



ST3 City Team | Seattle Design Commission

October 1, 2026

Purpose of Today's Briefing

A clear look at how SDC's advisory role supports the City's permitting process for light rail projects, followed by an overview of current ST3 planning work including Street Concept Plans, Station Area Planning, transit-oriented development, and equity driven efforts.



Agenda

- ST3 Program - Leadership updates
- SDC's Role Across Permitting Milestones
- WSLE and BLE Street Concept Plans Update
- ST3 Station Area Planning & TOD
- City Equity Processes — Brief Debrief



SDC advisory review of light rail facilities is unique

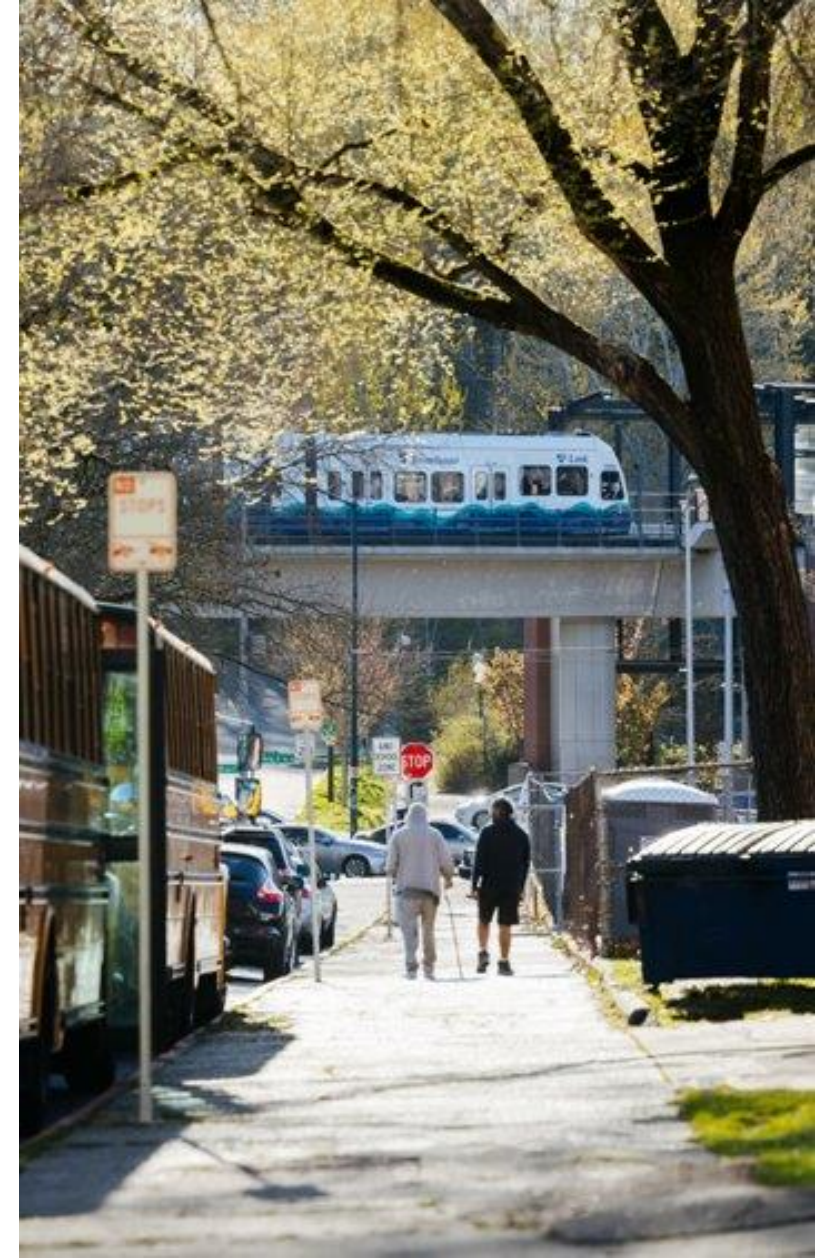
- Most extensive infrastructure investment in Seattle's history
- Designing guideway, tunnels, and stations in built and ecologically sensitive environments is technically complex
- Project development requires early and ongoing coordination to support project delivery on-time and within budget
- The City and Sound Transit have worked over many years to develop tools and processes to support SDC advisory reviews while streamlining permitting



The SDC's role in light rail design?

Seattle Land Use Code was updated in July 2025 to clarify the scope of the SDC review topics for light rail design:

- Architectural, aesthetic, and urban design qualities;
- Transportation, pedestrian accessibility, and circulation;
- Public amenity features and spaces;
- Wayfinding; and
- Integration of public art into the facilities.



What will the SDC review and when?

Light Rail Stations & ancillary facilities

- Preliminary Engineering- informs final design
- 30% design- informs permit development
- 60% design- Master Use Permit (MUP)
- 90% briefing- Construction

Other project elements

- Bridges and portals
- Guideway segments



How does the SDC advise on light rail?

At each SDC review:

- Sound Transit will present project design elements
- The City Staff Review Panel will report information to inform the SDC review process
- **The SDC will provide recommendations to SDCI and SDOT on modifications to the design better meet the intent of adopted City of Seattle Light Rail Design Guidelines**
- SDCI and SDOT Director's will consider SDC recommendations as the project advances through permitting

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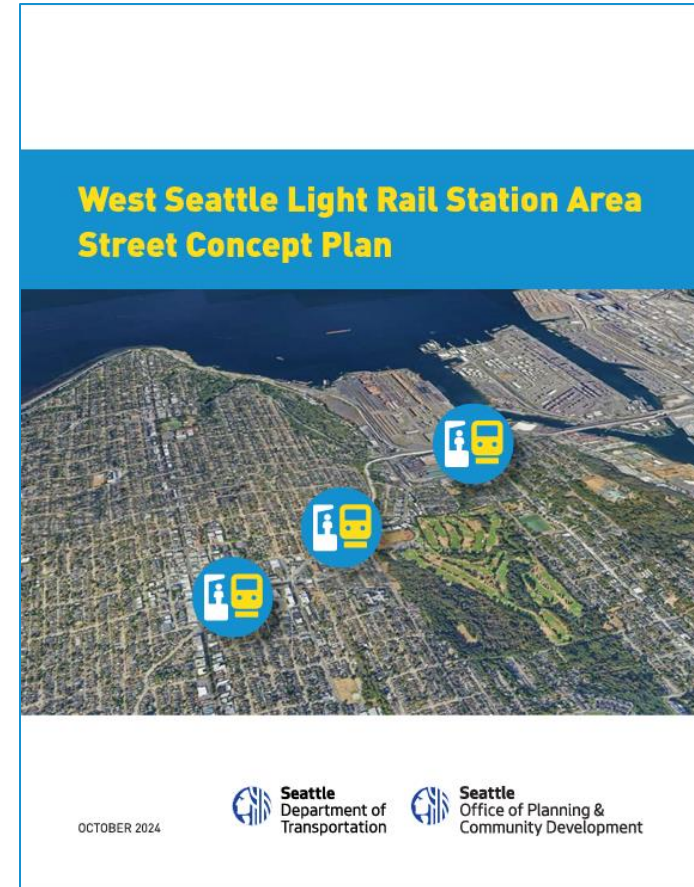


City Equity Processes

- **West Seattle Link Extension (WSLE)**
 - Partnering with City and Sound Transit Engagement Leads to support equitable engagement strategies for upcoming Engagement plans
- **Ballard Link Extension (BLE)**
 - No new update; the BLE RET report timing depends on the pending Draft EIS
- **Graham Street Infill Station**
 - City and Sound Transit established an interagency RET planning cohort, with Equity Leads from both agencies guiding the process
 - The cohort identifies opportunities to use RET outcomes as guiding principles and an equity lens for station design and station area planning

WSLE Street Concept Plans

- The West Seattle Light Rail Station Area Street Concept Plan was adopted by SDOT and OPCD Director's Rule in 2024.
- Sound Transit has modified station locations and designs since that plan was adopted
- The City is working to make minor updates to concepts in response
- Overlap with non-motorized access projects design, which is advancing



BLE Street Concept Plans

- Initial Street Concept Plans will focus on:
 - Dearborn Station
 - Denny Station
 - Seattle Center Station
- Coordinated with OPCD on recent engagement for SLU and Uptown Regional Center Plans
- Planning process will officially kickoff in Q4 with more formal engagement in early 2027

WHAT DO YOU WANT NEAR THE STATION?

What would you like to see near the future Seattle Center light rail station? (Pick 3)

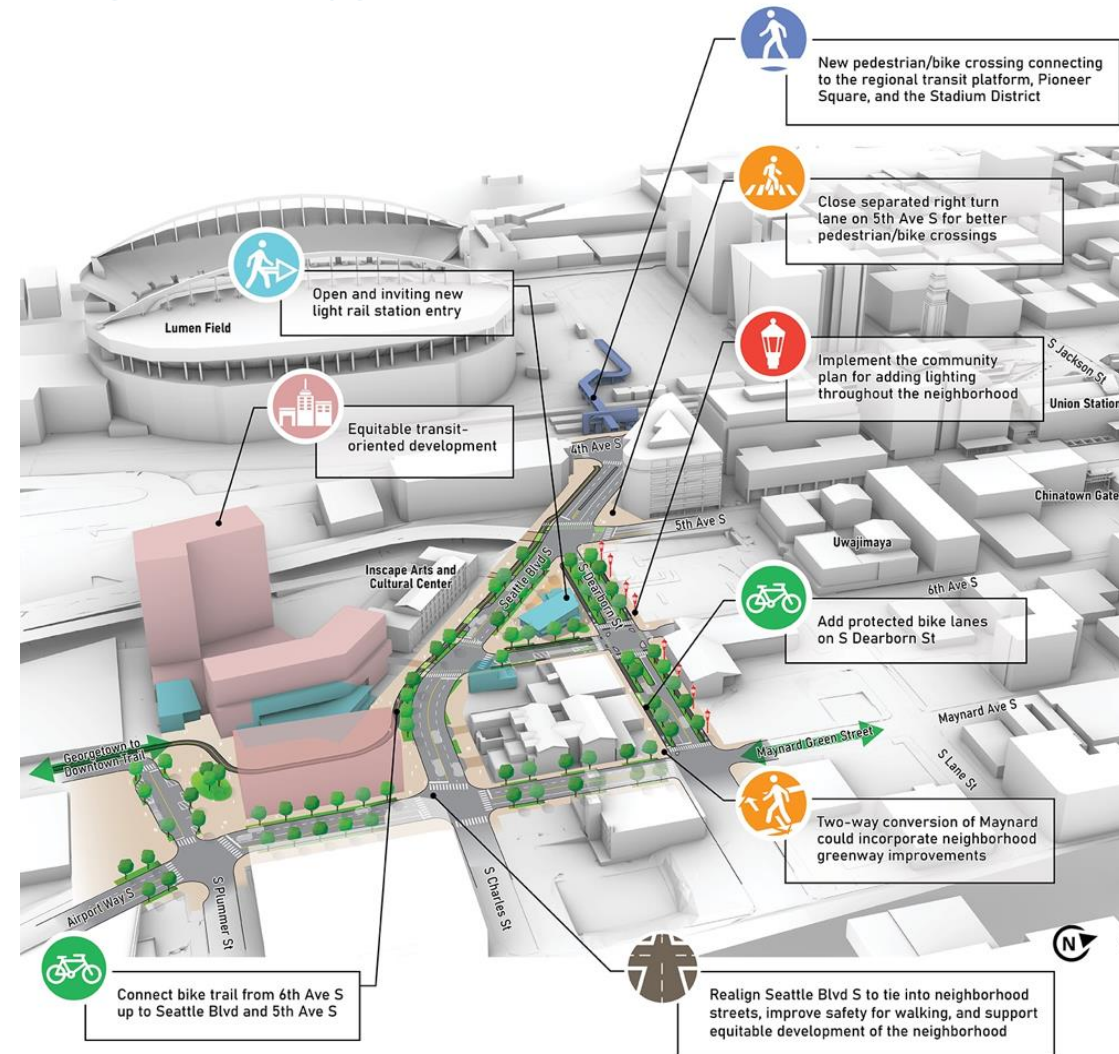
1  PLACE STICKER HERE	2  PLACE STICKER HERE	3  PLACE STICKER HERE	OTHER Write your other ideas on a sticky note
Trees and plants Landscaping and green spaces	Places to sit and wait Benches, tables, and chairs	Public art Sculptures, murals	
4  PLACE STICKER HERE	5  PLACE STICKER HERE	6  PLACE STICKER HERE	
Lighting Smaller, warm lights for people who walk and roll	Places to play Ping-pong tables, giant Jenga, hopscotch	Event-ready features Electrical outlets, space for tents	
7  PLACE STICKER HERE	8  PLACE STICKER HERE	9  PLACE STICKER HERE	
Bike parking For bikes and scooters	Shade and weather protection Umbrellas, shade sails, building awnings	Loading For people and goods	

City of Seattle Light Rail Team: lightrail@seattle.gov

South Downtown Hub Framework Plan

- Human-scale streets and public spaces
- Activate & renovate public spaces
- Transformed neighborhood south of S Dearborn St and Seattle Blvd S
- Robust development and public spaces at planned Link stations (Midtown, CID)

Reimagined perspective of the S Dearborn St and Seattle Blvd S



Station Area Planning

The City and communities will collaborate to:

- Enhance what we love about our neighborhoods and address community needs
- Guide new development and investments
- Improve connections for people walking, biking, driving, and taking transit



What makes a great neighborhood?



DAILY LIFE FEELS EASY.

The places we need every day are close to home and within easy reach. Destinations are clustered and well-connected by a network of safe sidewalks, bike routes, and frequent, reliable transit, giving us options for getting to the places we need to go.

Life isn't all logistics.

With school and work, parks, shops, and friends nearby, our everyday routine is so much simpler.

- Parents of Young Kids



WE WANT TO SPEND TIME.

Streets and public spaces are lively and welcoming, with lots of trees, active storefronts, and comfortable places to sit and gather with neighbors. They make it easy and enjoyable to get outside, walk, meet others, and spend time in the community.

I can go places on my own.

I walk to school and meet friends after without needing a ride.

- Middle Schooler



WE CAN BUILD A LIFE.

A range of housing choices, local businesses, and trusted community services make it possible to put down roots, find opportunity, and rely on people and places to support us over time.

I can keep living the life I've built.

The friends, places, and routines that matter to me are all right here, giving me the support to stay independent as life changes.

- Retiree



WE HAVE EVERYTHING WE NEED.

The things we need for everyday life are all here and easy to reach. Homes, jobs, shops, parks, schools, services, and community spaces are available throughout the neighborhood, making it feel connected and complete.

I can get where I need to go

Wide sidewalks, places to rest, and shorter trips help me stay active and connected.

- Wheelchair User



Station Area Plans

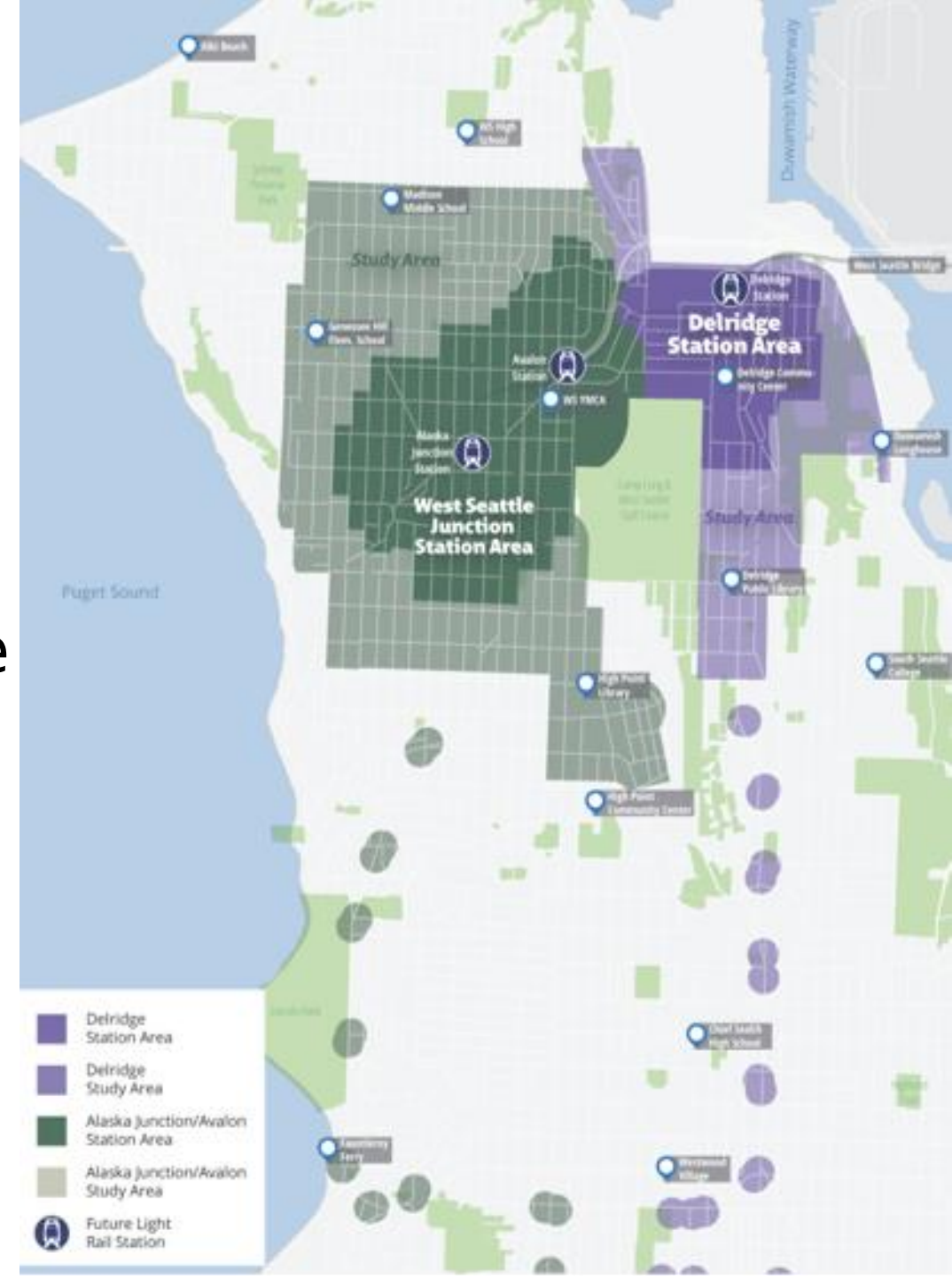
Place-specific approaches
to citywide goals

- Vision for growth
- Long-term strategies
- Near-term actions – *City & Community*
- Detailed projects
- Identifying coordination for public investments



Where are we Planning?

- **Station Areas** are roughly ½ mile from light rail stations, or a 10-minute walk, with a focus on land use and holistic community development
- **Study area** is roughly 1 mile from future light rail stations, with a focus on transportation improvements
- **Active now:** City-led efforts in WSJ, Delridge, Graham



Timeline

*We are
here!*

PROJECT PHASES



What We've Heard: All

 [Read the Phase 1 Engagement Report](#)

- Support for more housing, also concerns
 - Loss of old homes, parking, safety, character and design of buildings, open space/light and air, perceived as not family-friendly, design matters!
- More parks and open spaces, trees
- More third spaces and free to use public spaces
- Focus on kids – spaces, safety, and independent mobility
- Openness to taller buildings if paired with certain features
 - 3+ bedroom units, cultural/arts uses, on site open space
- Affordability



What We've Heard: WSJ

A neighborhood families want to live in

- More public spaces, green spaces
- Make California Ave more pedestrian-oriented
- Improve comfort and safety of walking, biking, transit
- Spaces for kids
- Arts and culture



What We've Heard: Delridge

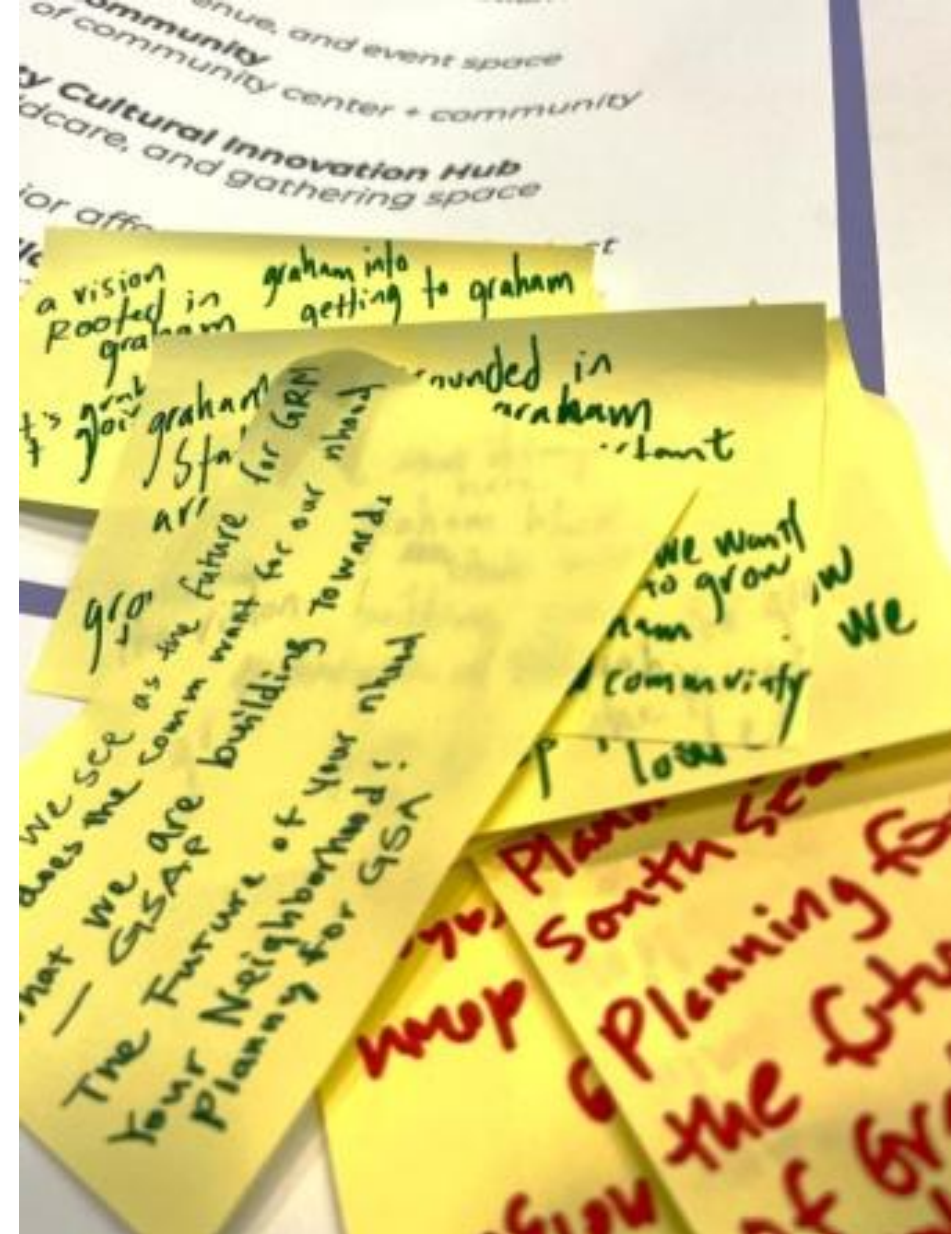
Focus on intergenerational housing and spaces

- Safe neighborhood streets, traffic calming, ped infrastructure
- Grow a mixed-use hub with housing and businesses
- Food access
- Longfellow Creek, park, green destination



What We've Heard: Graham

- Improved walking and biking routes throughout the neighborhood and to key destination
- Public spaces that are connected and support intergenerational activities
- Retaining and strengthening community and cultural anchors
- Business stability during and after light rail construction
- Affordability and displacement risk
- Maintaining space for business visitors
- Traffic calming on neighborhood streets



Land Use Concepts

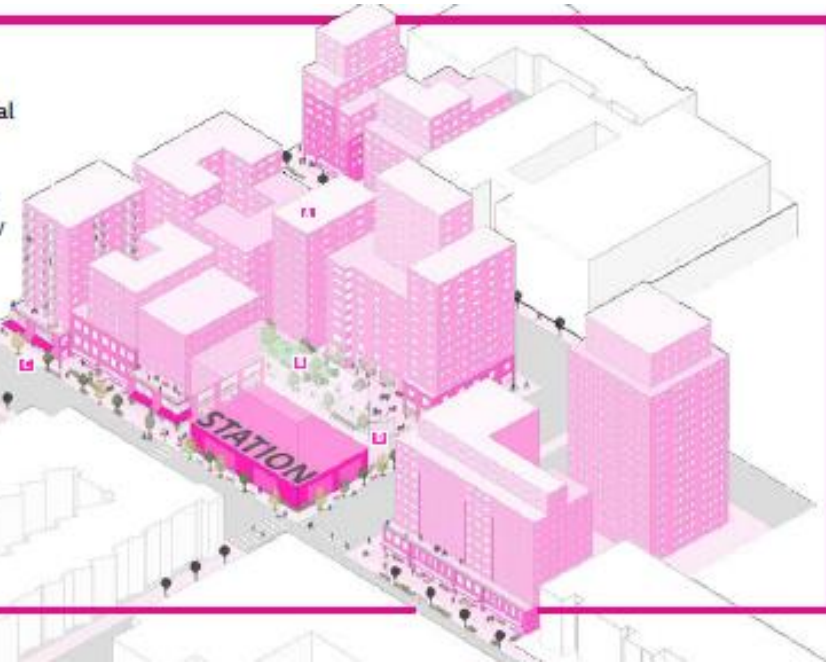
Place Types

- Station Blocks
- Mixed-Use
- Mid-Scale residential
- Place-specific character areas or corridors

1 STATION BLOCKS

a lively station-adjacent district with local businesses, services, and amenities

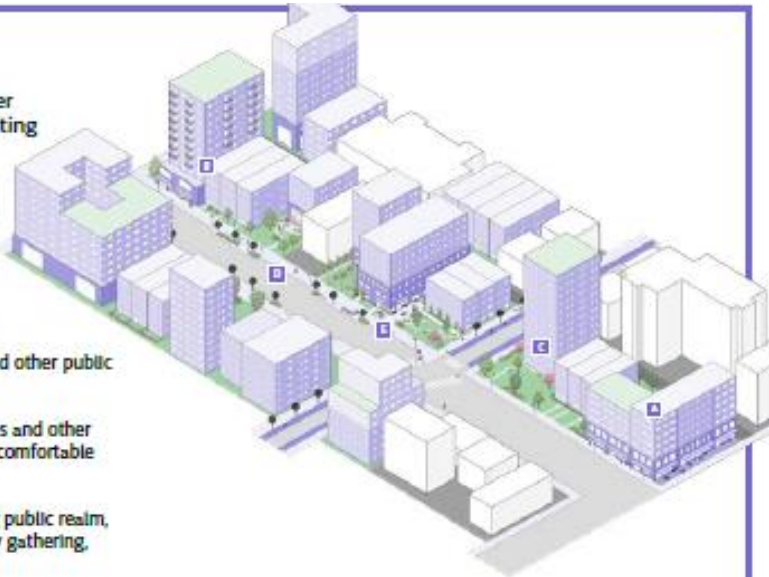
- A** Allow taller buildings, especially where new development includes public amenities and/or community features
- B** Prioritize public open space
- C** Improve pedestrian comfort and connectivity by widening sidewalks, and adding amenities like street trees
- D** Foster a lively, inviting public realm with active ground floor commercial uses and gathering spaces



2 MIXED USE

a walkable neighborhood center with housing, services, and inviting public spaces

- A** Allow mixed-use buildings with homes, shops, and services
- B** Create more diverse housing options, including family-sized units and ground-entry units
- C** Add more housing near parks and other public amenities
- D** Introduce traffic-calming features and other amenities to support a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment
- E** Ensure a generous and engaging public realm, with lots of space for community gathering, trees, and open space



3 MID-SCALE RESIDENTIAL

a close-knit residential neighborhood with a range of housing options and some local retail and services

- A** Maintain small-scale residential feel with stoops, porches, and landscaping
- B** Allow more housing options, including apartments and townhomes, especially near parks and other amenities
- C** Introduce small-scale commercial uses on ground floors to serve local residents
- D** Enhance the public realm by maintaining and creating more greenspace

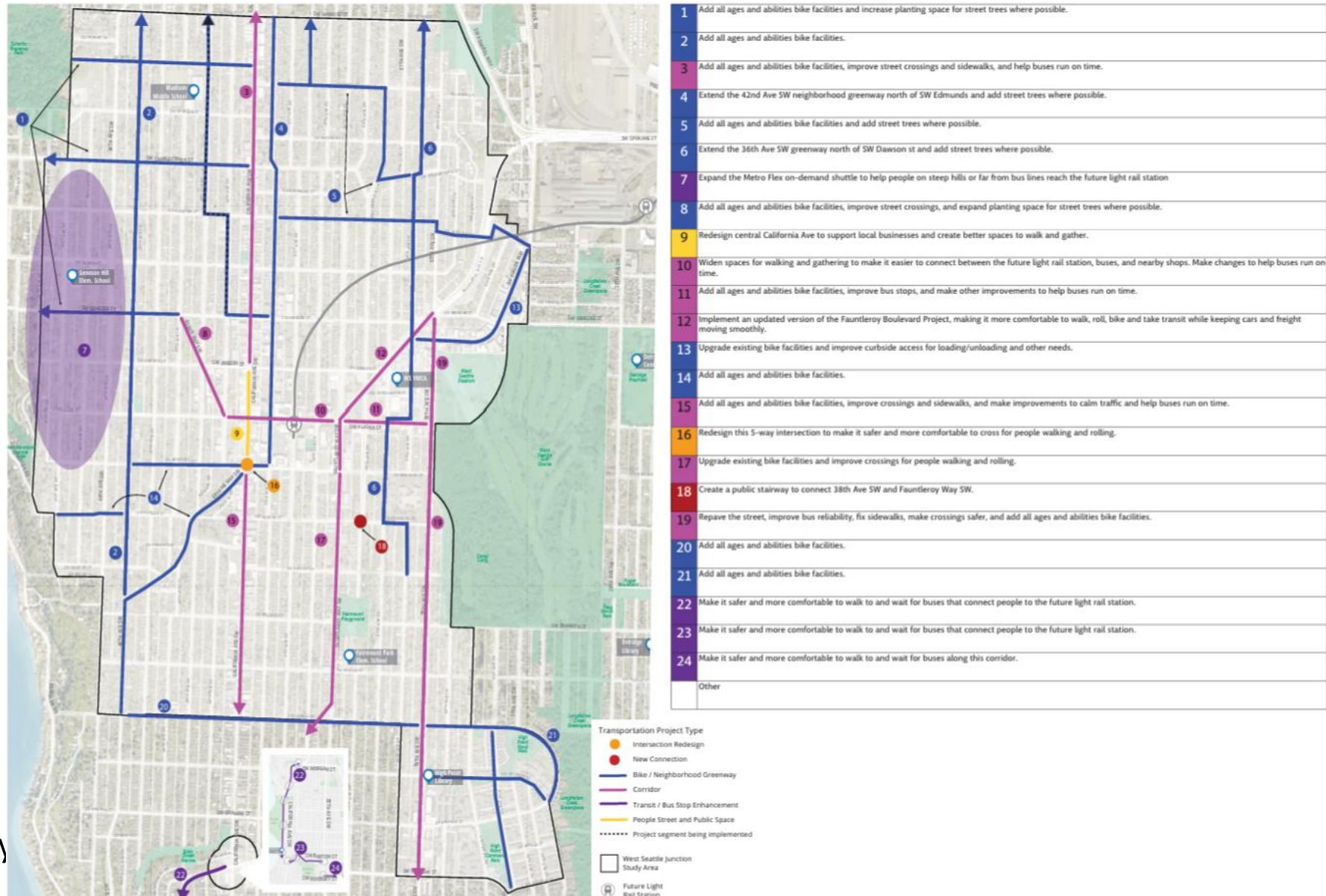


ST3 Cit



- A** Retain the historic character, with small local storefronts and buildings up to 4-6 stories
- B** Maintain a lively streetscape with continuous active ground floor uses
- C** Enhance the public realm with wider sidewalks, public seating, public art, lighting, and play features
- D** Expand arts and cultural uses, programming, and events
- E** Introduce traffic-calming features and other amenities to support a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment

Transportation Ideas Example: WSJ



Urban Design & People Streets

Place stickers on the streets you think would make good places to gather.

Streets can be "people first" places that prioritize people gathering, playing, or accessing businesses or other destinations on foot or by bike. These low-traffic or car-free spaces can be temporary or permanent depending on community needs.



Place a sticker on 3 improvements you would like to see on car-free or low-traffic streets.

1

PLACE STICKER HERE

More trees, plants, and shade

2

PLACE STICKER HERE

More public seating
Benches, tables, and chairs

3

PLACE STICKER HERE

Public art

4

PLACE STICKER HERE

Pedestrian-scale lighting
Smaller, warm lights designed for walking spaces

5

PLACE STICKER HERE

Play features
Like outdoor ping-pong tables or painted sidewalk games like hopscotch

6

PLACE STICKER HERE

Event-ready features
Like outdoor electrical outlets to easily host markets or fairs

7

PLACE STICKER HERE

Traffic calming and redirection
Like traffic circles, curb extensions

8

PLACE STICKY NOTE HERE

Other
Write your other ideas on a sticky note

9

PLACE STICKER HERE

I do not support these types of improvements in our streets.

Next Steps

- Analyzing feedback from engagement
- Refining land use concepts and transportation ideas
- Developing more detailed urban design recommendations
- Working with City departments to identify strategies and actions that can work towards addressing community priorities
- Draft Plans anticipated Q1/2 2027

Planning for Development

ST Agency TOD

Working with ST to optimize potential TOD sites

Considerations for land use zoning, integration with SAP

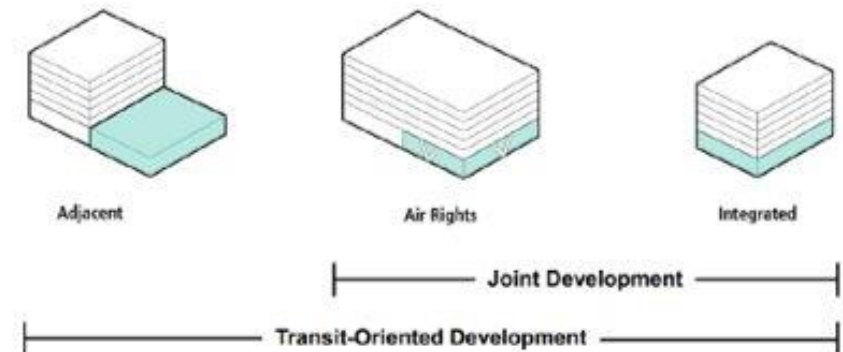
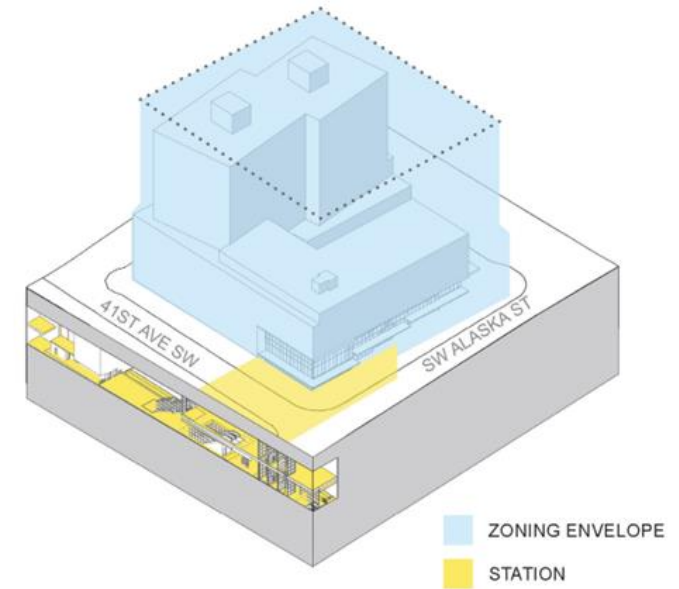
ST Joint Development

Partnering with ST, SDCI to advance identify land use and permitting challenges for JD

Community ETOD

CAG policy recommendations Q4

Will be integrating into SAPs, TOD work





**THANK
YOU!**