

# **APA Station Area Charrette Report: Capitol Hill & Edmunds St. Station Areas**

## **Overview**

On April 24, 1999, the Seattle Planning Commission and the Strategic Planning Office hosted a one-day mobile workshop at the American Planning Association's conference entitled "Building Transit-Oriented Communities." It provided a unique opportunity for Sound Transit staff, members of the community, and City staff to share the innovative work that is taking place with Link Light Rail and bring the expertise and resources of nearly 40 urban planners from across the nation to Seattle's station area planning process.

The primary goal of the workshop was to develop planning strategies and design concepts that are vibrant, mixed-use urban villages for the Capitol Hill and Edmunds St. light rail station areas. The one day event included presentations given by the respective Station Area Planners, Sound Transit staff and community members to set the context, a walking tour of each of the two station areas and intensive small group design sessions to develop key ideas and design concepts for the two station areas in these different parts of the light rail system in Seattle.

APA members and local participants received a pre-workshop packet (Footnote – excerpts included in Appendix \_\_\_) that provided detailed information on the Sound Transit Link Light Rail project and profiles of the two station areas. This information along with the walking tour and initial presentations equipped all participants with a good balance of written, visual and experiential information on which to base their work in their assigned teams during the day.

Each small group was given a broad set of general questions along with specific focus topics and potential products to help direct the groups efforts during the morning and afternoon sessions. The focus topics were selected by the Station Area Planners in response to the neighborhoods Advisory Committee, individual neighborhood plans, the Mayor and City Council goals for station area planning, along with the proposed alignments by Sound Transit.

## **Mayor and City Council Goals for Station Area Planning**

An important early step in the City of Seattle's station area planning process was the adoption of City goals for station area planning. These form the framework for station area planning with the community and Sound Transit. These goals, listed below were presented and used as an overall set of goals to guide the APA workshop.

Encourage housing, commercial, and retail uses that support transit and generate pedestrian activity.

Use urban design to enhance community identity of station areas and make them attractive, safe,

and convenient

Provide public facilities that encourage transit ridership.

Enhance the existing transportation network, support transit-oriented development, and promote good walking, bicycle, and transit connections.

Promote economic vitality within station areas.

## **Workshop Goal**

In planning the APA mobile workshop, the Seattle Planning Commission and Strategic Planning Office developed an overall goal for the event:

*To develop planning strategies and design concepts for the Capitol Hill and Edmunds St. light rail station areas that are vibrant, mixed-use urban villages.*

## **Group Assignments**

Teams for the two station areas, Capitol Hill and Edmunds St., were given assignments that included focus topics and potential products that had been prepared by the station area planners. These are summarized below.

### **Capitol Hill**

The four teams at the Capitol Hill workshop focused on different aspects of development opportunities. These included:

**Economic Development Opportunities ( Team)**

**Urban Design and Public Safety ( Team)**

**Station Areas in an Institutional Setting ( Team)**

**Circulation ( Team)**

# Capitol Hill Focus Group Discussions and Recommendations

## Economic Development

### Results of Economic Development Focus Group

#### Key Issues & Considerations

The team first examined the two station locations; one at Broadway and the other on Nagle Place (1 block east of Broadway), identifying the trade-offs between them.

#### **Broadway**

Located on either side of Broadway, at East John and south of Howell at Seattle Central Community College.

Impacts and effects of this station option:

Community concentration

Higher residential density West of off Broadway, SCCC location

Greater economic options

Economic Impacts - Homeownership opportunities

#### **Nagle Place**

Located 1 block east of Broadway, adjacent to the Lincoln Reservoir and along a mixed use area.

Impacts and effects of this station option:

Economic impacts on businesses along Nagle Place

Impact of eliminating parking along Nagle that is used by businesses

Impact on adjacent residential areas on north and east side of the reservoir and park

Effect on Nagle Place which is zoned for mixed use development

Significance of cost savings for this alternative alignment

Concern about inferior design

#### **Preferred Option: Broadway Location**

The team selected the Broadway station location as their preferred option and focused their work on this location. They cited in particular its proximity to the heart of the Broadway business district and residential density west of Broadway and the unique opportunities for integrating the station and station area development opportunities with SCCC.

Major concerns expressed by stake holders were length of time for cut and cover construction and the exact position of the head house; potential use of a mezzanine level for retail and bike storage, and connection to underground parking.

## Elements of Station Area Development

### Existing Vernacular Buildings

The City and community seeks to identify and preserve existing vernacular buildings in the Broadway area. These include landmarks such as the Broadway Performance Hall and Egyptian Theater as well as undesignated buildings like the Hollywood Video and the Odd Fellows Hall, which are good examples of architecture of earlier periods of the community's history. The Reservoir is another important landmark whose preservation is important in the lidding and redevelopment of the site.

## Land Use, Housing and Density

Land use and zoning are important tools for encouraging more density of housing and the close connection between housing and employment. There is a need to overcome the negative image of high density and encourage different housing types such as co-housing and loft housing above commercial/retail spaces. Land trusts are another potential tool for developing affordable housing and

Office space, which is in high demand, should have a neighborhood flavor and should provide a diverse array of goods and services to the community. There should be opportunities for living, working and shopping in close proximity to the station.

Specifically, E. John and E. Harvard are streets that are ripe for high density development, with zoning already in place that allows 65' heights.

### **Transit/Bicycle/Pedestrian Needs**

The Group also focused on the need for excellent transit and bicycle connections and overall good pedestrian access to the station. Shuttles through the neighborhood to connect people to the station, bicycle parking and storage and pedestrian amenities were all identified as crucial elements of station and station area development.

### **Design as tool for a Livable Environment**

The Broadway station should be designed as an attraction for businesses and should be integrated with street and pedestrian amenities. Station area planning should also propose gateway opportunities to be designed into the station and at key points along Broadway. Development could be designed to create space for incubator businesses. Another creative idea was to explore design and development at the mezzanine level that draws people up and integrates with station design at the surface.

### **Opportunities for Hotel Development**

Hotel development should be explored in the vicinity of the Capitol Hill station as part of the station/station area development. The rail connection to downtown, the University of Washington and SeaTac airport make this an attractive place for a hotel that reflects the neighborhood scale and character, possibly a residence in offering short or long term stays. Such hotels could range from simple accommodations to larger luxury rooms. The Ace Hotel in Belltown was offered as a model for this type of hotel development.

### **Student needs**

Students need affordable housing, gathering spaces, food services and opportunities for entertainment, including live music, movies and a recording studio.

### **Elderly population needs**

Finally the group examined needs for the significant elderly population on Capitol Hill, including a day care facility that uses elderly as caretakers and affordable housing options that provide a range of choices from independent to supported or assisted living.

## **Recommendations**

The group developed specific recommendations for economic development based on their discussion and consideration of the elements summarized above. These recommendations are listed below:

Provide incubator business opportunities

Create opportunities to live, work and shop in neighborhood

Develop and adopt a full range of transportation goals in connection with station development including transit, bicycle and pedestrian access and links

Initiated innovative programs such as car-sharing, shuttles and pedestrian and bicycle amenities and services

Provide needed parking in innovative ways, including possible use of underground space above the rail tunnel at the station for business customer use

Take advantage of the significant economic opportunities on the Broadway alignment including retail spaces, lighting and sculptural art at the station's street level with possible development above for office and housing uses

Include in the economic development mix affordable community spaces, office space and a small neighborhood hotel

Use the mezzanine level to fullest potential, including retail, newspaper and flower stands, bicycle storage and connections to underground parking

## **Urban Design and Public Safety**

### **Results of Urban Design and Public Safety Focus Group**

Their overall maxim was to preserve what is good and change what is bad, with a goal that the neighborhood look about the same when construction is complete. They stressed the need to build upon the themes that are already there, including the institutional campus, parks and open space, bike paths and a mix of housing.

### **Key Issues and Considerations**

#### **Elements of Station Area Development**

##### **Urban Design along Broadway, the Neighborhood Spine**

Broadway should be reinforced as the spine of the neighborhood by maintaining the “wall of buildings” with new development. Widening of sidewalks should not compromise this design feature. Buildings should have pedestrian and community friendly uses at street level. Particular attention should be paid in the SCCC Master Plan to create a more active street front on existing and future buildings along Broadway. Use zoning where appropriate to preserve and shape design features that maintain and build on current community character.

##### **Open Space and Parks**

Significant opportunities exist for developing and connecting key activities, open spaces, and view corridors through the development of the Capitol Hill station. View opportunities should be preserved within ¼ to ½ mile of the station.

Station and station area development should capitalize on the view of the reservoir area from Broadway. Several ideas surfaced to address the grade change from the Reservoir to Nagle and Broadway, including a bridge from Broadway to the park and making a clear pedestrian connection across Nagle to the reservoir. The park should be visually and physically accessible from the station. Future development around the park and on Nagle Place should maintain an intimate, pedestrian oriented environment. Additional green space, pocket parks and plazas should be explored. The Bonney Watson parking site provides an opportunity for a plaza connecting to the station entrance.

Station area planning should also promote open space links to Group Health on 15<sup>th</sup> E., Volunteer Park, the Pike/Pine neighborhood and downtown, and residential areas west of Broadway. Links through the Reservoir and park should be well-designed, accessible and safe.

Gateways and transitions from one neighborhood to another should be noted through urban design features.

## **Principles**

The team developed the following principles to guide urban design and public safety elements of station area development.

Careful selection and development of station entrances regarding urban design opportunities and constraints. The East John entrance should focus on existing street network; the SCCC station should be open up SCCC and the view corridor to the west. The Nagle Place station entrance would need more attention

The station should be an active secure place; programming at the reservoir and park is as important as design

Use the east side of Broadway as the connection for pedestrian traffic and activity

Draw on neighborhood history for design of stations

Pull out station art & design into the surrounding neighborhood

The perception of security is as important as reality, use design to foster a sense of security, remembering that activity promotes security more than a sterile secure place

## **Recommendations**

Create strong visual connections from the park to the station entrances

Maximize multi modal connection at E. John since it ties into the existing street network.

Park station entrance needs more attention considering all earlier input

There need to be station entrances on both sides of Broadway-not just one side

Commit to careful selection and development of entrances. The US Bank site is a huge opportunity for urban design and enhancing the south end of retail district.

Build infrastructure for retail development at the station itself

Consider a plaza and lighting features at the SW corner of Broadway & John

## **Station Areas in an Institutional Setting**

### **Results of Station Areas in Institutional Setting Focus Group**

Seattle Central Community College (SCCC) is a major institution subject to City requirements for master planning. It is a major landmark, employer, educational institution, property owner and magnet for community interaction. It has recently identified priority actions for future development: a new learning resource technology center north of the main building with computer facilities for instruction and student access to learning resources, increased parking and expansion of the campus to include the Masonic Temple and South Annex Building (south of Pine Street).

### **Key Issues and Considerations**

#### **Elements of Station Area Development**

##### **Evening Hours and Activity**

Institutions can often bring more evening activity to a business/commercial area and this opportunity should be used. Key nodes for evening activities include the Broadway Performance Hall, SCCC evening classes and public meetings, the SCCC Union/Activity Center. The SCCC library is an opportunity to create an additional activity node, either as a separate building or connected with the Student Activity center.

A station entrance on the west side of Broadway would add activity as would coffee shops and potential increased use of the Masonic Temple (by SCCC). The SCCC plaza and possibly a new station entrance/plaza should be places for street performers and community/school information kiosks.

Well designed and appropriate lighting for pedestrian activity and safety is essential to the sense of safety and to encouraging evening use of public spaces.

##### **Links**

Links within and between the institution and the community are important opportunities to make the institution a more integrated asset to the neighborhood.

As Seattle Central Community College seeks to provide more student services, opportunities and demand will increase for joint student and community use of SCCC and Parks Dept. facilities (SCCC Recreation facilities, Lincoln Park and Bobby Morris Playfield). This will help to integrate the institution into the neighborhood.

Design a “Quad” on SCCC campus for student gathering space that could also be shared with the community, linking SCCC to the park by “greening” one side of the parking lot (use ROW along Nagle). Promoting retail/business development at station entrances that draw students, shoppers and transit users, and promote civic development such as the new City Library to locate in this area.



## **Housing**

Housing should be affordable to students and might be part of SCCC's future development through public/non-profit/private partnerships. Several locations explored were on the SCCC parking structure and an SCCC mixed use structure with library, housing and classroom space.

Interest was also expressed in acquiring and using the funeral home site for institutional and housing uses. The team viewed the light rail station as a catalyst for the funeral home purchase and other innovative opportunities for integrating the community college with housing, community uses, retail and parking uses.

## **Parking**

The team noted that parking is a significant issue for SCCC and the community. They explored opportunities for accommodating parking without promoting auto use in this dense urban neighborhood. This included:

Possible future development of parking structures or underground parking in mixed use developments to replace surface parking lots as they get redeveloped.

Encourage more transit subsidies for students and faculty

Increase secure parking and storage for bicycles; explore space under escalators (in stations) as bike lockers.

## **Recommendations**

Locate the entrance to Capitol Hill Station on the west side of Broadway, adjacent or connected to Seattle Central Community College.

Vacate Howell St. and convert to a pedestrian link and view corridor west

Locate new City library near station; encourage cooperation with new SCCC Library. (Community Center space)

Work with SCCC to initiate a City/SCCC/neighborhood development partnership for affordable housing in SCCC neighborhood

Enhance the performing arts area between Broadway & Pine

Encourage private mixed use developments on existing surface parking lots

Enhance development opportunities around the park (City should re-think development densities)

Provide secure, ample bike parking at stations (and make certain that bikes will be allowed on train)

Increase lighting at park and in pedestrian tunnels/stations entrances to increase evening activity (safety)

## **Circulation**

### **Results of Circulation Focus Group**

#### **Key Issues and Considerations**

##### **Bicycle Access and Storage**

need for covered storage at the light rail station, at SCCC and near the Reservoir and park;  
need for bike lanes (Broadway/Nagle, Thomas, Denny, Harvard),  
better signage for bike routes and facilities,  
impacts of transit, parking and traffic circles on safe bicycle conditions, and  
need for clearly marked bicycle connections to other routes and destinations

They also noted the Long Beach Bike Station as an example, which is owned by the City of Long Beach, but operated by a non-profit organization. It provides inexpensive, covered outdoor locker storage and was built with MTA, federal and local funding.

##### **Principles:**

Bike routes should be on streets that have access into station, but possibly lower volume streets.  
Bicycle parking should be located at John & Harvard, the US Bank & the Lincoln Reservoir  
Develop bike stations using the Long Beach station's joint development model  
Look beyond 1/4 mile to fill in missing links to bicycle access and facilities.

##### **Elements of Station Area Development**

The Capitol Hill light rail station is predicted to have one of the largest volumes of transit users. The large volumes of pedestrians using the stations will create opportunities and challenges in terms of access/space and reinforcing the pedestrian environment.

Station entrances need to consider orientation and design with regard to the street and commercial/retail layout. Landscaping and design features are important ways to direct people from the station entrance to a safe crossing on Broadway.

The Nagle alignment/station option presents more challenges for pedestrian access and safety. With this option, a mid-block crossing should be placed at Howell to support links to SCCC and to Lincoln Reservoir and park. A raised connection to the park and reservoir should be considered.

Other pedestrian improvements include a 4-way walk signal at Broadway and John St., widened sidewalks on Broadway (narrow travel lane, or left turn), a bonus program to widen sidewalk with new development, pedestrian/bus bulbs at transfer stops to expand pedestrian space, improve speed/reliability of buses and slow traffic on Broadway.

Overall the group agreed that the current level of local transit service should continue to be

provided through the neighborhood because of the distance between the stations and the many employment hubs and the overall density of the area. They noted the lack of arterials that can serve transit, particularly east-west on north Capitol Hill.

Local shuttle and or circulator service was promoted as an important way to expand accessibility within the neighborhood and to/from the transit station.

## **Recommendations**

### **Transit:**

Maintain at least the current level of transit service on Capitol Hill

Consolidate #7 and #9 bus stops on Thomas; move SCCC stop to Broadway and John to connect with a 4-way scramble signal

Provide improved transit service on 12th to connect to Seattle U.

Provide shuttle service, looking at models that use subscription peak hour programs and small, electric shuttle vehicles.

Provide weather protection for transit stops

### **Circulation**

Develop a Bike Station that includes lockers and hangars, located either at the Bonny Watson parking lot or on the mezzanine level of the light rail station. This should be modeled after the Long Beach California bike station.

Provide wayfinding for bicyclists to the station, bike station and bicycle routes in the area.

Provide a variety of pedestrian treatments in and near the light rail station to assure access and safety for light rail station users. Particularly focus on the pedestrian crossing mid-block on Broadway (at Howell), considering use of a flashing crosswalk.

Maintain excellent bus transit service, consolidating bus stops where possible.

Provide transit information via ITS real-time info both on the surface and at the platform.

Consider bus/pedestrian bulbs on Broadway.

At Broadway and E. John, provide raised intersection, bus bulbs, 4-way signal (all-way walk), bollards to define pedestrian space and consolidated bus stop.

Develop a Link Super Shuttle, to provide shuttle service within the Capitol Hill neighborhood to the station. Seek private and public funding, and design to provide subscription service in peak hours.

Aggressively combat park and hide with transit pass incentives to workers and residents within range of the station.

### **Parking**

Park and Hide was identified as a potential issue, requiring strategies such as RPZ's to discourage people from using neighborhood streets for commuter parking.

Strategies for residential car storage and car sharing were cited as high priorities.

Light Rail transit related parking -- park and ride, and kiss and ride, also need to be addressed.

Team members noted that park and ride facilities are unlikely given the shortage of parking in this dense area, but that strategies should be developed to draw people from Seattle

neighborhoods east of Capitol Hill.

## **Edmunds Station**

The four teams at the Edmunds St. workshop focused on significant geographic nodes within the station area. These included:

**Columbia City Anchor/Historic District**

**Edmunds Street Link**

**Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.**

**Alaska St. Anchor at MLK Way Jr.**

### **Columbia City Anchor**

#### **Focus Topics:**

Columbia Plaza redevelopment

Farmers Market

Possibilities for re-development of Columbia Plaza site

How to consider historic district context?

How to find a permanent home for Farmers Market?

### **Edmunds Street Link**

#### **Focus Topics:**

What are preferred streetscape design possibilities along Edmunds Street, as a walking connection between MLK and Rainier Ave?

Explore the station design opportunities and parameters

### **Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.**

#### **Focus Topics:**

What key urban design and traffic elements on MLK between Edmunds and Alaska, help to connect the light rail station with Rainier Vista and the Columbia City core?

Gateway markers to Columbia City

Stair climb to Beacon Hill

Bike facilities and lanes

Bus routes and facilities

Street furniture

Integration of public art

## **Alaska St. Anchor at MLK Way Jr.**

### **Focus Topics:**

How can the intersection of MLK and Alaska be a point of activity that is well connected with the fabric of Rainier Vista redevelopment and is a focal point for the immediate neighborhood?

Feasibility of mixed retail and community services.

## **Edmunds St Station Walking Tour: (map with annotations)**

### **Columbia Plaza**

Neighborhood Plan goal to maintain the character and architectural fabric consistent with historic Columbia City.

Neighborhood Plan priority to redevelop Columbia Plaza and secure a permanent site for the Columbia City Farmers' Market

### **Edmunds Street Link**

Streetscape improvements here should make a positive connection between the light rail station and the Columbia City business district.

Opportunities for single family residences should be considered along with opportunities for greening the “sea of pavement” surrounding Orca school.

### **ML King Jr. Way**

Key goal is to make the station reflect the identity of the Columbia City neighborhood, given that the station is not in the business district core.

Design of the station platform must consider pedestrian access and safety, bike facilities and possibly a pedestrian stairclimb to connect the station with the west access.

### **M.L. King Jr. Way and Alaska St. intersection**

Development at this intersection should be moderate scale retail activity along with community services, complementing the Columbia City business district as the primary node of retail/commercial activity.

Rainier Vista redevelopment plans should be compatible with transit station proximity.

## **Edmunds**

### **Columbia City Anchor**

## **Results of Columbia City Anchor Focus Group**

The Columbia City Anchor team defined their mission to evaluate the effects of and relationship between the Edmunds St. light rail station and the Columbia City historic district (including Columbia Plaza and the farmers' market). They began with a discussion of opportunities, constraints and issues that face the Columbia City retail/commercial anchor.

### **Key Issues and Considerations**

The Columbia City Historic District provides a clear identity and design character for the Edmunds St. light rail station. The successful farmers market is a community focal point and a magnet to link areas and people.

Station area planning should build on the existing critical mass of cultural/community facilities in the Columbia City neighborhood. In particular Orca School @ Columbia should be considered for redevelopment potential, possibly for housing or retail/artists space.

Station area planning provides opportunities to better manage and use parking to meet current and future business and community needs, working with the Columbia City Business Association. In addition, transit service and routing should be fine tuned to create more connections to light rail

Traffic and parking were identified as a constraints to the development of the Columbia City business district. As a major traffic corridor, Rainier Avenue must maintain a certain capacity to carry vehicles. This is in conflict with the need for accessible parking in the business district and with the desire to create a pedestrian friendly area.

Another key constraint is the residential character of Edmunds St. which connects Columbia City business district with the light rail station on MLK Jr. Way. Improvements to enhance Edmunds St. as a connector must be sensitive to residents on Edmunds St. and to the residential character of neighborhood, while ameliorating the long walking distance between these two points.

Finally, property ownership in the area is made up of many small parcels, which is a constraint to future development.

### **Key Issues**

The team identified a range of issues to be considered in developing recommendations for this important historic district. They included:

Providing accessibility for all modes of travel

Creating Connections between nodes of Columbia City, station, Rainier Vista

Respecting privacy needs of residents on Edmunds St.

Exploring possible joint use public parking

Developing creative ways to maximize limited development capacity within Historic District and on narrow commercial lots

Protect and enhance the Columbia City Landmark District as the primary activity; support current reinvestment occurring in Columbia City

Create a destination and public meeting place at the Columbia City market

Create links between the light rail station and Columbia City through enhanced pedestrian improvements and bus circulation.

Scale the amount and type of commercial development at station to complement, not compete with Columbia City business district.

## **Elements of Station Area Development**

### **Recommendations**

The group's intent was to strategically locate the farmers market adjacent to the historic Columbia City and to capitalize on the market's ability to draw the community together. Because finding a permanent home for the farmers market was a mandate of this group, it became an integral factor in their intent to preserve the historic and economic integrity of Columbia City.

### **Farmer's Market Redevelopment (or the larger Columbia Plaza triangle)**

Locate the farmer's market at Columbia Plaza with covered sheds for year round use  
Create a central square/plaza possibly with a fountain and benches, surrounded by new development of compatible retail, housing

Expand the market to year-round operation with crafts, food, flea market

Explore other ideas including a cultural venue, an entertainment plaza, a civic park/building, ethnic food establishments, professional services, music; kiosk, water feature/fountain or clock tower or other icon

### **Orca School Redevelopment**

While the School District does not have any current plans to move Orca School, the focus group recommends that the community develop a clear strategy for redevelopment of this building if it becomes available. Future uses might include human services, freeing up space on Rainier Avenue for more retail uses.

### **Redevelop more retail space along Rainier**

Develop a master plan or development strategy for expanding retail space along Rainier Avenue in and near Columbia City. Design such developments with parking located behind buildings

Explore financing tools such as location efficient mortgage and transfer of development rights. Minimize commercial development at station that does not compete with Columbia City retail/business district.

### **Historic District Redevelopment**

Encourage redevelopment of strip development to better match historic district character (build to the sidewalk; locate parking behind buildings)

Develop a development strategy that promotes a more pedestrian oriented area

## **Gateways**

Explore gateways at Edmunds/Rainier and Alaska/Rainier intersections

This could include use of banners, signs (directional or identification), paving materials to complement historic district brick, curb cuts, pedestrian lighting, kiosks

## **Create a Pedestrian Corridor**

Create an attractive, safe pedestrian corridor along Edmunds St from the light rail station to the historic district, and along Rainier between Alaska and Pearl Streets.

Create continuity through use of similar streetlight fixtures throughout the identified pedestrian corridor.

## **Bike Corridor**

Develop a clearly marked bike corridor that connects the light rail station to key community destinations [along Edmunds, then behind farmers' market (with bike parking there), through open space to ballfields, to Genessee and on to Lake Washington].

## **Edmunds Street Link**

### **Results of Edmunds Street Link Focus Group**

The MLK at Edmunds Street team focused on a design of the light rails station platform and surrounding area that would draw people to the station from throughout the neighboring areas.

### **Key Issues and considerations**

How to incorporate the role of the school (Columbia School which houses the Orca program) as a landmark, particularly the tower.

Need for strong intermodal connections between light rail and buses, bikeways and pedestrian routes.

Need to balance residential uses along Edmunds St. with its function as the pedestrian link between Columbia City and the light rail station.

How to create a sense of place with individual identity at the station (tied to Columbia City)

Need for strong design focus for the Edmunds streetscape



## **Elements of Station Area Development**

### **Recommendations**

#### **Create a clear Identity tied to Columbia City**

Rename station from Edmunds to Columbia City Station

Provide clear signage to the Edmunds connection with signs to the library, commercial area, public market, cultural and recreation centers, and Orca School

Incentive –to use transit, make parking downtown inconvenient and costly

Explore elements such as a whirligig, gateway signage/feature and enhancement of the Columbia School tower to create visual landmarks that identify the station

#### **Create strong pedestrian link along Edmunds**

Create a smooth transition from Columbia City's more urban higher density commercial/residential character to the Edmunds station at MLK

### **Streetscape Improvements**

At Columbia School improve school fence and property to be more attractive; include an historic element/art on the school site

Improvements on Edmunds St should focus pedestrian traffic on the north side. This should include a 10' wide pedestrian/landscaped pathway.

Install pedestrian lighting on both sides of the street that carries out the Columbia City adapt to the different uses on each side (sf residential on the south side; mf developments on north side)

Protect existing character on south, focusing improvements on adding trees as a buffer; improving fences and lighting

Underground utilities on Edmunds St. between Rainier Ave. South and MLK Jr. Way South as part of street improvements.

### **Traffic Improvement to Slow Traffic**

Implement a coordinated set of traffic elements to channel and slow traffic on residential streets.

Accomplish this through curb bulbs, closing 32<sup>nd</sup> st and adding a small park (south of Edmunds), changing the pavement texture at crosswalks, east/west crossings

Create a bike friendly intermodal connection from the station

### **Development Potential**

Explore potential for higher density redevelopment (multi-family) on north side of Edmunds St.

Extend Historic Street Facades into Edmunds toward station

Relocate school and reuse building for affordable housing/services

Carry through Columbia City Historic design elements into new redevelopment along Edmunds and along MLK



## **Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. at Edmunds**

### **Results of MLK Jr. Way at Edmunds Focus Group**

The MLK at Edmunds team focused on Martin Luther King Jr. Way between between Edmunds and Alaska Streets. They first discussed key opportunities, obstacles and issues, then developed strategies and recommendations. Some issues and recommended strategies that they identified overlap with those of other teams, in most cases reinforcing recommended directions for development of the station and station area.

### **Key Issues and Considerations**

**Economic Development:** The light rail station can bring economic opportunities to MLK including mixed use development with ground floor retail and encourage higher density development at Rainier Vista

**Multi-modal connection @ Alaska:** Opportunity to focus bus and pedestrian connections

**Create destination:** increase density on the west; linkage from Beacon Hill to station platform via mixed use

**Develop Identity:** Use light rail station as an opportunity to create visual identity and incorporate art into the station and along MLK Jr. Way

**Enhance Rainier Vista's connections to transit and other parts of the community through the transit station and development of the southwest corner of Rainier Vista..**

The team identified several obstacles to achieving a clear vision for MLK Jr. Way. These include:

**Economic Development:** competition with downtown Columbia City could be an obstacle to development on MLK near the station.

**Distance between Alaska and Edmunds:** The design of the station platform could be an obstacle for pedestrian access from either end at these cross streets.

### **Elements of Station Area Development**

#### **Recommendations**

This team generated many detailed ideas regarding the actual design of the streetscape along MLK Jr. Way and for connections to the station itself. The overall goal of these recommendations are to create a station that is accessible and attractive and to develop a welcoming and safe environment surrounding the station. Important to accomplishing this is creating a sense of place and destination for people using the station.

#### **Create a welcoming, accessible and station**

Provide access to the station at both ends with pedestrian crossings across MLK

Reflect the diversity of the community through art and design features of the station, working with local artists to include icons from Columbia City and Beacon Hill.

Provide benches at the station and adjacent bus stops

Design station platform and access to it for safe use by the elderly and children  
Provide clear signage in languages represented in the community

### **Design Connections to Station to Encourage its Use and Enhance the Surrounding Area**

Provide gateways for pedestrians, vehicles and transit through signage, art and urban design features (could include special paving, planted median at Alaska)

Provide covered bike racks in the triangle at Edmunds

Make clear physical connections to Rainier Vista

Provide street furniture that reflects the station design in nearby mixed use buildings

Lighting should be same scale as existing lights, extend style from Columbia City

Explore special features such as a water feature or clock tower as part of the station entrance/access design

Expand the triangle park space by closing access at 32<sup>nd</sup> and MLK

Use brick sidewalk treatment along Edmunds and MLK to connect to Columbia City and Rainier Vista

Focus on east-west connections to Columbia City and Beacon Hill. Could include a covered walkway east from the station to the school and a shuttle from VA Hospital.

## **Alaska St. Anchor**

### **Results of the Alaska St. Anchor Session**

The Alaska St. Anchor team first identified key features and obstacles, then developed principles and recommendations for successful station area design for this key intersection at the station.

### **Key Issues and Considerations**

Area is characterized by high transit ridership

Rainier Vista garden community redevelopment offers opportunities for clustering housing density near the station.

Existing mini mart could be part of larger cluster of services developed along MLK, complementing more complete services in Columbia City.

32<sup>nd</sup>/Alaska triangle could be used as a park, resolving traffic flow issues

There are a number of obstacles to creating a strong anchor at Alaska with development of the light rail station. Most of these are physical obstacles related to the light rail system and the street grid.

The Light Rail alignment and MLK Jr Way divide the community.  
31<sup>st</sup>/Alaska/MLK triangle is currently not well used.  
30<sup>th</sup>/MLK intersection awkward; change configuration of 30<sup>th</sup> to have only one access point to MLK  
MLK intersects and interrupts the street grid  
Distance between the loading platform entrances and the train could be difficult for senior and disabled residents to access.

## **Elements of Station Area Development**

### **Recommendations**

#### **Successful Station Area Design: Principles**

Provide excellent transit service at the station with lots of connections  
Design adequate and comfortable access onto platforms for elderly and disabled transit users (Mid-block crossing to north end of station is dangerous: lengthen platform to the north, but leave south end access at Edmunds)  
Resolve conflicts relating to confluence of transit modes  
Provide traffic calming and pedestrian safety improvements on MLK and adjacent streets.  
Assure local pedestrian access across MLK and the transit alignment, particularly at street crossings  
Develop and implement clear standards for pedestrian-friendly scale of development and design treatments  
Assure that the proposed Rainier Vista redevelopment creates strong streets off MLK; and provides buffers to MLK  
Encourage single family infill wherever possible  
Design clear strong pedestrian connections to Columbia City  
Integrate public art/public spaces (including station design) of LINK/Express to cultural diversity and community history and character  
At the MLK/Alaska St. intersection, create a plaza surrounded by businesses and used by buses; consider pedestrian skybridges

#### **Key Elements:**

Land Use and zoning  
Increase zoning to allow some commercial use along MLK; include in Station Area Plan  
Develop Design standards for station and station area development  
Include specific access features in the Station alignment design  
Include clear implementation plan in Station area plan

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