

OTHELLO TOWN CENTER

Urban Design Framework



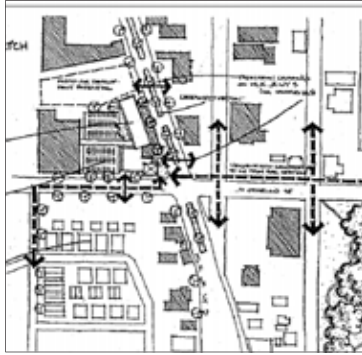
October 2011

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Early concept plan for the Othello Town Center.

INTRODUCTION

Since 1998, many members of the Othello community worked together to create the vision for the Othello Town Center through a series of planning processes beginning with the *MLK @ S. Holly Street Neighborhood Plan* (July 1998). A recent update to the plan (January 2010) identified a need to look more closely at the Town Center. Residents and businesses embraced “Othello” as a new name for their community, and the Town Center will help to strengthen the identity of this dynamic community. The purpose of this Urban Design Framework is to guide the future work and investment of the community, developers and the City to make that vision a reality. It identifies the existing conditions and specific planning and design strategies necessary to achieve the community’s vision.



Community members at an Othello planning workshop.

The Urban Design Framework focuses on the area referred to in previous plans as the Town Center and the Othello Station Area Overlay District, a special zone to encourage the development of a diverse, mixed-use community with a pedestrian orientation. For the purposes of this Urban Design Framework, the Town Center and the Othello Station Area Overlay District are considered the same area.



2010 Neighborhood Plan Update.

Othello Town Center – The Vision

The *MLK @ Holly Street Neighborhood Plan* (1998) adopted by City Council through ordinance number 119298, stated: “We the Residents, Merchants, and Friends of the MLK at S. Holly Street Neighborhood pledge to build and maintain a healthy, safe, and sustainable community. Through our diversity, strength, and cooperation, we will realize our full potential as a thriving social, educational, and business community; a community rich in ethnic and cultural diversity, sustained by a well defined urban village core and a variety of housing types with various levels of affordability.”

The community goes on to describe more specific aspirations for the Town Center:

“a uniquely identifiable Town Center that is a destination for international food and cultural experiences”

“a variety of open spaces for informal public gathering and recreation”

“dense urban development in the Town Center in a manner that creates a vibrant and active commercial district supportive of the community, along with residential infill development to increase the housing supply”



New homes near the Town Center.



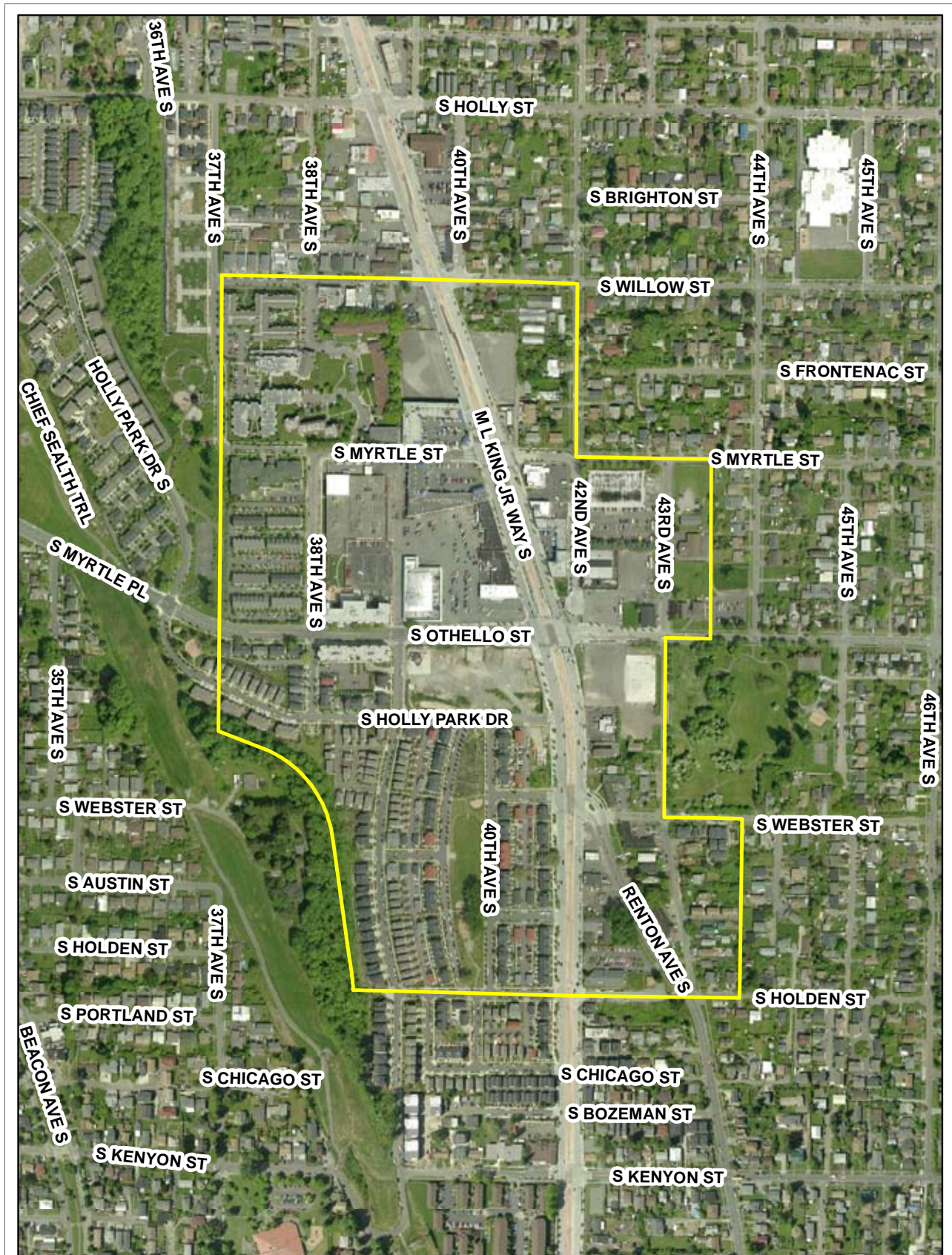
Othello light rail station. © Oran Viriyncy via Flickr



A vibrant walkable Town Center.



Outdoor stalls at the Othello Public Market.



Town Center/ Othello Station Area Overlay District.

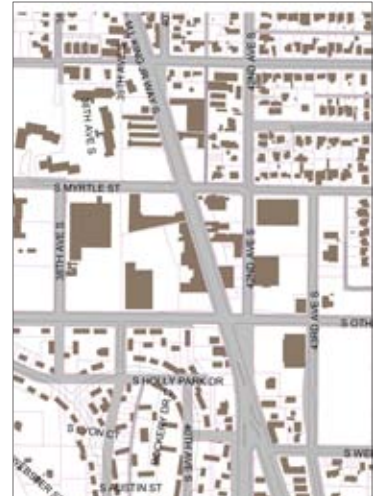
Othello Town Center - Today

The Othello Town Center, part of the Rainier Valley, is located south of I-90 and about six miles from downtown Seattle. Its unique multicultural shopping district is surrounded by the neighborhoods of NewHolly, South Beacon Hill and Brighton. The Othello Station is located on Martin Luther King Jr. Way South (MLK Jr. Way S.) just north of S. Othello Street. This section of LINK Light Rail runs at-grade in the median of MLK Jr. Way S. The existing commercial development is a mix of single story retail buildings along MLK Jr. Way S., a collection of small shops in the two-level King Plaza mall, an outdoor/indoor Othello Public Market, and larger format chain stores and banks (Safeway, US Bank, Chase).

In the past decade, this Town Center has experienced more change than other station areas in Southeast Seattle. In addition to the station-related improvements and the rebuilding of MLK Jr. Way S., auto-oriented commercial development is giving way to new housing, pedestrian-oriented shopping, restaurants and services evolving along a walkable grid of streets. Improvements are also happening at the 7-acre Othello Park close to the Town Center.



View of the Othello Town Center.



“Auto-oriented” pattern of streets and buildings before the recent developments.



Public realm improvements that are part of new mixed-use development near the Othello station.



New housing within a 5-minute walk of the light rail station.



Othello Neighborhood Plan workshop.



Comfortable human-scaled retail street. © Oran Viriyny via Flickr



This example of a neighborhood gathering place combines a plaza with softer planted landscapes.

Achieving the Vision

In May of 2010, Othello community members and the City of Seattle formed a Town Center action team to assist in the implementation of goals, strategies and action items identified in the recent neighborhood plan update. In October this team met to further define the vision and make specific recommendations on how to change the physical form of the neighborhood to make the Town Center more vital, walkable and economically successful.

This document is a blueprint for cementing community goals, coordinating private and public action, and prioritizing capital investment decisions.

Some of the “big moves” or opportunities to create a vibrant, multi-cultural Town Center are highlighted in Figure 1 and listed below. Many of these opportunities are supported by the existing zoning, but some will require changes (See Figure 1).

- **Promote the development of a pedestrian oriented retail, restaurant and entertainment district** that occurs east and west of MLK Jr. Way S. between S. Myrtle and S. Othello Streets.
- **Mark the intersections of MLK Jr. Way S.** at the north and south end of the station as important but distinct. Differentiate S. Othello Street as the prime corner with a major civic space and high quality new development. (Figure 1 - orange circles)
- **Establish gateways to the Town Center** on MLK Jr. Way S. near S. Willow Street and Renton Avenue S. (Figure 1 - purple lines)
- **Catalyze change with the redevelopment of “opportunity sites”** around the light rail station for mixed-use development. (Figure 1 - blue areas)
- **Break down large blocks** east and west of the station to a pedestrian-scale.
- **Connect the Town Center** to adjacent neighborhoods and open spaces.

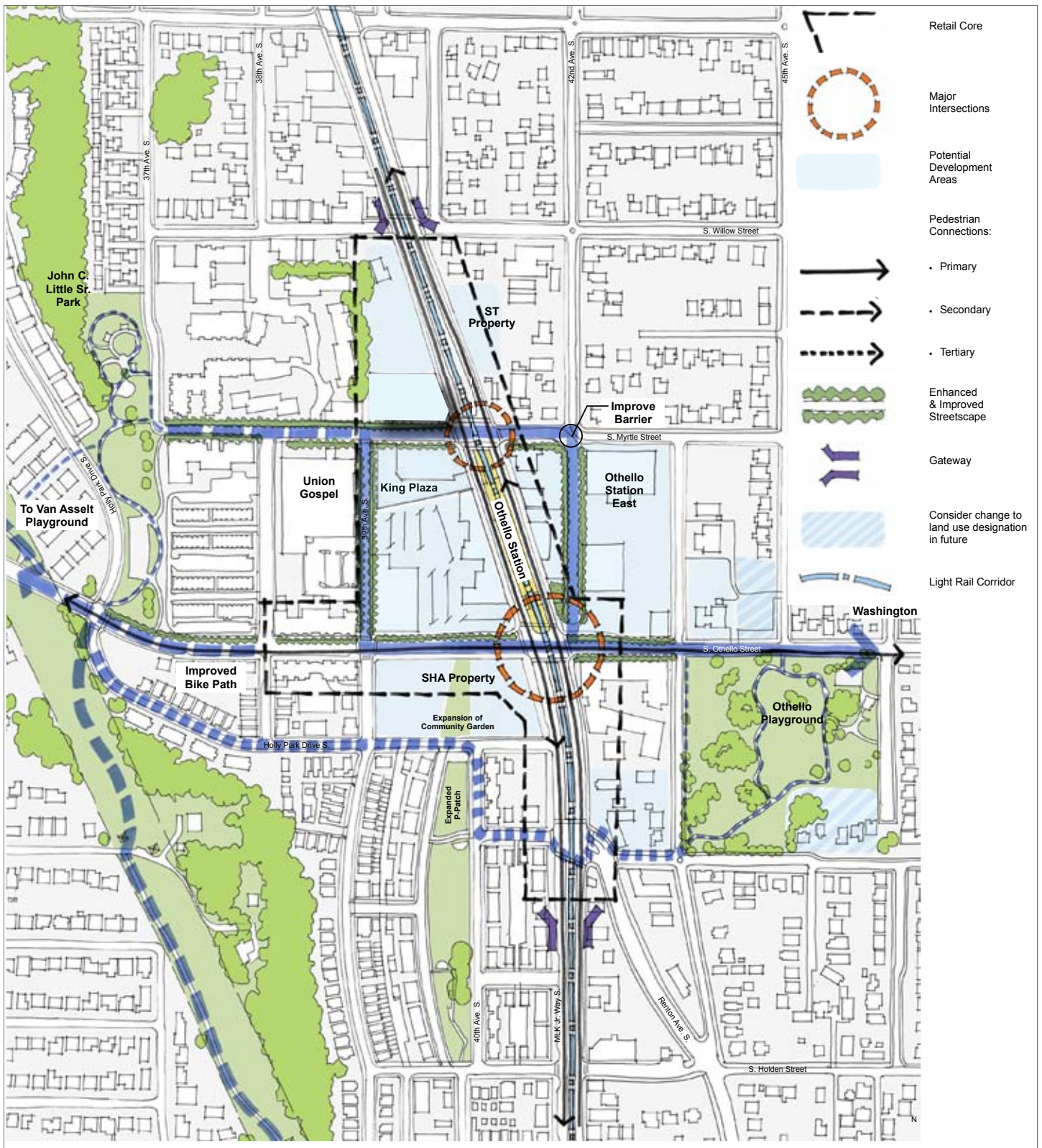


Figure 1 — Opportunities



A comfortable, pedestrian street.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The community's ideas for a vibrant Town Center are captured in the *Othello Neighborhood Plan*. The following Urban Design Framework recommendations refine those ideas. The community's vision for the Town Center incorporates many of the fundamental urban design principles used to make good streets and vibrant urban places—an interesting mix of retail uses along the street, multiple options for getting around, human-scaled buildings, streets and sidewalks, well designed streetscapes and public space, and a strong local identity. A good urban place is where you want to stop, get out of your car and walk around because it's attractive, interesting and buzzing with activity.



An example of mixed-use building for a Town Center.

The Urban Design Framework recommendations are organized as follows:

- Land Use and Built Form
- Circulation
- Streetscapes
- Open Space and Gateways
- Sustainable Strategies

The final section, Implementation, includes a summary of how the Urban Design Framework recommendations can be implemented through zoning changes and other tools.

Land Use and Built Form

Existing



Banners contribute to sense of place.

The current land use and built form of the Town Center includes both urban and suburban patterns and building types. Some blocks feature auto-oriented, single-story shopping centers with deep setbacks of surface parking. Other blocks are more urban—small shops line the sidewalks or sit in modest strip centers with limited surface parking. Housing types within or directly adjacent to the Town Center includes older single family houses, newer attached housing and a multi-story mixed-use development. Beyond the Town Center, auto-oriented commercial extends north and south. Existing open space within the Town Center is limited, but larger parks and open spaces, such as Othello Park, John C. Little Park, P-Patch, and Chief Sealth Trail, lie close by.

Recommendations

Othello's reputation as a diverse retail and restaurant destination draws shoppers from a wide geographic area. The unique culturally-diverse businesses of King Plaza and elsewhere in the Town Center are already generating vibrancy within the Town Center. Residential buildings will add more pedestrians, liveliness, and create demand for more businesses and services when fully occupied.

The proposed zoning will allow a continuation of trends exhibited by recent development. Auto-oriented commercial will give way to a richer mix of uses—multi-family housing with ground floor retail and commercial uses. Built form will be more urban—continuous street wall (e.g. buildings are not separated by driveways or surface parking), taller buildings that meet the sidewalk but step back on upper floors. However, new commercial space that is affordable and sized for diverse independent businesses must be part of the mix to preserve Othello as a unique retailing destination and cultural experience. During the planning process for the *Othello Neighborhood Plan* the community saw a need to increase the existing allowable height limits in the Town Center, as high as 85 feet for sites fronting MLK Jr. Way S.

- **Main Street Retail** — Focus pedestrian-oriented retail on MLK Jr. Way S., side streets (S. Othello Street, S. Myrtle Street) and streets parallel to MLK Jr. Way S. (38th Avenue S., 42nd Avenue S.) to create a regional destination for shopping and eating, as well as a neighborhood destination for retail services and meeting friends and neighbors.
- **Opportunity Sites** — Redevelop “opportunity sites” (e.g. blocks directly east and west of the station, SHA property, King Plaza) with mixed-use development that includes a high quality pedestrian environment, provides affordable places to live and run a business, and supports existing businesses by bringing more residents and workers to the Town Center.
- **Building Height** — Allow building heights up to 85 feet closest to the station, but provide a transition area of lower height near adjacent single-family housing. (see Figure 2)
- **Building Setbacks and Massing** — Encourage upper-level setbacks for buildings over 55 feet in height and additional setbacks in some locations to preserve views and maximize sun exposure in public spaces and residences.



New mixed-use development will bring more people to the Town Center.



Trees make walking and shopping more comfortable for pedestrians.



Upper-level setback.

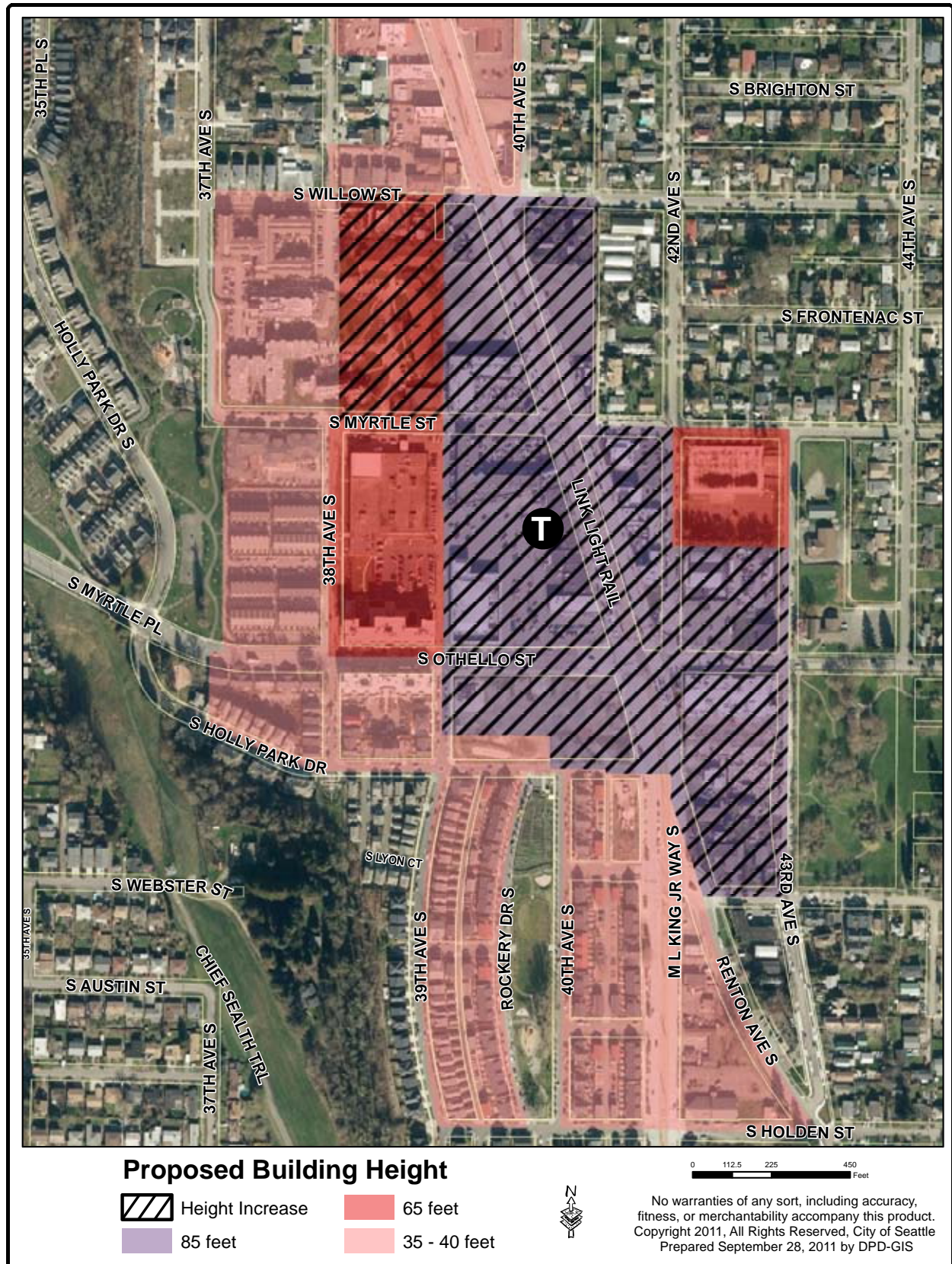


Figure 2 — Proposed Building Height

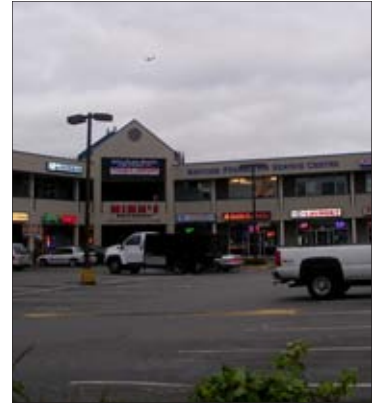
Circulation

Existing

The Town Center is intersected by three arterials (MLK Jr. Way S., S. Othello Street and Renton Avenue S.). MLK Jr. Way S., a principal arterial and a designated “major truck street,” carries the highest volume of traffic—over 21,000 vehicles a day. In general, the pedestrian infrastructure is good. New sidewalks, street trees and crossings have been built along many streets as part of the light rail construction or new development. But pedestrian connections through the many surface parking lots, crossings at some intersections and travelling to destinations beyond the Town Center remain challenging. Bicycle infrastructure is incomplete. Transit is excellent—light rail easily connects residents and businesses to other Rainier Valley communities and downtown Seattle.

Recommendations (see Figure 3)

- **Provide bicycle infrastructure.** Implement the recommendations of the *Seattle Bicycle Master Plan* and the *Neighborhood Street Fund Project* including the creation of a signed bicycle route on S. Othello Street that will link to major open spaces.
- **Make the sidewalk network complete and safe.** Implement the recommendations of the *Seattle Pedestrian Master Plan* and the *Southeast Seattle Transportation Study* to improve pedestrian crossings, especially intersections along S. Othello Street and MLK Jr. Way S.
- **Create mid-block pedestrian paths and crossings where blocks are long.** Use mid-block paths to connect, and break down the scale of the large or long blocks west or east of the station.



King Plaza draws shoppers from a wide area.



Wide sidewalks, street trees, and parking enhance pedestrian comfort.



A Sharrow - a wide travel lane shared with bicycles.



Figure 3 – Proposed Circulation Concept

Streetscape Concepts for the Town Center

Existing

Streetscape refers to the physical design of the public realm – the space between buildings. It includes not only the road, but also the adjacent sidewalk areas. Much of the streetscape has been improved as part of the station development, the redevelopment of the NewHolly neighborhood and other new development. But, parts of the Town Center remain auto-oriented and challenging to pedestrians, cyclists and transit patrons. Some areas still lack infrastructure like pedestrian scale lighting, landscaping, more visible crossings and other street furnishings. Infrastructure for bicycles is incomplete.

Recommendations

Streetscape improvements to MLK Jr. Way S. were completed as part of the Othello Station construction. Additional improvements can occur with the redevelopment of the blocks directly east and west of the station, and as part of the creation of a civic open space (see Open Space recommendations). Therefore, streetscape recommendations focus on enhancing the three other streets—39th Avenue S., S. Othello Street, S. Myrtle Street. Different functions and character will guide the detailed streetscape design. Audible signals, tactile/colored paving or other features could be integrated into these streetscape designs to assist mobility impaired pedestrians.

- **Enhance the character and function of 39th Avenue S.** This is a pedestrian-oriented street with generous streetscape and landscape amenities. Vehicle speeds are low, and allow a design that supports periodic street closure for a Farmers Market or other community events.
- **Enhance the character and function of S. Myrtle Street.** As an east/west connector through the Town Center, it is essential for the road right-of-way to accommodate pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles comfortably and safely. Enhancements could include landscaping, pedestrian lighting and street trees.



This streetscape is designed with pervious paving, street trees and other planting—types of green stormwater infrastructure.



Streetscapes that include wide sidewalks, small retail bays, awnings, and street trees encourage walking.



A unique bike rack adds character to the street.



Planted curb extensions (or curb bulbs) make intersections safer and streets more attractive.

- **Enhance the character and function of S. Othello Street.**
This street must accommodate a significant amount of traffic, both cars and buses while providing a safe walking and biking connection from adjacent neighborhoods to the station, shopping and other destinations. The existing streetscape can be further enriched with amenities including pedestrian-scale lighting, improved crosswalks, and directional signage. Streetscape elements, such as marked crossings, and curb bulbs, will promote safety and clarity at the intersection of MLK Jr. Way S. and S. Othello Street –the south entry point to the light rail station.
- **Off Peak Parking on MLK Jr. Way S.** should be considered to improve the pedestrian environment by providing a buffer between traffic and pedestrians, and to support a vibrant business district.

See the following section Open Space for additional and complementary recommendations related to the public realm.



Parked cars and street trees buffer pedestrians from traffic.

Walking conditions along and across streets with high traffic volumes and high speeds are uncomfortable, especially locations that have long blocks and auto-oriented development.
—Seattle Pedestrian Master Plan, September 2009



Distinctive tree planting enhance the pedestrian realm.



An example of pedestrian scale lighting in the International District/Chinatown.

Open Space and Gateways

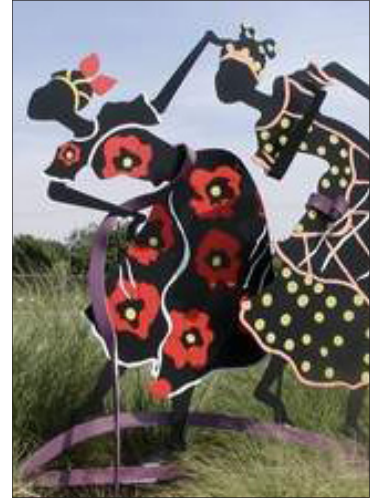
Existing

New transit and residential development has expanded and diversified open space in the Town Center—pocket parks, a P-Patch, gathering places along MLK Jr. Way S. Public art and banners are creating memorable landmarks and reinforcing the identity of Othello, a new name for this dynamic community. But well-defined entrances and a central civic space befitting a Town Center are lacking. Beyond the Town Center are significant community and regional open spaces, such as Othello Park, John C. Little Park, Chief Sealth Trail, Van Asselt Park and Community Center, and pocket parks in NewHolly.

Recommendations (see Figure 4)

The *Othello Neighborhood Plan* calls for the creation of a variety of open space as well as better connections to existing open spaces. Gateways—highly visible landscape or structural features—can enhance the identity and express civic pride of the Town Center by announcing arrival in a distinct special place. Signage, structures, lighting, landscaping, banners and even buildings can be used to create gateways.

- **Civic Open Space** – Developing an open space west of the station would accommodate community functions, celebrations, farmers market or other outdoor markets. The recommended location for a civic open space is the corner of MLK Jr. Way S. and S. Othello Street—a highly visible location with good southern exposure. The civic open space could be part of redevelopment that occurs on the block west of the station, and would be shaped by the development program. Under any option it is important that the surrounding buildings activate the space at street level with shops, cafes, or restaurants. (see pages 16 and 17)



"Come Dance with Me" is a popular landmark in Othello.



Young musicians preform at an Othello Park concert.



An example of a civic gathering space.



Option 1 Pocket Park

A large open space includes a landscaped park and a plaza that opens to MLK Jr. Way S. The existing Safeway remains.



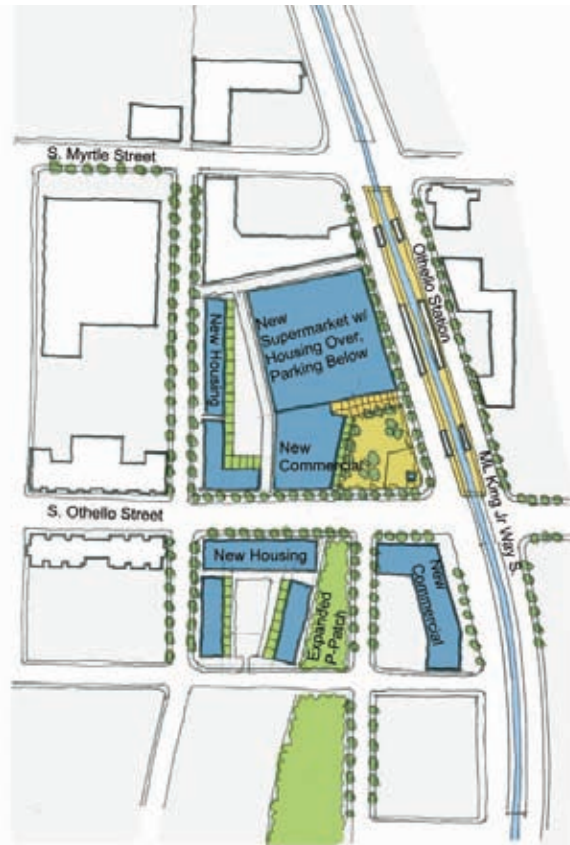
Option 2 Civic Green

A slightly smaller landscaped park has plazas on the north and west sides. Surrounding development includes a new supermarket and housing along S. 32nd Street.



Option 3 Green Plaza

A landscaped park occupies the prime corner. Mid-block paths from S. Othello Street, S. Myrtle Street and MLK Jr. Way S. connect to a formal interior plaza that forms a grand entrance for commercial and mixed use development.



Option 4 Market Square

This is similar to option one, but the development is denser and parking is underground. A small plaza sits on the north end of the park.



A civic space for informal gatherings.



NewHolly P-Patch.



A civic gathering place with a water feature.

- **East Plaza** – Enhance and expand the existing plaza east of the station as an informal community gathering space. Trees, seating, art and other elements will add beauty, comfort and usability of this space.
- **Expanded P-Patch** – The existing P-Patch is a treasured community asset. Its expansion could be integrated into the development of the Seattle Housing Authority property south of S. Othello Street. This would provide additional gardening space and a green linkage between the station and the adjacent neighborhood, and can be a destination on the signed bicycle route.
- **Links to Existing Space and Regional Trails** – The signed bicycle route along S. Othello Street/ Myrtle Place/ S. Myrtle Street links the major parks and trails adjacent to the Town Center.
- **Establish Gateways on MLK Jr. Way S.** (near S. Willow Street and Renton Avenue S.) — The gateway should be designed for visibility given the speed and volume of traffic on MLK Jr. Way S. Visibility from the light rail cars could be considered because the gateway also marks the arrival at Othello Station.

While most of the North Beacon Hill, MLK@Holly and Rainier Beach residential urban villages are within 1/4 mile of Village Open Space, some gaps appear when considering parks within 1/8 mile of locations within those urban villages.

—Seattle's Parks and Recreation 2011 Development Plan

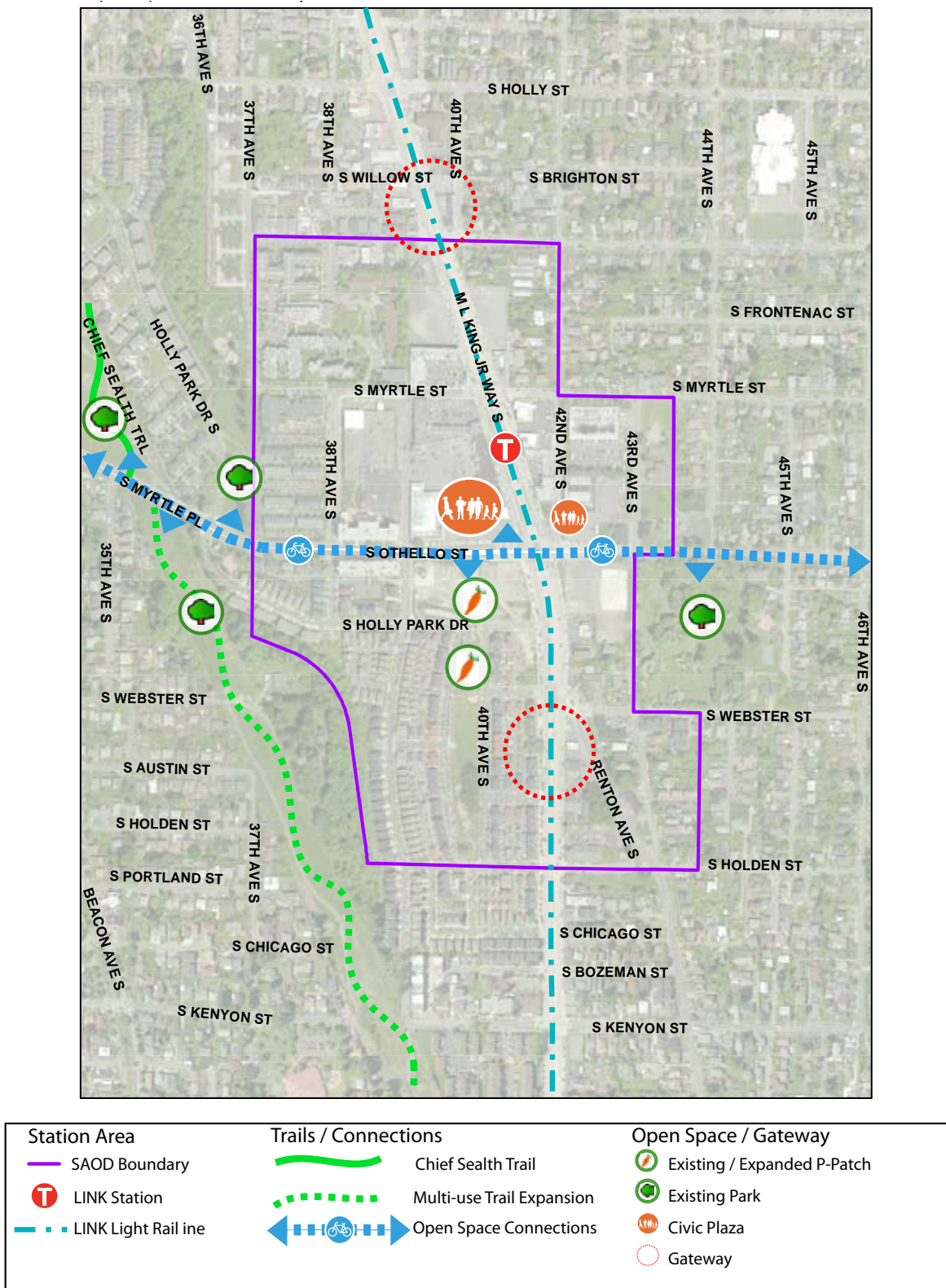


Figure 4 – Proposed Open Space and Gateways



Green roof on the new Ballard library.



Plantings on a roof deck absorb stormwater and enhance a shared open space. © William Wright Photography



Trees and other plantings are part of the green stormwater infrastructure.

Sustainable Strategies

The *Othello Neighborhood Plan* affirmed a commitment to creating a community that is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. Environmental sustainability is implicit in the previous recommendations for urban form, land use, circulation, streetscapes, and open space. With ample opportunity to walk, bike, and take transit current and future residents of the Town Center will live a more sustainable life. Research by the U.S. Environmental Protection agency found that residents of compact walkable neighborhoods consume half the energy of those who live in conventional suburbs. Additional sustainable strategies can help build an even more sustainable Town Center by integrating green stormwater infrastructure and green building technology to the extent feasible.

Green Stormwater Infrastructure refers to landscapes that are designed specifically to absorb and manage stormwater—bioretention plantings, permeable paving, green roofs, and rainwater harvesting. These practices keep urban runoff out of storm drains and overloaded combined sewers, and help improve Seattle’s water quality and aquatic habitat. In addition to their functional role, green stormwater infrastructure can be designed as an open space amenity adding interest and beauty to streets and public spaces. The new Stormwater Code requires Green Stormwater Infrastructure to the ‘maximum extent feasible’ for new projects throughout the city including the Othello Town Center.

Green stormwater infrastructure should be integrated into the design of future intersection improvements (curb bulbs, curbside planting strips, pavement) and open space (p-patch, plazas, pedestrian connections). These practices should be considered on a site-by-site basis in all new development—buildings, streets, trails and open space. More information at www.seattle.gov/util/About_SPU/Drainage_&_Sewer_System/GreenStormwaterInfrastructure/index.htm

Green Building Technology refers to an array of strategies that result in a building that uses sustainable materials and is highly energy and water efficient. The City has a several incentive programs to encourage green building technology (see Sustainable Development, page 21).

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation refers to the next steps—the policies, regulations, programs and resources that the City can use to implement recommendations. The Urban Design Framework considered a number of implementation tools to require or encourage the desired physical form and land uses within the Town Center.

Zoning

Existing

The Town Center currently includes two commercial zones (Neighborhood Commercial 2, Neighborhood Commercial 3), two residential zones (Lowrise 2, Lowrise 3) and two special districts (Station Area Overlay District, Pedestrian Designation) that affect land use, building types, street-level uses and design, and parking location and access. See Appendix A for a brief description of these categories and districts.

Recommendations (Figure 5)

The *Othello Neighborhood Plan* recommends “rezone key opportunity sites to encourage the redevelopment of parcels around the light rail station in a manner that incorporates housing, commercial services (such as a grocery store and small businesses) and amenities.” The community considered increasing the maximum height allowed, as well as some changes to zoning to attract denser housing and commercial development to the Town Center that will bring more vibrancy to the area. A detailed description and analysis of rezone recommendations are contained in the *Director’s Analysis and Recommendation on the Othello Rezone Proposal*.

Continue to Use Neighborhood Commercial Zoning — The recommended zoning continues to use Neighborhood Commercial to shape an active street-level retail environment mixed with upper level residential use.

Increase Height — Increase the allowable heights in the NC zone up to 85 feet for opportunity sites adjacent to the station. This change will allow more dense mixed-use development, activate the street with street level retail and increase the number of people to live, work or shop in the Town Center.

Rezone Select Residential Parcels to Expand Neighborhood Commercial — Parcels currently zoned for lowrise residential at the southeast and northwest corners of the Town Center are recommended for rezone to NC3. This change will allow well located parcels close to that station to be redeveloped with a mix of commercial and residential uses.

Sustainable Development

Much of the desired physical character and sustainability of the Town Center will be determined by decisions of private property owners. In Seattle, certain sustainable development practices are required by the Land Use, Building and Stormwater codes. In addition, the City has introduced several programs to promote sustainable building and design in new development projects:

Green Factor

The Green Factor is a landscape requirement designed to increase the quantity and quality of planted areas in Seattle while allowing flexibility for developers and designers to meet development standards. It currently applies to new development in commercial and neighborhood commercial zones outside

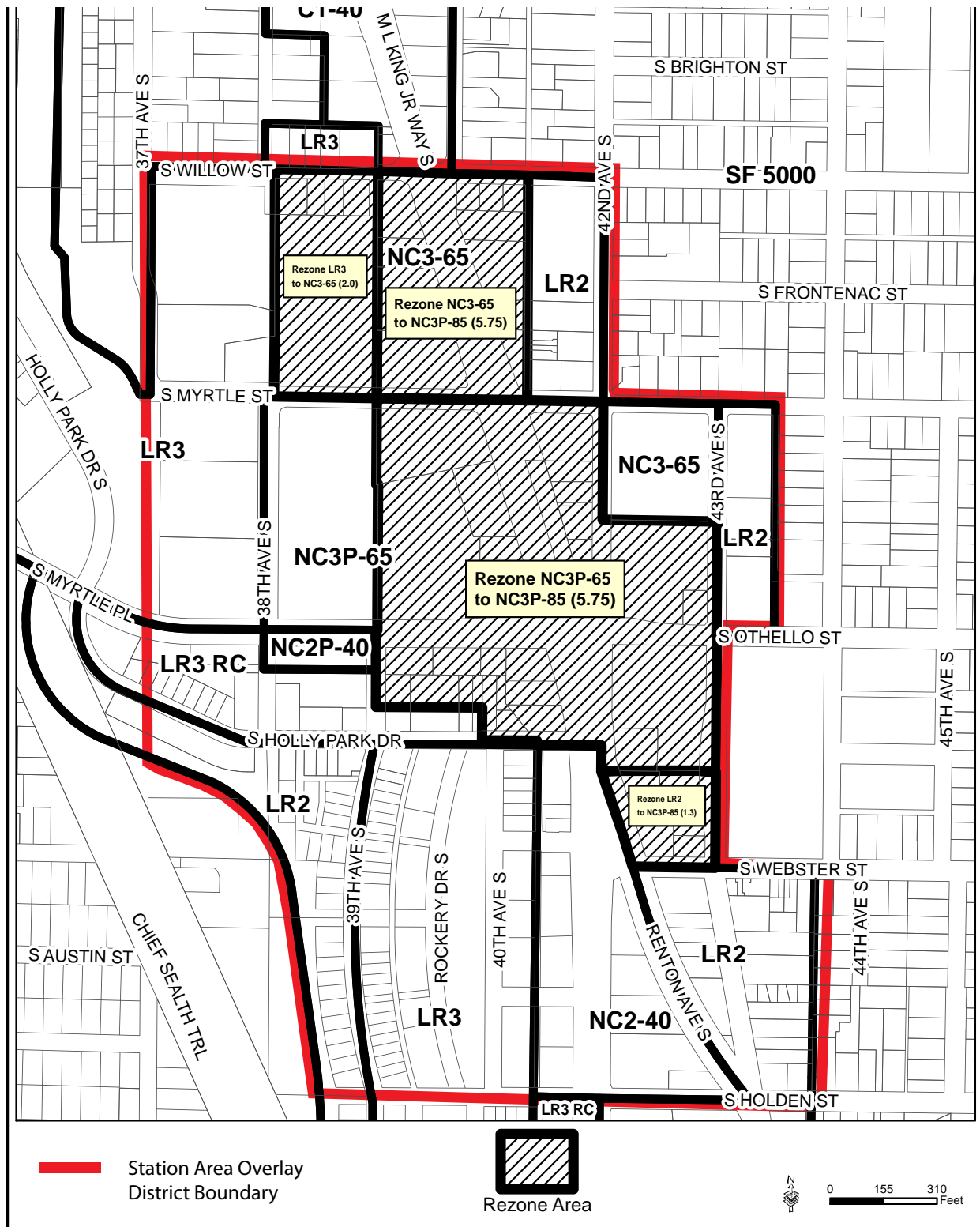


Figure 5 – Proposed Zoning

of downtown, and multifamily residential zones. The requirement is designed to encourage larger plants, permeable paving, green roofs, vegetated walls, preservation of existing trees, and layering of vegetation along streets and other areas visible to the public. Bonuses are provided for food cultivation, native and drought-tolerant plants, and rainwater harvesting.

Priority Green

Priority Green is a suite of green permitting incentives to assist projects that use smart approaches to design and construction and innovative practices.

- **Priority Green EXPEDITED** shortens review times for projects that meet typical green building standards and have less code complexity.
- **Priority Green FACILITATED** assists all innovative project types that will serve as visible models of high performance and sustainability.
- **Priority Green TOOLS** provides additional code incentives to assist applicants in developing green projects.
- **The Living Building Pilot Program** assists projects attempting to meet the requirements of the Living Building Challenge—a green building rating system to recognize buildings meeting the highest level of sustainability. The Pilot Program allows flexibility in development standards to accommodate innovative technologies or design approaches that might otherwise be discouraged or prohibited.

Analyses Requested by City Council

City Council Resolution 31204 requested that the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) study and analyze some specific implementation tools as part of the Urban

Design Framework. Complete analyses, discussions and recommendations regarding these items are included in the *Director's Analysis and Recommendation on Othello Rezone Proposal*. Findings are summarized below:

- **Development capacity under existing and proposed zoning.** The proposed rezones are anticipated to add 105 housing units over the next 20 years.
- **Proposed incentive structures for public benefits.** The recommended maximum building heights of 65 feet allows the use of incentive zoning provisions where 100% of the bonus floor area could be used to provide affordable housing.
- **Transfer of development rights.** Participation in a transferable development rights program is not recommended due to potential conflicts with City policy and community priorities, as well as the high transactions costs that would be incurred.
- **Minimum density.** The use of minimum densities is not recommended because under current market conditions, this requirement may be a disincentive to new development and the expansion of existing businesses.

Other Implementation Resources

Multi-Family Tax Exemption Program

The Multifamily Property Tax Exemption (MFTE) Program provides a tax exemption on the residential improvements on multifamily projects in exchange for the provision of affordable housing. The current rules allow a tax exemption for 12 years if 20% of the units are set aside for moderate-wage workers to rent or buy. Rental units are income restricted based on the average household median income (AMI). The 2011 income limits for rental units are 65% of the AMI for a studio

(\$39,520 for an individual, \$45,175 for a couple), 75% of the AMI for a one-bedroom (\$45,600 for an individual, \$52,125 for a couple), and 85% of the AMI for a two-bedroom or larger (\$51,680 for an individual, \$59,075 for a couple). The 2011 income limits for sale units are 100% of the AMI for a studio or one bedroom (\$60,800 for an individual, \$69,500 for a couple), and 120% of the AMI for a two-bedroom or larger (\$72,960 for an individual, \$83,400 for a couple).

Funding and Implementation Toolkit for Transit Communities

The Seattle Planning Commission created this online toolkit to provide decision makers, private partners and community groups with information about funding programs, implementation and planning tools commonly used to develop the essential components that create vibrant, lively transit communities. The toolkit focuses on three broad categories of “livability elements”: infrastructure, community development and parks/open space. The toolkit includes local, state and federal sources from small programs, like the Opportunity Fund for community initiative park development, to larger sources, like federal Community Block Grants that fund affordable housing, neighborhood revitalization, community facilities and

services and economic development. The toolkit can be viewed on the Commission’s website at <http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/projects/transit.htm>.

Public Investments in Streetscape Improvements

Many of the recommendations for streetscape improvements could be implemented by SDOT as part of the *Pedestrian Master Plan* and the *Bicycle Master Plan*, although when funding would be available is uncertain. A key next step in the streetscape improvement process would be the development of a Street Design Concept Plan that would become part of the *Seattle Right-of-Way Improvement Manual*. Streetscape improvements can be helpful in attracting private investment to the Town Center.

Summary of Actions

Building a successful Town Center requires the coordinated effort of the community, the City, private development and a range of other public and private entities. The following matrix describes the likely time frame for completion and the responsible parties for Urban Design Framework recommendations.

ACTIONS	City of Seattle	Community	King County Metro	Private Development	Sound Transit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● = 1 to 3 years ◐ = 3 to 5 years ○ = more than five years 					
Land Use + Built Form					
Focus “main street” retail on MLK Jr. Way S., side and parallel streets.	○	○		○	
Encourage the redevelopment of opportunity sites to mixed-use that builds on the international character.	●		○	○	○
Increase allowable heights.	●				
Consider upper level setbacks to preserve views and maximize sunlight.	●				
Circulation					
Improve bicycle infrastructure.	●				
Make the pedestrian network complete and safe.	○	○		○	
Improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the Light Rail Station.	◐			◐	◐
Create mid-block pedestrian paths.	○			○	

ACTIONS		City of Seattle	Community	King County Metro	Private Development	Sound Transit
● = 1 to 3 years ● = 3 to 5 years ○ = more than five years						
Streetscapes						
Enhance 39th Avenue S., S. Myrtle Street, and S. Othello Street.	○			○		
Allow off-peak parking on MLK Jr. Way S.	○			○		
Make S. Othello Street a pedestrian street.	○			○		
Open Space and Gateways						
Create a civic plaza east of the station.		○		○		
Enhance the existing plaza east of the station.	●	●			●	
Expand the P-patch.		○		○		
Improve pedestrian and bicycle linkages to significant open spaces.	●					
Establish gateways.	○	○				
Sustainable Strategies						
Integrate green stormwater infrastructure into design of streetscapes and open space.	●			●		
Promote green building technology in new development.	●			●		
Zoning						
Implement proposed zoning changes to allow more density and mixed use.	●					

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mayor Mike McGinn, City of Seattle

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Seattle Planning Commission

Seattle Design Commission

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Great City

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Councilmember Tim Burgess
Councilmember Sally J. Clark
Councilmember Jean Godden
Councilmember Bruce Harrell
Councilmember Nick Licata
Councilmember Mike O'Brien
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Othello Community Action Team Members

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Thank you to all the community members who
have generously given their time and energy
since 1998 to plan the future of Othello.

APPENDICES

Appendix A — Zones and Districts within the Town Center

Below are descriptions of zones and districts that are existing and/or proposed within or adjacent to the Town Center.

Single Family 5000 (SF5000) — This zone provides for a detached house with a single dwelling unit, or one principal unit and one accessory unit. The minimum lot area for this zone is 5000 square feet.

Lowrise 2 (LR2) — This zone provides a variety of multifamily housing types in existing multifamily neighborhoods and along arterial streets. A mix of small scale to multifamily housing such as townhouses, rowhouses and apartments are encouraged.

Lowrise 3 (LR3) — This zone provides a variety of multifamily housing types in existing multifamily neighborhoods of moderate scale. LR3 accommodates residential growth within growth areas (urban centers, urban villages and Station Area Overlay District). A mix of small to moderate scale multifamily housing is encouraged including apartments, townhouses and rowhouses.

Lowrise 3 Residential Commercial (LR3 RC) — This zone serves as a transitional zone between commercial zones and single family residential zones. It provides a variety of multifamily housing types and small commercial uses at street level in existing multifamily neighborhoods and along arterial streets. A mix of small to moderate scale multifamily housing is encouraged including apartments, townhouses and rowhouses.

Neighborhood Commercial (NC2) — This zone provides a moderately-sized pedestrian-oriented shopping district with a full range of retail sales and services for the surrounding

neighborhood. Typical land uses include: medium-sized grocery stores, drug stores, coffee shops, medical or dental facilities and apartments.

Neighborhood Commercial 3 (NC3) — This zone provides a larger pedestrian-oriented shopping district serving the surrounding neighborhood and a larger community, citywide or regional clientele. This type of retail district allows comparison shopping among a range of businesses. Typical land uses include: supermarkets, restaurants, offices, hotels, clothing shops, business support services, and residences that are compatible with the area's mixed use character.

Commercial 1 (C1) — This zone provides an auto-oriented, primarily retail/service commercial area that serves the surrounding neighborhood as well as a citywide or regional clientele. Typical land uses include large supermarkets, building supplies and household goods, auto sales and repairs and apartments.

Station Area Overlay District (SAOD) — The SAOD designation is intended to discourage auto-oriented development and increase opportunities for housing and mixed-use development near light rail stations. All existing legal businesses and uses are allowed to remain and maintain existing structures and sites. New development of certain commercial and industrial businesses—such as drive through businesses, warehouses, manufacturing, etc.—are prohibited.

Pedestrian Designation (P) — The P designation preserves and encourages an intensely retail and pedestrian-oriented shopping district where non-auto modes of transportation are strongly favored. The P designation restricts street level use to pedestrian-friendly commercial uses

that enliven the sidewalk environment. A pedestrian designation can be applied to any neighborhood commercial zone along principal pedestrian designated streets. The designation preserves and encourages a pedestrian-oriented shopping district by limiting building setbacks, reducing retail parking requirements, and controlling the location of parking lots and their access to behind, in, or under a building fronting on a principal pedestrian street.

Appendix B

Council Resolution Number 31204

RESOLUTION 31204

A RESOLUTION outlining specific actions, deliverables, and a schedule for completing neighborhood plan updates for the North Beacon Hill, North Rainier, and Othello neighborhoods.

WHEREAS, Seattle maintains a commitment to a true partnership between neighborhoods and government in building innovative planning structures and visionary neighborhood plans; and

WHEREAS, in 1998 and 1999, the City Council recognized neighborhood plans for North Beacon Hill, North Rainier, and Othello (previously called MLK@Holly) neighborhoods and approved implementation plans, i.e. Approval and Adoption matrices, for each; and

WHEREAS, the City Council approved resources in the 2008 Budget to begin updating the City's existing neighborhood plans; and

WHEREAS, in September 2008, the City Council passed Ordinance 122799 and adopted Resolution 31085, which collectively outlined a process for updating the City's neighborhood plans and placed a priority on updating neighborhoods plans containing transit stations; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 122799 identified the North Beacon Hill, North Rainier and Othello neighborhood plans as priority candidates for updates to capitalize on the opening of Link Light Rail and light rail stations in these neighborhoods in 2009; and

WHEREAS, North Beacon Hill, North Rainier and Othello are three of the most diverse neighborhoods in Seattle; 70% of residents in the North Rainier neighborhood are people of color, nearly 50% of residents in Othello are foreign born and 60% of residents in North Beacon Hill speak a language other than English at home according to 2000 census data; and

WHEREAS, throughout 2009, the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) and Department of Neighborhoods (DON) conducted significant public outreach including reaching historically underrepresented communities in the North Beacon Hill, North Rainier, and Othello neighborhoods, that resulted in draft neighborhood plan updates; and

WHEREAS, meaningful community engagement, as evidenced by over 100 workshops and meetings, occurred during the initial phase of neighborhood plan updates, encouraging over 1600 City of Seattle residents to play an integral role in neighborhood planning; and

WHEREAS, in January 2010, the Executive submitted draft neighborhood plan updates to the City Council for review and approval; and



WHEREAS, as with the original neighborhood plans, the neighborhood plan updates include goals and policies along with potential implementation strategies; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, the City Council intends to consider the proposed goals and policies from each neighborhood plan update for inclusion into the City's Comprehensive Plan, Towards a Sustainable Seattle; and

WHEREAS, additional work is required before the City Council can recognize the neighborhood plan updates and consider legislation to implement related rezones and development regulations; and

WHEREAS, ongoing meaningful community engagement must continue throughout all phases of planning and implementation that supports community building and neighborhood development; and

WHEREAS, prior to, and as part of, Council recognition of the neighborhood plan updates, DPD and DON should work with the North Beacon Hill, North Rainier, and Othello neighborhoods to develop implementation plans that include specific action steps to implement the strategies in each of the updates; and

WHEREAS, to inform Council decisions related to land use and the built environment in North Beacon Hill, North Rainier, and Othello, DPD should develop urban design framework plans for each neighborhood prior to submitting rezone and development regulation legislation to Council; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE,

Section 1. Implementation Plans. The City Council requests that the Executive build upon the community outreach efforts in 2009 and actively engage the North Beacon Hill, North Rainier, and Othello neighborhoods to develop implementation plans (previously referred to as "Approval and Adoption Matrices") for each of the updated neighborhood plans. The City Council anticipates a successful engagement effort will include the elements outlined below.

a) The engagement effort should enable the public to provide feedback through a variety of mediums, including public meetings and the use of online surveys.

b) The engagement effort should involve diverse and meaningful community participation, measured by the number and diversity of participants attending community



1 meetings or responding online. Ideally, at least 50 people will attend the public meetings from
2 each of the three neighborhood planning areas (approximately 1% of the population for each
3 planning area) and at least an additional 50 people will participate online or through other
4 avenues. Participants should reflect the demographic makeup of the community and at least one-
5 third of total participants will ideally be from historically under-represented communities.

6
7 c) The engagement effort should identify members of the public who are willing to serve
8 on project implementation teams, with a goal of involving at least 50 people from each of the
9 neighborhood planning areas to participate in ongoing action teams.

10 d) The engagement effort should result in implementation plans that do the following:

- 11 • Identify priority actions for implementation by the City, neighborhood, and other
12 actors.
- 13 • Articulate specific steps and deliverables that the City, neighborhood residents,
14 businesses, or other actors will be responsible for completing within an estimated
15 timeframe.
- 16 • Contain the proposed goals, policies, and strategies from the neighborhood plan
17 updates as well as those from the original neighborhood plans that remain relevant.
- 18 • Include outstanding work items from the existing Approval and Adoption matrices
19 for North Beacon Hill, North Rainier, and Othello neighborhood plans that
20 neighborhoods have indicated a desire to carry forward.

21
22 In addition, the Executive should submit a proposal to the City Council that describes
23 how it will: 1) involve neighborhoods in plan implementation and stewardship; 2) structure city
24 department workplans and/or staff teams to support neighborhood plan implementation and
25
26
27



1 enable departments to achieve on-going community engagement metrics similar to those outlined
2 in this resolution; 3) track and report progress on plan implementation over time; and 4) provide
3 a user-friendly, cohesive location for all neighborhood plan-related documents to be easily
4 located and accessed by the public.

5 Section 2. Council Recognition of Neighborhood Plan Updates. Prior to the City Council
6 “recognizing” each neighborhood plan update by resolution, the City Council anticipates it will
7 hold at least one public hearing, or similar “validation process”, in Southeast Seattle to ensure
8 the updates and associated implementation plans accurately capture the interests, concerns, and
9 vision of the neighborhoods.
10

11 Section 3. Urban Design Framework Plans. The Council requests that the Department of
12 Planning and Development (DPD) develop urban design framework plans for the North Beacon
13 Hill, North Rainier, and Othello neighborhoods, drawing upon the proposed neighborhood plan
14 updates and based on the Concept B options presented in the neighborhood plan updates and
15 recommended for further study by DPD. In addition, DPD should provide opportunities for
16 residents and businesses to participate in the development and review of the urban design
17 framework plans prior to submitting them to the City Council. Prior to beginning work on any
18 related zoning or development regulation legislation, DPD should submit the urban design
19 framework plans for Council review. At a minimum the urban design framework plans should
20 include structure height and bulk concepts; right-of-way improvement concepts; preferred use
21 locations; proposed incentive structures for public benefits; open space concepts; pedestrian
22 connections; an analysis of whether transferable development rights can accomplish any of the
23 goals and policies in the plan updates; and an analysis of the employment and residential growth
24
25
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1 capacity at buildout under the proposed concepts as compared to existing zoning. If a
2 neighborhood plan update considers the potential use of minimum densities, the urban design
3 framework plan should contain a rationale for minimum density standards that are proposed.


4 In addition, for the North Beacon Hill neighborhood, DPD should include an alternative
5 to Concept B that further optimizes the region's investment in light rail. This could take the form
6 of examining the potential for neighborhood commercial and multifamily zone designations in
7 single family zones in close proximity to the Beacon Hill station. And, for the Othello
8 neighborhood, DPD should include an alternative to Concept B that would allow the potential for
9 denser development around Othello Park as one approach to increasing "eyes on the park" and
10 improving public safety, as well as further optimizing housing opportunities within walking
11 distance of the Othello Station.
12

13
14 Section 4. Legislation Enacting Land Use Changes. The Council anticipates that after it
15 has reviewed the urban design framework plans, it may direct DPD to prepare legislation for
16 Comprehensive Plan amendments or regulatory amendments to implement concepts contained in
17 the framework plans. The Council requests that land use legislation be submitted to Council in
18 time for concurrent review with the annual Comprehensive Plan bill adopting future land use
19 map amendments and updating goals and policies for the neighborhood plans.
20
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1 Section 5. Schedule. To the extent possible, DPD and DON should complete the actions and
2 deliverables within the timeframes noted in the schedule included in Attachment A. If any of the
3 items cannot be completed within the timeframes indicated, Council anticipates that the sequence
4 in which it acts upon items will be similar to that reflected in the schedule in Attachment A.

5 Adopted by the City Council the 19th day of April, 2010, and
6 signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this 19th day
7 of April, 2010.

8 
9 President _____ of the City Council

10 
11 Michael McGinn, Mayor

12
13
14
15 Filed by me this 29th day of April, 2010.

16
17 
18 City Clerk

19 (Seal)



Attachment A: Schematic Schedule

Neighborhood Planning - Schedule for 2009 Plan Update Implementation		Apr-10	May-10	Jun-10	Jul-10	Aug-10	Sep-10	Oct-10	Nov-10	Dec-10	Jan-11	Feb-11	Mar-11	Apr-11
<i>Executive Actions</i>														
Develop Action Plans with Community														
Develop Urban Design Framework Plans														
SEPA Review of Endorsed Urban Design Framework Plans														
Draft Rezone and Text Amendment Bills														
<i>Council Actions</i>														
Recognize Neighborhood Plans and Adopt Action Plan														
Review Urban Design Framework Plans														
Adopt Goals and Policies in Comp Plan														
Adopt Rezone and Text Amendments Bills														



Appendix C

Othello Neighborhood Plan

January 2010

Othello

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN UPDATE



Recommendations to City Council



Goals, Policies and Strategies
to Achieve the Othello
Neighborhood Vision

Executive Summary

The following is the Vision Statement of the 1998 MLK @ Holly Street Neighborhood Plan; it still holds true in 2009: “We the Residents, Merchants, and Friends of the MLK at Holly Street Neighborhood pledge to build and maintain a healthy, safe, and sustainable community. Through our diversity, strength, and cooperation, we will realize our full potential as a thriving social, educational, and business community; a community rich in ethnic and cultural diversity, sustained by a well defined urban village core and a variety of housing types with various levels of affordability.”

The goals of the Neighborhood Plan Update 2009, to create a safe and vibrant Town Center that supports the economically and culturally diverse community of Othello, confirm and refine the goals of 1998. Refinements include a greater emphasis on making the Town Center pedestrian-friendly, especially with Link Light Rail now operational. In addition, there is a need to create good access and connections to transit and maintain the commercial center as one that serves the very diverse community – the economic and cultural diversity was often mentioned as a treasured characteristic of the neighborhood. A shared multicultural community center was in high demand – a place where ethnic communities can

both provide services for their own people and also share concerns and celebrations with others. Finally, the community sought development of this neighborhood as an employment center for residents – a place with family-wage jobs and opportunities for training and education for youth and adults. In sum, people sought a safe and vibrant neighborhood where they could live, work, shop and play. In updating the neighborhood plan there was strong community consensus that the urban village be renamed from MLK @ Holly Street to Othello. Hereafter the MLK @ Holly Street Neighborhood Plan will be referred to as the Othello Neighborhood Plan

How the Update Is Organized

This document incorporates various components that together comprise the update. The following is a description of the different components:

Community Engagement – describes the process through which community members provided guidance and invaluable information, including the various methods used to reach out to and engage as many neighbors as possible.

Sustainability – provides a discussion of environmental and socio-economic sustainability and its inherent relevance to neighborhood planning.

In the 1990s, community members from 38 neighborhoods across the city created a 20-year vision for how each of their neighborhoods would grow. This work was done as part of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan initiative, a citywide effort that sought to “preserve the best quality of Seattle’s distinct neighborhoods while responding positively and creatively to the pressures of change and growth.” The Neighborhood Plans developed strategies to ensure that the “creative response” to growth was informed by both City expertise and local knowledge and priority-setting.

In the decade after the plans were completed, there were significant changes in Seattle and its neighborhoods, including growth in housing and major investments in public amenities. Also, during this time the population of the city greatly diversified, requiring new strategies for civic engagement. Therefore, in 2008, the Mayor and City Council recognized the need to revisit the plans through broad and inclusive

discussions with the community—to confirm the neighborhood Vision, refine the plan Goals and Policies in order to take into account changed conditions, and to update work plans to help ensure that each community’s vision and goals are achieved through the implementation of the strategies and actions.

The Othello Neighborhood Plan was chosen by the Mayor and City Council as one of three plans to be updated in 2009. The arrival of light rail service brings increased development interest and new residents to the neighborhood. These changes present great opportunities to expand Othello’s identity as a vibrant, transit-oriented community, one in which residents, businesses and visitors enjoy the lively, diverse, and distinctive character of the neighborhood. This plan update articulates community goals so that the City, developers and neighborhood residents can all work together to bring about the neighborhood vision.

Over the past year, dedicated community members worked with City staff to assess and address those conditions that have changed since the 1998 MLK @ Holly Street Neighborhood Plan. New neighbors and new voices joined those who participated ten years ago. Together, community members discussed what they value in the neighborhood, and outlined their shared goals and ideas about how to achieve those goals.

These new Goals and Policies will be incorporated into the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The plan update also creates a shared work plan for the community and City (*see appendix*). The strategies and actions will be incorporated in a living document that defines shared priorities and responsibilities for next steps.

Vision, Goals, Policies and Strategies – are the key components of this update. The Vision is from the 1998 Neighborhood Plan and holds true today. The Goals, Policies and Strategies build upon one another to help fulfill the Othello Vision. They are a distillation of what we heard from the community and will guide the City’s work as well as inform future development that occurs in the neighborhood. The

Goals are organized into two broad categories: Creating Choices for Living, Working and Playing; and Shaping a Transit-Oriented Town Center. With each Goal are its associated Policies and Strategies and a discussion that incorporates the community input and feedback that shaped the recommended strategies.

Appendices – The appendix of the update has several important resource documents including a shared work plan for the City and neighborhood to guide implementation and the original Neighborhood Plan.

Over the course of the past year, a broad cross section of community members engaged with the City through both innovative and time-tested tools. From hands-on workshops and smaller-scale interactive meetings with community-based organizations, to online updates and questionnaires, neighbors used a variety of ways to get and stay involved. Reaching a broad range of those who live and work in Othello, including those who have been historically underrepresented in the planning process, was a primary objective of the plan update process. During 2009, community members expressed their views at 53 neighborhood and City-sponsored meetings and events in Othello. Long-time veterans of neighborhood planning, stewards of the important work begun in the 1990s, and a new generation of neighborhood planners came together to build a broader base of civic engagement. Bicultural and/or bilingual Planning Outreach Liaisons (POLs) connected with 13 underrepresented communities. The POLs hosted 43 community workshops where historically underrepresented Othello community members participated—strengthening the bridge between the City of Seattle, residents, community organizations, and businesses.

This intensive effort was necessary in order to build relationships with those who were new to the planning discussion, and to provide sufficient background information to help them participate effectively. POLs went beyond translation and interpretation to create culturally-appropriate opportunities for dialogue about planning and create deeper understanding of the issues and richer input.

In March 2009, neighbors engaged in the first phase of the update process through the Othello Baseline and Issues Identification Workshop. They discussed neighborhood-initiated planning efforts since the 1998 Neighborhood Plan as well as how to build on that work given changing conditions. Neighbors described how they live, work and play in their neighborhood, what makes it unique, what they value in the community and how they see it changing in the next several years. Neighbors also described how they move around and through the community, the kinds of places they go to and how they value those places, especially parks and open space. Embedded in these discussions were their identified needs for a healthy and vital neighborhood. POLs extended this conversation into their respective communities throughout March and April. Othello's important issues and priorities emerged from all these conversations.

In May, neighbors and City staff worked together at a town hall meeting at New Holly to address themes that emerged from the

March and April workshops. Neighbors worked through hands-on exercises to identify gaps and opportunities for improving mobility around and through the neighborhood as well as to explore the relationships among the number of households in the neighborhood, retail destinations, parks and walkability. The POLs replicated the exercises; working with their respective communities. The community's goals and desired improvements within the neighborhood grew from this second phase of meetings.

In September 2009, community members attended two open houses to review draft goals and recommendations that grew from the themes, issues, goals and desired improvements voiced by the community throughout the preceding months. Outreach continued through the final months of the year, including the POLs, who reached out to their communities through the end of the year to summarize the draft plan recommendations and to encourage their engagement in neighborhood plan implementation. Throughout the plan update process, the workshops and meetings have been structured to engage community discussion and guidance, followed by reporting back, all of which has informed the next steps of drafting and finalizing recommendations. This broad engagement and detailed recording of community comments throughout the process created ongoing transparency that serves as the underpinning of this update to the original neighborhood plan.

Sustainability refers to the long-term social, economic and environmental health of our community. Seattle's Comprehensive Plan states this as four core values — community, environmental stewardship, economic opportunity and security, and social equity.

A core principle of Seattle's approach to sustainability is that it must be addressed at a neighborhood level, and that it is critical to directly engage the people who live, work, and visit our communities to shape a sustainable future. In Othello, there are extraordinary resources to continue and expand this work, from the transportation infrastructure of light rail to the green infrastructure of the Chief Sealth Trail to social sustainability ranging from the diverse business community to the programs of the New Holly Community Center. Through the update process, the community articulated the importance of sustainability for their community.

In Othello, the existing plan calls for a well-defined urban village. This is

a fundamentally sustainable approach because it can significantly reduce the number of automobile trips by locating housing and services near one another and by linking the neighborhood residents to job centers through good transit. In addition, the existing plan, and the update, also call for sustaining cultural and economic diversity, valuing the fact that people from around the world live, work, worship and shop in this neighborhood.

The 2009 update to the Othello neighborhood plan recommends specific ways to support the ethnic diversity of the residents and merchants while also creating a safe and vibrant Town Center around the new light rail station. A part of this effort will explore how to increase the density in the Town Center core in a manner that respects and enhances the existing fabric and leverages the public investment of light rail to benefit the community. Community recommendations for increased walkability and connections to transit combined with those for local family-wage jobs and

training support environmental and social sustainability.

As the Neighborhood Plan Updates move forward, the City will continue to work with communities to further assess indicators of sustainability, from the availability of fresh, healthful food, to the green infrastructure of trees and open space. These may become useful tools for next steps to implement the strategies identified here. At the same time, through the update process, it became clear that sustainability issues do not have to be set out as separate and apart from overall recommendations, because communities see them as integral to the overall vision shaping their future.



www.seattle.gov/dpd/planning/neighborhood_planning | www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/npi

Goal 1

Ethnic diversity of Othello merchants, a key asset of this neighborhood, is supported and maintained over the years.

Discussion

The community is the most ethnically diverse in the city and the existing businesses represent that diversity. Community members expressed a desire to better communicate to the neighborhood the great resource of having such a variety of small businesses in the Town Center. There was a strong desire expressed to keep a grocery store in the Town Center, and to ensure that commercial rents are kept affordable so as not to price out the small and immigrant-owned businesses that are a defining characteristic of the community. Many community members recognized that more people moving into the neighborhood could result in more customers for the small and immigrant-owned businesses in the Town Center.

Policies

1.A. Support a vibrant and attractive multicultural Town Center in providing a range of goods for those who live, work and shop in the neighborhood.

1.B. Support implementation of coordinated long-term strategies for commercial district improvement including support for existing or expanding small businesses and ethnically based businesses to maintain the multi-cultural character.

1.C. Develop strategies that keep commercial space affordable for small businesses, especially culturally based businesses.

1.D. Encourage retail and services that are destination businesses for customers from the Rainier Valley and beyond, as well as those that support the culturally specific daily needs of the community.

1.E. Support culturally inclusive local business associations that support the vitality of a business district that serves the entire community.

1.F. Support key cultural assets such as the Filipino Community Center, Lao Highland Community Center, and cultural media.

Strategies

1. Better communicate to the broader region the great resource of having such a variety of small businesses in the Town Center. Develop business district communication/marketing materials to target current as well as future residents.

2. In partnership with local business associations, implement recommendations of the Southeast Retail Study.

3. Encourage property and business owners to enhance and maintain the cleanliness and appearance of residential and commercial areas. (MLK-P22)

4. Support existing small businesses to maintain the multicultural character.

- Provide technical and financial support to small businesses, especially ethnic or culturally based businesses.

- Encourage membership in local business associations.
- Encourage peer support and mentoring.
- Promote the location of cultural community centers and services in the neighborhood.
- Promote opportunities for cross-cultural meetings among the business owners as well as among the broader community.
- Encourage new and existing models of financing mixed-use development projects that provide long-term affordable commercial space as well as affordable housing in City-funded mixed-use projects.
- Encourage ability to provide incentives for established businesses to stay in the area.
- Promote use of limited-equity commercial condos to maintain affordable commercial space in support of the multicultural commercial district.

5. Explore strategies to retain or add affordable commercial space to support multicultural character. Potential partners include:

- SCORE/Small Business Development Center,
- UW Entrepreneurial Law Clinic,
- Rainier Valley Community Development Fund, and
- HomeSight.

6. Modify station area overlay zoning to retain or add affordable commercial space. (continued)

Goal 1 (continued)

7. Explore legislative changes needed to remove structural barriers to supporting affordable commercial space.

8. Explore means to allow home-based businesses in some parts of the urban village.

9. Support the continued presence of a grocery store.

10. Work with new and existing organizations who can support and recruit new businesses that are reflective of the cultural groups in Rainier Valley.

11. Encourage new small businesses that add to the multicultural character.

12. Support the MLK Business Association and the African Business Association to be a venue for business owners to work together and for its members to raise their concerns to the City as well as pursue grants and technical assistance.

13. Consider rezoning from single-family to commercial/mixed use adjacent to the Filipino Community Center so it can provide housing for its elders. *(See appendices.)*

Goal 2

This neighborhood is, and feels, safe for people and businesses – from crime as well as from accidents while walking, biking and driving.

Discussion

Public safety has concerned Othello residents for years. There are safety concerns both about potential violence, as well as walking and driving along the streets and around the new light rail line.

Policies

2.A Create a secure environment for people to walk and gather.

2.B Create a secure environment for people and businesses.

2.C Encourage partnerships among businesses to create a safe and active commercial district.

2.D Seek opportunities for the community and the Seattle Police Department to strengthen partnerships.

Strategies

1. Encourage more pedestrian traffic and “eyes on the street” in both the commercial and residential portions of new developments by encouraging dense development in the Town Center.

2. Use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to help create a more secure environment for people to walk and gather.

3. Provide pedestrian lighting on all streets in multifamily and mixed-use areas and on some walkways through parks, especially the Chief Sealth trail.

4. Activate public spaces with vendors.

5. Enliven temporarily vacant sites with local artwork or other activities.

6. Explore the formation of a Business Improvement Area (BIA). Encourage property and business owners to enhance and maintain the cleanliness and appearance of residential and commercial areas. (MLK-P22)

7. Encourage positive relationships between the community and the Seattle Police Department. Establish a cross-cultural training program to educate police officers on the various cultures and develop protocol and awareness necessary when assisting members of Othello’s diverse community. Educate the various cultural groups on police procedures, duties, etc.

8. Provide interpretation and translation services for grassroots and resident-led community groups.

Goal 3

A neighborhood that supports the broad economic, cultural and family-size diversity of this neighborhood by keeping housing affordable with a balance of both single-family and multifamily housing for both renters and owners.

Discussion

Community members expressed a desire to maintain as well as augment existing affordable housing in the neighborhood, some expressing concern that affordable housing options would disappear with new development. The importance of a range of housing prices and sizes, especially for larger families, as well as housing both for rent and for sale, was noted. Community members acknowledged the strong potential for light rail to bring renewed development interest in the Othello neighborhood. Along with the benefits of new neighbors, some expressed the concern about the potential reduction in housing affordability, specifically around the light rail station.

Policies

3.A Maintain and augment affordable housing to keep a range of housing prices and unit sizes and a balance of rental and owner-occupied housing.

3.B Encourage development of housing available in a range of prices and sizes, including affordable family-sized homes with amenities for families.

3.C Support low-income, senior and disabled renters and homeowners with supportive services that will allow them to continue to live in the neighborhood.

Strategies

- 1.** Encourage and require a mix of home prices and sizes through the active use of incentive, direct City funding, and surplus property programs.
- 2.** Leverage public funds to support affordable housing in the urban village, especially close to the light rail station.
- 3.** Use City funding to leverage other funding to preserve existing and create new subsidized housing throughout the Othello Urban Village.
- 4.** Apply Comprehensive Plan affordable housing targets to the Othello Urban Village and periodically evaluate progress. Set affordable housing objectives and use incentives, direct City funding, and surplus property programs to fill gaps.
- 5.** Within mixed-use zones in the Station Area Overlay District, consider minimum residential densities (related to the zoning designations).
- 6.** Use programs such as revolving loan funds and land trusts to keep owner-occupied housing affordable.
- 7.** Encourage affordable family-sized homes through incentives, direct City funding, and surplus property programs.

8. Support homeowners who are low-income, senior and disabled through programs such as the City's Homewise Home Repair and Weatherization programs as well as through the County's property tax exemption program.

9. Achieve a balance of affordable rental and homeownership housing through incentives, direct funding, and surplus property programs.

10. In partnership with local, state, and federal agencies, ensure the preservation of a supply of subsidized housing units in the neighborhood. (MLK-P7)

11. Encourage lenders to design mortgage programs, products, and educational materials that meet the needs of a diverse neighborhood. (MLK-P5)



Goal 4

Othello has vibrant commercial areas with diverse economic opportunities for area residents, including family-wage jobs and a variety of employment.

Discussion

A number of community members expressed their desire to have access to jobs and job training within or near their community.

Policies

4.A Support family-wage jobs in the neighborhood.

4.B Support innovative employment opportunities, including green businesses and training programs.

4.C Support programs that help residents be successful in their jobs including training and apprenticeships.

Strategies

1. Encourage local hiring by local institutions and community organizations. Work with business organizations such as the Rainier Valley Chamber of Commerce, the MLK Business Association and the Afri-

can Business Association to expand employment opportunities for area residents. Other potential partners include:

- SEED, and
- Center for Career Alternatives.

2. Promote zoning designations that allow home-based businesses as economic opportunities.

3. Seek sites that are appropriate for green business opportunities.

4. Promote and develop programs through the Office of Education and the Human Services Department.

5. Promote job training through programs such as the Seattle Vocational Institute.

Goal 5

Othello offers positive and safe activities for youth, including apprentice programs, recreation opportunities, and jobs specifically for teens.

Discussion

Job opportunities and apprentice programs specifically for teens were suggested as a means to provide neighborhood youth with positive activity options.

Policies

5.A Support the growth of jobs for teenagers in the neighborhood.

5.B Enhance community pride through multicultural community festivals, youth mentoring and other youth programs.

Strategies

1. Support programs such as the Student-Teen Employment Preparation (STEP) program designed to provide youth with education, job skills and career development training.

2. Support programs such as the Seattle Youth Employment Program, a year-round academic support and job training program for youth ages 14-21 that helps youth graduate from high school, move on to college or trade school, and develop job skills.

Goal 6

To support cultural diversity, there is improved access to education and employment training opportunities for all, including support specifically for immigrant and refugee families.

Discussion

Many neighbors lamented the closure of public schools in Southeast Seattle as well as the perceived inadequate amount of ESL classes offered in the neighborhood. Community members recognize the importance of additional support to immigrant

and refugee families in order to maintain the cultural diversity that the neighborhood values.

Policies

6.A Encourage local institutions to meet the needs of the residents through opportunities for life-long learning in the neighborhood.

Strategies

1. Work with South Seattle Community College to expand job training programs at New Holly Learning Center, a community resource for southeast Seattle. This center offers an array of programs and

courses for English-speaking and non-English-speaking adults and youth seeking to improve their literacy and employability skills in order to transition to college or entry-level employment. The South Seattle Community College New Holly Learning Center provides ESL and Family Literacy Programs, Placement Testing, ABE/GED preparation, and limited worker retraining.

2. Improve transit connections to educational opportunities and training programs at Seattle Community Colleges.

Goal 7

The Othello Residential Urban Village has parks, recreational facilities, and open spaces that are designed and programmed to accommodate users of diverse ages, interests and cultures, and that allow for informal interactions of people from different cultures.

Discussion

Many community members indicated the diversity of the neighborhood as one of the most important characteristics of the neighborhood and suggested that parks and open space could support this.

Policies

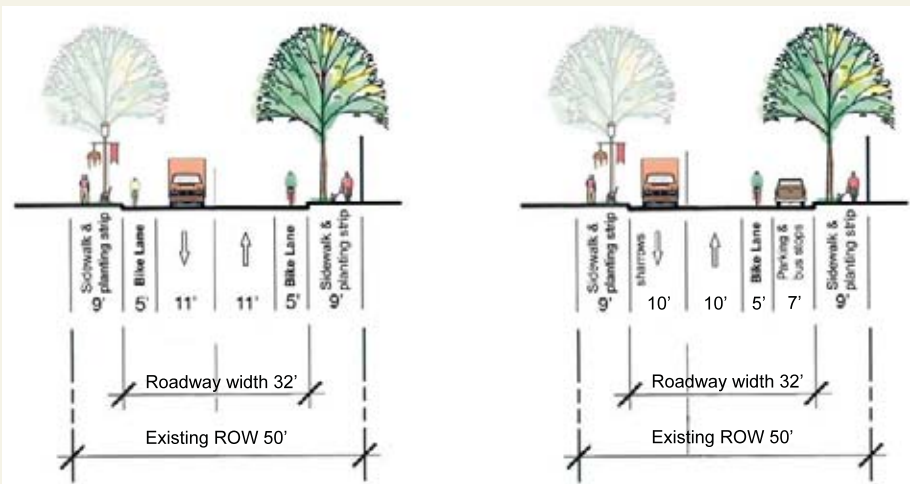
7.A Provide recreational and cultural programs and activities in parks and community centers that are relevant to the diverse population.

Strategies

1. Increase Seattle Parks and Recreation programming of parks for recreational and cultural activities that are relevant to the diverse population at John C. Little Sr. Park and Othello Playground.

2. Pursue the addition of a play feature at Othello Playground that is attractive to a diversity of ages.

3. Hire multilingual Parks program staff.



Streetscape Concept: S Othello St MLK Jr. Way S to Rainier Ave S (See discussion on page 16.)

S. Othello Street, looking west.



Existing Zoning - Likely Build Out



Option A-Likely Build Out



Option B-Likely Build Out, recommended for further study



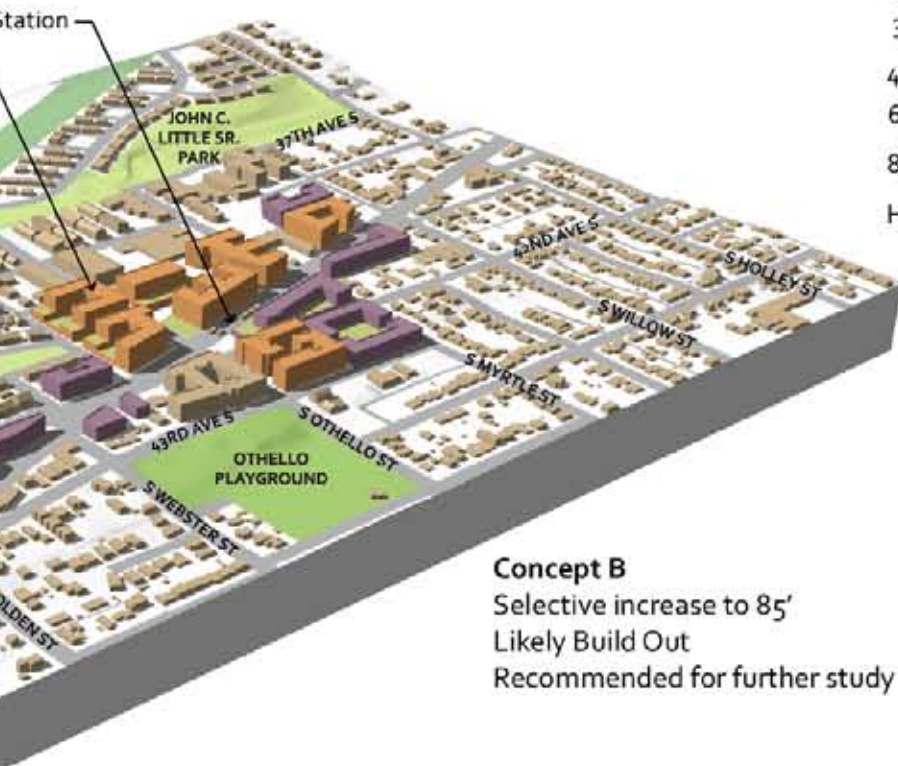
Existing Zoning
Likely Build Out



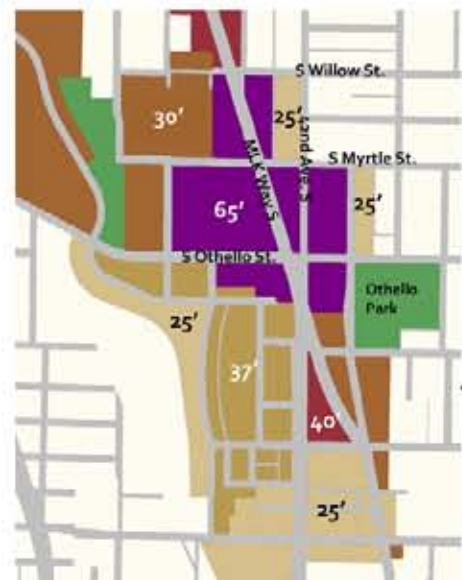
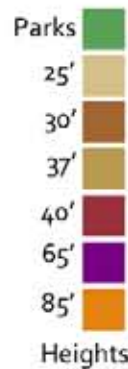
These building height concepts were created from a community review from meetings that summer and fall. Using existing zoning, and street design plans, the community will be able to achieve the goals and vision of their neighborhood.



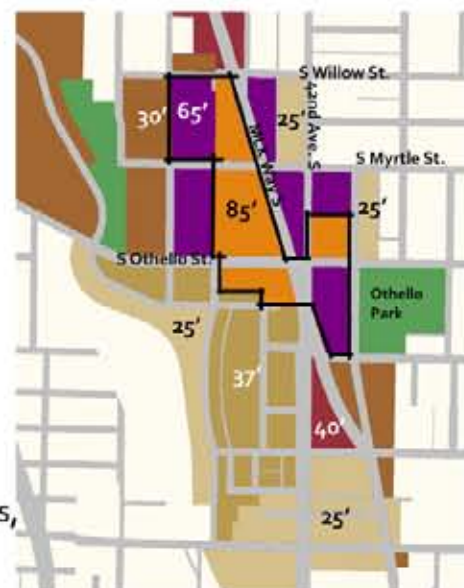
Concept A
Selective increase
at core to 85'
Likely Build Out



Concept B
Selective increase to 85'
Likely Build Out
Recommended for further study



Existing Height Limits



Recommended Height Limits

community discussions in spring 2009 and refined with community tools such as urban design framework plans, neighborhood design guidelines, and further define the desired form and characteristics of this Town Center to plan. See appendix for additional land use recommendations.

Shaping a Transit-Oriented Town Center

This section of the update describes goals of community members to strengthen its core Town Center around the light rail station while preserving the diversity of residents and merchants. It also outlines strategies and actions to help achieve these goals.

Goal 8

The core Town Center, around the light rail station, is economically strong and serves the multicultural community who live, work and shop here.

Discussion

Othello has growing recognition as a community, and is more readily accessible now with the arrival of light rail service.

Policies

8.A Support a uniquely identifiable Town Center that is a destination for international food and cultural experiences.

8.B Support the creation of a variety of open spaces for informal public gathering and recreation, including an open space in the Town Center that can be used for community functions such as a farmers' market and cultural celebrations.

8.C Encourage dense urban development in the Town Center in a manner that creates a vibrant and active commercial district supportive of the community, along with residential infill development to increase the housing supply.

Strategies

1. Officially rename the neighborhood from MLK @ Holly Street to Othello.

2. Use the City's Neighborhood Business District Fund and Neighborhood Street Funds, which are available to neighborhoods through a competitive application process, to establish its identity as the place to go for international shopping. Work with the community to identify projects and initiatives in which the community's effort would be matched by funds from the Neighborhood Matching Fund. Improvements may include

- streetscape amenities, such as benches and banners;
- activating public spaces with vendors;
- business district marketing map and brochure; and
- establishing its identity as the place to go for international shopping.

3. Create a civic space in the Town Center and accentuate the connections to high-quality open spaces including Othello Playground, John C. Little Sr. Park, Chief Sealth Trail, Van Asselt Park and Community Center, and the pocket parks and open spaces within New Holly.

4. Use the P-Patch program as a means of increasing open space and neighborhood amenities. (MLK-P14)

5. Using neighborhood design guidelines, an urban design framework plan, and street design plans, establish the context for, and characteristics of, a dense, pedestrian-friendly Town Center with a vibrant commercial core that addresses Town Center growth. The framework may more clearly define issues such as

- the location of the retail district, and nonretail commercial areas, and home-business areas;
- multifamily residential areas;
- building characteristics such as height, and frontage along sidewalks (including upper-level setbacks);
- pedestrian streets and sidewalk widths;
- open spaces and parks;
- key neighborhood assets such as King Plaza, or creating a pedestrian-oriented commercial, or market street, along the 38th and/or 39th Ave S corridor between S. Myrtle and S. Othello Streets (If along 38th Ave. S, consider impacts to new transit service that will use 38th Ave S.);
- gateway features; and
- provisions for public safety.

6. Through processes that engage community members, consider and evaluate the application of zoning designations and related development regulations that are most likely to achieve the urban design frame-

work plan. Include evaluation of new regulatory and programmatic tools as they become available.

7. Rezone key opportunity sites to encourage redevelopment of parcels around the light rail station in a manner that incorporates housing, commercial services (such as a grocery store and small businesses) and amenities. *(See pages 12 and 13.)*

8. Evaluate proposed height and land use changes within the Town Center. *(See pages 12 and 13.)*

9. Explore re-zone of block between MLK Jr. Way S. and 43rd Ave. S. from S. Othello to S. Webster to 65' height, especially along S. Othello to create consistent frontage along Othello Park. *(See pages 12 and 13.)*

10. Maintain ongoing collaboration with Sound Transit, property owners, and community members to pursue redevelopment opportunities in the station area.

11. Proactively assess utility capacity within the Town Center to ensure that it can support the desired future density.

12. Promote retail, restaurant and entertainment uses that are pedestrian-oriented and provide a high level of street activity. (MLK-P16)

13. Encourage well-designed residential infill development to increase the housing supply. (MLK-P1)

14. Encourage well-designed multifamily development to contribute to the development of a mixed-use Town Center development. (MLK-P2)

Goal 9

A shared gathering space appropriate for the range of cultures living in the neighborhood.

Discussion

Many community members expressed a desire for a gathering place that could accommodate specific cultural and interest groups. Given the diversity of cultures and eth-

nicities represented in the neighborhood, create a common and flexible gathering place.

Policies

9.A Seek opportunities and partnerships to create a shared cultural center that could accommodate offices and gathering/performance space for various multicultural and interest groups.

Strategies

1. Prioritize the acquisition of land and resources for development of a multicultural gathering space.

2. Work with ethnic communities to create design and development guidelines for a shared multicultural gathering venue. Include flexibility that can accommodate a variety of gatherings and activities rather than a multitude of separate venues.

Goal 10

The neighborhood has a safe and effective network of buses and trains that supports land use goals and adequately serves the community.

Discussion

In order for the light rail service to better serve the community,

community members expressed a strong desire for access to the station to be improved, specifically to and from the east and west.

Policies

10.A Create safe pedestrian and bicycle access to light rail and bus service, and to the business district, especially from the east and west.

10.B Promote development standards that accommodate a vibrant pedestrian environment throughout the Town Center.

10.C Design streets for pedestrian safety, especially at light rail crossings.

(continued)

Goal 10 (continued)

10.D Encourage King County Metro to provide effective bus service through the neighborhood to the light rail station and surrounding community facilities.

10.E Provide nonmotorized connections to open spaces.

Strategies

1. Work with King County Metro to restore bus connections along MLK Jr. Way S. and Renton Ave S. between light rail stations and to create new routes making connections, especially east-west, to the stations.

2. Use the Bicycle Master Plan as a tool for prioritizing bicycle improvements.

3. Implement the Southeast Transportation Study (SETS), which serves as the blueprint for programming transportation improvements in Southeast Seattle. Priority items may include the following:

- SETS Project #8: Improve safety at the intersection of S. Othello St. and 43rd Ave. S.
- SETS Project #9: Improve safety at intersections of Renton Ave. S. and 43rd Ave. S. and S. Holden St. /43rd Ave. S./S. Renton Ave. and create a safe pedestrian/bicycle route to the light rail station.

4. Use the Pedestrian Master Plan as a tool for prioritizing pedestrian improvements and Neighborhood Street Fund projects to improve walkability through sidewalk repair

and widening. Complete the sidewalk network to make better connections between destinations.

5. Explore on-street parking alternatives such as off peak parking on MLK Jr. Way S., and parking on one side of the street.

6. Improve nonmotorized connections to open spaces with lighting and benches.

7. Work with community to identify measures for residential streets, such as traffic circles, on-street parking, and street trees to mitigate impacts from nearby arterials. (MLK-P20)

Appendices

The appendices are posted online at www.seattle.gov/dpd/NeighborhoodPlanUpdates

Work Plan

The attached work plan adds Actions to the Goals, Policies and Strategies and formats them into a document that can be used to guide the Community's and City's work to achieve the community's goals.

Glossary

Updating the Comprehensive Plan

This document shows how the revised Othello Neighborhood Plan Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan updates and weaves together the Goals and Policies from the 1998 Neighborhood Plan and those that emerged from this 2009 Update process.

Recommended Changes to the City's Comprehensive Plan

Neighborhood Plan

completed in 1999

Baseline Report

dated March 2009 includes highlights of the 1999 Neighborhood Plan and 2009 statistics

Meeting Materials and Notes

from the March, May and September 2009 meetings and Planning Outreach Liaison (POL) meetings.

Acknowledgments

In acknowledgment of the participation of thousands of committed Seattleites.

Including:

Othello Neighborhood Association (ONA)
Othello Station Community Advisory Team (OSCAT)
Rainier Valley Chamber of Commerce
Southeast District Council
MLK Business Association
African Business Association
Rainier Valley Community Development Fund
Feet First
Great City
International Sustainable Solutions
Scan Design Foundation
Sound Transit
University of Washington, College of Built Environments
Neighborhood Planning Advisory Committee

Planning Outreach Liaisons

Somali speaking community
Amharic speaking community
Oromiffa speaking community
Tigrinya speaking community
African American community
Vietnamese speaking community
Tagalog speaking community
Chinese speaking community
Khmer speaking community
Seniors & People Living with Disabilities
Youth
Native American & Alaskan Native communities
Spanish speaking community

Commissions

Seattle Planning Commission
Seattle Design Commission

City of Seattle Lead Participants

Department of Planning and Development
Department of Neighborhoods
Seattle Department of Transportation
Seattle Parks and Recreation
Office of Housing

The City of Seattle Interdepartmental Team incorporated the contributions of over 20 agencies and departments.



