

Mt Baker Station Area Briefing Presentation

Urban Land Institute

Technical Assistance Panel

June 3, 2019



OPCD

Presentation Overview

- TAP Outcomes
- Background
- Transportation Safety and Accessibility
- Development Opportunities & Considerations
- Implementation
- Q&A



TAP Outcomes

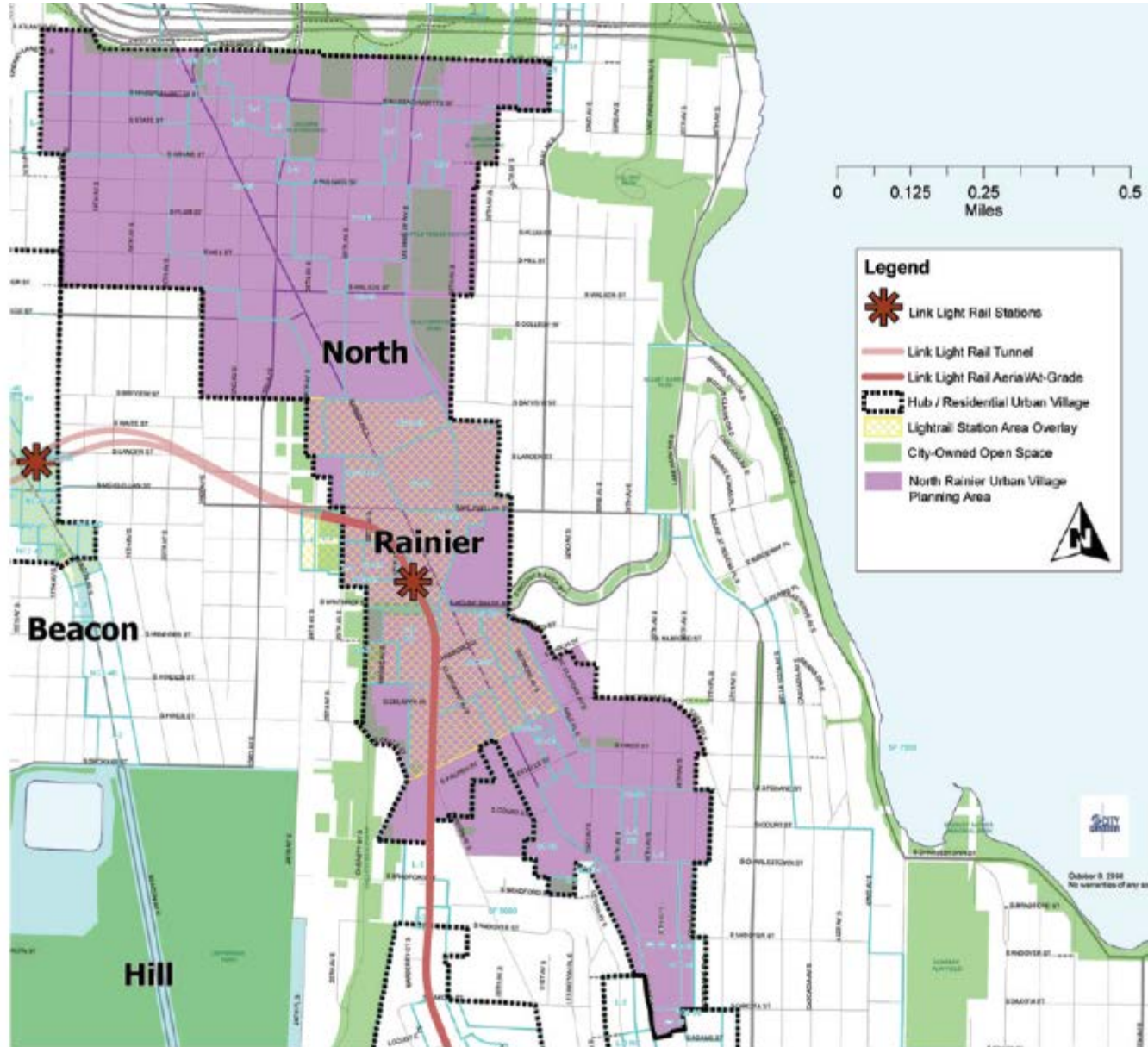
Key TAP Outcomes

- **Achieve the agencies' and community's vision** for equitable development and creation of a town center, attracting the private partners and investment needed to make it a reality
- **The viability of relocating the Mt. Baker transit center** to improve safety, accessibility and town center vitality, ensuring viability from transit planning, urban design and financial perspectives
- **Create a centrally located park/public space**, consistent with the vision
- **Stimulate redevelopment while minimizing displacement** using race and social justice as a lens
- **Define effective next steps** for TAP Partners and other stakeholders to continue their collaboration and implement the vision



Background

Background



Planning and Implementation Timeline

1999

The North Rainier Neighborhood Plan is completed. The Rainier Valley Community Development Fund is established in anticipation of light rail coming to the Rainier Valley.

2001-2008

The McClellan Town Center Plan is developed for the area around the future Mt. Baker Light Rail Station. The City Council upzones the area by increasing building heights and density allowances. The Southeast Action Agenda is created under Mayor Nickels, including a Community Renewal proposal.

2009-2014

The Neighborhood Plan is updated to include an urban design framework, action plan, and upzone around the light rail station. In 2014, The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) hires a TOD Manager. The Department of Transportation (SDOT) kicks off a new transportation planning effort called "Accessible Mt. Baker."

2015-2019

Mt Baker Town Center Neighborhood Design Guidelines was adopted in 2017. City of Seattle Interdepartmental Team was established late 2017 to collaboratively focus on implementation strategies. A multi-agency team was also formed to engage Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) to identify implementation and development strategies.



Mt Baker TOD Implementation SWOT - draft

Strengths

<p>Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing Light Rail station Robust transit system 	<p>Economic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hot regional real estate market Substantial infill and redevelopment opportunities (large catalyst sites) Large employment with UW laundry (over 100 jobs)
<p>Environment & Utilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing Olmsted Boulevard 	<p>Neighborhood Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prime location within the City and the Region Easy access to Mt Baker beach, Lake Washington, and interstate highways (I-5, I-90) Existing grocery and drug stores Historic Franklin High School Adjacent community hubs, retail centers, neighborhoods, and parks Many City planning efforts

Weaknesses

<p>Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inactive light rail station – ground floor and space utilization Unsafe transportation network & street design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of continuous sidewalks Lack bicycle facilities High traffic volume and track access on Rainier Ave Unsafe intersection at MLK and Rainier 	<p>Economic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Auto-dominated environment Stagnate local development market Inactive large public land owners - can't predict benefits/value, not on top priority lists Inactive large private land owners - leases Large underdeveloped public & private lands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UW parking lot next to the station Location and function of Metro bus layover Private owners (Lowe's, QFC etc.)
<p>Environment & Utilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low soil bearing capacity, high devt cost Stormwater infrastructure – unknown capacity, neighborhood priority & increased development cost Insufficient functional/accessible open space that supports TOD Uninviting Franklin high school storefront fenced off open space, inaccessible to the public, unappealing sidewalk experience 	<p>Neighborhood Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of night time activities and pedestrian friendliness from existing shops & services Public safety – drugs Lack of neighborhood cohesiveness & identity Lack of residential density Lack of implementation of City plans Lack of development progress to date

Opportunities:

<p>Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sound Transit Link Light Rail (ST2& ST3) expansion Accessible Mt Baker (AMB) effort Rapid ride on Rainier East west transportation network connection Greenways on McClellan: bike & ped connection 	<p>Economic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large infill and redevelopment opportunities Sound Transit redevelopment opportunities and strategic plan Build public and private partnerships (agreement, trade off, incentives etc.) Assemble land to seize redevelopment opportunity Use MHA rezone as a leverage
<p>Environment & Utilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate green infrastructure Provide open space that support community gathering and TOD 	<p>Neighborhood Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize City grants (Only In Seattle, NMF grants etc.) to support community capacity, business association Utilize community energy and collaborate implementation

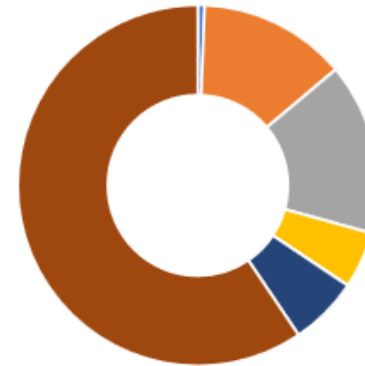
Threats:

<p>Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation funding limitations, uncertainties, and cycles AMB can't reach agreements with property owners 	<p>Economic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic cycles Property owners and retailers have little interest to change and remain status quo - stall redevelopment
<p>Environment & Utilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of infrastructure investments: parks/open space, stormwater associated with climate change 	<p>Neighborhood Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political changes Other city priorities in competition for funding, attentions etc. Community opposition

Mt Baker Community Profile

Mt Baker Stakeholders

- Affordable housing
- Neighborhood organizations (open space, business, renters, homeowners)
- Service Providers (education, social services, homelessness, youth)
- Small businesses & patrons
- Transit riders; people, cars, bikes going through area



RACE/ETHNICITY:

American Indian + Alaska Native	0.6%
Asian	13.3%
Black or African American	15.4%
Hispanic or Latino, any race	5.1%
Native Hawaiian + Pacific Islander	0.0%
Some other race	0.0%
Two or more races	6.2%
White	59.5%

		North Rainier / Mt. Baker	Citywide
Renter households	%	32.1	53
People under 18 years of age	%	20.2	15
People age 65 and over	%	12.6	11
Persons of color	%	40.5	33
Language other than English spoken at home	%	23.4	22
High school or higher	%	90.8	93
Bachelor's degree or higher	%	61	57
Median household income	\$	94,840	65,277
Unemployed	%	7.5	7
Population below poverty level		14.1	14

Mt Baker Ongoing Community Priorities

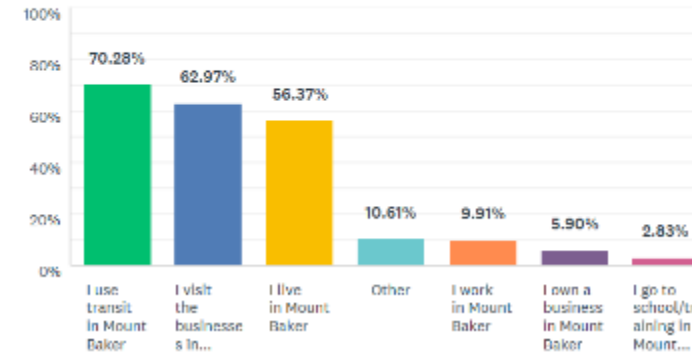
- **Create a Town Center** that is the heart of the neighborhood, a place where people will gather, shop, stroll, and enjoy community life
- **Enhance green space and create a central public space** where the community can connect and gather
- **Create inviting and safe connections** for people walking, biking, and taking transit, especially around MLK & Rainier, including transfers between the Metro Transit Center and Link Light Rail
- **Attract and retain small businesses** that reflect the diversity of the neighborhood and South Seattle
- **Build more affordable and mixed income housing** that reflects the diversity of the neighborhood and South Seattle

Community Priority Online Survey Results

- 426 Respondents
- Context around results
 - Recent bike infrastructure outreach
 - Messaging Accessible Mount Baker vs. Mount Baker ULI TAP
- Outreach & briefings post ULI TAP recommendations

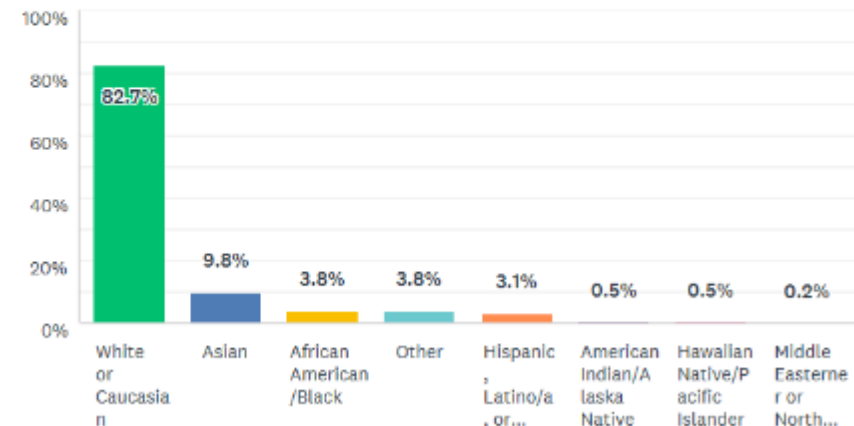
How would you describe your connection to Mount Baker? (please check all that apply)

Answered: 424 Skipped: 2



How do you identify? (please select all that apply)

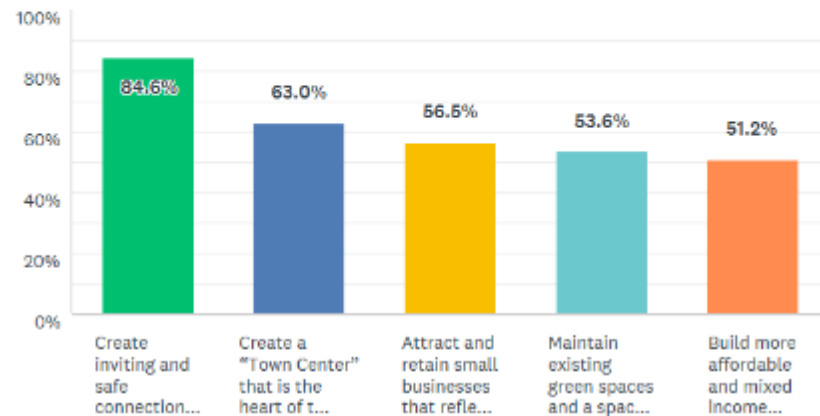
Answered: 417 Skipped: 9



Community Priority Online Survey Results (continued)

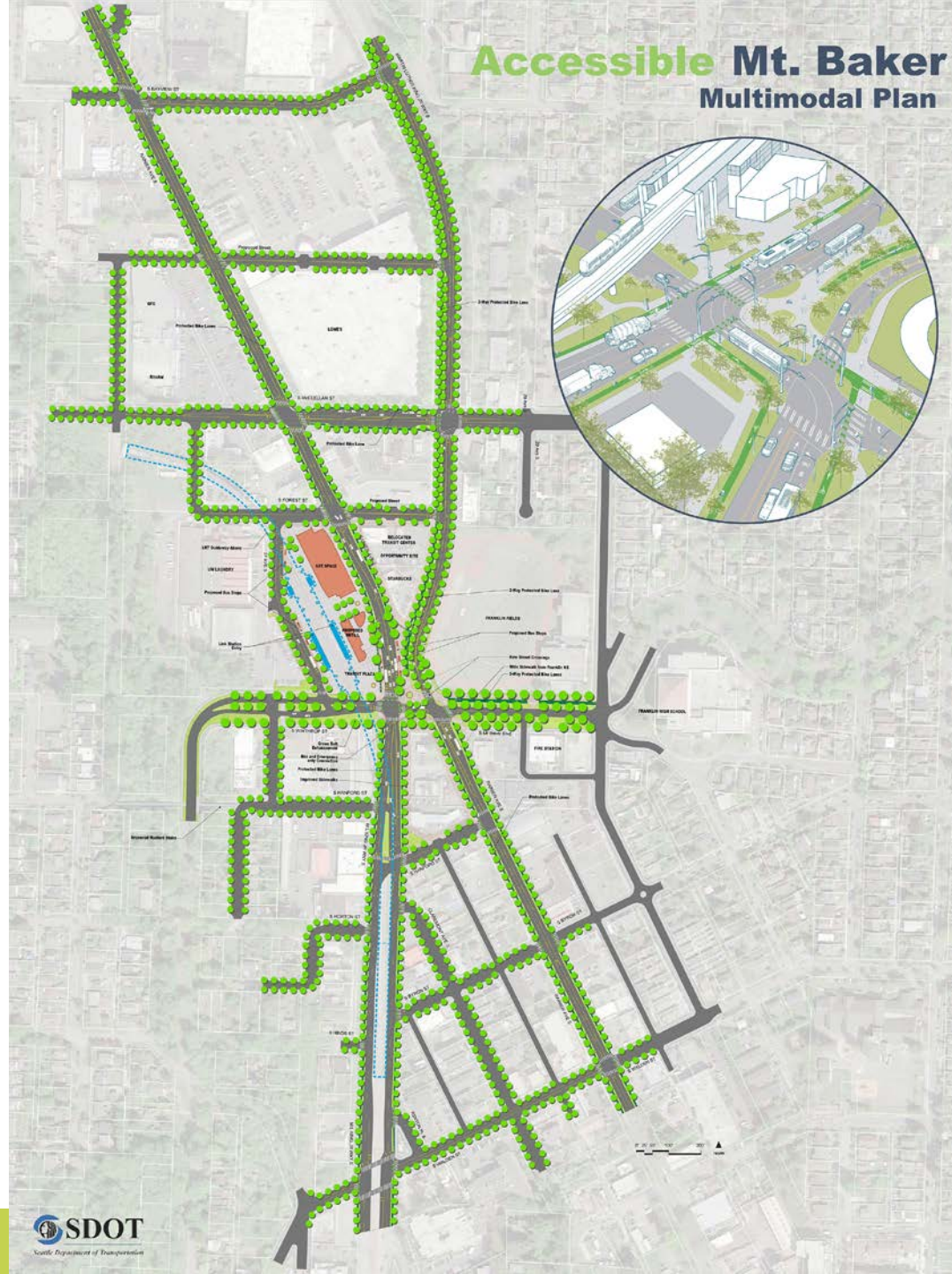
Please read the following themes from previous outreach and select the themes that you feel are still top priorities for Mount Baker.

Answered: 416 Skipped: 10



- ## Open Ended Question Themes
- Most Frequent Themes
 - Pedestrian and bike access, safety
 - Safe connections between modes
 - Public Safety, homelessness, encampments
 - Density, adding housing affordable and market rate
 - Other Frequent Themes
 - Bike infrastructure
 - Pedestrian experience through Mt Baker
 - Destination businesses
 - Neighborhood character, diversity, displacement

- Focus immediate around the station
- Accessible Mt Baker as a key catalyst
- TOD as principles
- Equity as a lens
- Collaboration as path forward





Transportation Safety and Accessibility



Sound Transit

Sound Transit Property:

- Surplus Property (150,000 sq. ft.) – No longer required to support Sound Transit facilities
- Bus Layover and Transfer Facility (33,900 sq. ft.) – Perpetual Use Agreement with King County Metro
- Mt. Baker Link Station and Supporting Facilities

Land Use Policies:

- State Statute - requires Sound Transit to first offer 80% of surplus property that is suitable for housing to qualified entities, who then must agree to create 80% of the units on the site for families and individuals making 80% area medium income or below. When all three of these criteria are met, Sound Transit has the ability to discount the property for affordable housing development.
- ST3 Approved in 2016 - directs the agency to implement a regional equitable TOD strategy for diverse, vibrant, mixed-use, mixed-income communities around our transit facilities
- Equitable TOD Policy updated in April 2018 - Provides programmatic direction to staff in implementing Sound Transit's TOD work program

Accessible Mt. Baker project elements

- Reconfigure Rainier and MLK intersection
- Re-locate transit center
- New public plaza
- Landscaping/lighting
- Traffic signal modifications
- Reconnect Olmsted Blvd and create Neighborhood Greenway
- Connections to bike network with protected bike lanes



- Collisions in project area (2014-2016):
 - 232 total crashes, 134 injuries, 1 serious injury, 1 fatality
 - 13 pedestrian and 4 bike collisions
 - 45 inattention collisions, 8 DUI crashes

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Accessible Mt. Baker

Near Term Projects

PHASE 1

- 1 Shorten existing crossing distances and increase signal waiting area by adding sidewalk area
- 2 Increase sidewalk width and perform repairs
- 3 Increase crosswalk width from 10' to 20'
- 4 Increase sidewalk width from 8' to 12'
- 5 Change north lane of Mt. Baker Blvd. to walk/bike only (see cross section below)
- 6 Prohibit right turn heading north onto MLK, Jr. Way from Rainier Ave. S. during red light
- 7 Single left turn lane only heading south from MLK, Jr. Way S. onto Rainier Ave. S. (change existing combined through and left turn lane to through traffic only)
- 8 Replace lower Hanford Stairs and provide better lighting
- 9 Clean and repair pedestrian bridge
- 10 Activate Light Rail Station environment with more programmed events, market, bike share, outdoor concerts and other activities

Other Actions

- Improve traffic signaling to shorten walk waiting time
- Clean up and organize signs
- Add sidewalks where missing
- Repair sidewalks
- Landscape maintenance
- Manage parking
- Improve lighting where needed



Under Consideration: Relocating the Transit Center

- Better transit connections between Link Light Rail Station and Transit Center
- Open up property to redevelopment
- Shorten pedestrian crossing distances
- Reduce pedestrian/vehicle conflicts





Development Opportunities & Considerations

Office of Housing

- Create affordable housing for a range of incomes at or below 80% AMI
- Ensure affordable housing investments support thriving, healthy communities with economic development, open space, transportation access, and community amenities
- Advance TOD opportunities in North Rainier Valley

Public Property Owners

- Significant public property ownership, especially in core of station area
- Public property owners have varied missions, strategic goals, needs and desired outcomes. Public property owners include:
 - City of Seattle, represented by OPCD, SDOT, SPR
 - Sound Transit
 - King County Metro
 - King County Wastewater
 - University of Washington
 - Seattle Public Schools
- Opportunity to align goals and have the sum be greater than the parts
- Public sector can and should be a catalytic force for neighborhood redevelopment



UW laundry, King Hall & parking behind the station



UW laundry and surrounding properties



Metro bus layover on Sound Transit property



King County and Sound Transit sites along Rainer Ave

Private Property Owners

- Private sector real estate development has been limited and sporadic (Mercy, Mt Baker Housing and market rate developers)
- Existing development is auto oriented, with large tracts owned and controlled by legacy owners (Lowes, QFC, Auto Zone/Pawnshop, etc.)
- Lack of pedestrian/bike amenities and traffic volumes on MLK and Rainier retard redevelopment
- Property owners have explored redevelopment opportunities but encountered barriers/constraints. Some properties are held for family income.
- A potential threat is that piecemeal development takes place that doesn't contribute to TOD vision and community cohesiveness



Gas station surrounding Sound Transit property



Gas station surrounding Sound Transit property



Private properties south of Winthrop St



Private properties south of the station

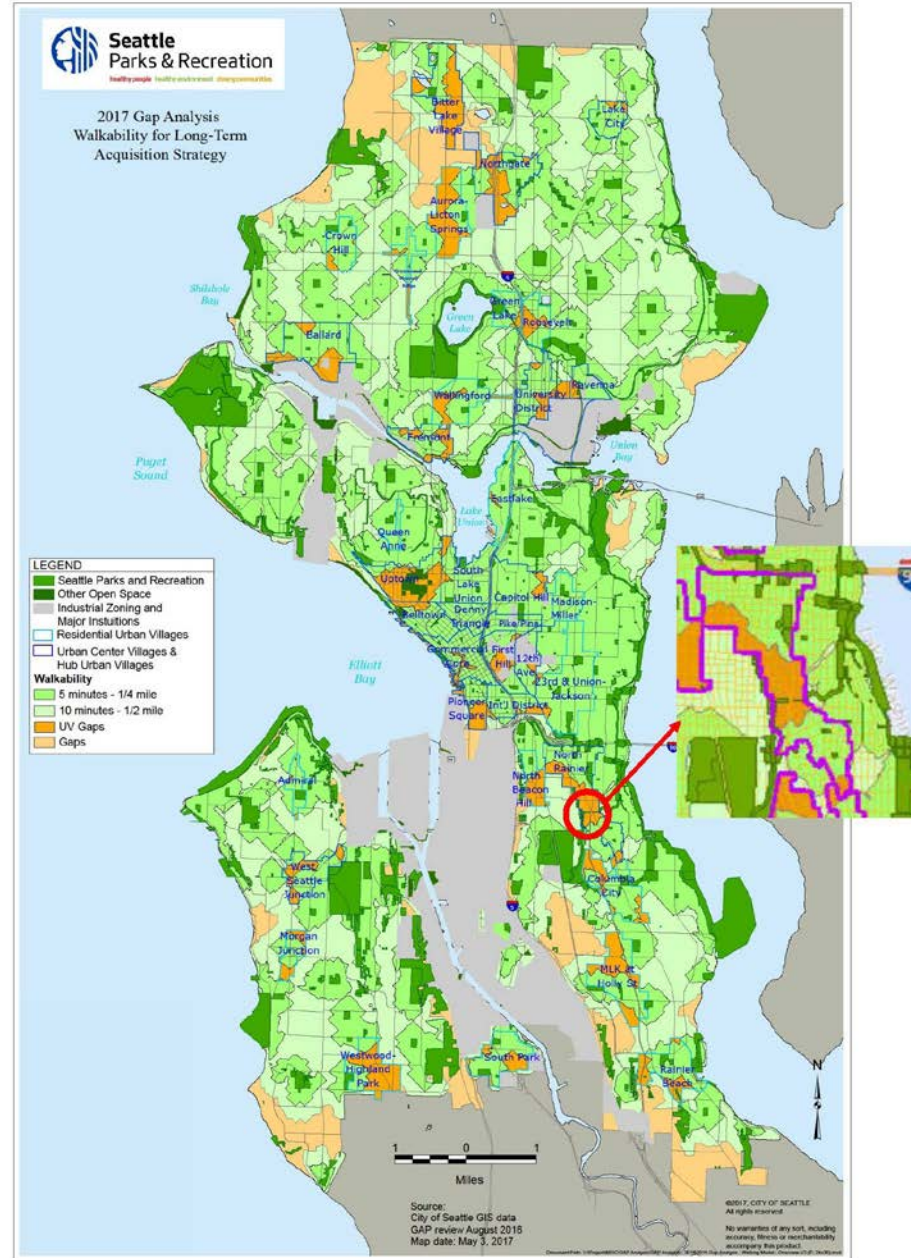


Buck & Buck

Parks and Open Space

- Mt Baker has been identified as a park-deficient area
- Various public planning efforts have been challenged due to lack of concurrency
- Cheasty Boulevard, while a historic Olmstead parkway, is poorly maintained
- SPR identifies that 10,000 SF would be a minimum park
- Lack of clarity regarding the types of uses desired in neighborhood
- Space under the Mt. Baker Light Station is underutilized
- Franklin High School's field is a significant open space that is fenced from the community

Gap Map showing park gap in Mt Baker Station Area





Implementation

Key Implementation Questions

- **What are the next steps** to implement TAP recommendations through the multiagency collaboration?
- **What are the priority short, mid, and long-term solutions** (or process to define them), and the role/responsibility for each agency?
- **What are the best funding sources** or options to support relocation and ongoing maintenance of the transit center?
- **What is the overall redevelopment process?**
 - What is the best way to incentivize/stimulate redevelopment that responds to community vision/ priorities?
 - What are the property assemblage(s) and/or land swaps needed to facilitate ideal redevelopment scenarios?
- **How to best to minimize displacement?**

Examples of Collaborations/Partnerships

- There are significant public-private partnership opportunities
- Aggregate public property with private property to create a development of scale, offering a joint RFP.
 - E.g., property between Hanford and Winthrop (King County Wastewater/Sound Transit/ City of Seattle)
- Actively manage and curate the light rail station ground floor and plaza for events, markets, and other traffic-generating activities
- Maintain ongoing outreach with property owners to be in front of development

Potential Funding Tools

- There are a variety of public funding tools that could assist in the redevelopment:
 - Move Seattle
 - Local Improvement District
 - BUILD Grants
 - Seattle Parks District
 - Sound Transit System Access Fund
 - Seattle Councilmanic Bonds
 - Office of Housing's Seattle Housing Levy
 - Only in Seattle Grants
 - Seattle Neighborhood Matching Funds
 - Redevelopment Opportunity Zone (ROZ) Funds



Q & A