



Lid I-5 Campaign Introduction

The Movement to Reconnect Seattle

Our Mission

To build the case and constituency for lidding Interstate 5 and building a more connected, sustainable, and equitable Seattle.

Coalition Partners



FIRST HILL
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Grassroots Civic Engagement



DESIGN CHARRETTES



MEDIA INTERVIEWS




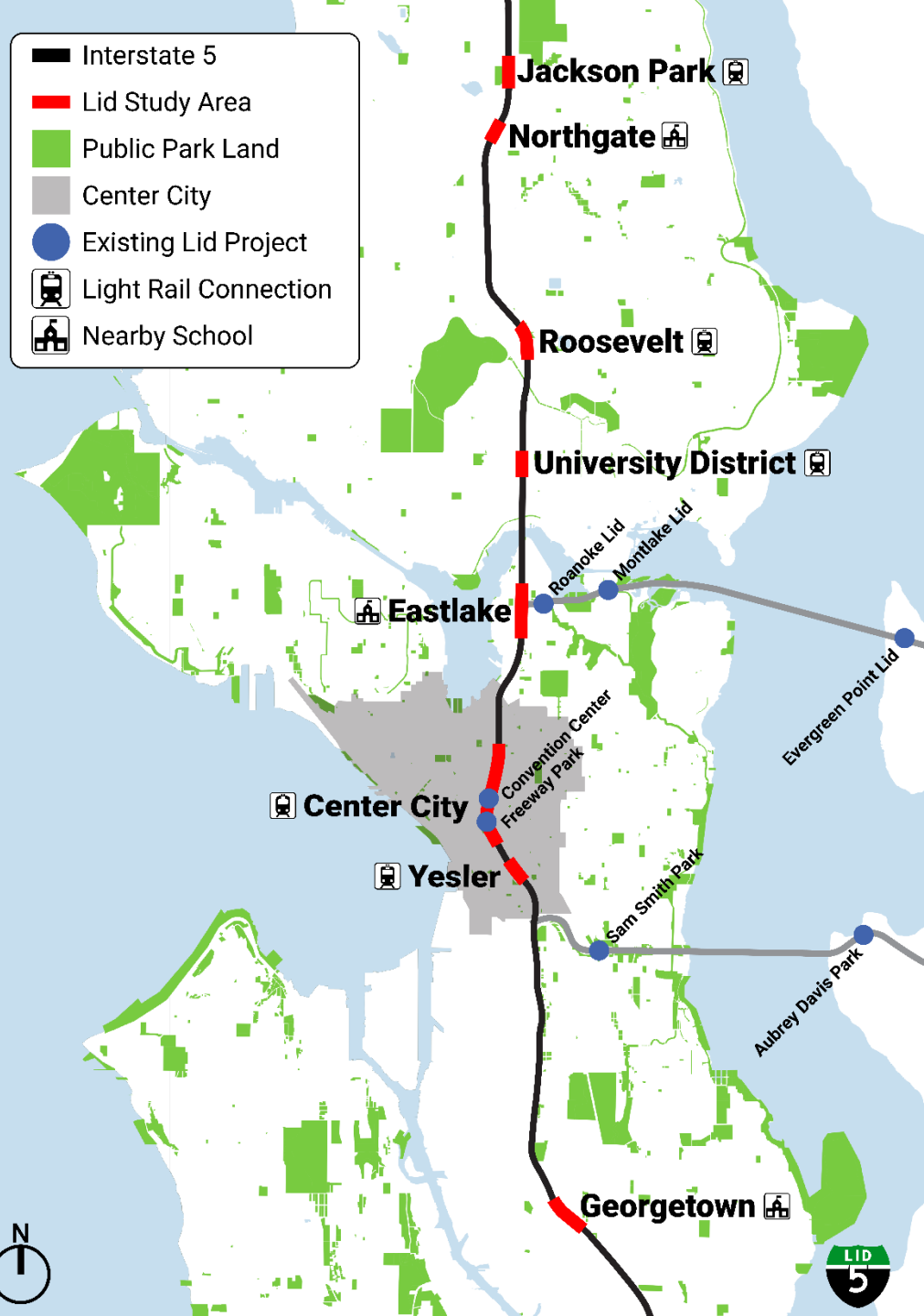
WALK/BIKE TOURS



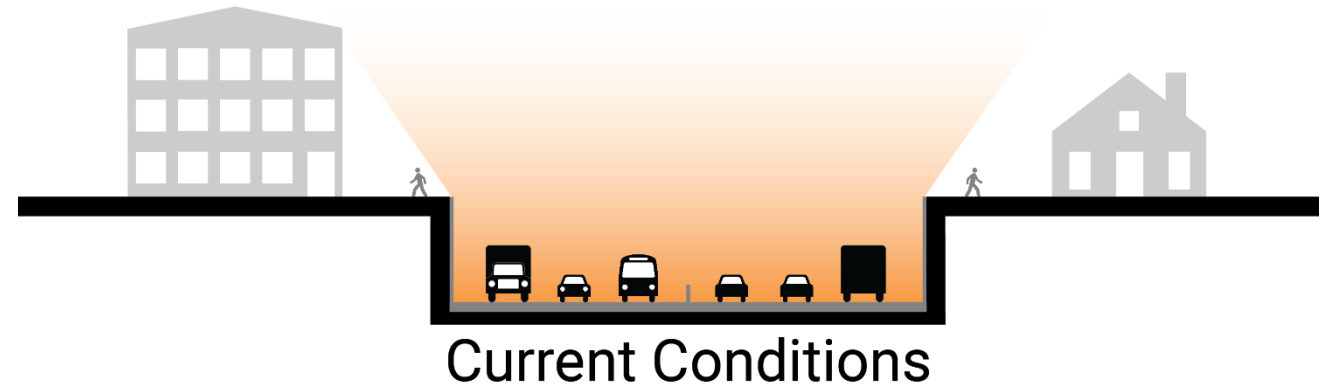
COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

Milestones To Date

- 
- 2024** \$2M federal grant awarded for further lid planning
 - 2023** \$200K state funding secured for further lid planning
 - 2023** City Council passes resolution supporting I-5 lids
 - 2022** Legislature funds I-5 master planning work
 - 2021** Lidding I-5 featured in national Congress for the New Urbanism report
 - 2020** Feasibility study finds the project is possible
 - 2019** Lidding I-5 included in *Imagine Greater Downtown* initiative
 - 2018** City-funded public design process produces conceptual lid designs
 - 2016** Comprehensive Plan includes lid-supportive policies



Where We Can Lid I-5







Seattle Featured in CNU National Report



Interstate 5 SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

HIGHWAY TYPE
Depressed Interstate highway

YEAR BUILT
1962-1967

STAGE OF REMOVAL
Outreach and coalition building — advocates are actively building support to cap a portion of the highway

KEY CHARACTERISTICS
In 1976, Seattle built one of the earliest caps, Freeway Park, over Interstate-5.

Advocacy group Lid I-5 supports a plan to expand the cap as a way to reconnect Downtown neighborhoods and address equity, sustainability, and community needs.

Early on, Seattle pioneered a new way of thinking about the relationship between city and freeway with the construction of Freeway Park over I-5 in downtown. Today, the highway is overdue for safety upgrades, including earthquake retrofitting, presenting the perfect opportunity to expand this lid and better serve people, not just cars. The Lid I-5 movement seeks to build on Freeway Park's legacy and spark a citywide conversation about what can be done with highways that damage communities.

CNU
Congress for the
New Urbanism

Feasibility Study Highlights

Result: We can and should lid the freeway in Central Seattle.

“Lidding I-5 through downtown presents an opportunity to tackle some of the most pressing challenges facing Seattle.”

“The robust fiscal and economic benefits of a lid, in addition to the public benefits described in this study, make a lid project worthy of consideration...”

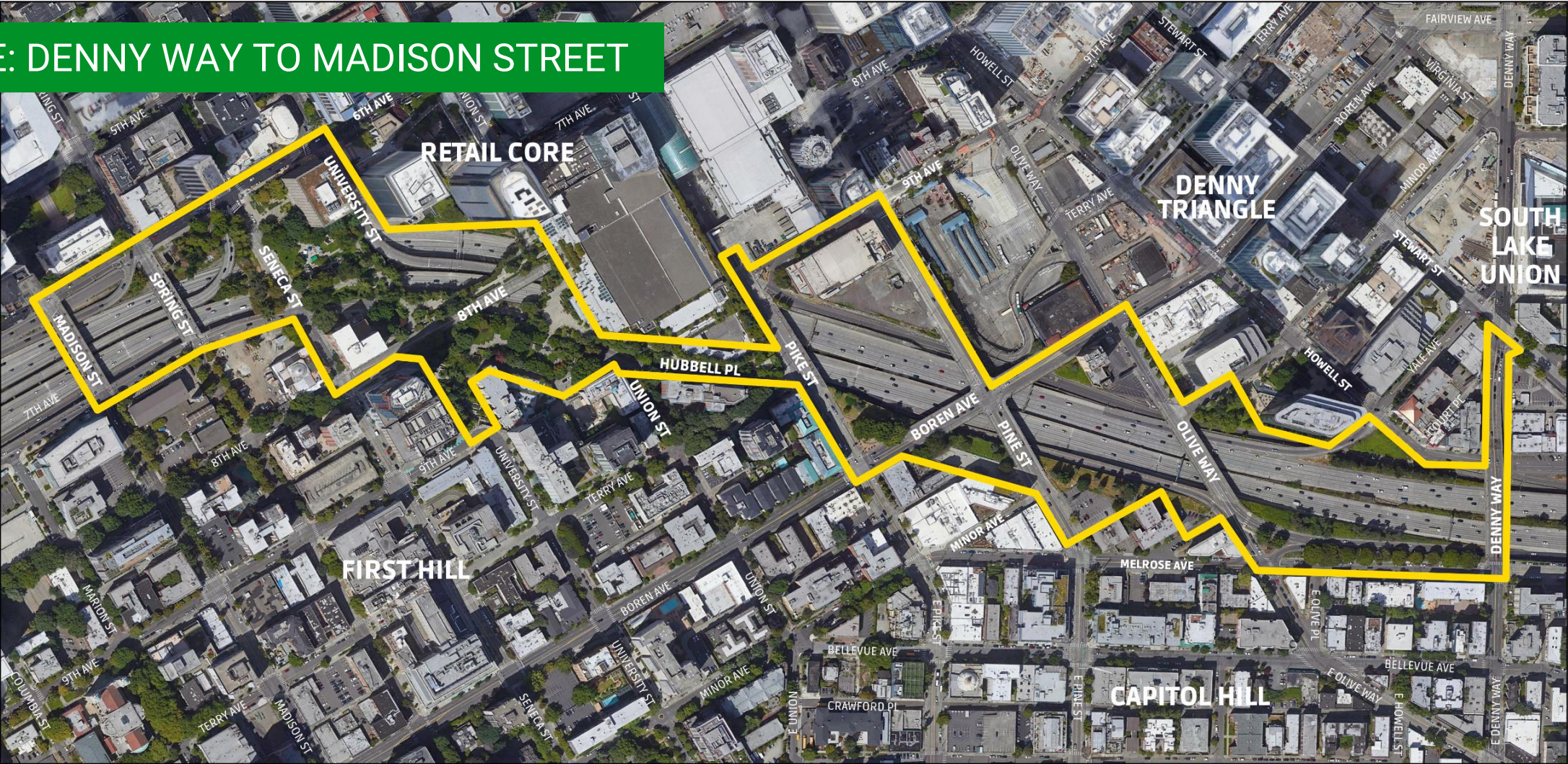


Seattle
Office of Planning &
Community Development




Study Area

SCOPE: DENNY WAY TO MADISON STREET



Legend

 Structural Assessment Boundary (Study Site)

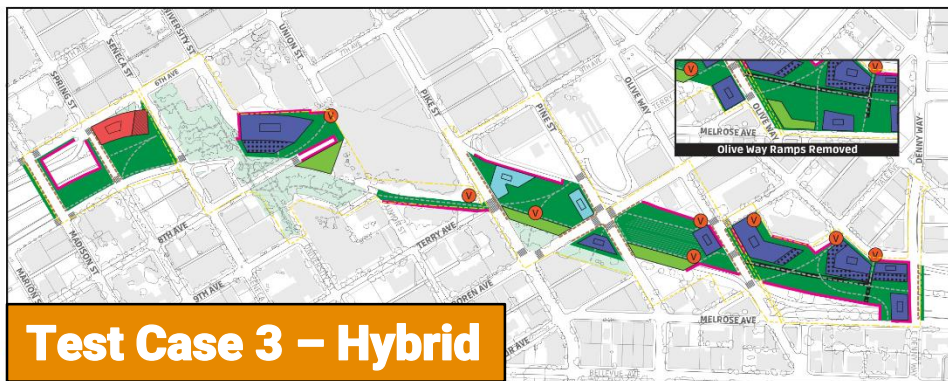
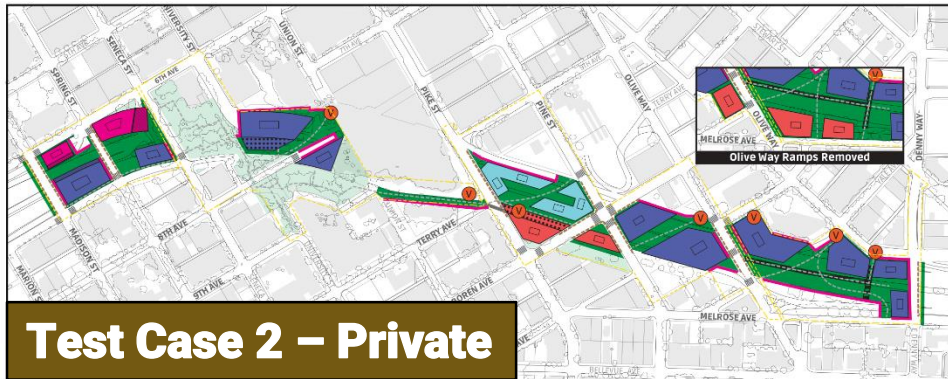
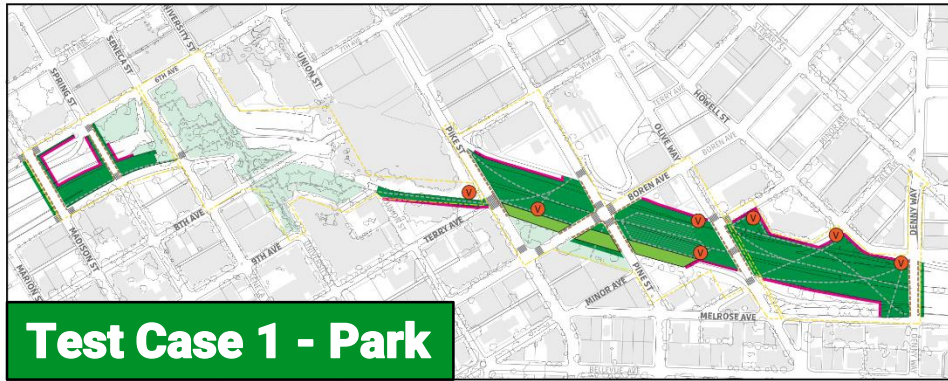


Test Case Framework

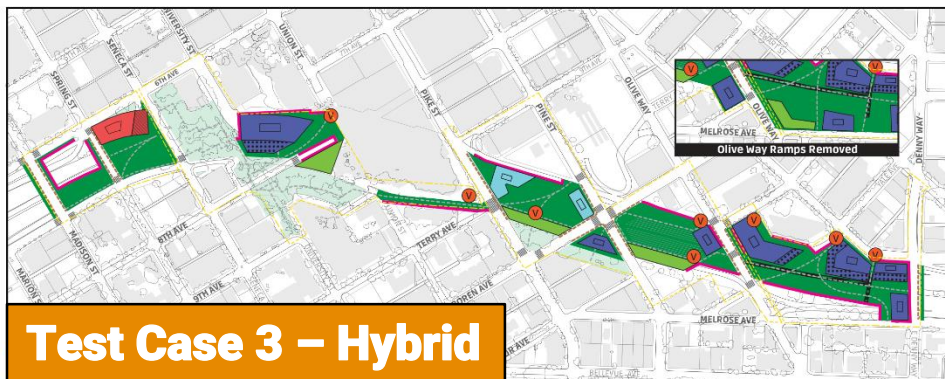
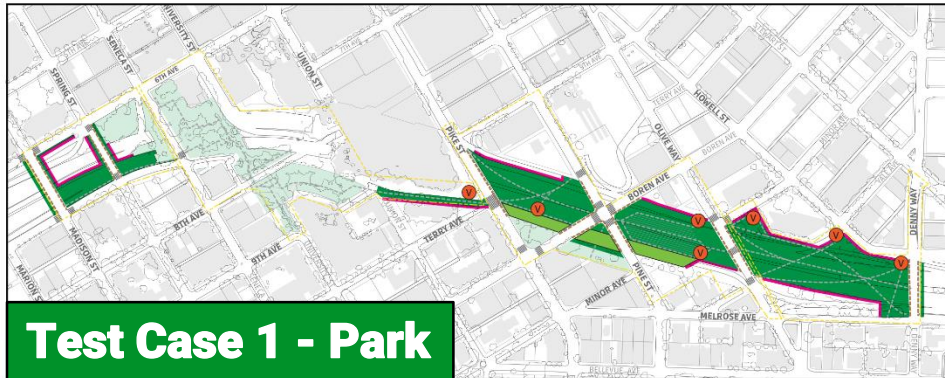
The study looked at the *range of feasibility* and did not recommend a preferred design

- » **Test Case 1:** Minimum level of public benefit for least cost (public park on the easy sites)
- » **Test Case 2:** Maximum private investment (mid-rise and high-rise commercial/residential)
- » **Test Case 3:** Mid-density hybrid (balance of civic and private uses)

Removing the Olive Way ramps was explored as an additional option in Test Case 2 and 3



Development Potential

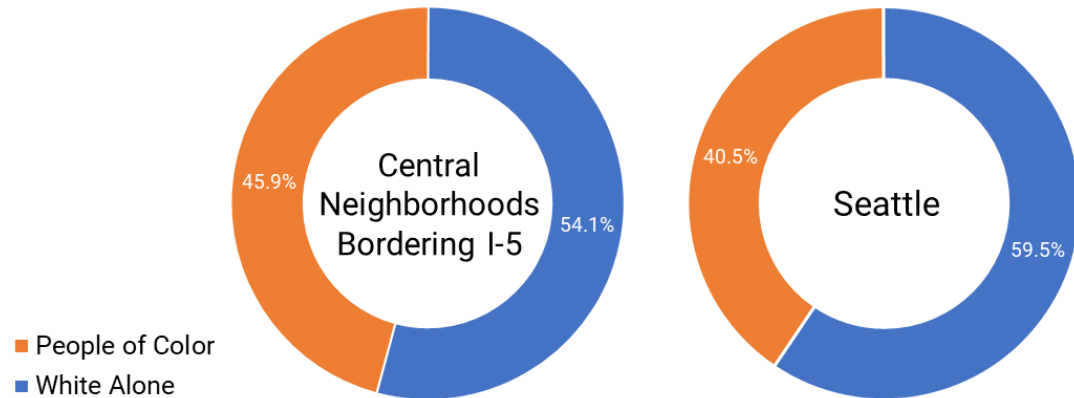


	Test Case 1 Park	Test Case 2 Private	Test Case 3 Hybrid
Total Lid Area	11 acres	15 - 17 acres	15 - 16 acres
Public Parks	9.8 acres	None	7.7 acres
Market Housing	None	5,200 units*	800 units*
Affordable Housing On-Site	None	None	533 units*
MHA Affordable Housing Payment	None	\$150 - 215M	\$32 - 39M
Commercial or Civic Space	63,000 square feet	5.2M - 5.6M square feet	2.1M - 2.2M square feet

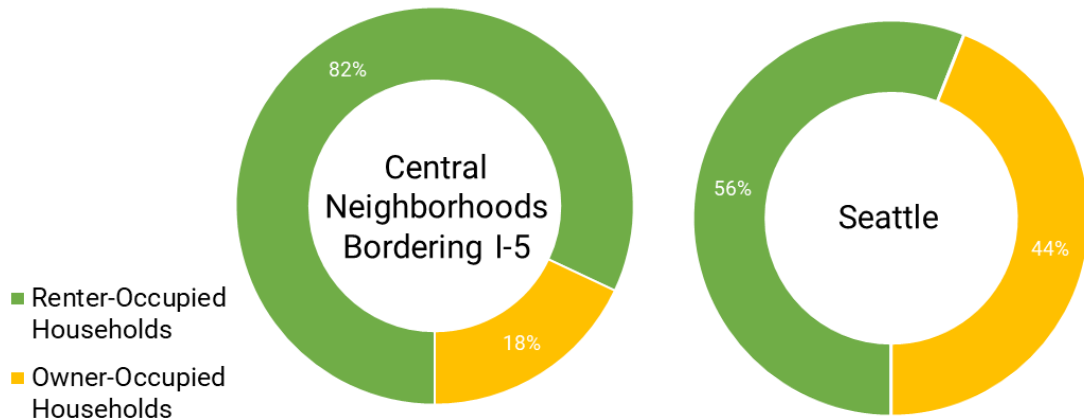
* Calculated by Lid I-5 based on floor area, assumes average 900 square feet per unit

Key finding: Each block of the lid has different structural loading capacities (parks, low-rise, mid-rise, or high-rise).

Resident Stakeholders Who Benefit



Compared to Seattle as a whole, the study area is more racially and ethnically diverse, median incomes are 25% lower, and there is a larger renter population.



Approximately 600 social housing units are within a block of Interstate 5, and the Downtown area has the highest concentration of such homes.

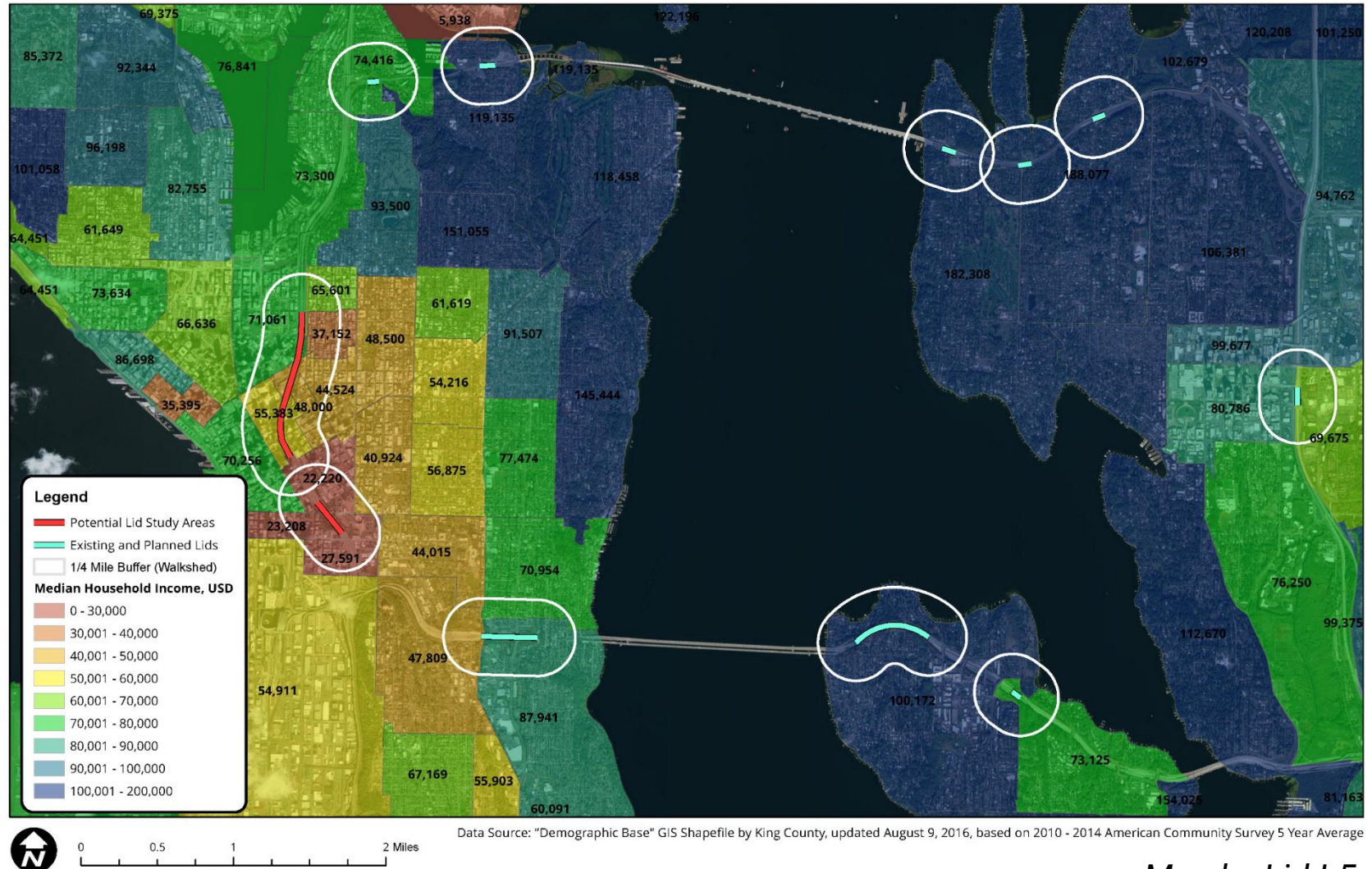
Race/ethnicity data: Seattle OPCD, 2021

Housing tenure data: Esri, 2014-2018

Regional Equity Considerations

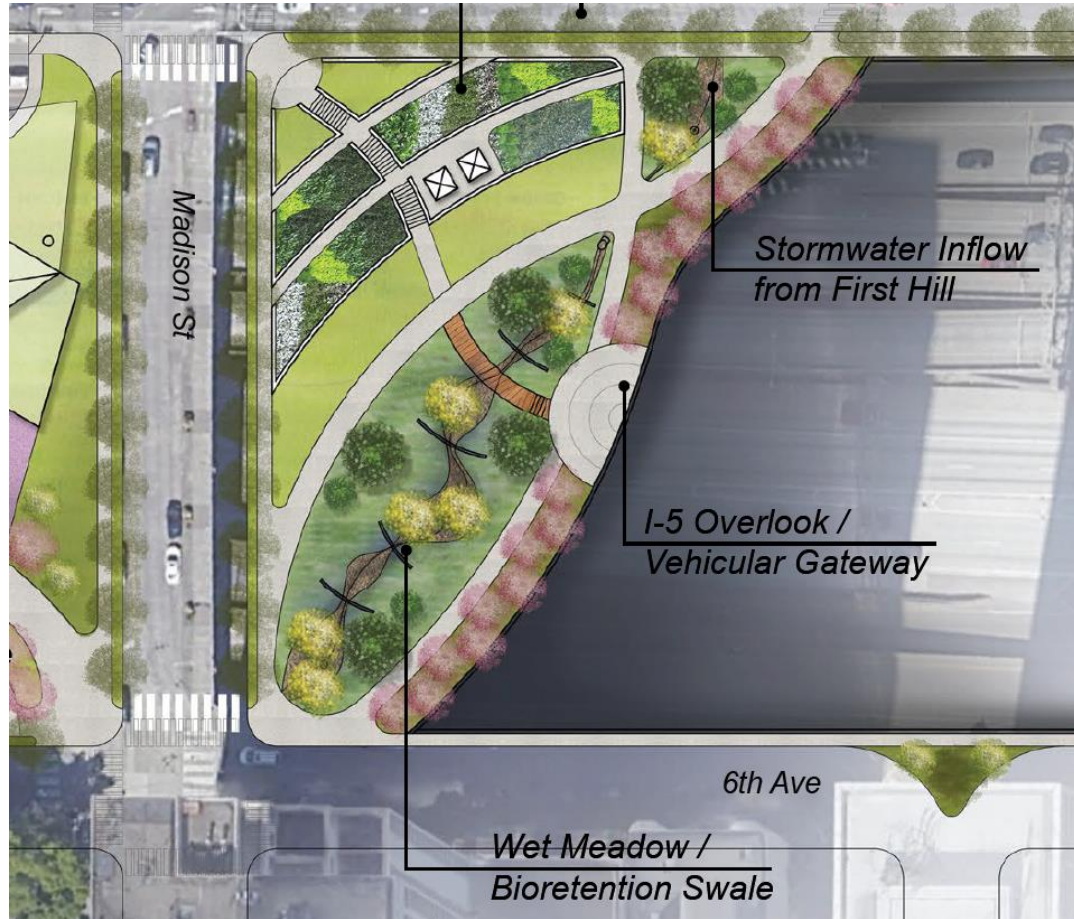
Lidding I-5 in Central Seattle will help rectify regional highway mitigation inequities.

A 2018 University of California study confirmed Freeway Park and Sam Smith Park are more equitably located than the many lids built outside Seattle.



Map by Lid I-5

Environmental Benefits



Concept by Central Hills Triangle Collaborative team S1

- » **Noise:** Freeway noise levels of 70-78 decibels exceed the typical ambient level of 66 decibels. A lid could buffer this.
- » **Air:** A lid could reduce direct exposure to air pollutants within the study area.
- » **Heat:** A lid with green space could help reduce local air temperature by 3-4 degrees
- » **Water:** 30% of the rainwater runoff of the Capitol Hill basin could be treated or retained on the lids.

I-5 System Master Planning



- » WSDOT is planning the future of I-5 across the state
- » WSDOT is studying the risk of I-5 failing during a major earthquake in Seattle, and how it might be upgraded
- » WSDOT is studying ramp configurations in central Seattle



“Most of I-5 coming into and through downtown is on bridges and elevated structures that, without seismic retrofits, will not likely be useable after a strong earthquake. Damage to them would impair emergency services and economic activity for months, if not years.”

- Seattle Office of Emergency Management

Central Puget Sound Highway Earthquake Risks

Liquefaction Susceptibility

- High
- Moderate to high

Seismic Lifeline Status

- Lifeline - 95% Complete or Complete by 2027
- High Cost Corridor Segments (non-lifeline)
- Potential Lifeline - Requires More Analysis



Data from Washington State Department of Transportation

Public Policy Support

- » **Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (2024)**

- » **Downtown Activation Plan (2023)**

Lidding I-5 is identified as a “Green” initiative that also relates to Safety, Residential, and Tourism actions.

- » **City Council Resolution 32100 (2023)**

City endorsement of the Lid I-5 project and intergovernmental cooperation

- » **Imagine Greater Downtown (2019)**

- » **Seattle Comprehensive Plan**

- » Growth Strategy policy 3.13 (2022)

- » Transportation policy 3.12 (2016)

- » Parks policy 1.17 (2016)

State Funding

In 2023 we secured \$200K in state funding for Seattle OPCD to update and add to the 2020 Lid Feasibility Study (ESHB 1125).

7 (14) \$200,000 of the multimodal transportation account—state
8 appropriation is provided solely for the Seattle office of planning
9 and community development to update and add to the 2020 I-5 Lid
10 Feasibility Study with additional test cases with ramp changes and
11 removals in downtown Seattle and alternative assumptions with regards
12 to parking, expansion of Freeway Park, affordable housing, and
13 commercial real estate (L2021140). The Seattle office of planning and
14 community development shall conduct ongoing community engagement with
15 underrepresented constituencies to support the technical work of this
16 study and raise public awareness of opportunities of I-5 lids. Focus
17 should be given to low-income households living and working in the
18 I-5 lid study areas in central Seattle.

- » “Additional test cases with ramp changes and removals in downtown Seattle”
- » “Alternative assumptions with regards to...”
 - » Parking
 - » Expansion of Freeway Park
 - » Affordable housing
 - » Commercial real estate”
- » Engagement with “low-income households living and working in the study areas”

Seattle City Council Resolution 32100

- » Formally establishes support for lidding I-5 where feasible citywide
- » Directs city to continue to collaborate with WSDOT and FHWA
- » Directs to city to add supporting policies into land use, transportation, and subarea plans
- » Directs city to study a public development authority option
- » Directs city to apply for federal Reconnecting Communities grant



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

600 Fourth Ave. 2nd Floor
Seattle, WA 98104

Legislation Text

File #: Res 32100, Version: 2

CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION supporting the development of lids across Interstate 5.

WHEREAS, since its construction in 1965, Interstate 5 has created a rift through the center of Seattle, splitting neighborhoods and dividing Downtown Seattle from adjacent communities; and

WHEREAS, in response to the impacts of Interstate 5 on the City and in recognition of opportunities to create new open space, better connections between neighborhoods, and opportunities for residential development including affordable housing, community members have come together to form Lid I-5 to advocate for lids across the interstate; and

WHEREAS, in response to the efforts of Lid I-5, the Seattle Convention Center provided funding for the development of a feasibility study to identify whether a lid across the interstate between Downtown Seattle and the Pike/Pine, Capitol Hill and First Hill neighborhoods would be feasible; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) prepared the I-5 Lid Feasibility Study (Lid Study), which found that lidding between Downtown Seattle and Capitol Hill and Pike/Pine would be feasible but challenging; and

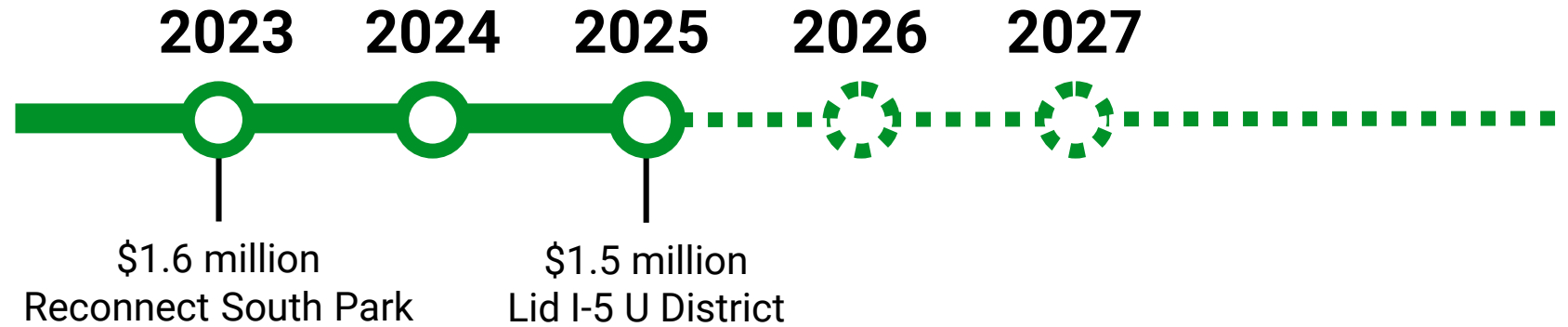
Federal Funding for Freeway Mitigation

Congress allocated \$4.15 billion for reconnection projects like lifting I-5.

Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program

\$1 billion

"Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act" (2021)



Neighborhood Access and Equity

\$3.15 billion

"Inflation Reduction Act" (2022)



Downtown Lid Planning Grant

In March 2024 we secured a \$2M USDOT grant (using \$200K local match) for Seattle OPCD to:

- 1) Build project leadership via a stakeholders group
- 2) Establish an Urban Design Vision
- 3) Complete technical products for advanced planning:
 - Feasibility analysis of the expanded study sites
 - Updated feasibility study assumptions and cost estimates
 - Mobility opportunities study
 - Prepare for the master planning process

The grant was “obligated” in December 2024.



**Washington State
Department of Transportation**

Transportation Building
310 Maple Park Avenue S.E.
P.O. Box 47300
Olympia, WA 98504-7300
360-705-7000
TTY: 1-800-833-6388
www.wsdot.wa.gov

September 18, 2023

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) supports the City of Seattle's application for the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant Program to build a lid over Interstate 5.

WSDOT recognizes the importance of reconnecting the densely populated neighborhoods that were separated by I-5 in the 1960s. In partnership with the City of Seattle, we are exploring the feasibility of a lid over I-5 as an innovative, multimodal solution to keep people, goods and services moving through Seattle's core.

WSDOT will work closely with the city on the development of project concepts and designs. As design details are refined, WSDOT will work with the city on our review and approval of applicable plans for this important connection.

We hope you will give this proposal full and fair consideration.

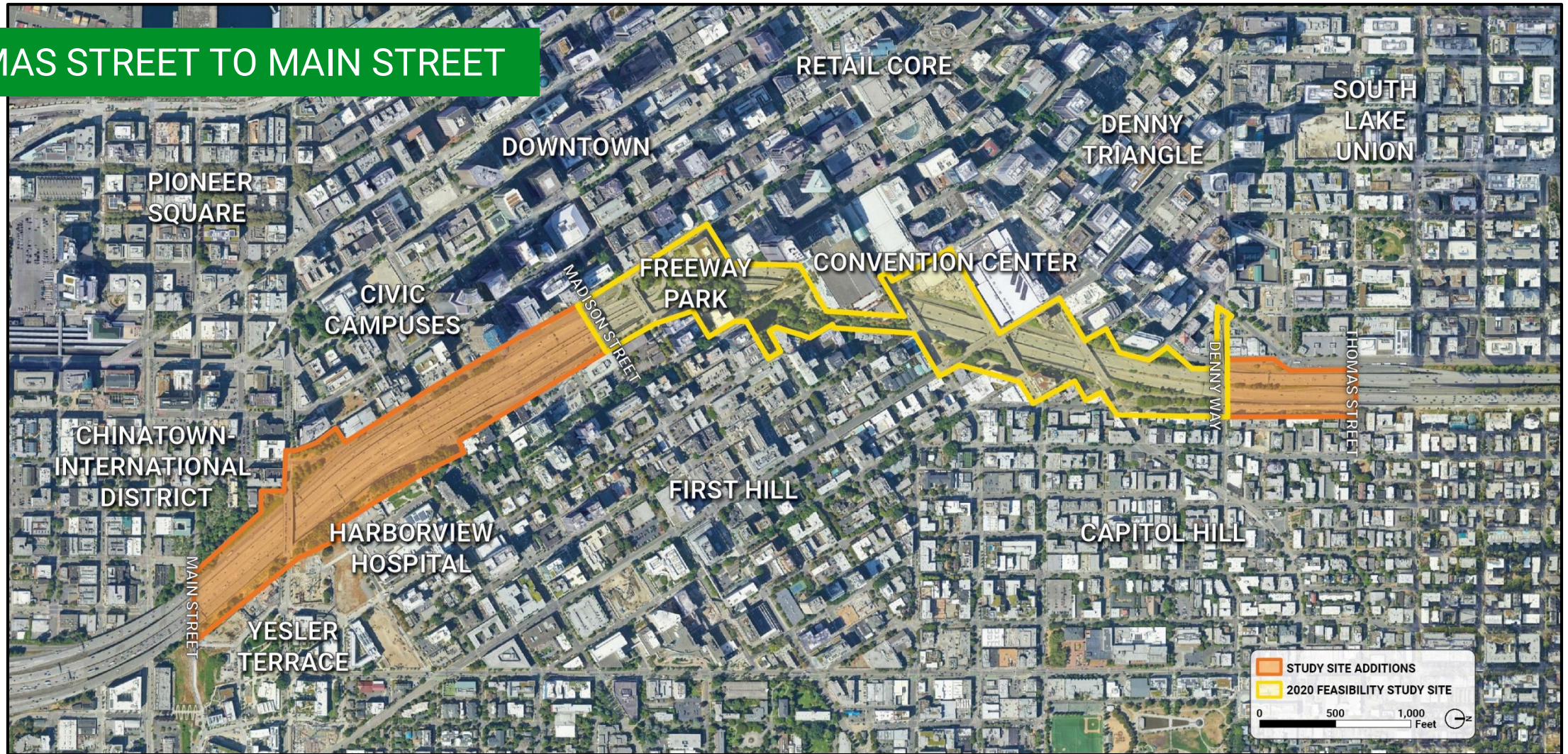
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roger Millar'.

Roger Millar, PE, FASCE, FAICP
Secretary of Transportation

Study Area – Wider Look

THOMAS STREET TO MAIN STREET



Next Steps

- » Scope and perform the federal and state grant work over the next 2-3 years
- » Continue building public awareness and engagement
- » Integrate lidding I-5 into:
 - » Seattle's 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update
 - » Seattle Downtown Subarea Plan
 - » PSRC Regional Transportation Plan
 - » WSDOT I-5 Planning and Environmental Linkage Study
 - » WSDOT I-5 Causeway Seismic Study





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www.lidi5.org

