

Frequently Asked Questions - 130th and 145th Draft Station Area Plan

If you have a FAQ, email to patrice.carroll@seattle.gov.

Updated (8/16/21)

New Questions/Comments about the proposed Future Land Use Map Amendment.

Why so little time to respond to the proposed Future Land Use Map Amendment? Why the urgency to rezone when the station will not be built until 2031?

On August 5, 2021 the Sound Transit Board adopted a realignment plan that will serve as a framework for delivering agency system expansions as rapidly as possible and aims to open the 130th St Station in 2025.

The City has long standing policy to support higher-density, mixed-use development in the areas surrounding light rail stations. Discussion of land uses changes for this location have been underway for some time:

- Sound Transit began studying a potential 130th station in the mid-2000s, including an assessment of the potential for transit-oriented development surrounding the station. The 130th station was not included in the 2008 ST2 voter approved package. The Draft ST3 package included an unfunded “provisional station” at 130th Street. Extensive lobbying by community members and elected officials persuaded Sound Transit to include a fully-funded “infill station” in the 2016 ST3 voter approved package.
- In 2014 – 2016 the City studied the impacts of a potential urban village surrounding a future 130th Street station as part of the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan update. A “Potential Village” surrounding the 130th station is shown in Growth Strategy Figure 4 in the 2016 adopted plan.
- In 2019 the City initiated a station area planning process for the areas surrounding the 145th and 130th stations and the 145th BRT station. The City implemented a variety of strategies to raise awareness and get feedback from community members.

The public will continue to have multiple opportunities over the next two to three years to weigh in on zoning alternatives and environmental studies, as well as any legislation with additional Comprehensive Plan amendments and proposed zoning changes.

As the City’s representatives on the Sound Transit Board, CM Juarez and Mayor Durkan have been advocating for the 130th station during Sound Transit’s realignment process. Some Sound Transit Board members were critical of the single-family zoning surrounding the 130th station. The future land use map amendment helped demonstrate the City’s commitment to higher-density, mixed-use, transit-oriented development near the 130th station. The design of the station was accelerated and will be complete in 2021. The station area we are studying for land use changes includes the 145th light rail station (opening 2025) and 145th BRT station (potentially opening 2026). Because of their geographic proximity, it makes sense to study these areas together.

What is the Seattle Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan is a 20-year vision and roadmap for Seattle’s future. Our plan guides City decisions on where to build new jobs and houses, how to improve our transportation system, and where

to make capital investments such as utilities, sidewalks, and libraries. Our Comprehensive Plan is the framework for most of Seattle’s big-picture decisions on how to grow while preserving and improving our neighborhoods.

Tree Preservation - There is no discussion of what would happen to these trees when construction of multi-unit housing takes place. How many of them would have to be cut down? What would be the impact?

The future land use map amendment does not change the underlying single-family zoning. Future zoning studies will assess these impacts for different categories of proposed zoning. The Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections administers and enforces the City's tree protection regulations that apply to private property. These regulations provide protections for certain trees. SDCI has proposed new rules that strengthen tree protection regulations and is awaiting direction from the Mayor’s Office. More information about that process and where to send comments can be found here: <https://www.seattle.gov/sdci/codes/changes-to-code/tree-protection>

Traffic Impacts - The Addendum does not adequately address traffic through the area when the station opens.

Sound Transit has done extensive studies of the traffic impacts of a light rail station at 130th Street. More information about these studies can be found on the project website. <https://www.soundtransit.org/system-expansion/ne-130th-st-infill-station>

Water Quality & Construction Impacts - How will construction materials be prevented from entering the Thornton Creek? What if fuel, oil, or chemicals used for construction are accidentally spilled? What are spill response mitigation and prevention? The Addendum does not address impact from construction vehicles, and arrangements to protect the safety of the residents.

The future land use map amendment does not change the underlying single-family zoning. Future zoning studies will assess these impacts for different categories of proposed zoning. Most projects in Seattle require permits including electrical, plumbing, side sewer, construction, and land use permits. New projects must meet all code requirements and development standards. The land use permit, also called a master use permit, can require other levels of review such as environmental review, conditional uses, etc. In addition, the Seattle Building Code provides minimum requirements for design and construction of new buildings. Seattle has adopted the 2018 International Building Code, with amendments specific to our city. Chapter 33 governs safety during construction. More information about permits and codes can be found here: <https://www.seattle.gov/sdci>.

Can my property be included in the “future land use map amendment” or the “focus area for future zoning study”? Can my property be rezoned sooner than the station area rezone in 2023 - 2024?

The future land use map amendment has been forwarded to City Council Land Use and Neighborhood committee for review. Property owners can provide comments the committee or testify at the public hearing (see next steps below). The “focus area for future zoning study” in the Draft Plan will be finalized in the Final Station Area Plan. We will consider all the comments received in finalizing that area. However, the addition of a single parcel that is not contiguous to the study area is unlikely. If your property is not included in the final study area, you can continue to advocate for a rezone throughout the multi-year rezoning process.

Any property owner or other interested party may initiate a request for a rezone, which is an amendment to the City’s official Land Use Map. This process is described in the Land Use Code as a

quasi-judicial rezone application. The decision on such applications is made by the Seattle City Council. The review and decision process includes a report and recommendation from the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI). The City's Hearing Examiner then conducts a public hearing for the City Council and writes a report which includes a recommendation to the City Council. The City Council applies rezone criteria to the record established at the public hearing in making a decision on the application. More information about applying for a rezone is here:

<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/publications/cam/cam228.pdf>.

What are the next steps for the future land use map amendment?

This amendment, part of a package of annual Comprehensive Plan amendments, were transmitted to Council. City Council Land Use & Neighborhoods Committee will review the amendments, hold a public hearing on Wednesday, September 8, 2021 at 9:30 AM. More information about how to participate in or this public hearing can be found here:

<https://cosaccela.seattle.gov/Portal/Cap/CapDetail.aspx?Module=DPDPublicNotice&TabName=DPDPublicNotice&capID1=21SCI&capID2=00000&capID3=79604&agencyCode=SEATTLE&IsToShowInspection=>

Previously Posted Questions about the Draft Plan (See *UPDATED* questions about Sound Transit's schedules)

1. What does it mean if my home is in the "early action limited rezone" area (one block adjacent to the 130th station)?

In 2021, the City is considering making a change to the Comprehensive Plan's future land use map for the one block closest to the station, from "single family residential" to "mixed use/ commercial." Property owners on this block will be notified this spring if the City decides to proceed. While this change to the Comprehensive Plan does not actually change the zoning for this block, it would allow a landowner to request a zoning change for their property, what we call a "contract rezone." Learn more about contract rezone process here. The City could also consider zoning changes after additional study. <http://www.seattle.gov/DPD/Publications/CAM/cam228.pdf>.

2. Where can I get more information about the design of the 130th station?

Sound Transit leads the design of the 130th station. We will forward any comments about station design to Sound Transit. The contact person is My Nguyen, Community Outreach Specialist, (206) 370-5690, my.nguyen@soundtransit.org. More information about the NE 130th Infill Station can be found at this website:

<https://www.soundtransit.org/system-expansion/ne-130th-st-infill-station>

3. Where can I learn more about the 18 station access improvement projects and other transportation projects?

Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) leads the development and coordination of station access projects such as sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian crossings, etc. We will forward comments about transportation improvements and the multimodal access study that we receive to SDOT. The contact person is Chris Saleeba, SDOT, chris.saleeba@seattle.gov. The final multimodal station access study can be found here:

<https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/OPCD/OngoingInitiatives/NE130thAnd145thStationAreaPlanning/130th148thMultimodalAccessStudy.pdf>

Transit Questions

4. What is Sound Transit?

Sound Transit, a regional public authority, builds and operates regional transit service throughout the urban areas of Pierce, King and Snohomish Counties. Transit services include Link light rail; Sounder trains; ST Express Bus; Tacoma Link light rail; and soon, Bus Rapid Transit.

5. When were the 130th and 145th light rail and bus rapid transit stations approved, and when will they open? *UPDATED*

The Shoreline South / 148th Station was voter-approved as part of the ST2 in 2008 and is expected to begin service in 2024. The 130th Infill Station was voter-approved as part of the ST3 in 2016, with a 2021 opening. The 145th and 15th Avenue Stride S3 bus rapid transit station was voter-approved as part of the ST3 in 2016 with a 2024 opening. On August 5, 2021 the Sound Transit Board adopted a realignment plan that aims to complete the 130th light rail station in 2025, and the 145th bus rapid transit project in 2026.

6. Could the 130th St Station open earlier than 2031? *UPDATED*

In February 2020, The Sound Transit Board passed [Motion No. M2020-13](#) to advance the schedule for completing final design, and the first construction package for an integrated station. After final design is complete, staff would return with all financial, operational and construction information so the Board can determine whether to authorize additional construction that would allow the station to open in 2025.

7. What impact has COVID-19 has on Sound Transit's system expansion? *UPDATED*

Because of the COVID-19 recession and rising cost estimates, Sound Transit will not be able to deliver many system expansion projects on their original timelines without alternative revenue from federal or state sources. On August 5, 2021 the Sound Transit Board adopted a realignment plan that aims to complete the 130th light rail station in 2025, and the 145th bus rapid transit project in 2026.

8. Will there be any parking at the stations?

The Shoreline South /148th station will have a 500-space parking garage. No park and ride facility, or public parking is planned for the 130th Station or the 145th BRT station. Some community members are concerned that commuters using transit may drive to the station and park their cars in nearby neighborhoods. SDOT will initiate a study two years before service begins to determine how best to manage parking to discourage commuter parking.

Station Area Planning Questions

9. What is a station area and station area planning?

The term "station area" typically refers to the area around a station that is accessible within a ten-minute walk. On flat terrain, this roughly correlates to a half-mile walk. Station Area Planning is a coordinated agency and community effort to plan for change within a light rail station area in advance of station opening. New transit service can bring change to a community, including housing, commercial activity, and more. We also study a larger area to understand how the new stations can be accessible by bus, bike, and car. Station area planning does not address the design, construction or operation of light rail alignments, stations or service. Learn more about Sound Transit's system expansion.

10. What does it mean if my home is in the study area or station area?

If your home is in the station area, generally within ½ mile of the station, the final station area plan may propose nearby public investments or changes to land use rules on or near your property. You may see future improvements that will make it easier and safer to get to transit stations, such as separated bike lanes, neighborhood greenways, pedestrian crossings, sidewalk improvements, local bus service, etc. You may also see development that is already allowed in single family zones -- new single-family houses, accessory dwelling units (backyard cottages). More detailed zoning studies are needed to determine the exact area that may be rezoned to allow other housing types and services near the future stations, and what new zones are appropriate.

11. What type of new development is expected?

Potential changes in zoning near stations is likely to encourage more housing options and neighborhood-serving retail. Expected building types within a short walk of the station may include multi-story apartment buildings, townhouses and mixed-use buildings with ground-level retail with apartments above. Other community services, such as daycare or medical office may choose to locate in new mixed-use buildings.

12. How was the community involved in developing the Draft Plan?

In short, everyone that is interested in the Station Area is an important stakeholder. The project team identified and reached out to a variety of organizations interested in or directly affected by the Station Area Plan such as neighborhood organizations, citywide advocacy organizations, social service providers, schools and churches. Strategies used to engage the community included interviews, surveys, small group discussions, open house, community workshop, email list, and online community conversations. You can view a detailed list of stakeholders on page 4 of the Draft Plan. Summaries of community feedback for each event are posted on our website.

13. Why are you talking about future zoning changes?

Throughout Seattle's history we've changed zoning to accommodate new plans for neighborhoods, to reflect new investments in transit or to stimulate new development in certain areas. Currently, our city is growing at a rapid rate, but the market is leaving many low- and moderate-income families behind. Zoning changes near future transit stations are intended to promote more affordable housing with excellent access to high quality transit, as well as opportunities for additional services and amenities.

14. How will the surrounding neighborhoods change over time?

Even after zoning changes, each individual landowner will decide if and when to sell or build new housing on their property. Residents who own property near new transit stations frequently make these decisions even if the City were to propose no zoning changes. Larger parcels will tend to redevelop sooner than smaller single-family parcels. While several townhouses may be developed on larger single-family parcel, an apartment building may require several parcels. It may take years for a developer to acquire and assemble multiple individual parcels for a larger development site. Areas around some light rail stations close to single family housing have changed slowly (e.g., Rainier Beach). Areas around light rail surrounded by commercial development or surface parking lots have experienced redevelopment sooner (e.g., Roosevelt).

15. If off-street parking requirements for new development are reduced or eliminated, will traffic congestion get worse and parking even more difficult?

Requiring off-street parking affects the cost of housing. Requiring new apartment buildings to add off-street parking (garages) adds to the overall cost of construction, thus raising rents and limiting the

number of housing able to be built. Modifications to parking requirements are considered for areas that are close to frequent transit service because many residents will use transit more.

16. What will happen to my property values?

Property values are affected by a wide range of factors, including other adjacent land uses, the size and condition of the property and structures, zoning, overall economic conditions, etc. Even without light rail, denser zoning will generally result in higher land value. Research has shown that property values within a half mile of new light rail stations generally increase, particularly where zoning is changed to mixed-use and higher density. Some studies show increased value for properties even further away. Increased value related to redevelopment potential may be less for single family properties that would need to be aggregated with other properties to create a sufficiently-sized parcel for redevelopment. For mor information about property assessment and tax relief programs, visit the King County Assessor’s website at <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/assessor.aspx>. The Assessor's Office is also available to speak to community groups about the assessment process. Please call 206-263-2261 or email assessor.info@kingcounty.gov to schedule a presentation on the assessment process.

17. Will there be new affordable housing?

The City has made proximity to light rail stations a priority for affordable housing investments. This is likely to spur the interest of affordable housing developers in sites near light rail stations. Also, Sound Transit had made affordable housing development a priority for any surplus property they may have after construction is completed.

18. What is the plan for preserving existing communities and not leading to more displacement?

The City is promoting aggressive investment strategies to preserve and expand housing affordability, which will help ensure that people with low incomes can afford to stay in their communities. These strategies include acquiring and renovating existing affordable housing, providing owners with tax incentives to keep rents low, and building new affordable housing developments in neighborhoods at high risk of displacement. In addition, the City has incorporated racial and social equity values and anti-displacement policies in the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan, which will guide density, investments and growth in a manner that takes into account the risk of displacement caused by policy changes.

Planning Process Questions

19. What is the timeline for the final station area plan, environmental studies and rezoning process?

Currently we are considering two options for future work. These will be influenced by your feedback and decisions by Sound Transit:

<p>More Aggressive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue Final Plan in 2021 • Implement land use early action for 1 block in 2021 • Begin zoning and environmental studies in 2021 for station area • Adopt new zoning in 2023 	<p>Less Aggressive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue Final Plan in 2021 • Begin zoning and environmental studies in 2022 as part of the Comp Plan Major Update • Adopt new zoning in 2024
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20. How can I stay involved in the 130th and 145th Station Area planning process?

The best way to stay informed about the 130th and 145th Station Area Planning is to sign up for our email list at bit.ly/130145thSAP. You will receive monthly email updates about this project and related projects in the area led by Sound Transit, Seattle Dept of Transportation or other agencies. Also, if your community organization would like staff to attend your meeting, email patrice.carroll@seattle.gov to schedule.

Additional Information about Tree Protection

<https://www.seattle.gov/sdci/codes/changes-to-code/tree-protection>

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The Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) administers and enforces the City's tree protection regulations, Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 25.11 Tree Protection, that apply to private property. The purpose of the code is to provide protections for certain trees.

SDCI is in the process of replacing Director's Rule 16-2008, Designation of Exceptional Trees, with a new, updated Director's Rule. The Draft Director's Rule 13-2020:

- Expands the definition of exceptional trees by adding additional species and protecting certain species at smaller diameters
- Establishes a definition of significant trees as trees at least six inches in diameter that are not exceptional
- Updates and simplify tree planting and replacement requirements
- Provides tree protection and retention strategies for use when dividing land
- Provides additional mitigation requirements when an exceptional tree is allowed to be removed for development
- Updates requirements for tree risk assessments when proposing to remove an exceptional tree
- Requires all Seattle-based tree service providers to certify they are aware of existing tree protections, requirements, and penalties

The Draft Director's Rule, and associated documents, are posted on the Project Documents page. SDCI is awaiting direction from the Mayor's Office regarding the Draft Director's Rule. SDCI will accept comments until the rule is completed and adopted. In the meantime, SDCI will be preparing initial concepts for SEPA analysis this year.

If you wish to send us written comments:

- Email to SCI_DRulesComments@seattle.gov
- Mail to Director, Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections, 700 5th Avenue, Suite 1900, P.O. Box 34019, Seattle, Washington 98124-4019.

SDCI is part of the City's team that is updating the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP). The Draft UFM, Executive Summary, summary of public comments and a presentation on the UFMP can be found here <https://www.seattle.gov/trees/management>.