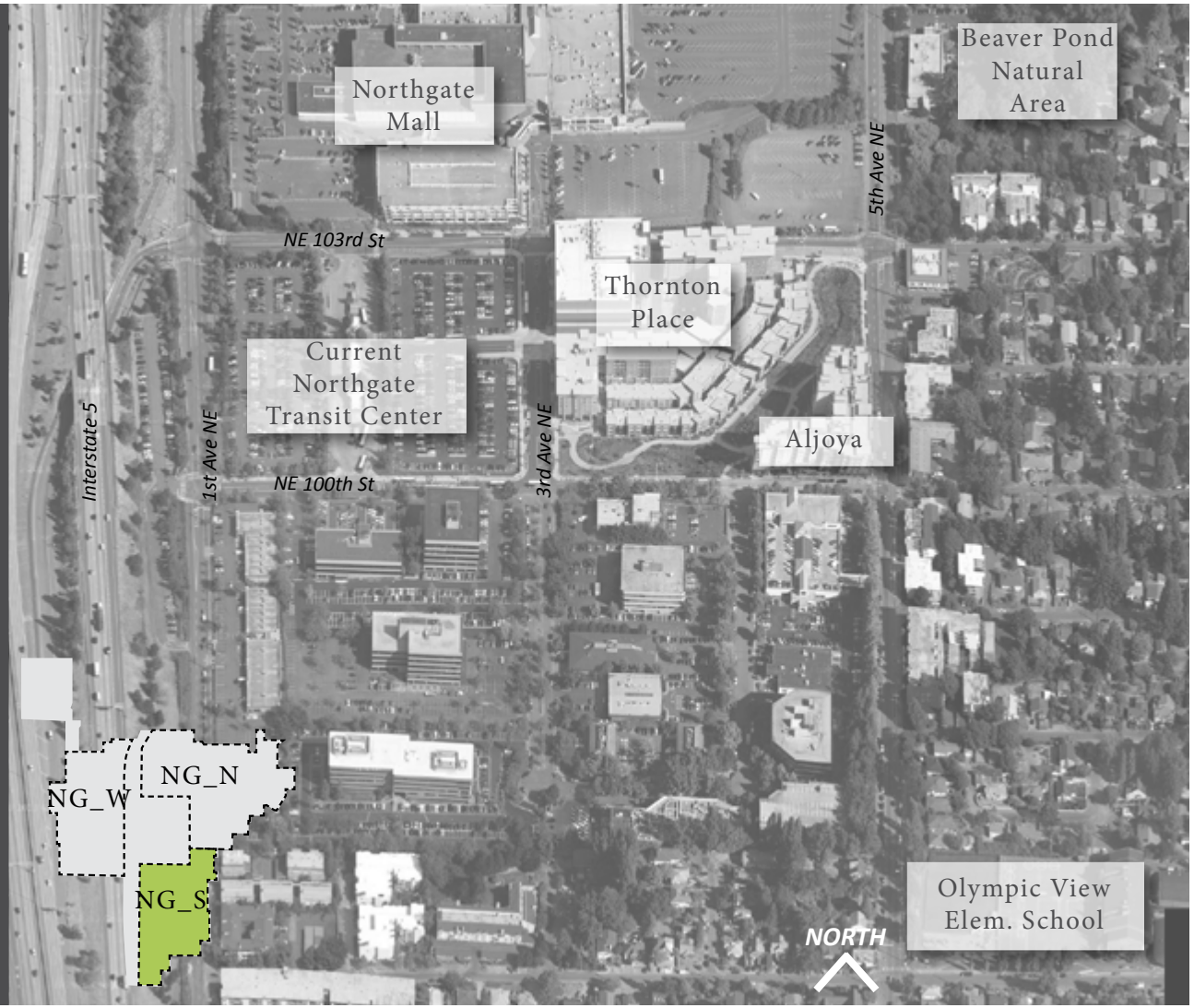
"P" Parking Resources.
Potential strategy: Consider a district wide public parking resource strategy, which could be parking at garage facilities as mapped.

South Subarea (NGS)

Urban Design Analysis

The South Subarea encompasses approximately six superblocks, as shown in the adjacent photo. The two most identifiable elements of the South Subarea are the Northgate Transit Center and the Thornton Place mixed-use and cinema complex. This area is and will continue to serve as a transit hub, where buses and rail service will come together. This combination means that maintaining traffic circulation to support effective bus operations will continue to be an important factor in this area's future.

The Subarea also contains multiple office buildings, strip retail facing I-5 along 1st Ave NE, and large areas of surface parking. The Northgate Library and Community Center are located at the northeast edge of the Subarea, about a 0.4-mile walk from the Transit Center. There are no grocery, drug or hardware stores, and only a few restaurants (within the Thornton Place internal circulation space). The Thornton Creek channel at Thornton Place provides an interesting and attractive open space amenity, with a greened drainage corridor and pedestrian amenities between 5th Ave NE and the Northgate Transit Center. The Olympic View Elementary school is a 15 minute walk (0.6 mile) from the Transit Center, just outside the southeast edge of the Subarea.



Pedestrian Amenities

Pedestrian connections within the South Subarea are available in most places, but are limited by gaps in sidewalk continuity and varying physical condition. The extent of surface parking lots compromises walking comfort in much of the commercial area south of the Mall. There is no sidewalk on 3rd Ave NE south of NE 100th Street. Connections to the south are restricted by a grade change aligned with NE 96th St, where a stairway connects up to 4th Ave NE. Between NE 100th St and NE 95th St a steep slope on the west side of 5th Ave NE is a barrier to pedestrian travel. Pedestrian comfort along parts of 5th Ave NE is compromised by higher speeds of traffic near narrow sidewalks, limited visibility and frequent turning vehicles. Most blocks have no sidewalks past one-third of a block east of 5th Ave NE. Higher quality sidewalks are included as part of the Transit Center and Thornton Place.

As noted in the Urban Center mobility recommendations, there are shortfalls in pedestrian connections to/from Maple Leaf to the east of this Subarea. Recommended improvements between Roosevelt Way NE and 3rd Ave NE would improve mobility to/from the South Subarea.

Mobility and Access

The service focused at the Metro Transit Center, including 13 Metro and two Sound Transit routes, provides excellent transit access for the Subarea, and Link light rail will further improve it in 2021. Although the Subarea is immediately adjacent I-5, access to and from the freeway is relatively challenging. There is a reversible ramp at NE 103rd St. connecting with the I-5 express lanes and a northbound general purpose ramp at NE 107th St., but access to the I-5 southbound general purpose lanes requires traveling up to Northgate Way and crossing below the freeway through frequently congested intersections.

Community vehicular connections to/from the South Subarea are reasonably accessible to and from the north and south (via 1st and 5th Avenues NE) but relatively limited to/from the west (N 92nd St. via 1st Ave NE), and east (certain local streets only, with steep grades and several traffic calming revisions in Maple Leaf -- primarily the prohibition of certain travel directions by automobiles).

Development Opportunities

The South Subarea is dominated by large surface parking lots, including the commuter parking next to the Northgate Transit Center, the Mall perimeter lots, and multiple lots surrounding office buildings in the southern portion of the Subarea. Four vacant mall block ‘edges’ exist along NE 103rd St. and 5th Ave NE. The corner of NE 103rd St. and 5th Ave NE is a potential future development site.

The properties east of 1st Ave NE south of NE 100th St. are a group of large and consolidated parcels with ample surface parking lots surrounding office buildings and strip retail. These are potential redevelopment opportunities due to property size and the aging conditions of the existing improvements.

The King County Metro transit center and surface park and ride lots have been identified as a catalyst project site, and with the arrival of the Link station and redevelopment of the bus transit island, prime property will be available for redevelopment. This site is presented in Chapter 4 of this UDF as a case study for the character and type of development and adjacent public amenities desired in the urban center.

South Subarea Principle #1

Create two great neighborhood-scale public open spaces

The South subarea lacks a civic/community gathering space. In order to encourage private investment, establish two distinct and complementary public spaces to support the growth of an urban residential neighborhood.

- A "Town Square" public open space is recommended to be located between 3rd Ave NE and the new Northgate Transit Center. A preferred location for the park is adjacent to or visible from 3rd Ave NE. It should also be close to, but not immediately adjacent to the future light rail station. See the recommendations for the Metro TOD property in Chapter 4.
- A small "Village Green" that includes spaces designed for both young and older surrounding residents. This space should be located south of NE 100th St, and could be integrated/coordinated with adjacent mixed-use residential development.

South Subarea Principle #2

Establish Third Avenue NE as a central linear park street

Third Avenue NE is located between Thornton Place and the King County Metro Transit Center. The City should consider actions to create a central neighborhood promenade street that provides orientation as an organizing feature for the subarea. The design of this street should include:

- Generous 15-20-foot linear park space on the west side of the street, plus complementary 8-foot sidewalks. Where feasible, expand the public realm into the curb parking zone for special street furnishings, art and other pedestrian features such as water features.
- Incorporation of complementary aesthetic street features demonstrating sustainable landscaping qualities appropriate for an urban "main street."
- Encourage adjacent building frontages as ground-related residential.
- Encourage a landscaped buffer 'fence' where the linear park street will be adjacent to surface parking lots.
- Encourage retail storefronts north of NE 102nd Street (e.g., the recommended E-W pedestrian connection), and allow such uses anywhere along the street.
- Update development standards to include blank wall restrictions.

Example of a linear park located at a street median

Location of potential infill locations at parking lots in the south subarea

South Subarea Principle #3

Convert surface parking lots into infill development

Encourage the infill redevelopment of surface parking lots, with a focus on the following priority locations:

- The Metro Transit Center TOD Site
- The Mall edge along NE 103rd Street and 5th Ave NE
- Several locations south of NE 100th Street
  - West of 3rd Ave NE – office use is most likely
  - Between 3rd and 4th Ave NE – multifamily use is desirable, but may need incentives
  - East side of 1st Ave NE – commercial use is most likely

South Subarea Principle #4

Buffer freeway noise with office/ commercial buildings

Large buildings with uses that are not overly sensitive to noise can help block freeway noise from penetrating the Urban Center and reducing comfort for area users.

- Between NE 97th and 100th Streets, office and hotel uses are the most likely development opportunities that would be tall enough to create a good buffer in the western portion of the TOD site – encourage this type of development.
- Other structures, such as the future light rail station structure, and Sound Transit parking garage north of NE 103rd Street will also provide a degree of freeway noise buffering.

Locating commercial/office buildings adjacent to transit or high traffic arterials.

SOUTH SUBAREA CONCEPT DIAGRAM

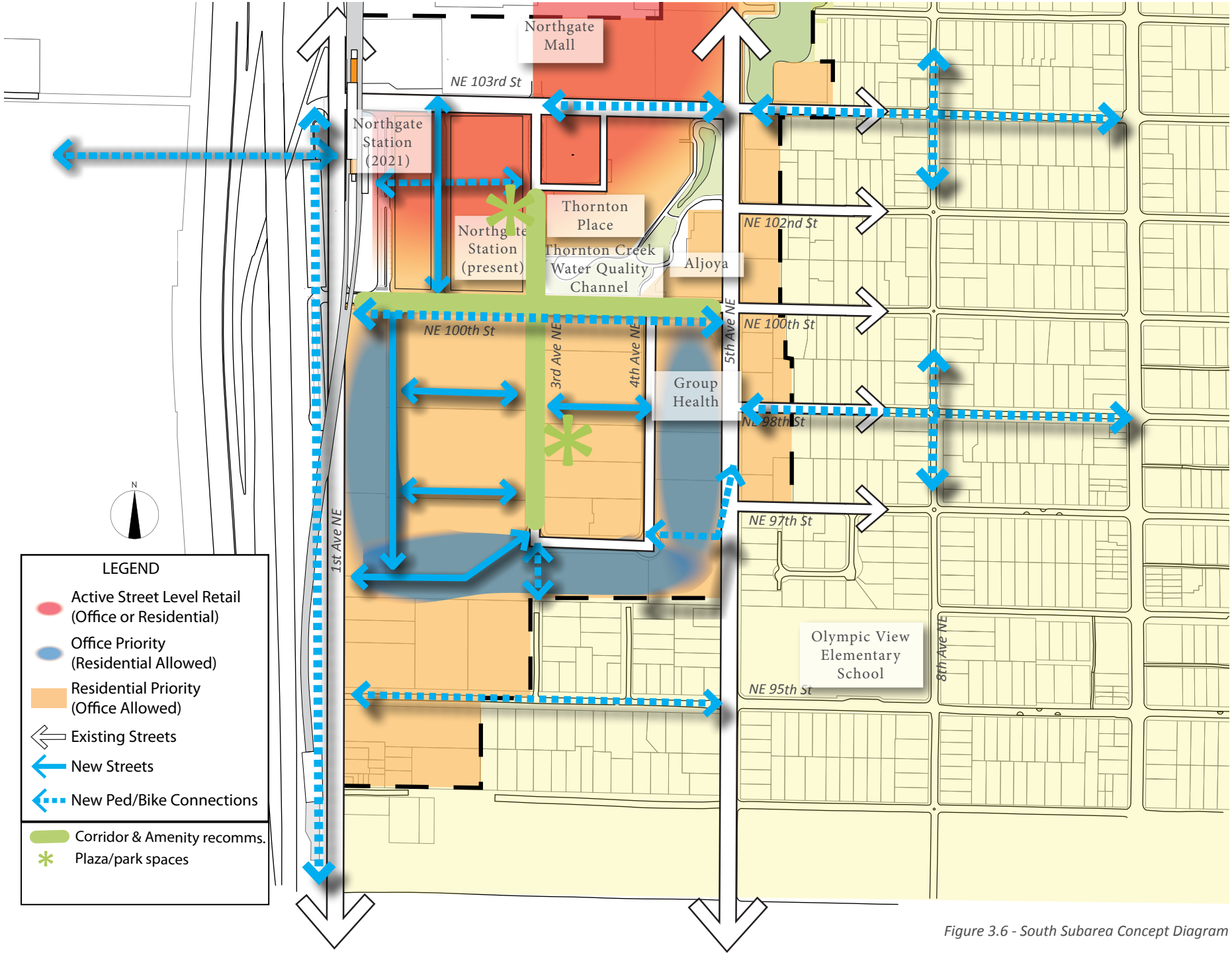


Figure 3.6 - South Subarea Concept Diagram

Figure 3.7 - South Subarea Urban Form Diagram

NORTHGATE SOUTH SUPERBLOCK RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Superblock NGS #1.**
   Potential use: A parking garage adjacent to the north end of the light rail station will accommodate parking that replaces stalls to be lost during rail construction.
   Connection opportunities: Based on analyses in 2013, a garage connection to/from 1st Ave NE was included in planning, as well as vehicle access to/from NE 103rd St.

2. **Superblock NGS #2.**
   Potential use: A major opportunity to establish a dense mixed-use core for this South subarea with a significant presence of residential and commercial uses in a future transit-oriented development (TOD). See Chapter 4 of this UDF for more information about recommended guidance for future TOD development. The west edge of this block will serve as a key transit hub for rail and feeder bus routes linking to several North Seattle neighborhoods.
   Connections & Amenity Opportunities: Numerous opportunities to provide complementary streets, pedestrian ways, town square/open space, and encouraged indoor amenities. See Chapter 4 of this UDF for more information.

3. **Superblocks NGS #3 and NGS#4.**
   Potential use: As the nearest properties to the rail station, south of NE 100th Street, these existing retail and office use blocks have potential for denser redevelopment or infill development that could include denser office buildings, perhaps most likely near I-5. Additional residential development could be added opportunistically in some properties that have large underused surface parking lots.
   Connection & amenity opportunities: Green street improvements on NE 100th St. and 3rd Ave NE will require setbacks or acquisitions on certain edges of these properties. Also, design concepts should include public plaza spaces, and additional north-south and east-west pedestrian ways and/or local streets (between 1st and 3rd Avenues NE) to redefine more walkable block patterns in these parcels as they are infilled or redeveloped.

4. **Superblock NGS #5.**
   Potential use: This superblock between 3rd and 4th Avenues NE could be redeveloped with high-density residential or mixed uses. If property consolidation is possible, these parcels could provide sites large enough to establish a meaningful new residential presence.
   Connection & amenity opportunities: A public park space amenity is encouraged near 3rd Ave NE to provide breathing space and amenities for future residents. A recommended new street between 3rd and 4th Ave NE would also provide for better vehicle and pedestrian circulation.

5. **Superblock NGS #6.**
   Potential use: The broad southeast vicinity of the Northgate Mall property (including at the intersection of NE 103rd St and 5th Ave NE) could accommodate a diverse mix of infill development over the long term that may include retail, office and residential uses. This would help round out the South Subarea and bring a denser urban character closer toward the library and community center Redevelopment should be encouraged to include a large-scale mixed-use building or complex with enough space to include large retail and commercial development. This may also need a parking garage to provide sufficient parking for overall needs, but this should be designed using “right-size parking” principles.
   Connection & amenity opportunities: Plazas and pedestrian ways in future development will enhance north-south walking connections, and outdoor amenities will add a more livable and human-scaled setting.

NORTHGATE SOUTH STREETSCAPE CONCEPT PLAN

The existing and new proposed streets in the Northgate South Subarea will share some commonalities but also have varying distinct functions. Some streets need to accommodate broad uses including regional through access, transit, trucks, autos, bicycles and pedestrians. Other streets should be limited to local access only, with only minor and occasional use by lighter service trucks and buses. This street design concept plan outlines and illustrates recommended designations for two key streets in the South Subarea:

- NE 100th St.
- 3rd Ave NE

NE 100th St.: A Great Green Street

NE 100th St. will serve as one of the subarea's principal Green Streets with "complete street" elements including landscaping and possible drainage features, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure while continuing to function as one of the neighborhood's transit streets (including continuing bus layover functions). In contrast to NE 103rd St., which is fed by the I-5 offramps and busier in terms of automobile traffic, NE 100th St. will provide an east-west connection that is focused on mixed modes of transportation.

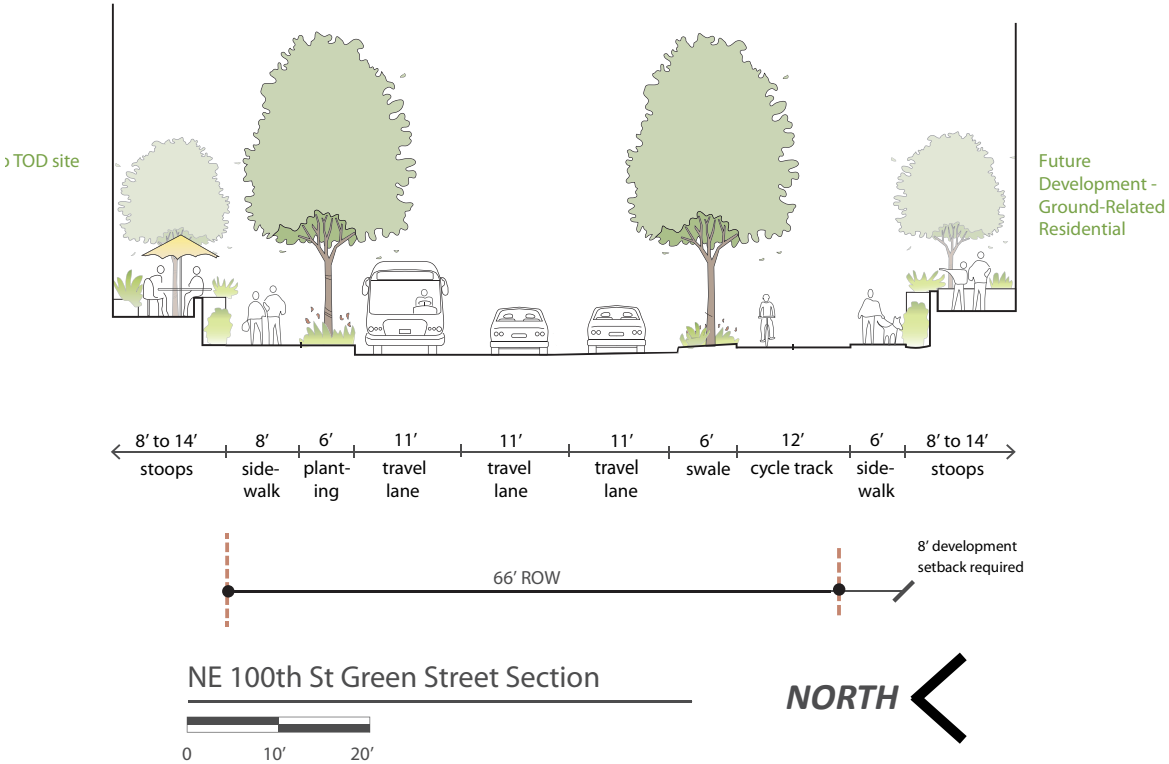
A new cycle track on the south side of the street will be a local bicycling connection between 1st and 5th Avenues NE, with prioritized pedestrian/bicycle paving over general street paving at 3rd and 4th Avenues NE.

The NE 100th St. roadway section will be rechannelized to three automobile travel lanes: two general purpose travel lanes and one curbside lane (north side) for bus layover. A retained sidewalk on the north side of the street will accommodate the majority of pedestrian trips to and from the light rail station. A greened landscaping edge is also recommended on the north side of this sidewalk.

On the south side of NE 100th St., the pedestrian zone will consist of a six-foot wide sidewalk, buffered from the automobile lanes by a six-foot wide landscaped swale and 12-foot wide, two-way cycle track. There will be no curb parking on the south side of this street.

Bus layover will continue to be accommodated on NE 100th St. as well as a portion of WSDOT right-of-way between 1st Ave NE and I-5. This layover will help maintain the area's function as a large transit hub, improving service reliability while maintaining operational cost efficiencies. If built, a bicycle lane on the south side of NE 100th St. would displace one layover space just west of 5th Ave NE.

Section A - NE 100th St west of 3rd Ave NE



A greened residential sidewalk edge

A 'cycle track' with in-street green buffer

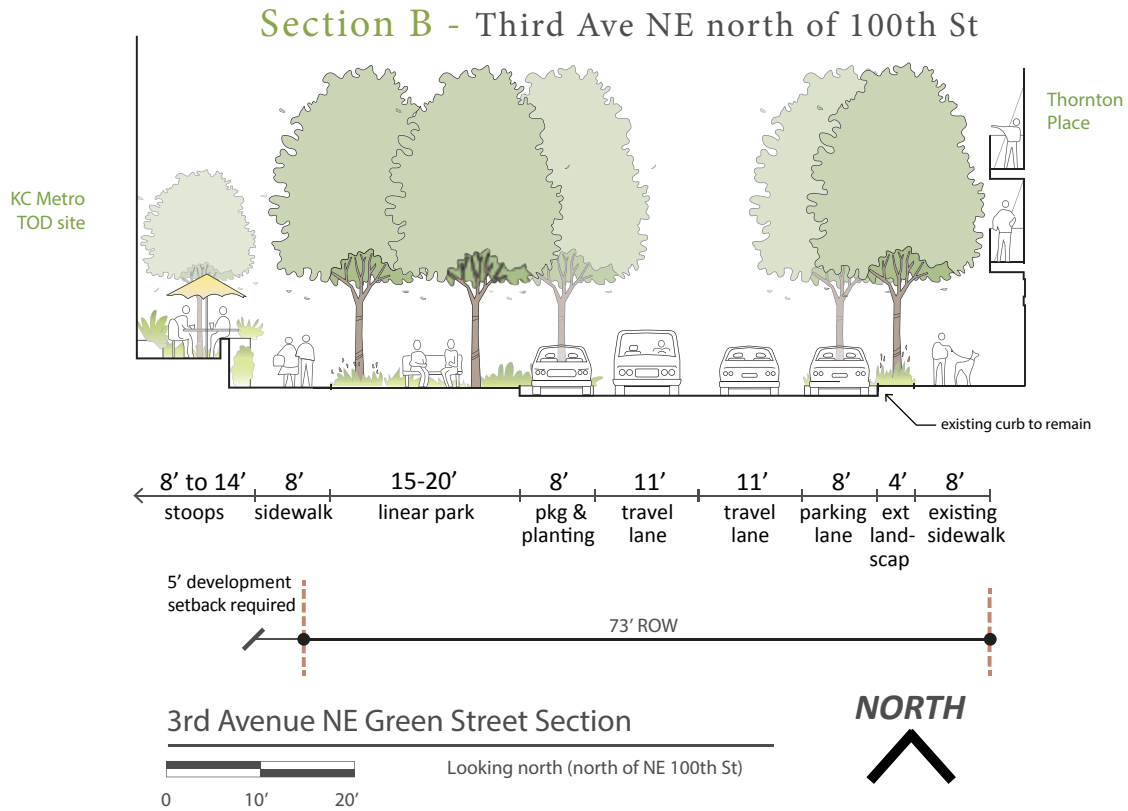
Third Ave NE: A Linear Park Street

Third Ave NE will be both a central "Main Street" and a linear park street, providing an important pedestrian connection and greened space to link the neighborhood subareas north and south of NE 100th St.

Generous sidewalks and green street features will reinforce and unify the neighborhood street character of 3rd Ave NE while providing a buffer to adjacent surface parking areas. In order to help complete the neighborhood pedestrian network, sidewalks will be added to the 3rd Ave NE right-of-way south of NE 100th Street, where they currently do not exist.

Configured in the form of a linear park 15-20 feet wide plus an additional 8 feet given to sidewalks, this corridor will create a strong pedestrian pathway that serves and connects the Northgate South subarea.

North of NE 100th St., this design (if 15 feet in width) could be accomplished within the right-of-way without overlapping private property, if a left-turn lane through the middle of this block is eliminated south of Thornton Place's entry to 3rd Ave NE. A right-turn pocket on 3rd Ave NE, and adding a traffic signal at NE 100th St./3rd Ave NE will help maintain vehicle traffic movement efficiencies.



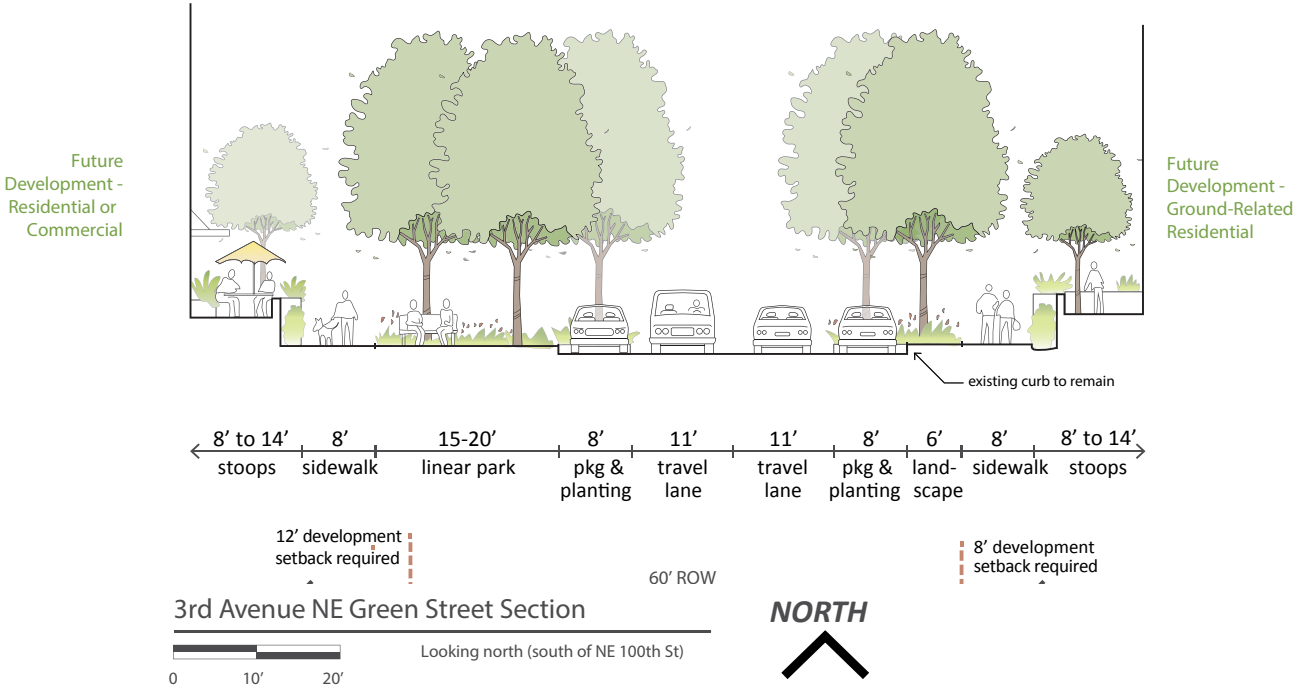
Third Ave NE south of NE 100th Street

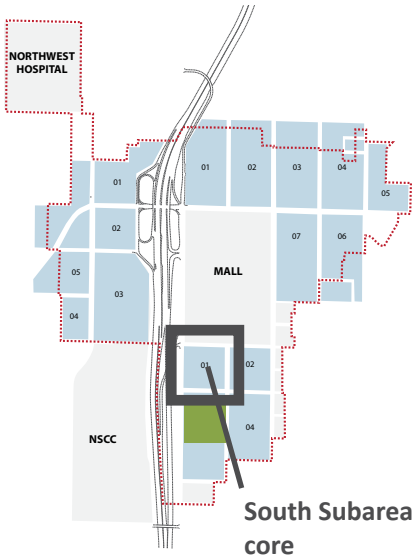
The 3rd Ave NE right of way south of NE 100th St. may be reconfigured to eliminate the existing vegetated median in exchange for usable public green space directly adjacent to the sidewalk. Alternatively, eliminating parking on one side of the street would enable a linear park corridor while also keeping the existing vegetated median.

South of NE 100th St., this street section would overlap with private properties by approximately 8-9 feet on both sides of the street. This overlap, either retained in private property or in future acquired right-of-way, would be used to enhance the public realm in anticipation of adjacent redevelopment with street-related uses.

A linear park street with commercial uses at its edge

Section C - Third Ave NE south of 100th St





Context

A transit-oriented development (TOD) is encouraged to occur between 1st and 3rd Avenues NE at the core of the South Subarea next to the future Link station (shown above). The South Subarea currently consists of a few superblocks with: the Thornton Place mixed use complex; Aljoya senior housing; several low-to-moderate scaled medical-dental office and clinic buildings; a few larger multi-tenant office buildings; limited presence of retail uses; and a dominating presence of surface-parking lots reflecting a suburban approach for commercial office development.

FIVE ASSETS: There are five assets of the South Subarea that will help support TOD goals:

1. Activity generated by transit riders

Transit riders will use local services and patronize restaurants, and some will choose to live in this subarea. The future TOD will facilitate pedestrians passing through the heart of the site on their way to and from the east.

2. The Northgate Mall as an adjacent draw for customers and activity

Northgate Mall is a major regional shopping destination with over one million square feet of retail, attracting thousands of shoppers and hundreds of employees to the area every day. The South Subarea and the King County property can be expected to attract future customers from the mall, due to proximity, transit ridership, good pedestrian connections, opportunities for complementary retail uses, and the provision of other welcoming place-making urban design amenities.

3. The nearby office district's potential to support future infill development and as a source of local service customers and town square users.

The subarea south of NE 100th Street has substantial medical and office employment and other nearby residential base. It also has a substantial potential to support future infill development that may occur in response to transit station proximity. The area lacks sufficient public gathering spaces, and so the King County property would offer a place for local services and a central community 'town square' gathering place for these users.

4. Thornton Place as an established resident base with complementary retail & public places.

Thornton Place's residential base of 530 apartments, movie and retail businesses, nearly 1,000 parking stalls, and green space provide an existing resident and visitor population. This helps lower risks for future development, and provides an opportunity to strengthen overall activity levels for the whole subarea. Ensuring there are direct pedestrian connections between the Link station and Thornton Place's amenities will naturally improve local circulation and beneficial levels of activity in public places.

5. North Seattle Community College as a potential draw with improved accessibility.

The 7,000+ college population of students and staff bring activity through the day to the campus west of I-5. With more convenient pedestrian/bicycle connections to the station area via a pedestrian/bicycle bridge across I-5, there is great potential to increase overall economic activity in the South Subarea, and increase the convenience and frequency of mass transit ridership for school commuting. This will also help "reunify" the Northgate Urban Center's two parts on either side of I-5, which will also benefit local residents west of I-5.

Northgate Mall

Thornton Place

Northgate Washington Dental Service

North Seattle Community College

Overall Development Goals

The City's goal for development of the King County property and the South Subarea is to ensure that a future development will result in a publicly accessible urban community that fully realizes its potential as a transit-oriented community. This goal synthesizes the objectives of regional and city planning policies as well as the preferences and priorities expressed in many community comments.

The King County property provides a significant opportunity to build upon the precedent established by Thornton Place to create an attractive and safe environment that is accessible and inviting to the surrounding community. King County's large publicly owned site provides a unique opportunity to realize a broad range of community development, environmental sustainability, livability, public health and social equity objectives.

Developing the King County Site

The King County Metro Northgate site has been North Seattle's primary bus transit center and commuter park and ride lot for decades. The construction of the Link station by 2021 provides an opportunity to redevelop this site with higher-density land uses that will be transit-supportive and important to the creation of a more walkable, vibrant and environmentally sustainable activity center in this part of the Urban Center. This will build upon the population base at the adjacent Thornton Place.

Benefits of TOD: Transit-oriented development promotes cleaner ways to travel than driving alone. By redeveloping the Northgate parking lot into a transit village, we will preserve precious farmland and open space elsewhere in the county, and will reduce air pollution. Households who live in this transit village will be more income-diverse than households in other multifamily housing communities, and will own fewer cars, and drive less often. They will generate fewer greenhouse gas emissions than other residents of the region.

This UDF explores ways to realize its full development potential while also adhering to strategies promoting public health, an excellent natural and built environment, and community economic growth.

At the same time, this UDF encourages a broader transformation of the South Subarea to be a mixed-use district that will also take advantage of proximity to mass transit service.

What qualities do we want to see in the TOD site development?

-A combination of public places and amenities that become an active "heart" of Northgate, attracting daily activity as a popular gathering place

--A walkable environment

--A safe place that is well-lit, secure, populated and supports healthy activities

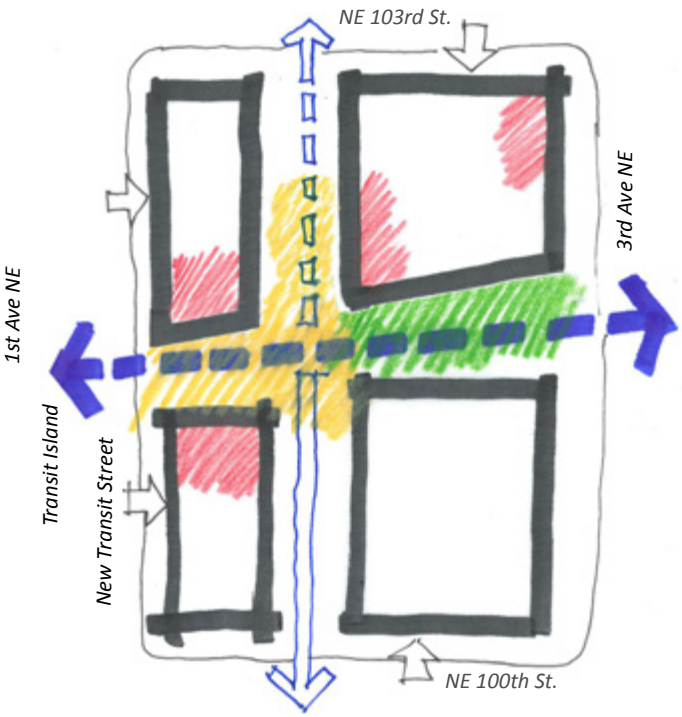
--Efficient development to maximize its potential as a transit-oriented activity center while still being a pleasant, livable setting

--Ground-level uses in key locations on the site that create an engaging and activated atmosphere

--Uses that support, integrate and blend well with the transit functions on the site and in the vicinity

--Uses that support an equitable mixed-income community with community amenities and economic opportunities that support the Northgate neighborhood

PREFERRED SITE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT



URBAN FORM CONCEPT DIAGRAM

- Building perimeter
- Ground-floor retail/services
- Public plaza
- Green open space
- Parking and loading access
- Primary circulation
- Secondary circulation

NORTH

The preferred site development concept emphasizes pedestrian connections, greened public spaces, activated streetfronts through the center of the site, and extensive presence of residential uses to accomplish a transit-oriented community.

Key features include:

- A primary pedestrian-oriented east-west corridor through the center of the property, linking the transit station with Thornton Place;
- Generous public greened town square and plaza open spaces located along the east-west corridor;
- Block sizes and future mix of uses that are flexible for development in phases
- North-south access for vehicles and pedestrians
- Ground-floor commercial uses and a variety of housing types, including affordable housing
- Transit island designed to ease transit connections between bus and rail, and fit within the area's street network

Development Guidelines

The following guidelines articulate the most important and desirable characteristics of future development at the Northgate Metro TOD site.

The guidelines will influence future buildings, streets and amenities in ways to meet the goals discussed in this UDF.

There is an intentional flexibility in how these recommendations can affect future development. There are many possibilities for the development of this TOD, and the City does not wish to prevent creative and efficient arrangements that will result in a great transit-oriented community.

The guidelines are organized into four main categories:

1. Defining Blocks and Major Pathways Within the Site
2. Parks and Public Amenities
3. Land Uses and Building Design
4. Other Supporting Features and Qualities

The illustration above shows three buildings with roughly the same capacity (in floor area) distributed with different heights and massing. This suggests the benefits that taller tower forms can bring in allowing other portions to be lower-scaled.

DEFINING BLOCKS AND MAJOR PATHWAYS WITHIN THE SITE

The recommended TOD concept is to divide the site into four rectangular blocks that will serve as future building development blocks. This would occur through:

- A central east-west corridor for predominantly pedestrian and bicycle movements between Thornton Place to the east and the transit station to the west; and

- A north-south street or pedestrian corridor that would provide access to parking and complementary public spaces; and

- Other complementary indoor or outdoor pedestrian connections within the development blocks, to increase overall pedestrian circulation and achieve an urban form with a finer grain.

East-West Corridor

The east-west corridor is recommended to include an open space that will be a multipurpose 'town square' public gathering space.

The corridor should provide an approximate line-of-sight between the transit station and Thornton Place's entry on 3rd Ave NE.

Recommended features of the corridor:

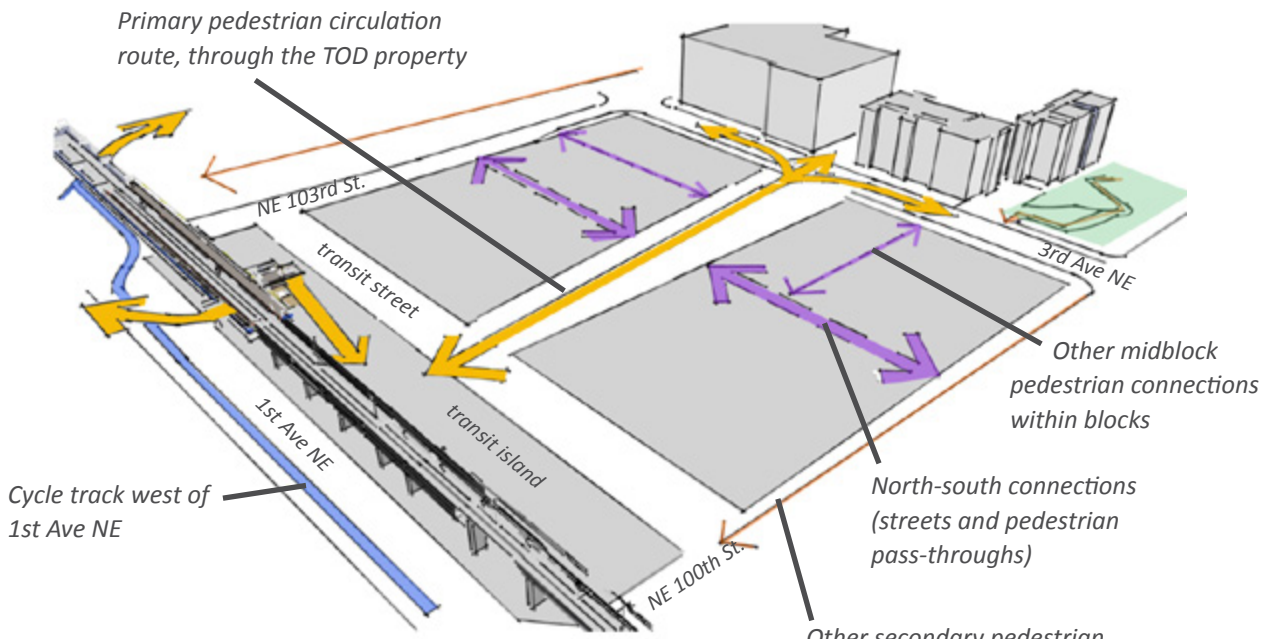
An average corridor width of approximately 40 feet, allowing for considerable flexibility in width in different parts of the corridor -- to accommodate the town square and other plazas.

Prioritizing pedestrian movement over vehicles. The corridor may contain a one-way automobile access street if designed as a pedestrian prioritized and curbless environment with special paving, and the ability to restrict vehicular access during special events.

High quality pedestrian amenities and lighting along with engaging street-level uses and other design features that will create an attractive and safe environment.

Appropriate paving material and other street design features promoting safety and aesthetic quality at the major crossing of the transit street (east edge of the transit island).

Weather protection features such as canopies on adjacent buildings for at least 50% of the east-west corridor.



A desire to accommodate east-west major pedestrian circulation, and north-south circulation for vehicles and pedestrians within the TOD site. Other circulation routes also recommended within each smaller block.

DEFINING BLOCKS AND MAJOR PATHWAYS WITHIN THE SITE (Continued)

Blocks

There is no recommended fixed block size, but blockface lengths of at least 120 feet will provide for sufficient spacing of streets and intersections and will provide building sites that are well sized for individual building and parking construction.

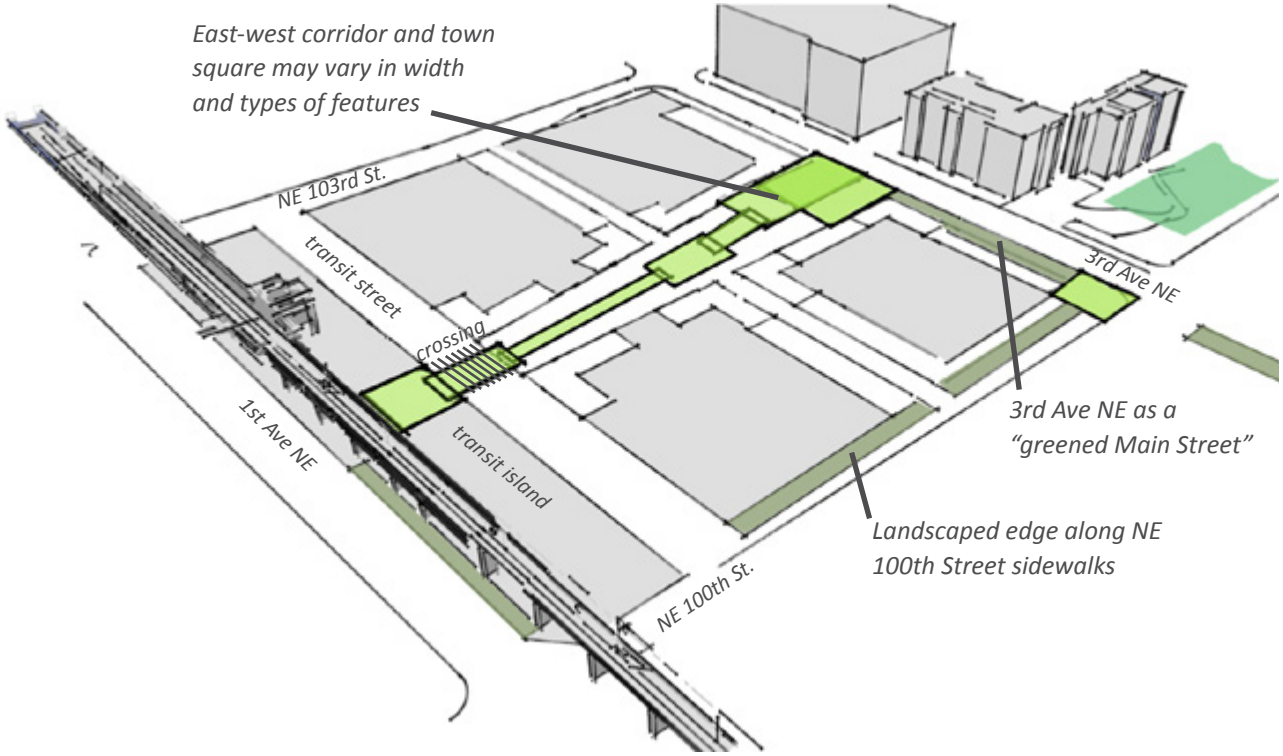
North-South Corridor

The north-south corridor may consist of a two-way automobile street with accompanying sidewalks and parking lanes across the entire site, or may consist of a primarily pedestrian-oriented corridor along part or all of its length. On-street parking may be provided in this corridor. This corridor is expected to accommodate vehicle access to underground parking for at least some of the future building sites.

PARKS AND PUBLIC AMENITIES

Parks, public amenities and open space features should complement and connect to the network of open spaces around the site. This includes designs that acknowledge and relate to the Thornton Drainage Channel corridor just east of 3rd Ave NE at Thornton Place. Open space amenities also should:

- Emphasize 3rd Ave NE as a greened "Main Street" helping unify the Northgate South sub-area;
- Reconfigure NE 100th St. with more green design features
- Locate a community town square park/plaza feature in proximity to 3rd Ave NE to be a comfortable, activated and successful "people place."
- Include a plaza or other treatment at the junction of the transit-street pedestrian crossing and the beginning of the east-west connection.



Locate and link open spaces along the major east-west circulation route, including a large community 'town square' oriented closer to 3rd Ave NE. Also, a linear street park recommended for part of 3rd Ave NE and greening of the NE 100th St. corridor.

Recommended Features

Community Park/Plaza Space(s) and Open Space

- A community park or plaza approximately 10,000 square feet in size as part of the east-west corridor that will function as a town square and open space amenity for local residents and visitors.
- The development should provide for a minimum of 15% of the site's area in outdoor open spaces. This amount could be phased in over time as the site develops.

The park/plaza should be:

- Located on or near the east-west corridor.
- A suitable community gathering place, with a combination of both hardscape and durable landscaped areas to soften and enhance the spaces.
- Designed to integrate public artworks, as well as green features such as raingardens or similar features, and sculptural water features.
- Configured to provide a sense of an "outdoor room" in an urban setting.

PARKS AND PUBLIC AMENITIES (Continued)

- Located to complement and enhance viability of ground-level non-residential uses; for example, designed with edges and amenity features that will encourage restaurants with outdoor dining spaces.

- Designed to accommodate a single-level small building and/or multiple kiosks for cafes or similar activating uses to stimulate activity within the corridor and help define edges of the public space.

- Configured to gain most advantage from solar exposure, particularly in afternoon hours.

- Fully accessible to the general public for all daytime and evening hours, to provide gathering place(s) that are designed to accommodate multiple functions and uses, such as farmers markets, book fairs, and daytime concerts.

Sidewalks

- Provide sidewalks and streetscape improvements at the site perimeter as shown in the street section drawings included in this UDF.

Other Community Amenities

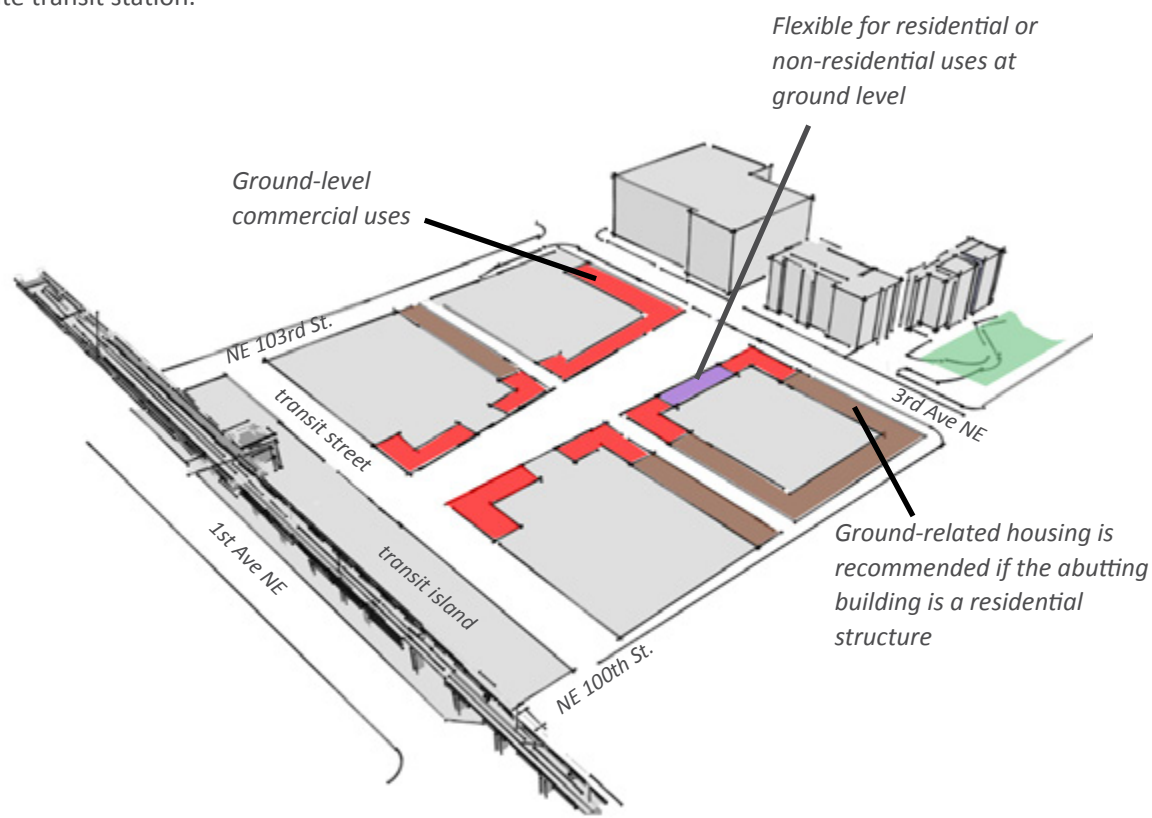
- Encourage provision of indoor community amenity features, including community meeting rooms, space for recreational activities, accessory spaces such as shopping atriums, and artist/cultural facilities as tenants.

LAND USES AND BUILDING DESIGN

The intent is to encourage efficient use of land on this TOD site while providing public amenities and serving community needs with affordable housing, services and community facilities. These recommendations provide guidance to shape the future development and ensure that the arrangement, sizing and combinations of uses will lead to an active and vibrant urban community at the Northgate transit station.

Possible Development Agreement

- To allow flexibility in application of development standards and to achieve high-quality design in the transit-oriented community, a development agreement is encouraged.



A desire to concentrate ground floor commercial uses (in red) along the east-west circulation corridor. Also, a desire to include ground-related housing with stoops (in brown) on north-south corridors where residential buildings are present.

Recommended Features

- The TOD site should host a combination of uses that are built in response to market forces. Expected uses will primarily be residential, retail, and office development.

Site Density

- This UDF recommends that future development use as much of the available development capacity as possible, to most efficiently use this key transit center core property. The density limit is 6 FAR (total floor area can equal 6 times the site's total land area). City zoning allows this density limit to be exceeded if it will enable more residential housing to occur.

- A recommended minimum density of 2 FAR per building site or defined "block" on the TOD site.

Height Limits

- Structures that exceed the current 125-foot height limit could provide a distinct identity for this station area and allow for sufficient development potential to make this a successful TOD.

- Strategies such as site coverage limits could help taller buildings make positive contributions to the function and design of the area.

Transfer of Development Density

- To provide flexibility for the most efficient development outcomes, allow the transfer of development capacity among individual properties across the TOD site.

LAND USES AND BUILDING DESIGN (Continued)

Ground-Floor Commercial Uses

- Ground-floor retail uses are encouraged along at least one side of the east-west pedestrian corridor, and along the edges of the recommended town square open space. Ground-level retail uses are also encouraged along the west side of 3rd Ave NE, at a minimum to include locations north of the east-west pedestrian corridor. (See the illustration on page 69).

- Convenience retail uses are encouraged to occur adjacent to or on the transit island's main pedestrian plaza, to provide visible and convenient goods and services for transit users.

Amount of Retail Uses

- For the whole TOD site, provision of an approximate minimum of 40,000 square feet of ground-level retail uses is recommended, to ensure availability of services and activation of the main east-west corridor.

- The development is encouraged to provide a medium sized grocery store or urban market and a drug store as resident-supportive uses and convenience uses to commuters.

Residential Development

- Residential uses will be permitted throughout the TOD site, although ambient noise levels may discourage location of residential uses facing the light rail facilities and Interstate 5.

- To establish an engaging residential presence along streets, encourage ground-level, ground-related housing with stoops on block faces of predominantly residential buildings that border on the north-south streets, including 3rd Ave NE south of the east-west pedestrian corridor.

Affordable Housing

- The TOD site development will be required to include affordable housing targeted to provide new affordable dwelling units serving a range of household incomes.

- The TOD site development will contribute toward achieving the Growing Transit Communities TOD Compact goals for affordable housing production, which are:
  - 13% of dwelling units serving households from 0-30% area median income
  - 12% of dwelling units serving households between 30-50% area median income
  - 18% of dwelling units serving households between 50-80% area median income

The development agreement will specify levels of affordability.

Tower Size Limits

- Define a maximum size limit of 10,000-12,000 square feet per floor for residential tower floors.

Locations of Towers

- Portions of the TOD site north of the east-west pedestrian corridor are preferred as locations for the tallest building towers, in order to avoid shading the primary public spaces.

Upper-Level Building Setbacks

- Define upper-level building setbacks for towers in the range of 5-15 feet above a building's base, to allow more light into sidewalk and pedestrian corridors.

Limits on Uses

To encourage efficient use of the site:

- Prohibit surface parking on building sites or restrict it to accessory short-term spaces.

- Limit individual ground-level retail/commercial spaces located on the TOD site to approximately 25,000 square feet.

- Prohibit presence of drive-in businesses.

OTHER SUPPORTING FEATURES AND QUALITIES

Recommended Features

Green Performance Levels

- Meet a high level of environmental performance for buildings, to a minimum of LEED Gold or Built Green 4-Star standards.

- Meet City Green Factor for landscaping at a minimum performance level of 0.3. This will afford flexibility in the selection of strategies for accomplishing greened conditions in future development.

- Encourage inclusion of raingardens and distinctive landscaping and water features.

Transit "Busway" Street

- Accommodate a vegetated median within the transit street that discourages jaywalking.

- Ensure a well-marked crossing at the east-west pedestrian corridor.

- Ensure sufficient safety for pedestrians and bicyclists for the busway crossing locations at the north and south ends of the transit island.

- Require that the northbound lane is available for general purpose traffic, and that two southbound lanes are reserved only for transit use. Require curbside parking spaces next to the northbound lane (east side of transit street).

- Accommodate street design flexibility and relief from code standards, if it will help avoid bus service operational conflicts.

Parking

- Encourage parking provision that will be "right-sized," meaning that future development will avoid parking in excess of its needs. The recommended performance guideline is to achieve site-wide parking rates that are less than one parking space per dwelling unit and one space per 1,000 square feet of nonresidential floor area. However, for the non-residential uses' parking guideline consider flexibility for retail-uses' parking to exceed a rate of one space per 1,000 square feet.

- Recommended parking should be located underground and not on the surface of any building site.

- Accommodate on-street parking for the site's internal streets.

- Accommodate above-ground structured parking for up to 30 feet above grade, if intervening uses or full screening of parking areas from view is accomplished.

Vehicle Access

- Recommend parking accesses be located on the internal north-south street when possible.

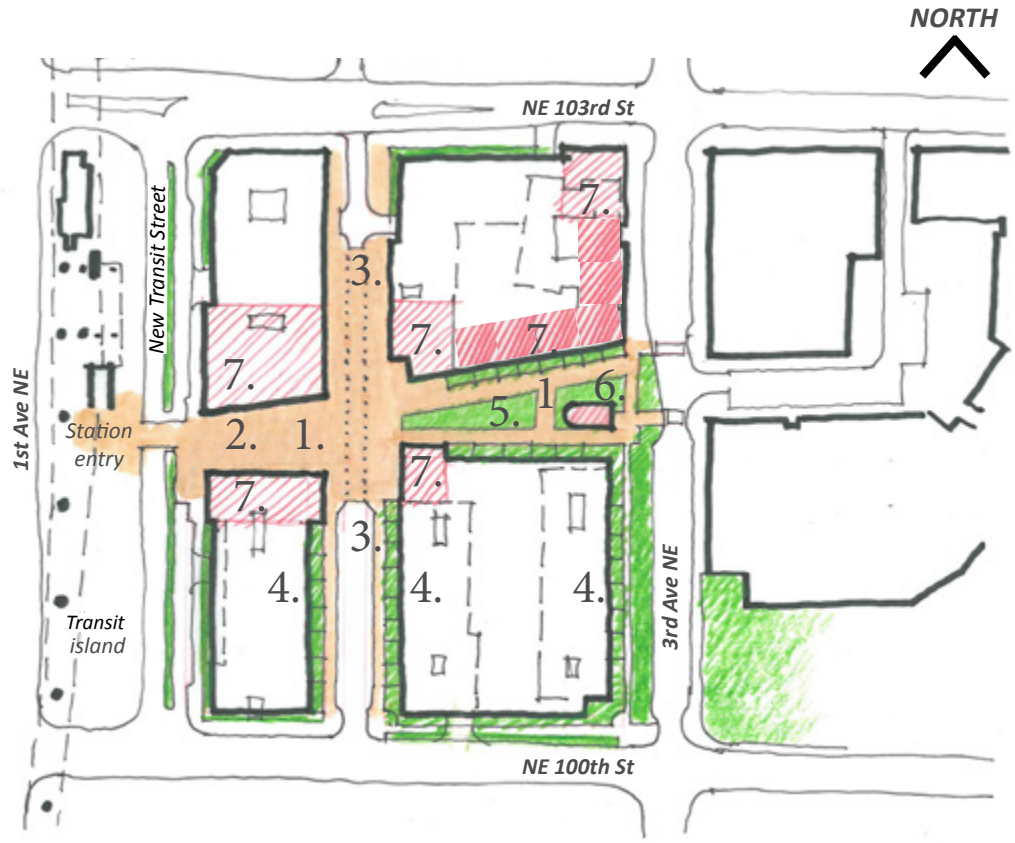
- Accommodate parking accesses from 3rd Ave NE, NE 100th St., and the transit street; parking accesses may also occur from NE 103rd St. as long as the City concurs that safety and operational efficiencies can be maintained.

- Allow parking accesses at other locations if necessary to meet other City design goals.

Development Concept Using the UDF Guidance

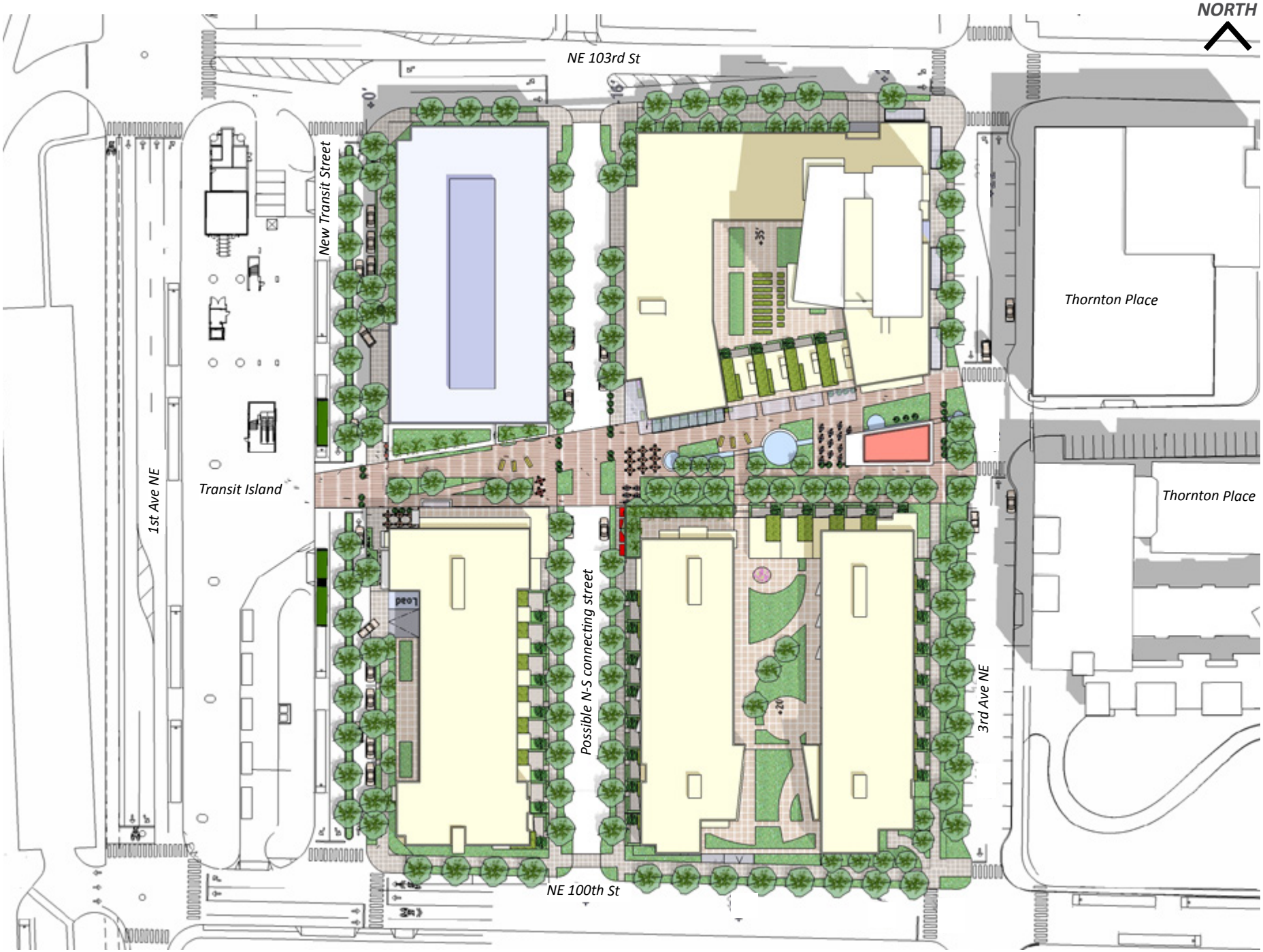
The following illustrations show one conceptual site plan that would be consistent with the City's proposed guidelines. However, this is not meant to show the only acceptable development outcome. Also see Appendix 1 for other alternative siting possibilities.

Development on the site should fit well within the recommended off-site improvements to the South subarea. These include the proposed street parks and related streetscape improvements on 3rd Ave NE and NE 100th Street. As well, the TOD would help area pedestrian circulation by providing attractive pathways for transit users, to and from Maple Leaf.

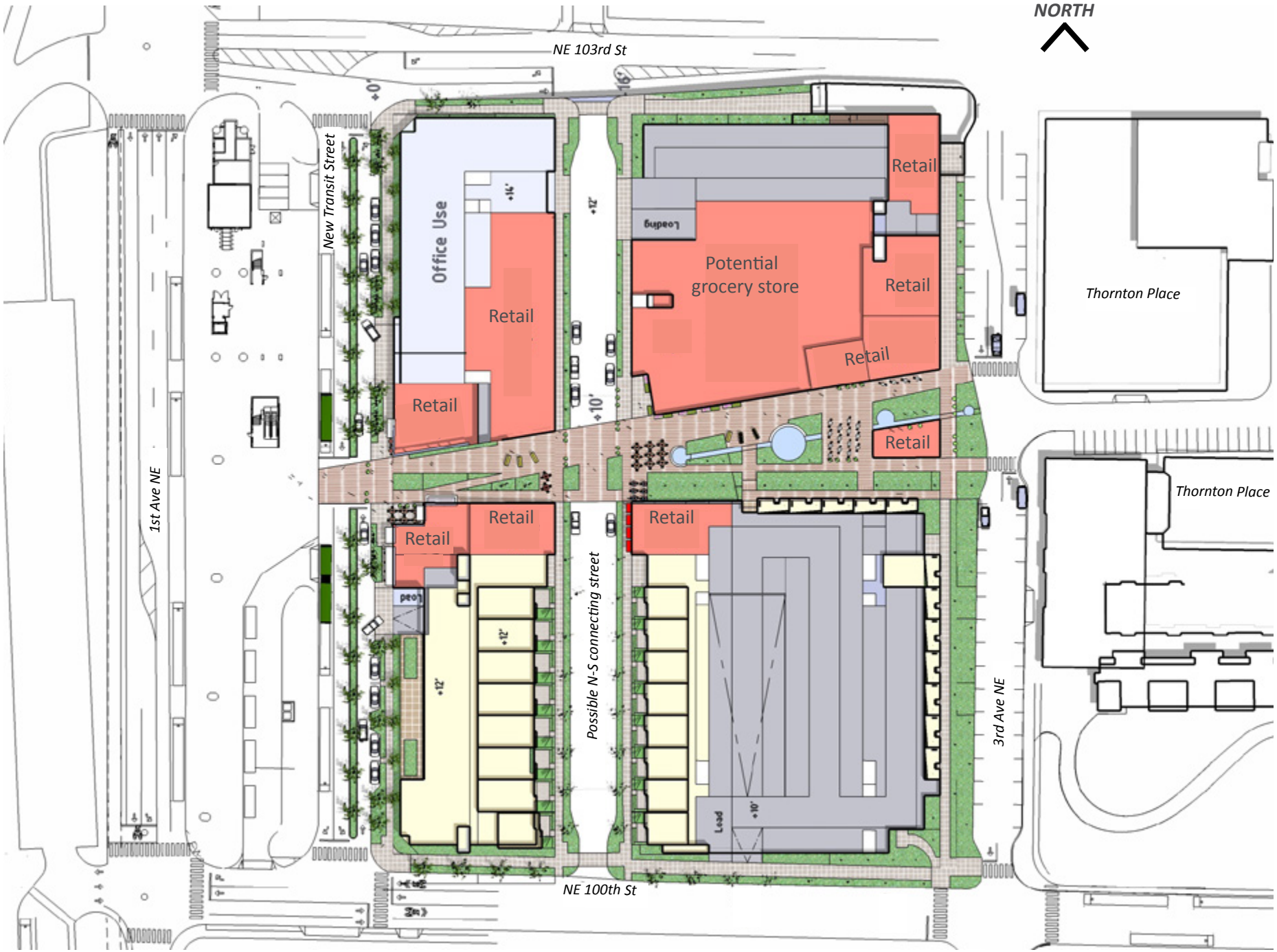


CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN

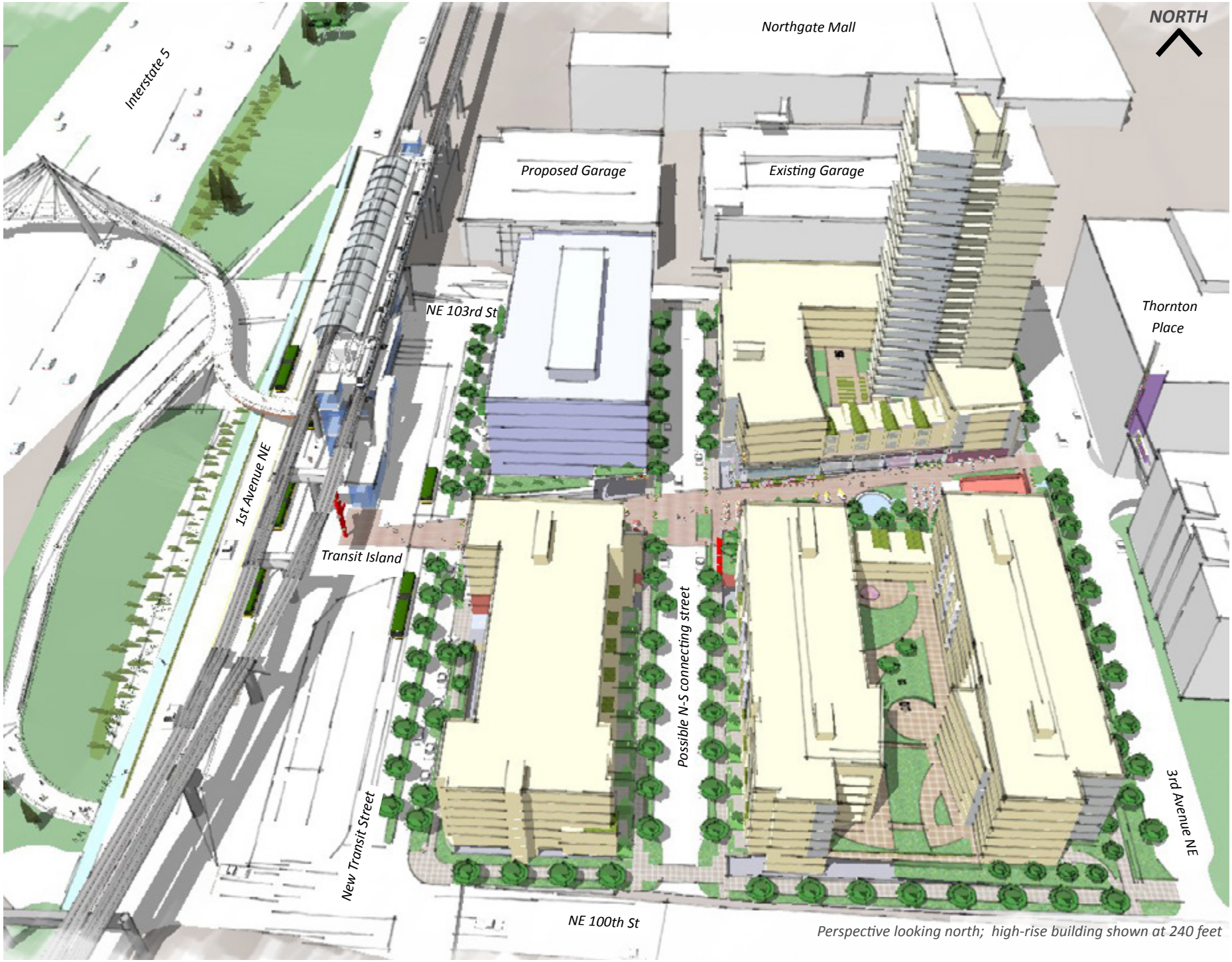
1. Town Square plaza
2. Primary pedestrian access from station to 3rd Ave NE
3. Access and service routes through site, becoming a textured *woonerf* at the town square
4. Townhomes or work lofts with ground-related entrances and landscaped stoops
5. Common green space for recreation, playgrounds, and/or rain gardens
6. One-story kiosk retail
7. Encouraged ground-floor commercial retail uses



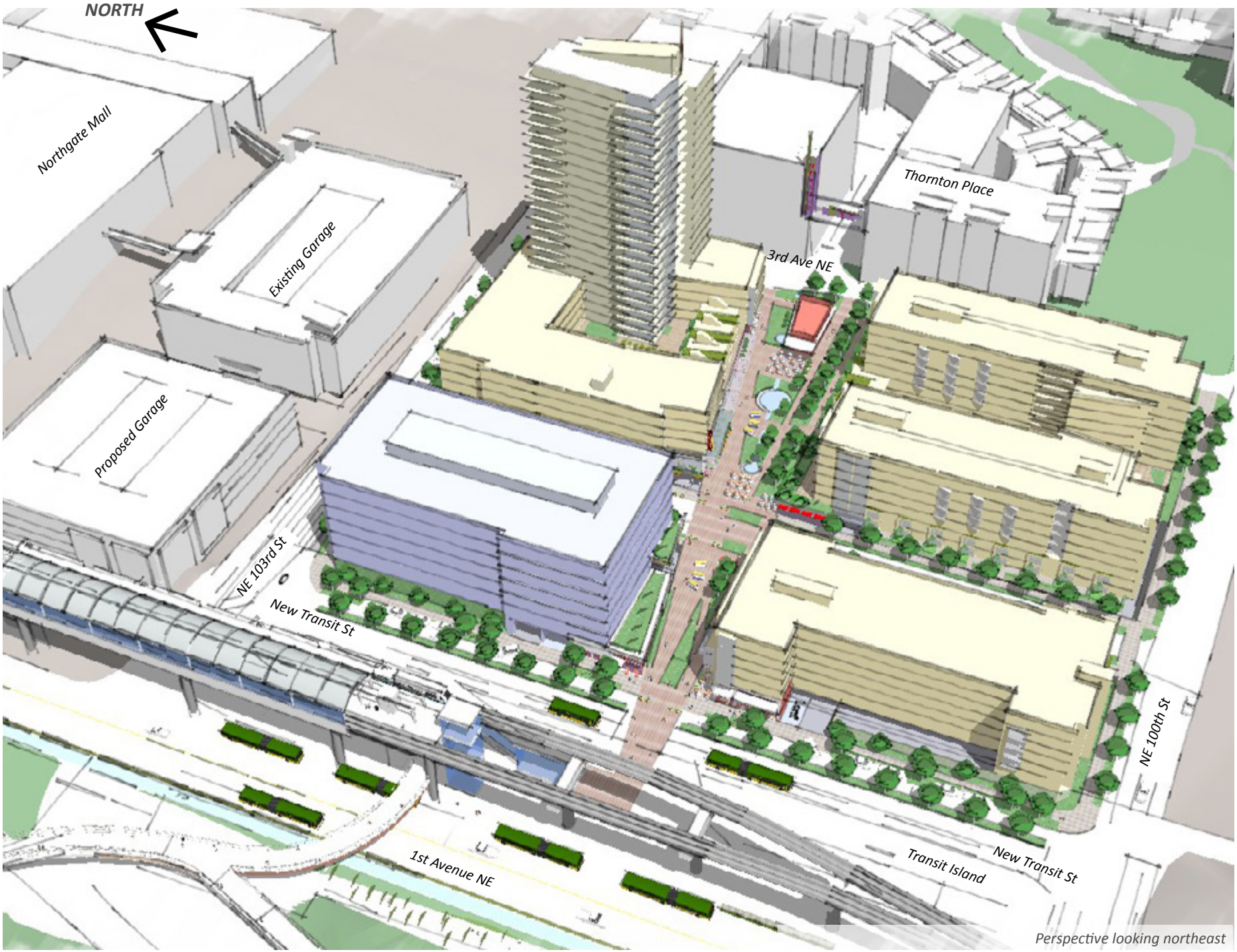
Illustrative Site Plan



Ground Level Plan to illustrate desired uses and active edges



Perspective looking north; high-rise building shown at 240 feet



Perspective looking northeast

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5 IMPLEMENTATION

Transforming the Northgate Urban Center into a more livable and walkable community will require actions by multiple departments of the City of Seattle in collaboration with partner public agencies such as Washington Department of Transportation, King County and Sound Transit. More detailed evaluation and recommendations will be required to resolve issues comprehensively. However, several general implementation steps are recommended below. These actions are designed to leverage current investments and general market development patterns. The City Departments of Planning and Development (DPD) and Transportation (SDOT) are suggested to lead the relevant actions listed below related to each subarea.

Northgate North Subarea

DPD should lead efforts related to development opportunities. Actions should include meetings with property owners to present and discuss City goals and objectives of the UDF. Both individual and group meetings should be considered to elicit the most useful information. Based upon meetings, develop strategies and tools to better catalyze and coordinate future development opportunities consistent with UDF goals.

SDOT should lead efforts to further evaluate recommendations for improving streets and mobility connections. Actions should include:

- Develop street concept plans for 5th Ave NE, and NE Northgate Way.
- As needed, assist appropriate community organizations to sponsor Neighborhood Street Fund grant applications for street improvements on 5th Ave NE.
- Coordinate with King County Metro to determine how to further evaluate and realize recommended improvements to the transit facilities.
- As part of ongoing transportation planning, develop strategies (including multi-agency collaborative strategies) to realize the recommended new street and pedestrian/bike connections.
- Facilitate community application for Neighborhood Matching Funds for Hubbard Homestead Park improvements and connections to nearby senior housing.

Also consider future funding such as the new Parks Levy, Future Bridging the Gap transportation improvements levy, and other collaborative funding strategies for all street improvements.

Northgate South Subarea

DPD should address development opportunities on both the King County Metro TOD site as well as other development opportunities in the Northgate South Subarea.

The TOD site may be the first catalyst for redevelopment and for street improvements. For the Metro TOD site, DPD should refine and incorporate the proposed development guidelines into a development agreement with King County that allows it to solicit for development services. DPD and SDOT should coordinate commitment of capital funding for infrastructure and right-of-way improvements with a possible Request for Proposals and as part of the future development agreement for the site.

For all other development areas, DPD should meet with property owners to present and discuss City intentions and objectives of the UDF. Both individual and group meetings should be considered to elicit the most useful information. Based upon meetings, develop strategies and tools to better catalyze and coordinate future development opportunities consistent with UDF goals.

The design and funding for the new cross I-5 bridge at NE 103rd St. is a significant second catalyst for change. SDOT should:

- Continue coordination of the proposed pedestrian and bicycle bridge evaluation across I-5, connecting the Transit Center and surrounding Northgate South subarea to NSCC, the Northgate West subarea and the overall North Seattle bicycle infrastructure network.
- Develop street concept plans for the green street and cycle track for NE 100th St. and 3rd Ave NE in coordination with SPU.

- The new bridge can catalyze funding for new pedestrian and bike connections to the bridge along NE 100th St. and from NE Northgate Way. SDOT should include these pedestrian and bike connections in their project descriptions as they pursue potential funding sources.
- Assist the appropriate community organizations to sponsor Neighborhood Matching Fund grant applications for street improvements.

Northgate West Subarea

DPD should:

- Continue to monitor opportunities that could arise with future development to include a new active public space.
- Meet with property owners to present and discuss City intentions and objectives of the UDF. Both individual and group meetings should be considered to elicit the most useful information. Based upon meetings, develop strategies and tools to better catalyze and coordinate future development opportunities consistent with UDF goals.

SDOT should:

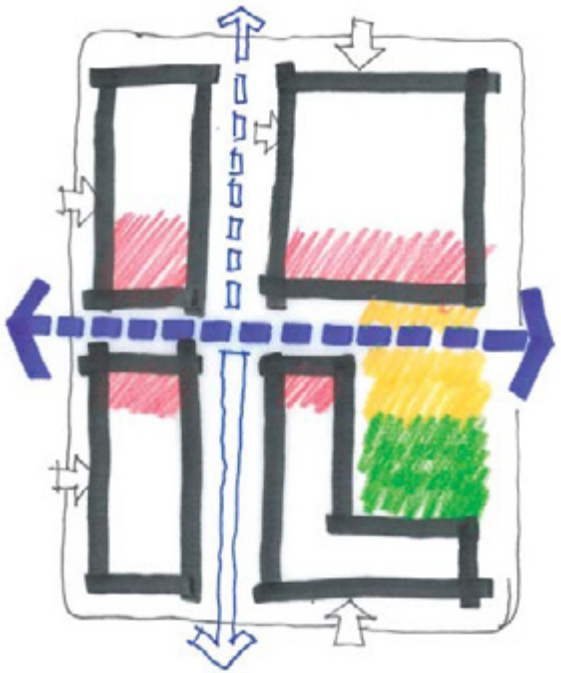
- Develop a street concept plan for Meridian Ave N
- Develop strategies to realize recommended new street and pedestrian/bike connections.

APPENDICES

1. TOD Site Design Alternatives

APPENDIX 1: TOD Site Design Alternatives

A DEVELOPMENT OPTION



URBAN FORM CONCEPT DIAGRAM

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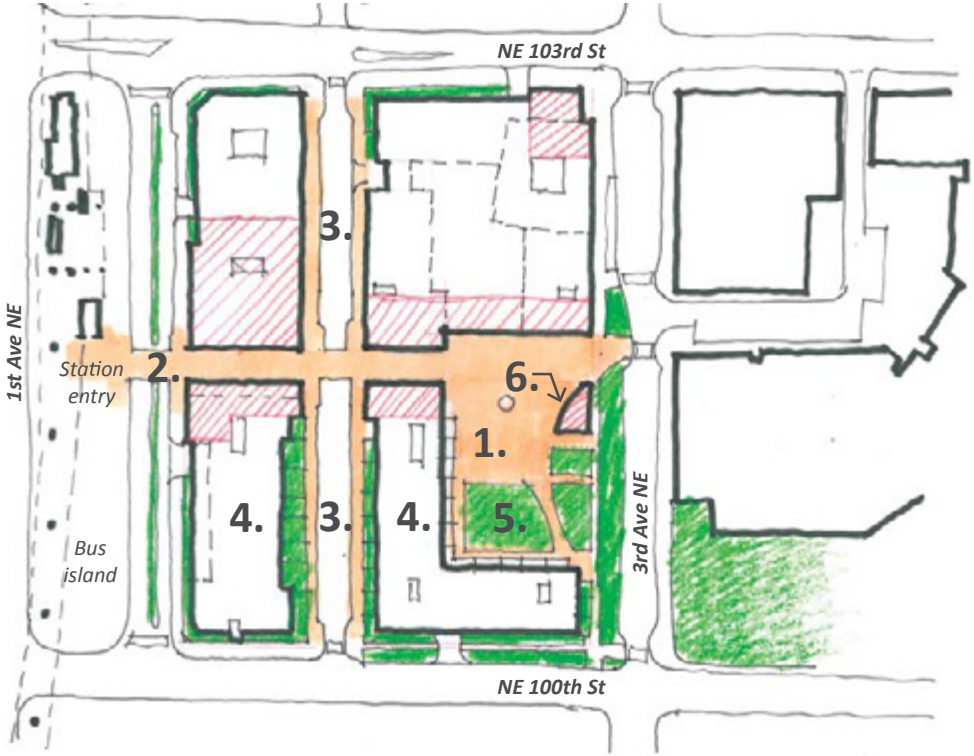
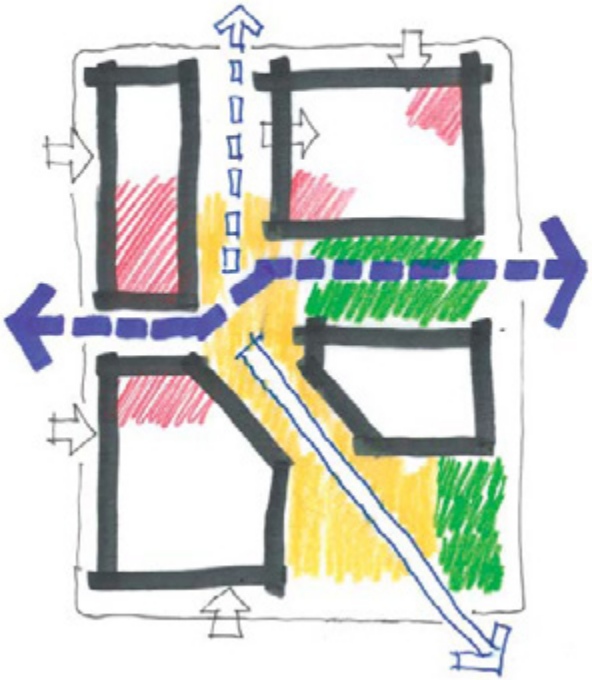


CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN

1. Town Square plaza framed by residential portion of Thornton Place development; opens up to 3rd Avenue NE
2. Primary pedestrian access from station to 3rd Ave. NE
3. Access and service lane divides the block into multiple development sites; provides some short-term parking
4. Townhomes or work lofts with ground-related entrances and landscaped stoops
5. Common green space for recreation, playgrounds, and/or raingardens
6. One-story kiosk retail

DEVELOPMENT OPTION B



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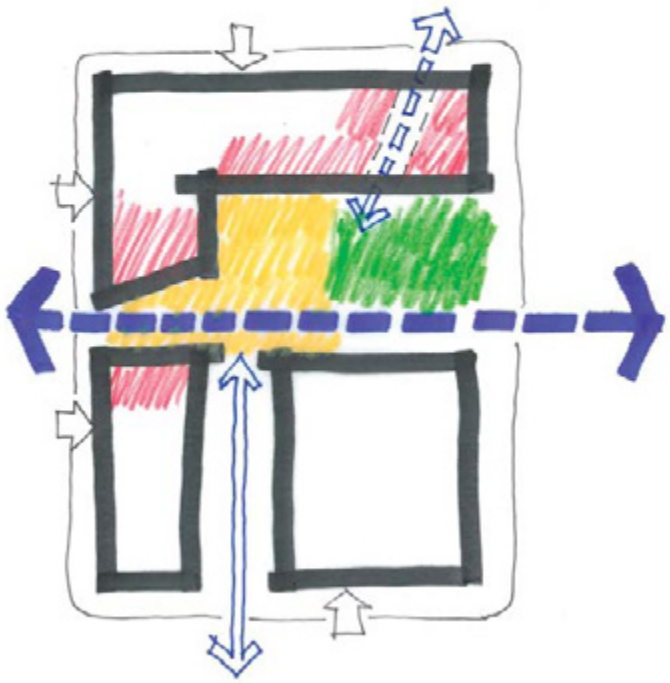
C DEVELOPMENT OPTION



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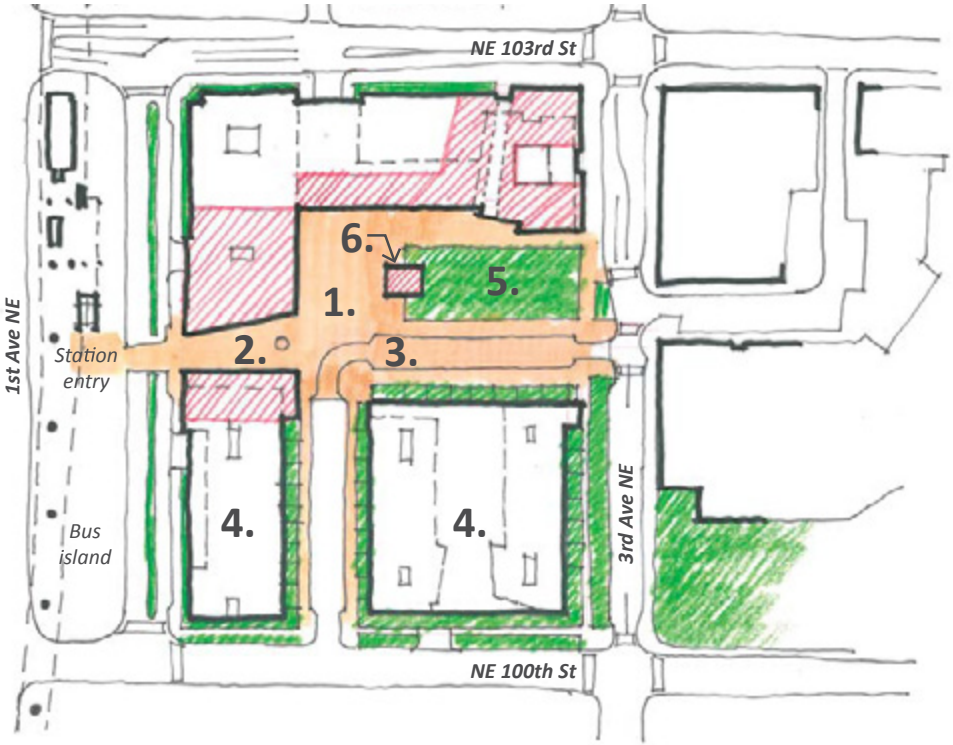

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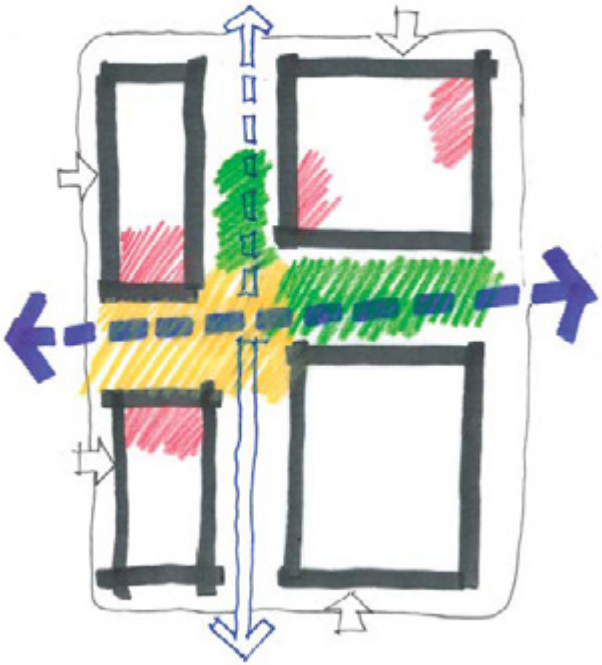

URBAN FORM CONCEPT DIAGRAM

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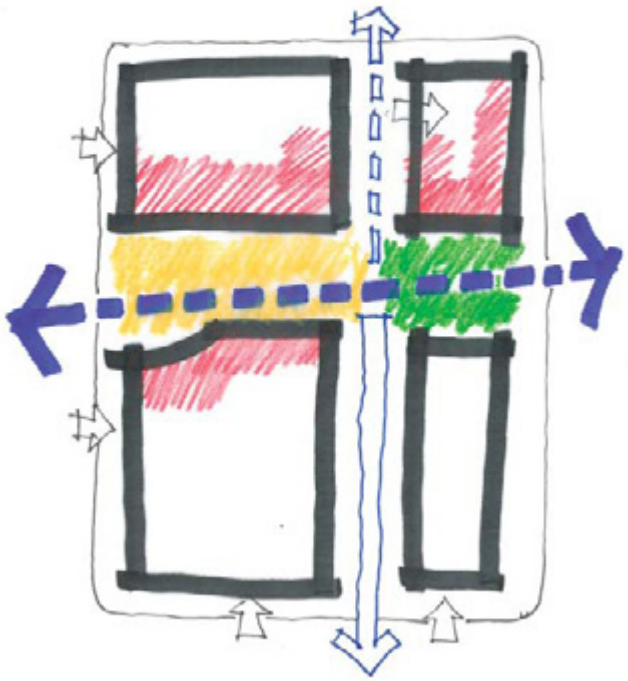
- Public plaza
- Green open space
- Parking and loading access
- Primary circulation
- Secondary circulation

CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN

1. Town Square plaza
2. Primary pedestrian access from station to 3rd Ave. NE
3. Access and service lane loops through site and becomes a textured *woonerf* at the town square
4. Townhomes or work lofts with ground-related entrances and landscaped stoops
5. Common green space for recreation, playgrounds, and/or rain gardens
6. Dead-end service lane to access loading and parking

E DEVELOPMENT OPTION



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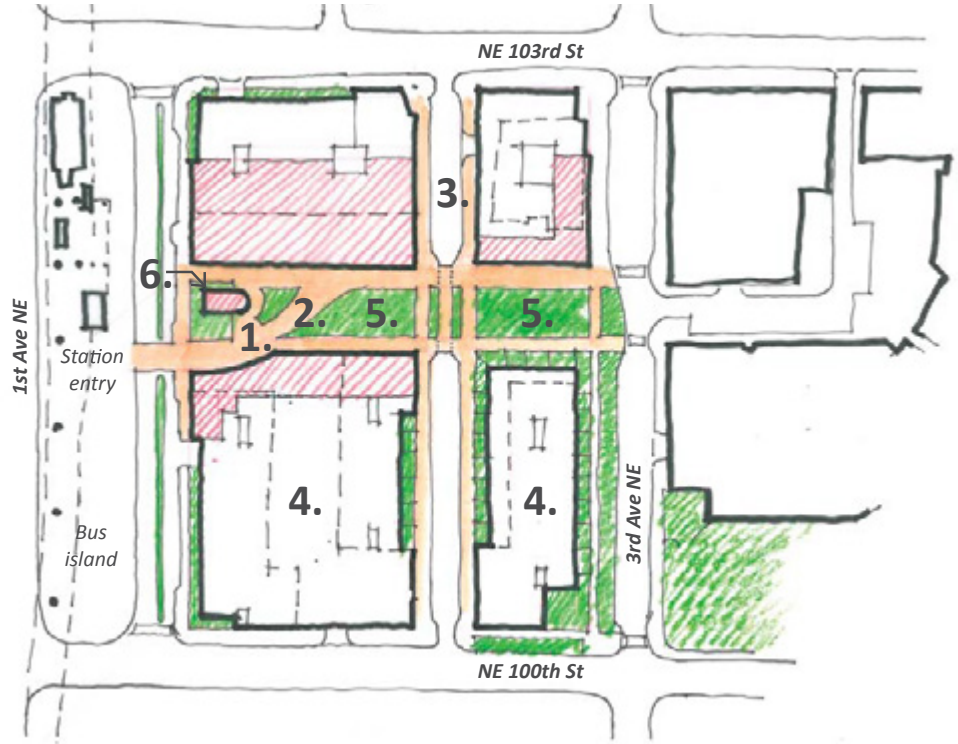
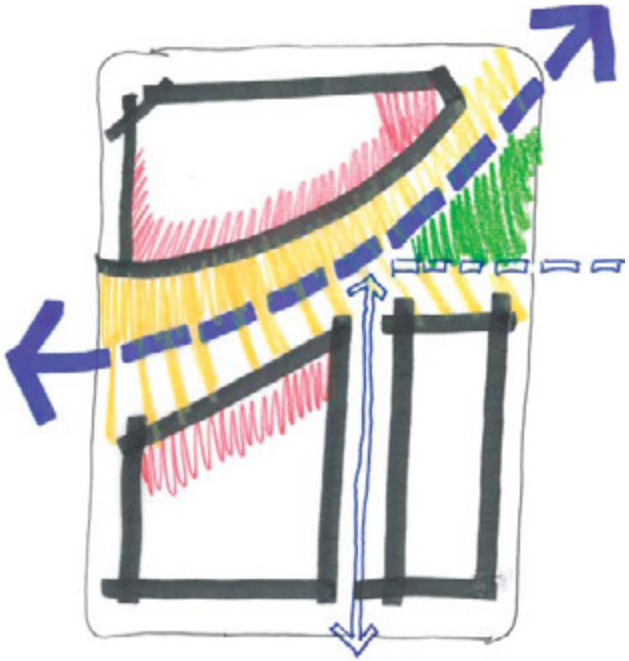


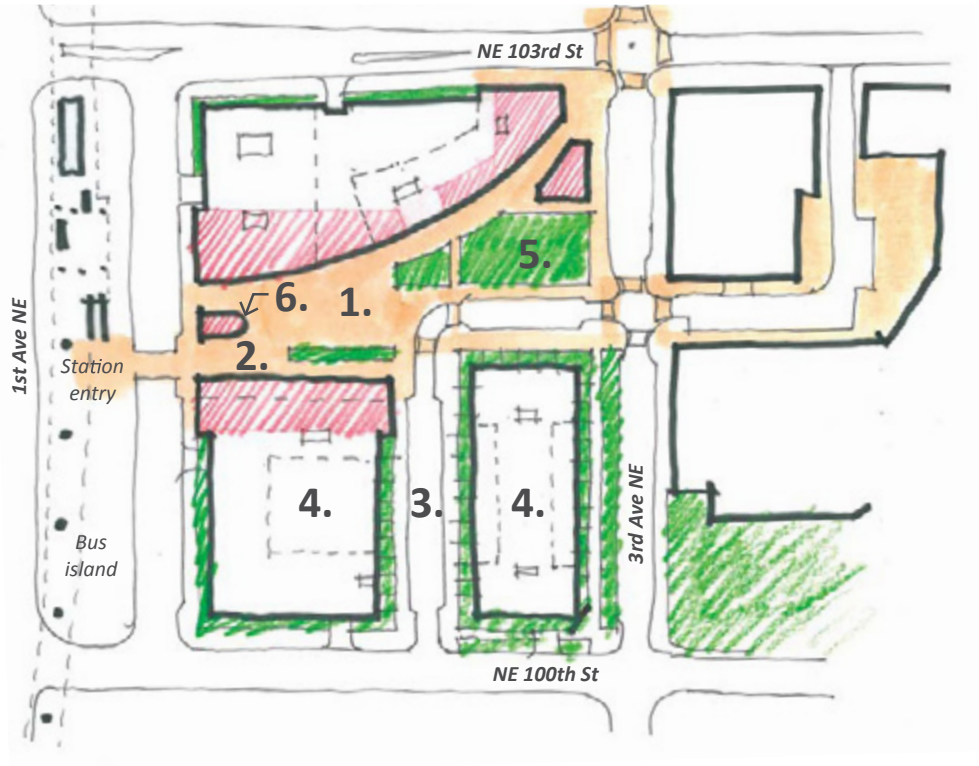
CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN

1. Town Square plaza
2. Primary pedestrian access from station to 3rd Ave. NE
3. Access and service lane divides the block into multiple development sites; provides some short-term parking
4. Townhomes or work lofts with ground-related entrances and landscaped stoops
5. Generous common green space for recreation, playgrounds, and/or rain gardens creates a continuous public “mews”
6. One-story kiosk retail



URBAN FORM CONCEPT DIAGRAM

- Building perimeter
- Ground- oor retail/services
- Public plaza
- Green open space
- Parking and loading access
- Primary circulation
- Secondary circulation



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