



Seattle Transit Communities

A Citywide Strategy to Integrate
Neighborhoods with Transit

A report for the
Seattle City Council by the
Seattle Planning Commission
March 2013

The transit communities strategy would support more inclusive, affordable, and diverse neighborhoods where it is easier to walk, bike, or ride transit than to drive a car when accomplishing most daily tasks such as going to the grocery store or getting to work.

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Table of Contents

Background

In the report	4
What is a transit community?	4
What is frequent transit service?	4
Seattle should have a citywide transit communities strategy	5
Planning background	6

Proposed strategy

Seattle's transit communities strategy	8
Essential components of livability	9
The proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment	10
How to identify transit community nodes	10
How to map transit community boundaries	11
How to distinguish types of transit communities	12
Areas around frequent transit service	14

Outreach & engagement

Informing the 2010 Seattle Transit Communities report	16
Comprehensive Plan major update	18
Stakeholder feedback on the proposed strategy	19

Background

A transit community is a place where a neighborhood is integrated with transit, where coordinated public and private investments improve neighborhood quality, and where proactively planning for change can create or enhance a place where people of all ages and income levels can live in a complete community and access frequent, reliable transit.

In the report

The Planning Commission has prepared this report for the Seattle City Council to describe how the proposed Seattle transit communities strategy would integrate neighborhoods with transit. It summarizes the Commission's research and analysis about this topic, builds on Seattle's broad planning context, and helps advance major citywide goals related to global climate change and racial and social equity.

The first section of the report explains what a transit community is, articulates why a citywide strategy to plan for transit communities is important, and summarizes the planning context upon which this strategy builds.

The second section outlines the overall strategy and details the initial proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment.

The third section explains the outreach and engagement that has informed the proposed strategy, summarizes feedback the Commission has received about the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment and makes recommendations for implementing the proposed strategy.

What is a transit community?

A transit community is a complete, compact, neighborhood connected by frequent, reliable transit service.

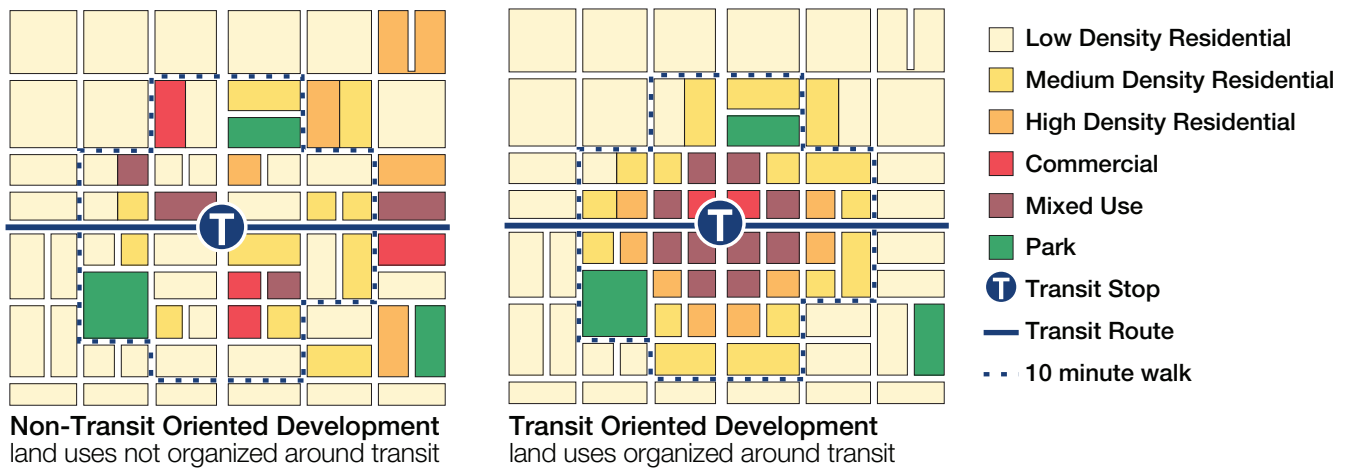
People can walk, bike, or take transit from their homes to accomplish many of their daily activities including getting to work or school, picking up groceries, or going out to a restaurant or special event.

Transit communities require well-coordinated investment centered around transit service to create these lively, diverse communities.

What is frequent transit service?

Frequent, reliable transit service is a fundamental organizing principle for transit communities. It runs at least every 15 minutes from early in the morning until late at night every day of the week.

This level of service allows people to ride transit without consulting a timetable; people are generally willing to walk ten minutes, or about half a mile, to get to the transit stop or station, regardless of mode.



Seattle should have a citywide transit communities strategy

A lot has happened since Seattle’s Comprehensive Plan was originally adopted in 1994 and significantly updated in 2004. New citywide planning goals have been established to provide more housing opportunities, become a carbon neutral city, eliminate racial disparities, and create the most pedestrian and bicycle friendly city in the country.

Many Seattle households are increasingly burdened by their housing costs and race-based disparities persist, particularly related to income and poverty, education, criminal justice, and health. Driving is still a fact of life for those who do not live near transit, services, or good facilities for walking and bicycling.

The transit communities strategy allows the City to plan in a new way to welcome new residents and businesses while minimizing displacement. Coordinated, leveraged investment supports a mix of land uses easily accessible by foot, bicycle, or transit.

At a national and regional scale, agencies are planning for transit communities. The federal Sustainable Communities Partnership encourages collaboration among the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Department of Transportation.

Regionally, PSRC’s Growing Transit Communities helps maximize investment in major transit projects by “locating housing, jobs, and services close enough to transit so that more people will have a faster and more convenient way to travel.”

At the same time, technological advances allow for better, more data-driven planning using tools like geographic information systems (GIS) and for more inclusive public engagement using social media, while [Planning Outreach and Engagement Liaisons](#) help people from traditionally underrepresented communities get involved.

Transit communities proactively integrate land use with transportation and engage more of the community in the planning process so that Seattle can be an affordable choice place for everyone who lives here today and draw residents and businesses 20 and 100 years from now.

Planning background

More than 100 years ago, Seattle developed around streetcar lines that connected downtown to neighborhood business districts and residential areas. After WWII, the Federal Highway Act of 1956 reoriented planning around automobiles and led to decades of urban sprawl.

In 1990, the Growth Management Act (GMA) directed cities in Washington to direct growth into existing urbanized areas, which preserves natural resource and farmland as well as coordinates investments.

These are some of the many plans, land code updates, and investments in transit service that help Seattle implement the GMA, which informed the development of the transit communities strategy.

citywide plans and initiatives

<u>Comprehensive Plan</u> 1994 2004 present	Established the urban village strategy in 1994 directing most growth to areas with frequent transit and adequate services. Updated annually with revised growth targets in 2004. Largely successful in directing growth but less successful in terms of equity - housing is less affordable for households and racial disparities in ownership have not decreased.
<u>Neighborhood plans</u> 1998 present	Developed by 38 neighborhoods to identify local needs to meet the challenges of expected growth through approximately 2014. Adopted beginning in the late 90s. Approximately half have had some type of recent update.
<u>Race & Social Justice Initiative</u> 2005 present	Citywide effort to realize the vision of racial equity in education, criminal justice, environmental justice, health and economic success. Included dramatically expanded outreach to historically underrepresented communities during updates to neighborhood plans in Southeast Seattle.
<u>Climate Action Plan</u> 2005 2013	Currently being updated to help make Seattle a carbon-neutral city.
<u>Bicycle Master Plan</u> 2007 2013	Focuses on expanding bicycle riding and reducing bicycle collisions on the City's street network and trails. Project completed to date include on-street bicycle facilities, multi-use trail improvements, bicycle wayfinding signage, and new bicycle parking spaces.
<u>Pedestrian Master Plan</u> 2009	Strives to make Seattle the most walkable city in the country with goals of improved safety, equity, vibrancy, and health. Has resulted in numerous improvements to crosswalks, signage, and sidewalks citywide.
<u>Transit Master Plan</u> 2005 2012	Describes the type of transit system that will be required to meet Seattle's transit needs through 2030. The downtown circulator & Ballard-to-downtown corridors are being studied right now.

land use code updates

Incentive Zoning 1980s-present	Based on the incentive program developed for downtown in the 1980s, this program now is used around all major ‘upzones’ and requires new projects building above base zoning to either include affordable workforce housing on-site or contribute to funds through which the City provides affordable housing. In some cases, other public benefits may also be required, such as new open space or landmark preservation.
<u>Pedestrian Designations</u> 1980s-present	Designations limiting auto-oriented uses and promoting street level vitality, P-zones strengthen business districts and help implement neighborhood plans.
<u>Neighborhood Design Guidelines</u> 1999-present	Starting in the late 1990’s, 18 neighborhoods developed neighborhood-specific guidelines that have been adopted by the City for use in the design review process that applies to larger projects in urban centers and villages.
Station Area Overlay Districts 2001	Adopted in advance of planned light rail station opening to limit auto-oriented uses, especially long-term parking, light rail stations.
<u>Neighborhood Business District Strategy</u> 2009	Update to Seattle’s commercial code to help protect and enhance neighborhood character, improve the pedestrian environment, make the land use code easier to use, and enhance business districts. Changes include clarification of development standards, revisions to height exceptions for specific situations, adoption of and improvements to Seattle Green Factor landscaping standards, and clarification of parking requirements.
<u>Multifamily Zoning Update</u> 2011	Major update to the multifamily portion of the land use code, to increase flexibility, allow more variety in the types of housing and increase affordability. Changes include new design features, incentives for “green building”, application of Green Factor, changes to height limits, and density incentives for improved design.
<u>Regulatory Reform</u> 2012	Code revisions to promote economic recovery by providing new code flexibility to encourage more investment and business startups in Seattle. Eliminated redundancies in the permitting process, further reduced parking requirements in areas with frequent transit service, allowed mix of residential and commercial uses on ground floor of commercial zones.

transit service investments

ST Regional Express 1999	20 express bus routes that connect Seattle with other cities around the region.
South Lake Union Streetcar 2007	11 streetcar stops connecting downtown and South Lake Union.
Central Link 2009	Light rail service connecting downtown Seattle and SeaTac Airport, including 5 stations in Southeast Seattle connecting to the 5 downtown transit tunnel stations.
RapidRide 2012	Frequent service C & D lines connect downtown to West Seattle and Ballard/Crown Hill. E line on Aurora Avenue North expected in 2013.
First Hill Streetcar 2014	Streetcar line under construction will include 10 streetcar stops connecting Capitol Hill, First Hill, International District, and Pioneer Square.
University Link 2016	Light rail extension under construction including 2 stations that will extend Central Link to Capitol Hill and University of Washington.
North Link 2020	Light rail extension under construction including 3 stations extending Central Link to Northgate.
East Link 2021	Planned light rail line from east side to downtown Seattle via I-90. Includes a new light rail station in Southeast Seattle.

Proposed strategy

The Seattle transit communities strategy would coordinate public and private investments to create more livable neighborhoods within a ten minute walk of frequent, reliable transit service and strengthen existing neighborhoods.

Seattle transit communities strategy

The proposed strategy builds on citywide plans and initiatives and begins with the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment as a first step that would coordinate investment, followed by updates to the land use code, beginning with the Station Area Overlay Districts. Any adopted changes would require public engagement.

Other amendments to the Comprehensive Plan would be made as the major update process moves forward.

Adopt the transit communities Comprehensive Plan amendment

The Planning Commission urges Council to adopt the proposed amendment, which will guide City staff in identifying specific locations of transit communities and engaging the community to develop potential land use code changes that would benefit the designated neighborhoods.

Update Station Area Overlay Districts

The Commission envisions that transit communities would update and ultimately replace Station Area Overlay Districts (SAODs), and map areas around all modes of frequent, reliable transit service. The SAODs were mapped through a Station Area Planning process that began in 1998 and built on the neighborhood plans in eight areas where light rail stations were planned.

While SAODs have been important, more could be done to encourage transit oriented development around light rail stations, particularly to minimize displacement of affordable housing and business space.

The transit communities strategy would support more inclusive, affordable, and diverse neighborhoods where it is easier to walk, bike, or ride transit than to drive a car when accomplishing most daily tasks such as going to the grocery store or getting to work.

what we heard

Transit communities should first and foremost be equitable communities.



Illustration of a multifamily area in a neighborhood that meets 2035 Climate Action Plan goals.



Continue strong public engagement

The process of mapping transit communities and updating the land use code will require a thorough program of community outreach and engagement that makes it easy for people to get involved.

Planning efforts for transit communities would incorporate social media tools as well as Seattle’s award-winning Planning Outreach and Engagement Liaisons, who significantly improve participation from traditionally underrepresented communities.

Essential components of livability

The essential components of livability are a fundamental organizing principle for transit communities. They are vital elements that turn transit oriented development into a great neighborhood.

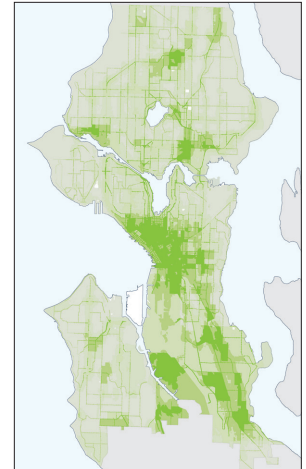
The transit communities strategy emphasizes and prioritizes coordinated investments – public as well as private – to build the essential components identified in neighborhood plans, urban design frameworks, and other community involvement processes.

what we heard

Fund the essential components of livability; neighborhoods need infrastructure that supports growth and connects people to transit service.



2010 transit communities workshop with Planning Commissioners and City staff.



Pedestrian Master Plan priority areas.

The proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment

The proposed amendment would add a new subsection of location specific policies within the Land Use element. The proposed subsection, C-6, outlines the overall purpose and intent of the transit communities policy; introduces the goals, concepts, and approach; discusses the values behind the policy; identifies how transit communities would be identified, and boundaries drawn; and distinguishes among different types of transit communities.

As part of the major update and review of the Comprehensive Plan, future amendments will introduce the concept of transit communities within the citywide land use policies and increase flexibility in rezone criteria for areas that are located within transit communities. Amendments within other elements, such as the urban village and capital facilities elements, would support focused City investments in transit communities, in addition to urban centers and urban villages.

The following pages describe some of the key concepts from the proposed amendment including how we propose to identify transit communities and map the boundaries, the different types of transit communities, and a very general comparison the amount of land within existing planning boundaries – urban centers/villages and SAODs – and illustrative areas around frequent transit service nodes.

The Commission’s February 7, 2013 letter to City Council recommends specific changes to the proposed amendment.

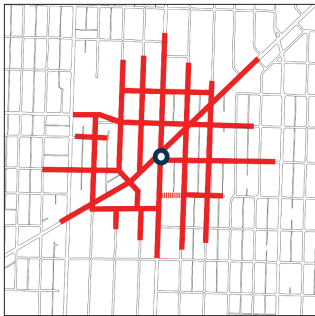
How to identify transit community nodes

We propose using a methodology similar to the one that identifies priorities in the Pedestrian Master Plan, which we adapted to identify the transit community nodes identified in the Planning Commission’s 2010 report.

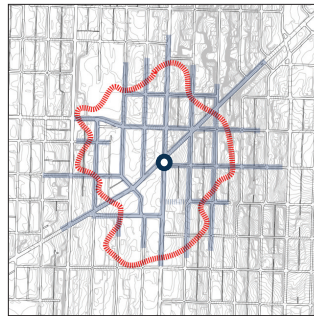
Generally, the data to be used for this analysis falls into three broad categories: pedestrian-demand generators, social equity factors, and corridor function.

Mapped using graphic information systems

street network

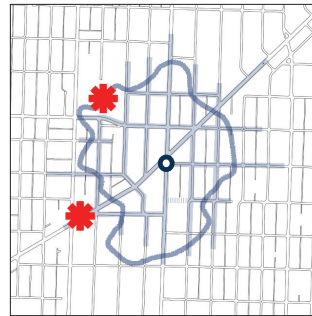


walking effort

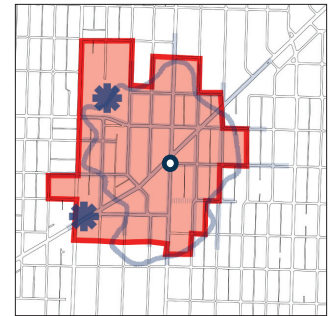


Mapped with community input

neighborhood destinations



transit community boundary



Current data from the Transit Master Plan, 2010 Census, and King County Public Health, among other sources, would be analyzed to identify potential transit community nodes.

Pedestrian demand generators include existing land uses, existing and funded transit service, and population and employment forecasts. Within each of these categories, there are many detailed layers of data that would be scored based on anticipated pedestrian activity that could be expected within one-eighth to one-half mile. The layers would then be aggregated into one map of overall pedestrian demand.

Social equity factors would include public health indicators, such as diabetes and obesity rates, as well as household data such as income, access to vehicles, and housing cost burdens.

Corridor function includes data from SDOT about the type of street and the type of function it provides, which is how the city organizes and plans its street network.

Once the nodes have been identified, the City would work with communities to identify transit community boundaries.

How to map transit community boundaries

The proposed amendment also identifies a data-driven approach to mapping transit community boundaries that would be augmented with input from each neighborhood. This process would build on the concept of a walkshed – or how far the average person is able to walk in 10 minutes, which is about one-half mile. As previously noted, national research indicates that people are typically willing to walk about 10 minutes to transit service that arrives at least as frequently as every fifteen minutes.

Walksheds are mapped in two steps, as illustrated above. First, a half mile is mapped from the transit node along the existing street network rather than by drawing an as-the-crow-flies circle around the transit node. Second, adjustments are made for topography, or walking effort.

The City would then work with each neighborhood to ensure consideration of specific destinations, such as schools, business districts, or parks, that might be just beyond the walkshed but still important to connect to transit stops and stations. After public review, City Council would authorize the new transit community boundaries to be adopted into the land use code.



How to distinguish types of transit communities

Our proposal identifies five types, or typologies, that distinguish broad categories of transit communities in a Seattle-specific context. The typologies recognize different types of transit communities based on major activities, street life, and essential components of livability.

Ultimately, changes to the land use code would reflect these neighborhood differences rather than establishing a one-size-fits-all approach. Each typology could prioritize different strategies regarding integrating land use and essential components of livability into the transit community.

Urban Center

A regional hub in downtown or other regionally designated intensely urbanized area where abundant transit and very-high-density land uses predominate; features wayfinding linkages to and between transit nodes in addition to a rich network of public spaces, civic institutions and destinations.

Mixed-Use Center

A local or regional hub where transit supports a high concentration of jobs, housing and services in a vibrant neighborhood; community facilities for all ages; high levels of complete street improvements and a network of dedicated bicycle facilities. Features a land use mix of residential, pedestrian-oriented retail, and other employment.

what we heard

It is important to recognize differences among neighborhoods.



Photo by Z T Jackson.

Mixed-Use Neighborhood

A local neighborhood centered around transit where a range of retail, commercial and housing options meet most of residents' daily needs; variety of public open spaces often integrated with other public facilities including natural areas, trails, and sports fields; healthy food access; high level of complete street improvements; community facilities and dedicated bicycle facilities connecting to transit. Features a moderate intensity of activity and a land use mix of residential and pedestrian-oriented retail.

Special District

An area near transit featuring a major institution, entertainment district, sports facility, or multimodal transfer hub that creates large pulses of activity; pedestrian environment designed to accommodate large groups, displays, and vendors. May have a very high, intermittent intensity of use associated with large cultural or sporting events. Most special districts in Seattle are within designated urban centers.

Industrial Job Center

A cluster of large and small industrial businesses and ancillary commercial uses well-served by transit and less likely to have the mix of uses or level of pedestrian activity found in other types of transit communities; zoning to allow new residences is strictly prohibited; features facilities to ensure pedestrian and bicycle safety in areas with lots of freight traffic. Features a land use mix of light industrial and commercial uses.

what we heard

Neighborhoods define "complete" differently.



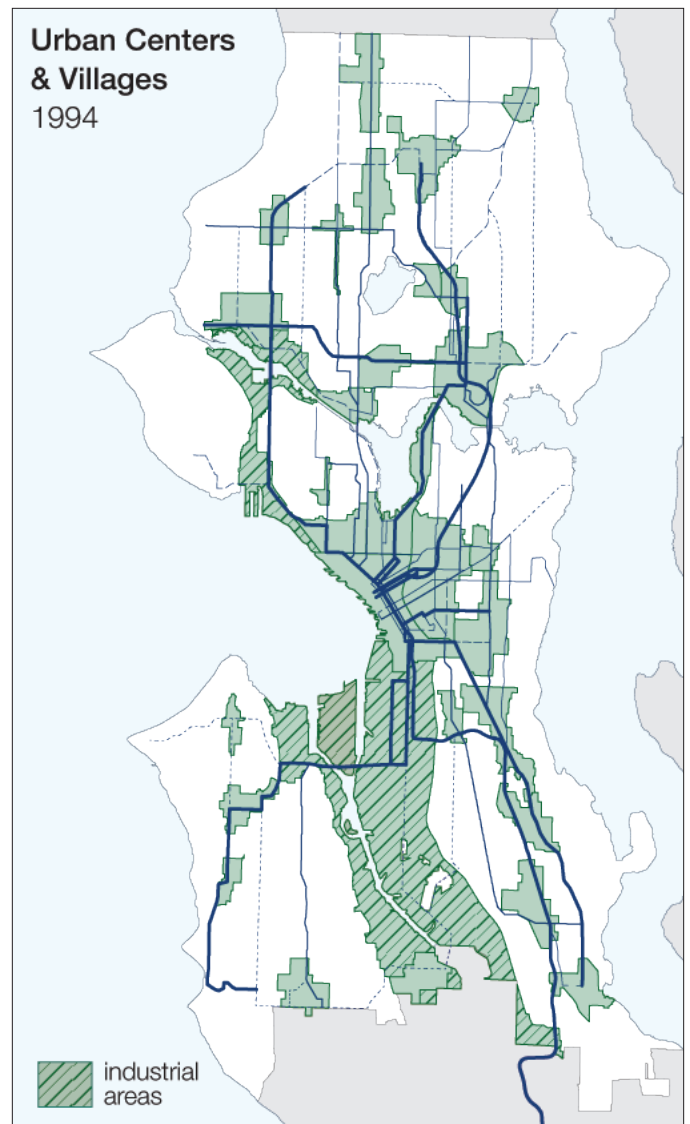
Areas around frequent transit service

The adjacent maps illustrate areas within urban centers and villages, Station Area Overlay districts, and 10 minute walks of select stations with frequent transit service; they also show the Frequent Transit Network as identified in the Transit Master Plan.

Urban centers are regionally designated areas for growth while urban villages are locally designated. SAODs were adopted in 2001 to ensure that investments around light rail stations would advance neighborhood plans.

The areas within a ten minute walkshed on the third map provide a very general illustration of what the transit communities policy might look like – expanding SAODs and mapping additional areas in select locations that meet the criteria described previously.

While urban centers and villages account for slightly less than one third of land, excluding rights-of-way (ROWs) in Seattle, SAODs account for less than one percent. The illustrative areas within a ten minute walk of light rail and RapidRide stations would account for less than five percent of area, excluding ROWs.

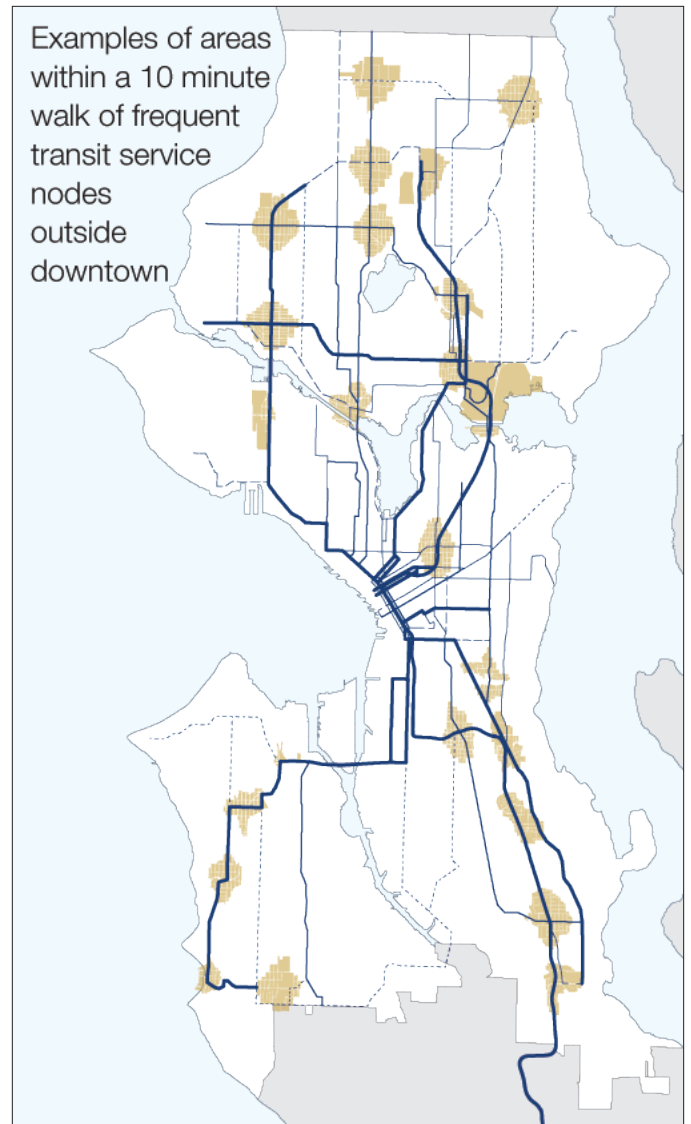
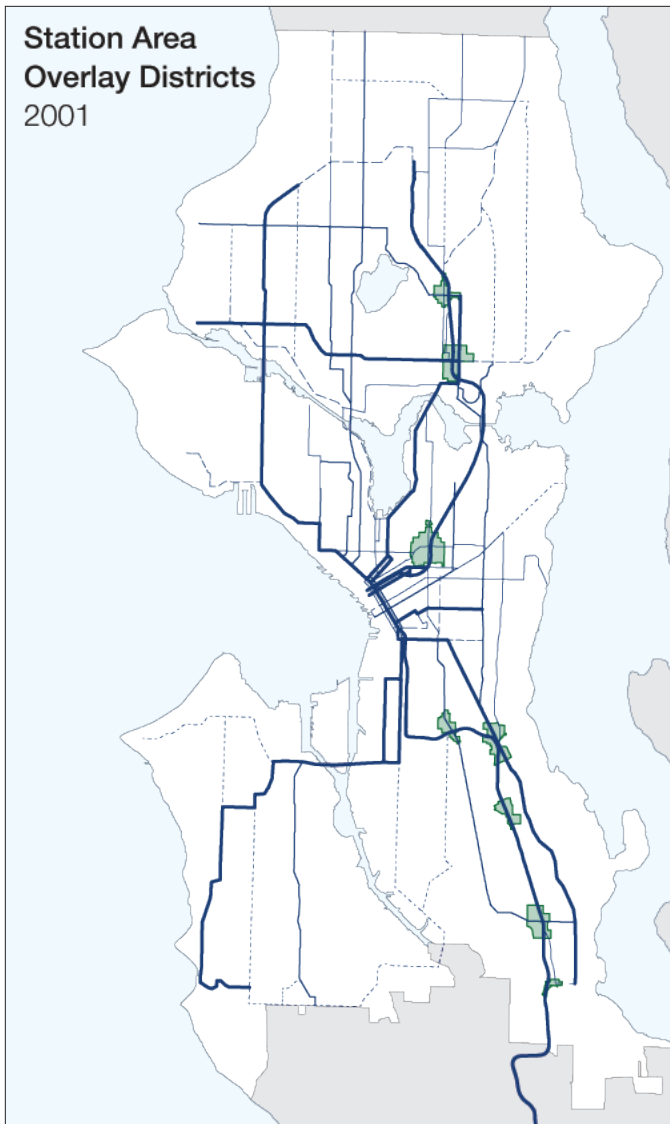




Community members participate in neighborhood planning in southeast Seattle.



Photo courtesy of Top Pot Doughnuts.



areas mapped in the land use code
 illustrative ten minute walksheds
 very frequent/frequent
 very frequent/needs upgrade
 frequent/needs upgrade
 priority upgrade
 future upgrade

Outreach & engagement

The proposed Seattle transit communities strategy has been developed over five years with input from a variety of sources. The tables below outline the major meetings and outreach efforts that helped shape the strategy. The following pages explain more about the major update to Seattle’s Comprehensive Plan and the 2012 Leadership Discussions hosted by the Planning Commission to gather feedback on the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment.

Informing the 2010 Seattle Transit Communities report

report scoping & development

Fall 2008 | City Scoping Roundtable

City Councilmembers and staff, Mayor’s executive staff, representatives from departments including DPD, SDOT, OH, DON, and Parks, as well as a representative from Sound Transit

The Commission could use their expertise to (1) how can the city make the most of transit investment by better aligning land use policies and public amenities (2) provide identify Seattle-specific transit oriented development best practices; (3) determine components of the successful transit oriented land use around transit hubs and transit corridors (4) identify and provide elements of a policy framework to achieving enlivened and successful transit oriented neighborhoods, and (5) better determine certainty and priorities for how to address transit communities.

Summer 2009 | Neighborhood Status Check

~ 350 people attended one of five open house discussion groups
4,576 people responded to the on-line questionnaire

Overall, people are more pleased about the parks and open space, public facilities, and business districts in their neighborhoods and more dissatisfied about safety and transportation. For the most part, people felt that neighborhood plans are being implemented fairly well and that the priorities identified in their plans are still relevant, though some may have changed and some new priorities have arisen. This information encouraged the Commission to stop thinking about ‘amenities’ and start thinking about the essential components of livability.

This intensive check in with communities across Seattle revealed a need to create a more coherent citywide strategy for communities who have access to great transit.

July 2010 : mapping work sessions

Commissioners, DPD, SDOT, OH, and Council Central Staff

As the Planning Commission developed the report we enlisted technical and policy expertise to identify transit community nodes and assign typologies for the purpose of the report. The first work session identified 41 transit communities from 49 transit nodes (identified by SDOT using the Pedestrian Master Plan prioritization methodology). Typologies were also suggested. The second work session helped the Commission identify 14 priority transit communities.



Status Check in-person meeting for Morgan Junction, July 28, 2009



The Seattle Transit Communities report release event in November 2010.

report release & presentations

November 2010 | public report release event

~150 people attended including Councilmembers Bagshaw, Clark, O'Brien, and Rasmussen

A public event where the Commission released our framework policy report [Seattle Transit Communities Integrating Neighborhoods with Transit](#). The public and the press were invited to an open house to view boards, materials and the report. The Commission made a public presentation and four members of the Seattle City Council were provided with advance copies of the report also presented their initial thoughts and feedback about the report. After the release of the Commission presented our work to a wide variety of audiences including decision makers, city officials, stakeholders, constituents and community members to answer questions and hear feedback about the policy and next steps (see below for details).

2011-2012 | briefings and presentations

City leaders, officials, advisors

We briefed City officials and staff on our report to get feedback and determine the next steps and to help us refine our comp plan proposal. This presentations including: Seattle City Council meeting (public meeting), Mayor Cabinet; City of Seattle District Coordinators, DPD planning division, Seattle Design Commission, Mayor's Regulatory Reform roundtable, Transit Master Plan technical advisory team, Transit Master Plan advisory group, Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee, Climate Action Plan Transportation Technical Advisory Group, Climate Action Plan Green Ribbon Commission.

Community and civic organizations

Several community and civic organizations invited the Planning Commission to attend meetings, brownbag lunches and forums to present our work. Some of these included Great City, Futurewise, Seattle Living, Urban Land Institute, and Seattle Chamber of Commerce Policy committee. These presentations were designed as an opportunity to share the Commissions work and recommendations, and questions and to hear feedback from a broader audience. Many of the forums we attended were open to the general public.

National and regional conferences

We were selected to present our work at numerous national and local conferences including the National American Planning Association conference, the American Society of Landscape Architects national conference, the Washington State American Planning Association conference and, the Cascadia Collaborative joint conference Oregon & Washington American Planning Association.



Councilmember O'Brien poses with community members at the December 2011 meeting about the Comprehensive Plan major update.



A Planning Outreach & Engagement Liaison takes notes at the December 2011 meeting about the Comprehensive Plan major update.



Commissioner Leslie Miller presents information at the May 2012 meeting about the major update to the Comprehensive Plan.

Comprehensive Plan major update

2011-present | multiple stakeholder events

~1,400 people responded to an on-line questionnaire

“My dream for Seattle is...”
 “What other topics should be included in the review?”

~150 people participated in the “Transform Seattle” event

Commission members observed, participated in or assisted with this meeting and discussions that took place in December 2011 at New Holly. Planning Outreach and Engagement Liaisons worked with communities speaking eight different languages.

~50 people participated in a May 2012 community meeting

The Planning Commission assisted the Department of Planning and Development by co-hosting and having Commissioners lead small group discussions at their first public discussion about the Comp Plan Major update. A major theme of this public meeting was a citywide transit community’s policy. Participants were introduced to the concept and had the opportunity to provide their thoughts and feedback.

Business, labor, and civic leaders

What we heard from business district associations, neighborhood groups, and unions.

Big themes and consensus points.

1. There is a real value in having a policy that leverages billions of investment in transit. The Commission's approach is sound, makes a lot of sense and will provide more clarity about how the City can leverage all the billions in transit investment. From a tax perspective, it makes a lot of sense to create these compact and connected communities around really great transit service by focusing scarce resources.

2. This policy is a good economic development approach as well as good environmental policy. The approach is sound and the policy offers many opportunities to further the vision for a healthy, economically viable, diverse, affordable city. It will help Seattle achieve goals we already have by putting a critical mass of jobs and housing near transit.

3. A transit community approach is a more equitable approach. With transportation costs being high the ability to rely on transit will be a significant savings to people living and working in transit communities.

4. This is a good first step but more is needed. The proposed Comp Plan policy is a good first step in defining transit communities. More is needed as the Comp Plan update moves forward and the land use code is updated.

Identifying and addressing unintended consequences and challenges.

1. Recognize authenticity and particularity of different communities. In order to make sure this policy addresses context while creating a useful framework and approach the proposed transit community policy recognizing authenticity

and particularity. The typologies are a helpful way to think about different needs for different communities.

2. Prioritizing Resources is Always a Challenge. Forty-something transit communities might be too many places to focus on. Consider designating fewer and/or how to best prioritize resources like levy dollars, money for sidewalks and all the other important investments. Consider tweaking the methodology so there is higher level of transit services needed to qualify as a designated transit community.

3. Consider transit impacts of Metro service cuts. Metro is facing serious service cuts in the coming years unless transit funding is addressed. The City will need to make sure transit agencies are part of this conversation and understand what transit service might be effected and whether that impacts what qualifies

as a transit community be our definition of frequent and reliable service

4. Transit communities should be viewed as places for growth. Maximize public investment and promote affordability by creating corresponding housing and job densities in transit communities. The language used in Denver, "areas of growth and areas of stability", is applicable in Seattle as well where the vast majority of residentially zoned land will remain unchanged. It is therefore appropriate that the City should consider a variety and mix of zoning to achieve desired growth. For example, a broader mix of low-scale housing types should be allowed in single family zones within a transit community.

Housing and Equity Leaders

What we heard from affordable housing developers and philanthropic organizations.

Big themes and consensus points

1. Places with the greatest level of frequent and reliable transit should be considered the greatest areas for opportunity.

A citywide transit community strategy can help clarify and direct expectations about the vision for Seattle and the commitment to leveraging investments in transit.

2. There is a real value in policies that consider combined household costs of housing and transportation. Since transportation is the second highest household cost after housing, it makes sense to locate housing affordable for all incomes within and 5 or 10 minute walk of frequent and reliable transit.

3. Creating equitable communities is an important goal of this policy. Transit communities by their very nature are equitable communities and are about diversity and access to jobs, housing, and services that are served by transit. Strengthen the policy language in the proposal regarding equity.

Develop policies and create partnerships to allow existing communities prosper from frequent transit service by minimizing displacement, particularly for affordable housing and businesses.

Identifying and addressing unintended consequences and challenges

1. Access and equity also means addressing public safety because if people don't feel safe walking to the transit stop it won't matter how close it is or how nice the sidewalks are.

2. Clarify that 'complete' doesn't necessarily mean that everything has to be within one community. Transit communities need to be both internally accessible to people as well as externally connecting people with jobs and other important destinations. It is hard for each neighborhood to have all the pieces that would make it 'complete'. Consider access to other destinations on a corridor when prioritizing investments. For example, maybe there is not a library or community center in every transit community but people should be able to reach everything they need within 20 minutes by transit.

Urban sustainability leaders

What we heard from development professionals and environmental advocates.

Big themes and consensus points

1. Create equitable and sustainable communities.

A transit community strategy has to be grounded first and foremost in creating equitable communities. Equity is as important an objective as sustainability and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Focus on more opportunity for affordable living options and better access to economic opportunity.

If done right, transit communities should provide equal access to jobs, schools, critical services, and healthy food all within nearby proximity. Furthermore, equity is about aging in place, or not having to leave your neighborhoods when

you have kids. Equity should include safe routes to schools, great communities with school and parks and all the good things that enhance quality of life. Strong policies that reinforce healthy living, public health and promote walking to combat the obesity epidemic are also essential.

2. Focus on how people get to transit. Policies and investments need to focus on access to the station and creating mixed use, mixed income communities close to great transit. Be intentional and prescriptive about how people get to transit stations.

Access is important. Support both the 10 minute walkshed concept as well as the 1-3 mile bikeshed concept in planning and investments.

3. Good parking policies are essential and should recognize that communities evolve.

Avoid transit sprawl which is encouraged by parking lots at transit stations but recognize that parking in transit communities is an issue that needs to evolve over time. Support shared parking or parking that could be easily repurposed or redeveloped as the transit community evolves.

4. Create a whole network of transit community champions similar to the Capitol Hill Champion and give more voice to people who work in and visit neighborhoods. It's not just about people who live in them today.

5. Be bold and directive in pushing for right zoning and better jobs and housing density near transit. Updating policies in the comp plan and land use code that allow the right zoning and better jobs and housing density near transit. Move forward with the other bolder and more forward thinking policies the Commission originally proposed.

About the Seattle Planning Commission

Our vision of the future is one in which our city has thriving neighborhoods where residents and businesses work with the City to plan and produce projects that enhance the quality of life for those who live, work, and play in Seattle.

Comprised of 16 volunteer members appointed by the Mayor and City Council, the Commission acts as steward of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan. In this role, the Commission advises elected officials and City departments on broad goals, policies, and plans for the development of Seattle. The Commission focuses on issues that shape Seattle including land use, transportation, housing, and environmental policy.



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