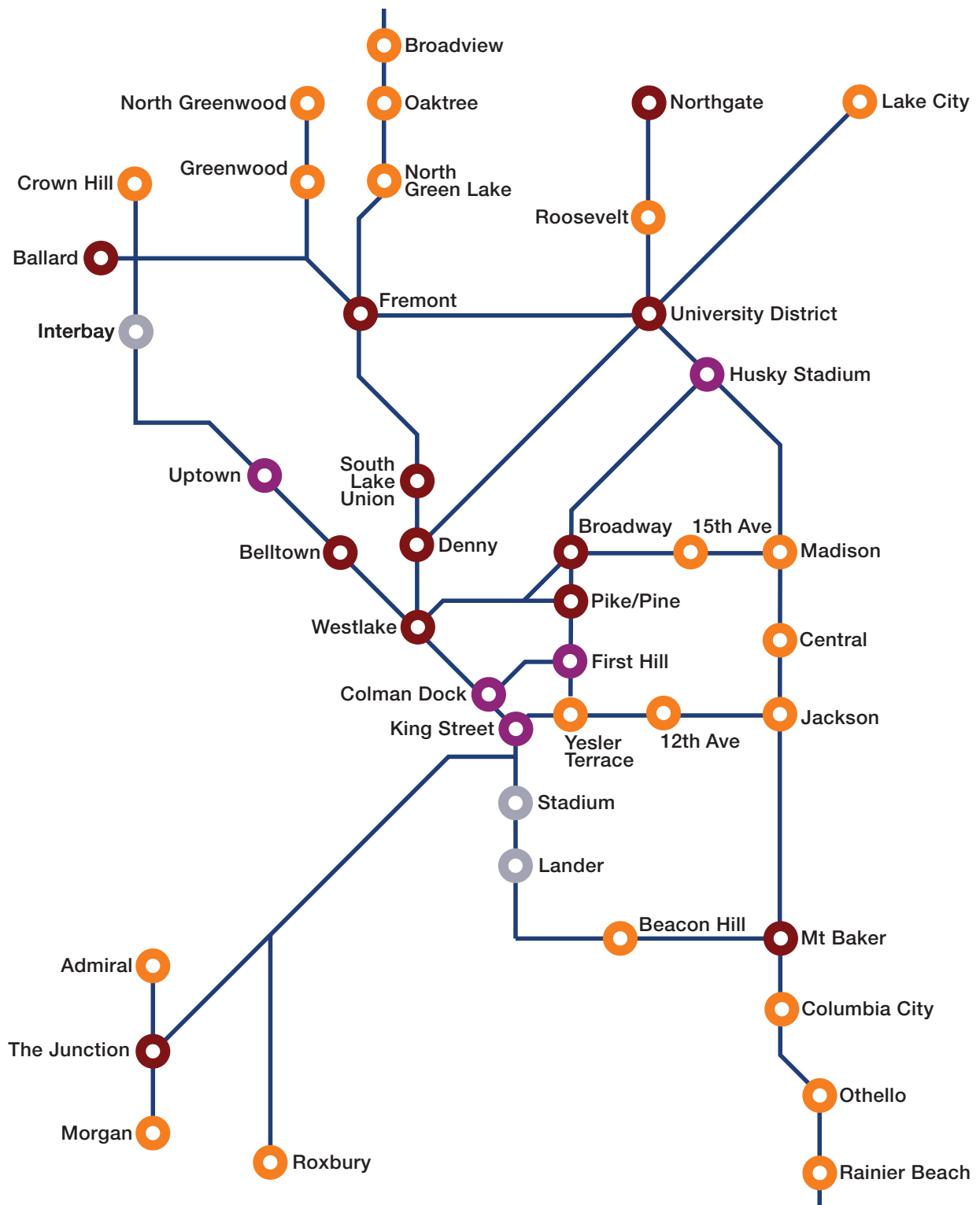


Seattle Transit Communities

Integrating Neighborhoods with Transit

A report from the Seattle Planning Commission



Seattle Planning Commission

Our vision of the future is one in which our city has thriving neighborhoods where residents and businesses work with the City to plan and produce projects that enhance the quality of life for those who live, work, and play in Seattle.



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Photographs

Photographs courtesy of the Seattle Planning Commission or DPD City Planning unless otherwise noted.

The Planning Commission, comprised of 16 volunteer members appointed by the Mayor and the City Council, is the steward of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan. In this role, the Commission advises the Mayor, City Council, and City departments on broad planning goals, policies, and plans for the development of Seattle. The Commission focuses on issues that shape Seattle including land use, transportation, housing, and environmental policy.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Typologies	12
Mixed Use Centers	16
Mixed Use Neighborhoods	20
Special Districts	24
Industrial Job Centers	28
Funding & Implementation Strategies	32
Recommendations	38

November 2010

Introduction

Planning for a Growing Region

Current growth forecasts indicate that the Central Puget Sound region can expect 1.7 million additional residents and 1.2 million additional jobs by 2040. Much of that growth will come to Seattle and with it the perfect opportunity to build lively, walkable neighborhoods centered on frequent transit service – to create Seattle transit communities.

This report builds on the City’s goals to accommodate increased jobs and housing while actively supporting urban sustainability, social equity, and livability. These goals form the foundation of both the Seattle Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) and the regional growth strategy expressed by the Puget Sound Regional Council in VISION 2040, and more than that, they are integral to the social fabric of Seattle. The Planning Commission feels that through guiding appropriate land use, supporting essential transit infrastructure like parks and local business districts, and leveraging funding opportunities the City can support the regional growth management strategy while maximizing regional transit investments, both now and in the future.



SEATTLE’S GROWING POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT

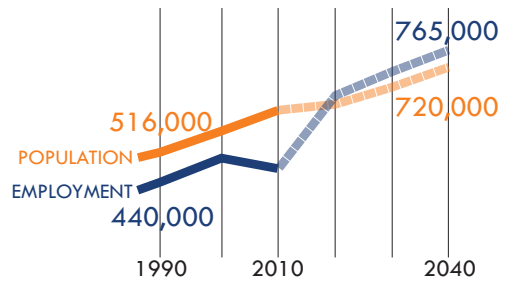


Photo by Benjamin Benschneider
Courtesy of Weber Thompson

Seattle Transit Communities outlines how City policies, practices, and infrastructure investments can create vital, sustainable communities. Additionally, the report prioritizes transit communities where timely investment is urgent and will create the most impact. Finally, knowing that funds are precious, we have included a range of resources to help leverage every dollar spent. Our goal is to provide Seattle’s elected officials, decision-makers, and citizens with a concise primer and recommendations on what it takes to create and support successful transit communities.

Seattle Transit Communities

Link light rail began operating in the summer of 2009, and new routes and stations will be added to the system in the coming years. Investments are also planned for streetcar, regional bus, commuter rail, local bus, and bus-rapid-transit services.

This rich array of local and regional transit investments creates opportunities to make it easier for people to accomplish day-to-day tasks without relying on a car. It is imperative that Seattle leverage these opportunities by fostering the development of transit-oriented communities with the right balance of housing, jobs, and infrastructure to suit each of our unique neighborhoods. If we are successful, the rewards of this type of development will forever enhance Seattle's reputation as a thriving, affordable, dynamic city marked by great natural beauty.

What is a transit community?

While there are many types of transit communities around the world, they share a common characteristic: people can walk, bike, or take transit from their homes to accomplish many of their daily activities including getting to work or school, picking up groceries, or going out to a restaurant or a special event.

Transit communities require well-coordinated public investment centered on transit service to create these lively, diverse communities. People need to be able to obtain the goods and services they require and have rich options for enhanced livability, including access to open space and neighborhood schools.



Westlake and 4th Avenue in 1907
Photo courtesy of Museum of History and Industry, Seattle,
PEMCO Webster and Stevens Collection

Transit Communities are not new to Seattle. Many of Seattle's favorite neighborhoods were originally developed around the old streetcar network.

Cities across the country developed around transit service more than 100 years ago before the automobile became ubiquitous. Seattle's first streetcar began operation in 1884 and was drawn by horses. In the 1890s, privately-owned routes connected downtown to the University District, Woodland Park, and Madison Park and helped spur housing and business growth in these neighborhoods. By the 1920s streetcars connected downtown jobs to thousands of households in neighborhoods including Ballard, Fremont, Rainier Valley, Wallingford, and West Seattle.

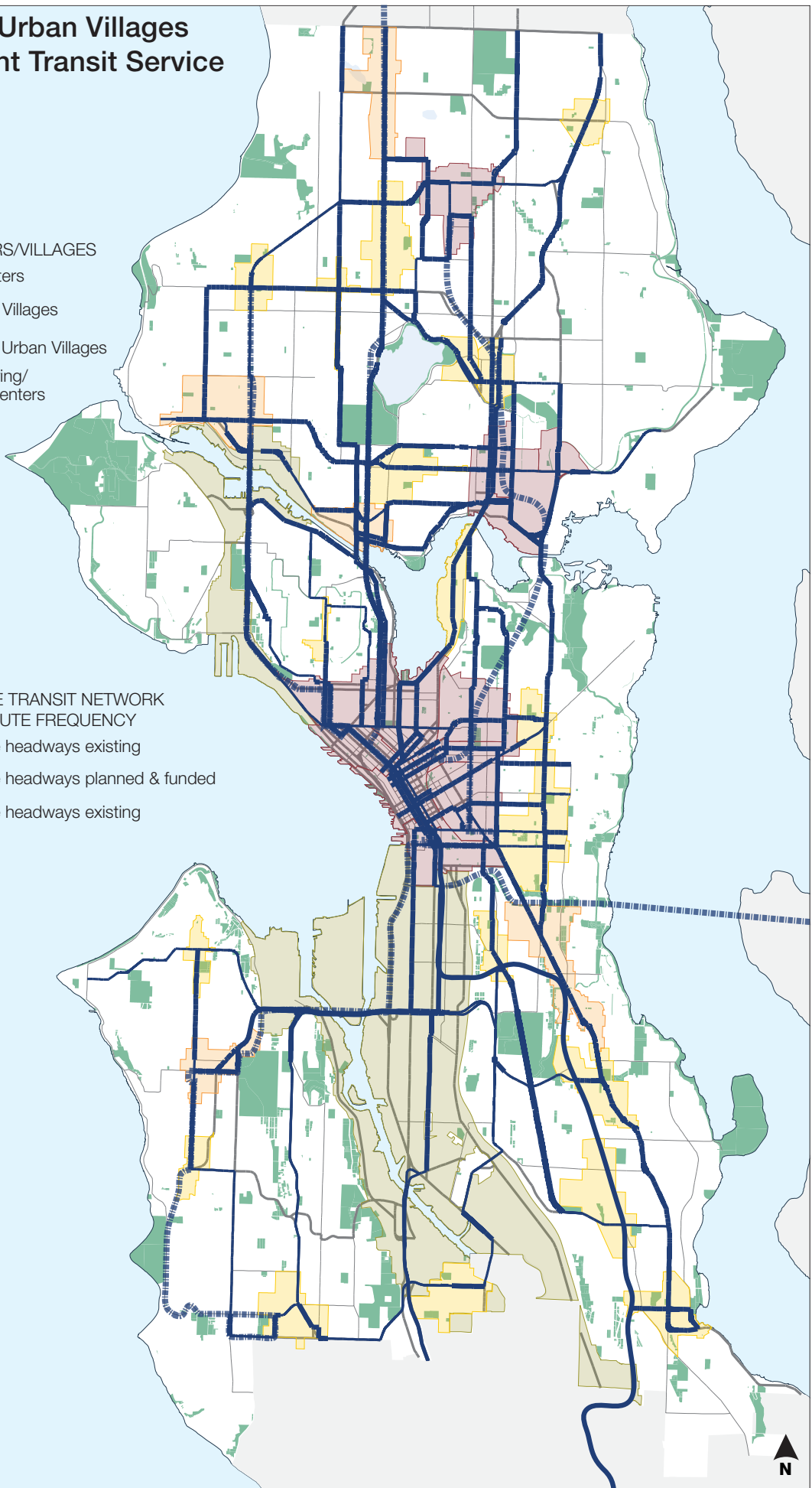
Seattle's Urban Villages & Frequent Transit Service

URBAN CENTERS/VILLAGES

- Urban Centers
- Hub Urban Villages
- Residential Urban Villages
- Manufacturing/Industrial Centers

URBAN VILLAGE TRANSIT NETWORK SERVICE BY ROUTE FREQUENCY

- <15 minute headways existing
- <15 minute headways planned & funded
- >15 minute headways existing



Benefits of Transit Communities

In addition to accommodating growth, transit communities are by definition “green” and provide an opportunity to create both a sustainable Seattle and a healthier planet. Transit communities:

Lower Overall Household Costs.

Studies show that household costs decrease when people are less dependent on cars. In addition to increasing affordability, social equity improves when all citizens have good access to jobs, schools, healthy food, and other critical services.

Improve Public Health.

Residents of transit communities walk and bike more than their suburban counterparts, in part because everything is accessible. Recent research shows that people who walk and bike are frequently healthier than those who live in auto-dependent neighborhoods.

Support Diversity.

Transit communities can support existing cultural communities and businesses by reducing sprawl and keeping cultural assets accessible within a compact area. Stemming displacement and the negative effects of gentrification while increasing growth remain critical challenges for Seattle.

Enhance Local Business Districts.

Compact communities with more businesses and residents create vibrant neighborhoods. Business districts thrive as more retail space is available and the people who live nearby evolve into a dependable customer base; residents have a reduced need to leave their communities in order to shop, eat, or play.

Reduce Carbon Footprint.

Per capita greenhouse gas emissions decrease when people are less dependent on cars. Households within transit communities also consume less energy per capita than households in auto-dependent communities.

Preserve Regional Open Space and Natural Resource Lands.

As required by the Growth Management Act, compact urban neighborhoods allow farms and forests to be spared the intense pressure of development and be preserved for future generations. Reduced sprawl increases the health of the entire region.



Photo by Oran Viriyincy





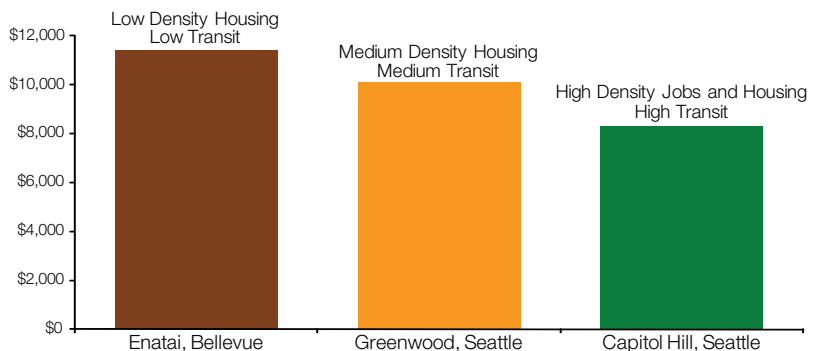
Photos by Oran Viriyincy

The Housing and Transportation Affordability Connection

Transit communities are more equitable than auto-dependent communities because they minimize transportation costs and increase mobility. A reasonably priced house or apartment may remain unaffordable for a low-income household if the lack of frequent, reliable transit service requires owning and maintaining a car.

The “Housing + Transportation Affordability Index” developed jointly by the Center for Transit Oriented Development and the Center for Neighborhood Technology considers the cost of transportation in addition to housing when estimating overall housing affordability. The Terwilliger Center at the Urban Land Institute has developed a customizable on-line tool based on the Housing + Transportation Affordability Index. Recent studies have shown that households in transit communities can save thousands of dollars each year compared to those that live in auto-oriented neighborhoods.

Annual Transportation Cost for Seattle Area Households Earning Area Median Income



© 2010 Center for Neighborhood Technology, Housing and Transportation (H+T) Affordability Index

This chart by Center for Neighborhood Technology shows lower transportation costs for a typical household earning median income living in a transit community compared with an auto-oriented community.

The success of a transit community is strongly correlated with reliability, mode, and accessibility of transit service.

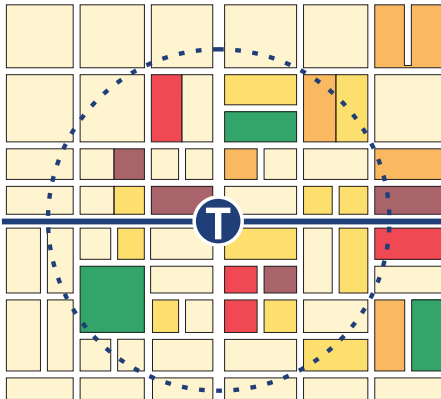
Successful Transit Communities

Successful transit communities are organized around reliable, accessible transit. Walking and biking are the primary ways of getting around within the neighborhood and transit service readily connects to other neighborhoods. Safe, comfortable bus stops and train stations with real-time arrival information make transit easier to use while well-maintained sidewalk and bicycle routes make transit easier to access, making both essential investments in transit communities. Frequent, reliable service throughout the day allows people to use transit as their primary mode of transportation for trips out of the neighborhood.

It is generally agreed that transit should be accessible within a 10-minute walk (one quarter to one half mile) or bike ride (approximately two miles), depending on the level of service. People are willing to travel further to transit when they know it will arrive quickly and if they will feel safe and comfortable while they wait. Transit use increases, as does the desirability of transit communities, when the transit network expands and serves more job centers, educational institutions, and cultural facilities. A variety of retail activities, community services, and a good pedestrian environment near transit stations can further increase the attractiveness of transit and of the surrounding community.

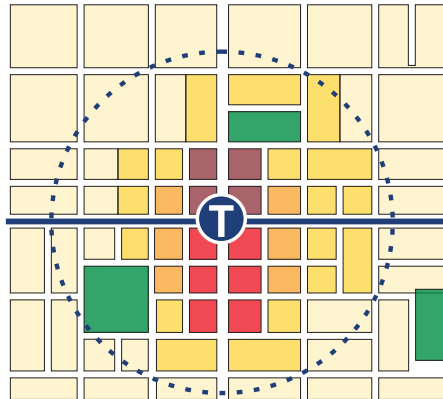
Non-Transit Oriented Development

Land uses not organized around transit



Transit Oriented Development

Land uses organized around transit



- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Park
- T Transit Stop
- Transit Route
- 10 minute walk

Different types of transit create different opportunities.

Different types, or modes, of transit can serve alternate functions and support related types of transit communities. Additionally, some modes are more likely than others to catalyze growth near stations.

Fixed rail systems, like the Sound Transit Link light rail system and the South Lake Union Streetcar, provide the greatest opportunity for transit-oriented development (TOD). They provide a certainty of transit service for both residents and businesses – assuring that the system and the riders it attracts will be dependable long-term assets. An exception to the rule, commuter rail does not help develop mixed-use transit communities because service typically operates only at peak periods and is designed to get people to and from their jobs. Light rail and streetcars, on the other hand, operate throughout the day serving both the commuter and the broader community. The flexibility of a bus system allows it to be reprogrammed to meet demand.

Local/Regional Buses

Local/regional bus service is typically characterized by closely spaced stops and average speeds at or below the posted speed limit. Seattle enjoys a robust bus system with numerous routes that feature frequent service. King County Metro provides both local and express bus service within the city and throughout the county, while Sound Transit, Community Transit, and Pierce Transit provide regional express commuter bus service.

Electric Trolley Buses

Electric trolley buses, with several popular routes in Seattle, are quieter and produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions than diesel buses while providing a higher level of route certainty for the community.

Bus Rapid Transit

Bus rapid transit (BRT) accommodates more riders at higher speeds than local buses. A BRT system is characterized by specially branded buses that have lower floors for quick boarding and exiting, stations that are further apart with real-time loading information, and priority signalization and dedicated transit lanes. King County Metro's Rapid Ride approximates BRT service. Scheduled to begin operation in 2012, it will connect downtown and West Seattle. Routes connecting downtown to Ballard and Shoreline will begin in 2012 and 2013 respectively.

Streetcars

Streetcar systems are typically local connector routes that serve areas of existing or anticipated high residential and/or employment density. Stations are typically spaced about one quarter mile apart; streetcars operate at moderate speeds with high frequency. Streetcars





provide certainty about the location of the stops/stations and thereby encourage private investments. In 2007, the South Lake Union Streetcar began service and has exceeded ridership expectations. The First Hill streetcar will connect downtown and the Capitol Hill light rail station and is expected to open in late 2013. Future routes, including a First Avenue streetcar being studied as part of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall replacement project, could connect the Central District and Fremont/Ballard to downtown and extend the South Lake Union route to the University of Washington.

Light Rail

Light rail can transport more passengers, at frequent, reliable intervals with higher average speeds than either buses or streetcars. Stations are typically one or more miles apart and can offer significant placemaking and transit-oriented development opportunities. The Sound Transit Central Link line from downtown Seattle to SeaTac Airport opened in 2009; new stations at Capitol Hill and the University of Washington are scheduled to open in 2016. In 2020, North Link will expand light rail service to Northgate and East Link will connect to Redmond/Overlake via Bellevue.

Commuter Rail

Commuter rail typically connects cities rather than neighborhoods and generally runs during peak commuting periods. Many commuter rail stations feature parking and bus transfer facilities. Sound Transit's Sounder commuter rail provides service during peak commuting periods connecting Everett and Tacoma to downtown Seattle. Service also operates during special events, such as Seahawks games.

Ferries

Ferries and water taxis are iconic transit modes in the Puget Sound region that carry large numbers of passengers during peak commuting periods and also provide all-day and weekend service. Because they accommodate both automobiles and walk-on passengers who may park nearby, infrastructure around ferry terminals tends to be auto-oriented and thus creates a potential challenge to developing transit communities. Washington State Ferries connect Bainbridge Island, Bremerton, and Vashon Island with downtown Seattle at Colman Dock; the terminal at Fauntleroy in West Seattle provides connections to Southworth and Vashon Island. Passenger-only water-taxi service also connects West Seattle and downtown.

Transit Community Typologies

All Seattle's Transit Communities are Not the Same

Transit communities will accommodate most of Seattle's anticipated households and jobs and will create transportation choices for people who work, live, shop, and recreate in these neighborhoods. Once identified as a transit community, the success of the neighborhood is created from a clear understanding of its unique characteristics, a vision for the future and a plan to achieve that vision in a way that enhances the neighborhood. This report provides a Seattle-specific context by defining typologies that relate to existing neighborhoods, and recommends a variety of tools, strategies and investments to create successful transit communities while preserving unique neighborhood identities.

Four Seattle Typologies: Mixed Use Centers, Mixed Use Neighborhoods, Special Districts, and Industrial Jobs Centers

Every neighborhood is unique. Some transit communities in Seattle are places where people work, live, and shop whereas others are regional employment centers with little or no housing. While many categories can be developed to differentiate types of transit communities, this report focuses on what distinguishes communities based on peak activities, street life, and essential components that help create vibrant, livable places supported by our transit investments.



Photo by Keith Brofsky

Four distinct typologies that distinguish broad categories of transit communities in Seattle were developed: Mixed Use Centers, Mixed Use Neighborhoods, Special Districts, and Industrial Jobs Centers. Each typology will have different strategies regarding integrating land use and essential components for livability into the transit community.



Photo courtesy of SDOT

Essential Components for Livability

To best optimize transit investments in Seattle we need to put the right land use strategies in place while making sure the community has all the necessary and essential components for livability, such as adequate open space, an enhanced streetscape, and opportunities and activities for the people who live and/or work there. Elements such as open space, pedestrian enhancements and other investments should no longer be viewed as ‘amenities’ and instead they should be considered necessary components and essential elements for livability. The ‘livability elements’ are what transform a transit connection into a transit community.

Basic and Fundamental Elements for All Transit Nodes

Not every ‘transit node’ or connection is a community. We recognize that there are many important transit connections, or nodes, in Seattle where transit service is frequent and reliable, but there is little opportunity to support a transit community as we describe in our four typologies. The City should ensure all transit connections have the basic elements that make it easy for pedestrians and bicyclists to access transit.



Some examples of basic elements for transit connections include: (1) protection from vehicular traffic, (2) complete/context sensitive streets, (3) well-defined waiting spaces that are safe and comfortable, including basic elements like lighting, comfortable places to sit or stand, and protection from the weather, (4) sidewalks that provide adequate room to walk, (5) places to secure bicycles, and (6) coherent, consistent wayfinding.

Essential Components Common to All Transit Communities

All Seattle transit communities require planning strategies and essential components for livability. Regardless of the differences outlined in the typologies, these communities accommodate transit service as an essential component and thus the City should direct planning and funding resources to promote transit ridership and enhance community vitality. This includes considerations for local bus integration, taxi and passenger drop off zones, bikeways and sidewalks to stations or stops, plus bicycle parking facilities and pedestrian plazas at the station. These elements lay the foundation and enable great placemaking in all transit communities.

In the pages that follow we outline the characteristics and activities that make successful transit communities based on the four typologies; Mixed Use Centers, Mixed Use Neighborhoods, Special Districts, and Industrial Jobs Centers followed by land use strategies and essential ‘livability elements’ that are more specifically needed in each type of community.

Seattle's Transit Communities

The Planning Commission, with technical support from DPD City Planning, SDOT, Office of Housing and the Design Commission, analyzed 49 transit connections that have a high level of transit service (headways, number of lines, and hours of service).

The adjacent map illustrates these 49 transit connections with a high level of transit service (identified by Seattle Department of Transportation).

The Commission looked at the characteristics, goals, peak activities and use in each community and categorized them into one of the four typologies. Not all transit connections met our

definition of transit community, and in some instances we combined two or more transit connections to better plan for a single transit community. In all we designated 41 Transit Communities with a specific Transit Community typology.

Providing a typology designation will enable a more fine grained and focused approach, by matching the strategies, actions and investments outlined in each specific typology to optimize transit investment and enhance livability for each community. It's important to note that each of these communities has a unique identity and characteristic that should be carefully considered in planning and implementation efforts.


MIXED USE CENTERS		
Ballard	First Hill*	South Lake Union
Belltown	Fremont	The Junction
Broadway	King Street*	University District
Colman Dock*	Mt Baker	Uptown*
Denny	Northgate	Westlake
MIXED USE NEIGHBORHOODS		
12th Ave	Crown Hill	North Greenwood
15th Ave	Greenwood	Oaktree
Admiral	Jackson	Othello
Beacon Hill	Lake City	Rainier Beach
Broadview	Madison	Roosevelt
Central	Morgan	Roxbury
Columbia City	North Green Lake	Yesler Terrace
SPECIAL DISTRICTS		
Colman Dock*	Husky Stadium	Stadium*
First Hill*	King Street*	Uptown*
INDUSTRIAL JOB CENTERS		
Interbay	Lander	Stadium*


* Communities that are a hybrid of two typologies


Seattle's Transit Connections & Frequent Transit Service

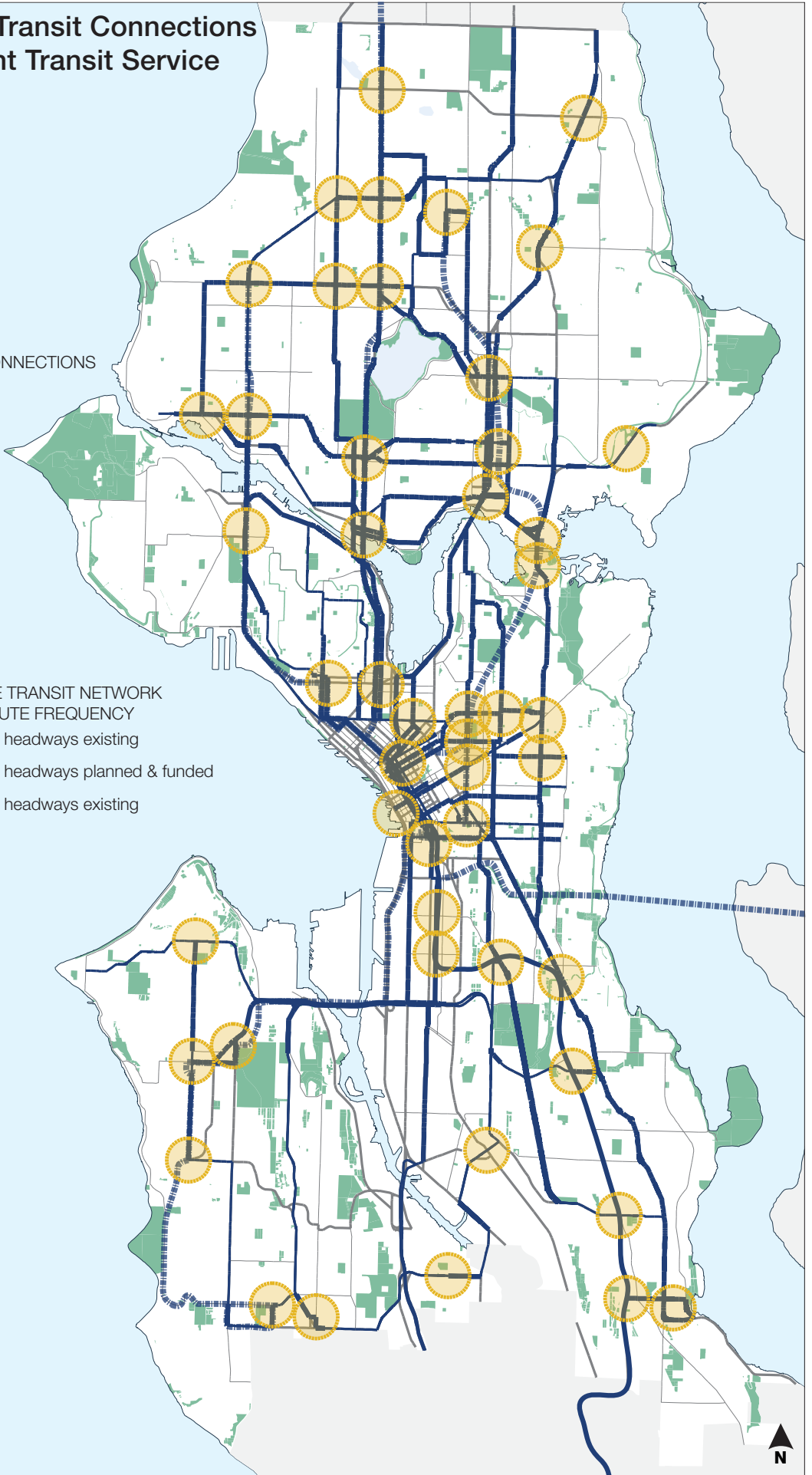
 TRANSIT CONNECTIONS

URBAN VILLAGE TRANSIT NETWORK
SERVICE BY ROUTE FREQUENCY

 <15 minute headways existing

 <15 minute headways planned & funded

 >15 minute headways existing



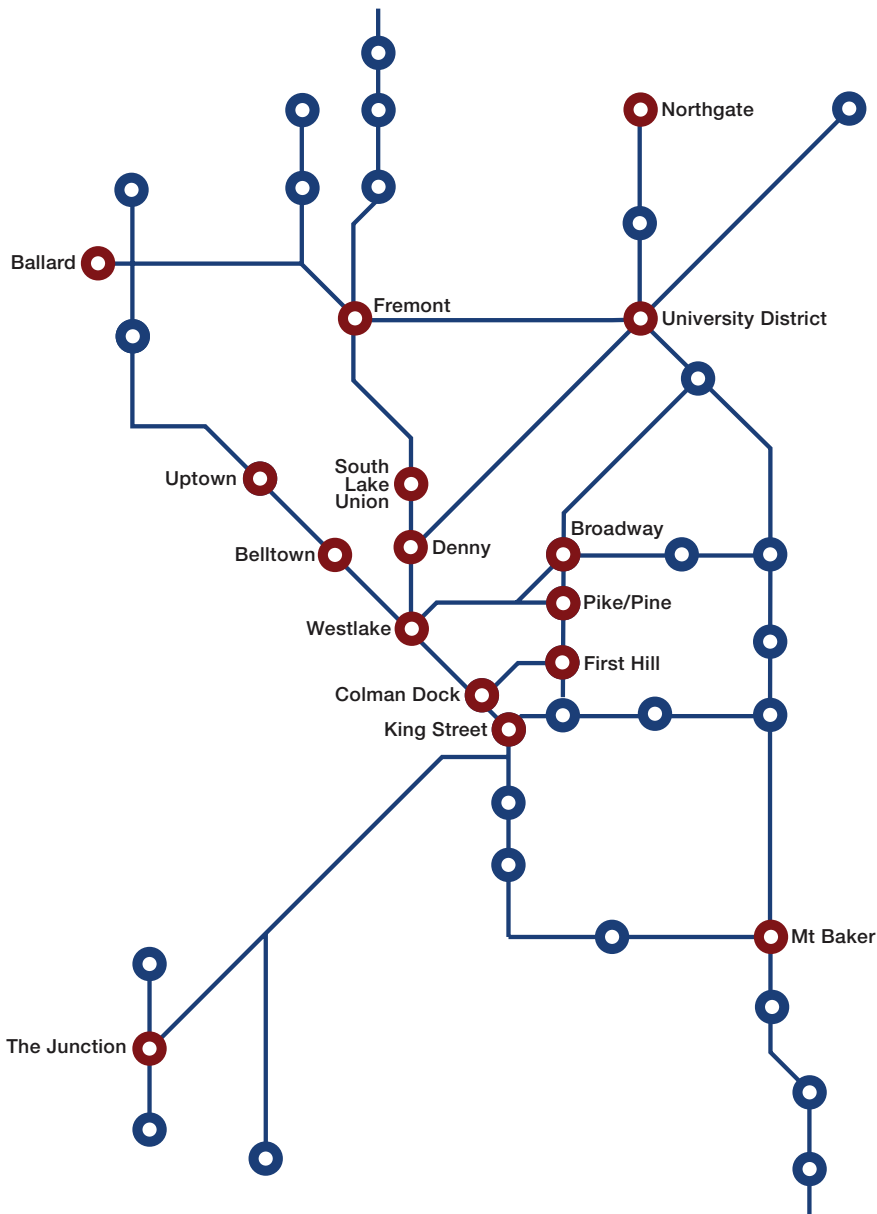
Mixed Use Center

Vision

A Mixed Use Center is a vibrant and eclectic local or regional hub where frequent, reliable transit supports jobs, residents, and services. A variety of retail and commercial activities support a mix of housing types and civic and recreational amenities are easily accessible on foot, bike, or transit.

Peak Activities

Mixed Use Centers are active throughout the day – employees commute to jobs, creating a bustling street scene at lunch; visitors shop and enjoy tourist activities; employees, visitors, and residents enjoy a vibrant nightlife extending activity into late night hours. Commuter rail, light rail, streetcars, bus rapid transit, express bus, and other bus service connect Mixed Use Centers to the other centers in Seattle and the region with frequent service every day throughout the week.



Characteristics and Goals

Mixed Use Centers are complete neighborhoods that have the highest levels of transit connectivity to other neighborhoods with reliable, frequent service. A tight street grid is lined with tall office buildings, hotels, and residential towers, often with retail along the sidewalk. Commuter rail, light rail, streetcars, bus rapid transit, express bus and other bus service connect Mixed Use Centers to the other centers in Seattle and the region with frequent service every day throughout the week.

A successful Mixed Use Center is characterized by the following:

Diverse residential population that includes single-person households, residents of all ages, incomes and levels of mobility, and families with children.

Places with the highest concentration of jobs and households in taller buildings. Tallest buildings are located within the regional Mixed Use Centers in Seattle's Center City area; other local Mixed Use Centers achieve more moderate building heights.

A range of small to very large businesses and institutions, providing numerous jobs as well as synergistic clusters of businesses.

Retail businesses include small, locally owned shops and large department and grocery stores serving people who live and work in, as well as visit these neighborhoods, and are primarily found at the ground floor along arterials. Residents have access to goods, services, and activities without using a car.

Multifamily building lobby entrances and some townhomes are at street level off of main arterials.

Wide sidewalks that accommodate large numbers of pedestrians, sidewalk cafes and street vendors create opportunities for people to stop, sit and enjoy the area.

Generous, high quality shared public spaces which are critically important to livability and soften the effects of greater density and make urban living more attractive.

Public open space typically includes large public plazas, semi-public plazas at the base of tall buildings, and smaller pocket parks. Public art is incorporated into plazas. Public art and public realm improvement strategies contribute to a high quality pedestrian experience.

Parks often serve multiple purposes and Green Streets help integrate the natural environment within the higher intensity land uses.

Street walls act to define the sidewalk and street space. Visual and physical connections between the sidewalk and buildings, active street edges, transparent building facades, along with pedestrian scale proportions create the sense of an outdoor room-like feel.

Paid public parking is found on most surface streets and off-street in garages. Very few surface parking lots. Parking maximums ensure that new buildings add to an environment that prioritizes people over automobiles.

Essential Components for Livability

People who live in Mixed Use Centers are almost four times more likely to walk or bike. The quality of the pedestrian and bicyclist environment and street life are critical. Included below are many of the essential components for Mixed Use Centers.

Breathing Room

A variety of parks, open space, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and plazas, vital to the quality of life for the people who live, work and play in these communities.

Green Streets to encourage lush plantings, create attractive sidewalks, clean the air, provide shade, and help manage stormwater.

Landscaping in new buildings that reduces stormwater runoff and improves water quality.

Getting to Transit is Easy

Safe and clean transit stops and stations with lighting, seating, trash receptacles and real time signage.

Appropriately wide sidewalks with continuous pedestrian-level lighting and mid-block pedestrian connections.

Overhead weather protection near transit facilities.

Bicycle lanes and bike parking/storage where appropriate.

Wayfinding for pedestrians, bikes and vehicles.

Complete Streets

Streets are safe and accessible to all users and are well lit by pedestrian-scaled lighting with healthy street trees and other landscaping.

Stormwater management is incorporated within the sidewalk areas.

Transit is at the Center of the Community

Area around the transit stop/station incorporates public art, plazas, and comfortable open spaces, and is surrounded by businesses that are open 16-18 hours each day.

Business surrounding transit stop/station support users and could include daycare facilities, restaurants, coffee shops, and music venues.

Tallest buildings are closest to transit and employment hubs.

Vibrant Street Life

Generous sidewalks, bicycle facilities, street furniture, landscaping, and public art.

Sidewalks are wide enough to accommodate the browsing zone, travel zone, and amenity zone.

Café tables - essential to a vibrant street life - are located in the browsing zone.

A Community for All Ages

Essential components such as schools, play areas, senior centers, libraries, and generous public spaces are located here where people of all ages can thrive.

A broad mix of housing sizes and affordability levels are encouraged.



Wayfinding

A variety of signs, map, kiosks, and pathway markings help people navigate in transit communities and are particularly useful where large numbers of visitors come to attend events. Wayfinding also helps people explore their neighborhoods and find something new.

Find out more about wayfinding and other tools in the Pedestrian Master Plan:
http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/pedestrian_masterplan/default.htm



Land Use Tools and Strategies

Expedite review for projects that provide public open space, larger sidewalks, and/or community spaces.

Replace minimum parking requirements with maximums at appropriate locations.

Provide zoning incentives and density bonuses to allow taller buildings and higher densities in exchange for affordable housing, historic preservation, public open space and/or other desired components.

Create or use existing overlay zones to preserve historic features.

Establish minimum density requirements closest to employment centers and transit hubs to encourage development that matches the intent of the zoning.

Expand housing choices in Single Family zones adjacent to Mixed Use Centers to include residential small lot and other options.

Create safe mid-block connections in locations with a larger street grid and thoughtfully repurpose alleyways.

Add bicycle lanes, buffered bike paths and sharrows to appropriate existing streets and provide ample on-street bicycle parking.

Work with local business districts and property owners to encourage a mix of large and small locally-owned businesses.

Work with employers within five to ten minute walks from transit nodes to reduce free parking and other incentives for driving.

Encourage daycare and elementary schools for families with children.

Use mechanisms to provide low-income and workforce housing in transit communities. Ideas include:

- Partner with affordable housing developers.
- Encourage public-private partnerships.
- Identify areas of existing affordable housing that should be preserved and key locations where it could be built or incorporated into market rate housing.
- Encourage larger homes for non-traditional and extended families.
- Create transit overlay zones that focus on preserving existing and encouraging new affordable housing.

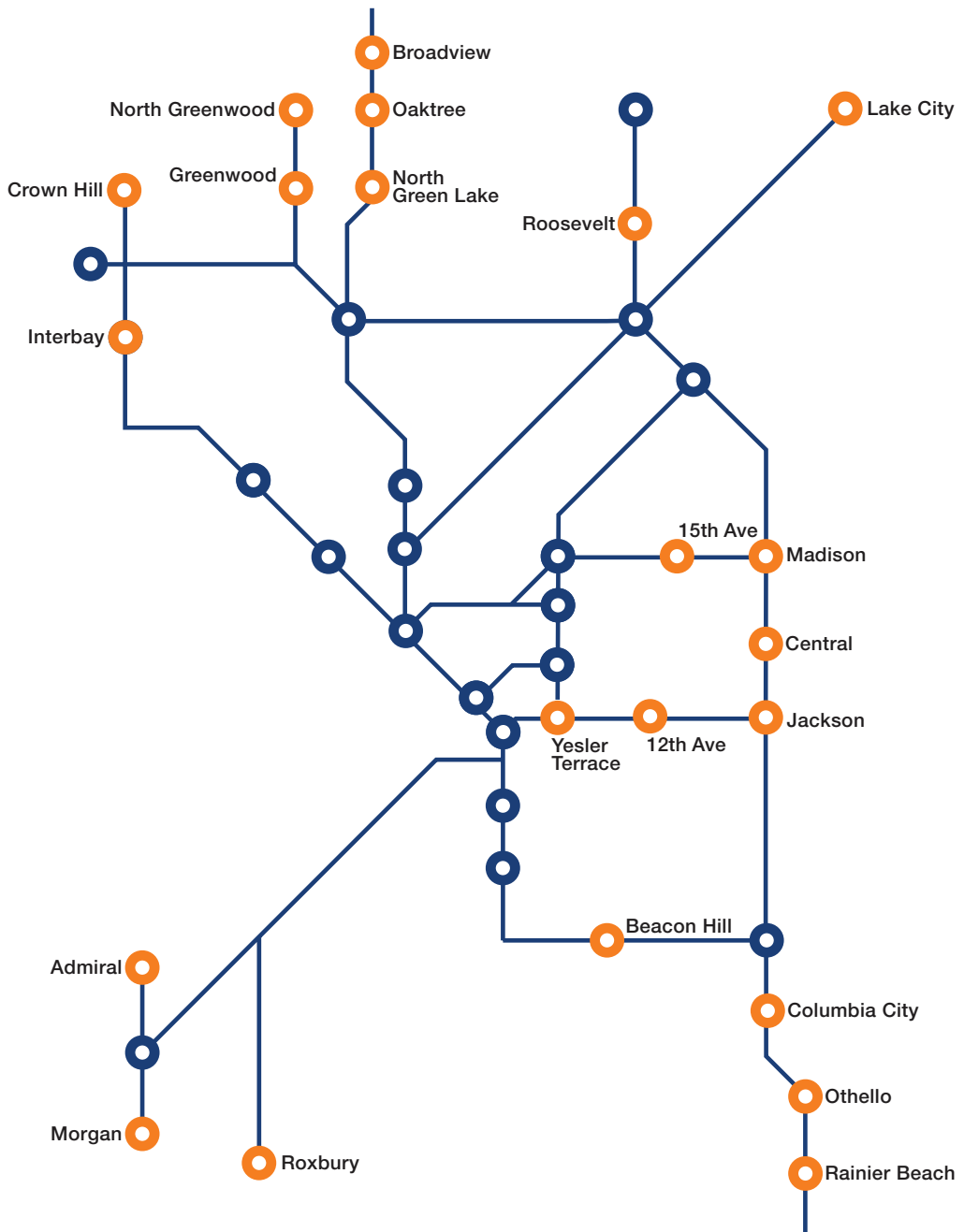
Mixed Use Neighborhood

Vision

A Mixed Use Neighborhood is a 'complete community' where residents have access to a variety of retail, commercial, employment and housing options. These neighborhoods are compact, dense communities but are less intensely developed than Mixed Use Centers, are not considered regional employment hubs and have a land use of a more moderate intensity.

Peak Activities

Shopping, dining and recreation mostly attract locals during evening hours or weekends and businesses tend to close earlier than those located in Mixed Use Centers. Most residents commute to Mixed Use Centers and other employment centers.



Light rail, streetcars, and bus transit connects to major employment hubs such as Downtown, First Hill, and University of Washington with frequent service during peak commuting times and frequent service from at least one transit mode. Service to other Mixed Use Neighborhoods and Mixed Use Centers during off-peak times is less frequent.

Characteristics and Goals

A successful Mixed Use Neighborhood is characterized by the following:

Moderate to high residential densities and low to moderate jobs densities in low to mid-rise buildings.

Moderate to high residential densities and low to moderate jobs densities located in low to mid-rise buildings.

Taller buildings along the major arterials and multifamily buildings with moderate heights on lesser arterials and side streets.

Retail primarily serves people who live and work in these neighborhoods and is typically found at the ground floor of buildings along arterials. Businesses are typically smaller stores with larger anchors such as a supermarket or pharmacy.

Residential uses can be found at street level just outside of the main business district and accommodate a wide range of household types from single- and two-person households of all ages to families with children.

Most people commute to work outside of the Mixed Use Neighborhood to other locations.

Wide sidewalks, especially in business areas, accommodate moderate numbers of pedestrians, and small sidewalk cafes.

Street elements such as pedestrian lighting, street trees, and associated landscaping are found in these business areas.

Open spaces include larger neighborhood parks and playfields, sometimes located at school campuses. Smaller pocket parks and plazas can be found closer to the business district.

Schools, libraries and community centers are prominent parts of these neighborhoods.

Parking is typically a combination of paid and free, both on-street and off-street.

On street bicycle facilities and bike parking racks on located sidewalks.

Public art of neighborhood or city-wide interest.



Photo courtesy of Seattle Public Libraries

Essential Components for Livability

People who live in Mixed Use Neighborhoods enjoy access to small and lively neighborhood business districts that serve most of their day-to-day needs.

Breathing Room

Community facilities such as parks, open space, trails, and Green Streets are typically integrated with schools, community centers, and other public facilities. Open spaces include natural areas, playgrounds and sports fields.

Green Streets encourage plantings that create attractive sidewalks, clean the air, provide shade, and help manage stormwater.

Vibrant Street Life

A high quality street and pedestrian environment promotes vitality and accommodates many local uses including parades, street fairs, and other community events.

An inviting public realm that includes sidewalks, bike facilities, street furniture, landscaping, and public art.

Getting to Transit is Easy

Safe and clean transit stops and stations with lighting, seating, trash receptacles and real time signage.

Appropriately wide sidewalks with continuous pedestrian-level lighting and mid-block pedestrian connections.

Overhead weather protection and wayfinding near transit facilities.

Bicycle lanes and bike parking/storage where appropriate.



Transit is at the Center of the Community

Area around the transit stop/station incorporates public art, plazas, and comfortable open spaces, and is well-connected to neighborhood-serving businesses such as daycare facilities, restaurants, coffee shops, etc.

A Community for All Ages

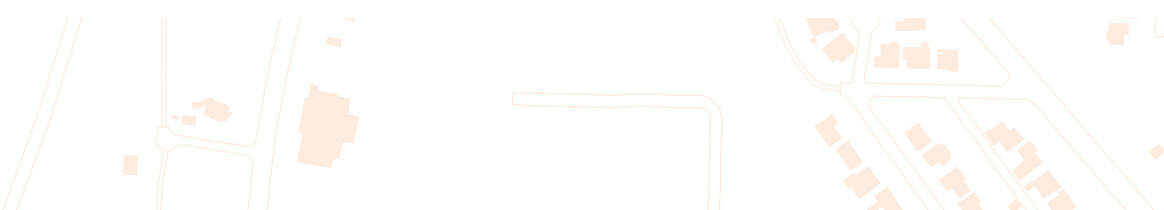
A diverse mix of community amenities such as schools, play areas, senior centers, libraries and generous public spaces.

A broad mix of housing types, sizes and affordability levels.

Complete Streets

Streets accessible to all users and well lit by pedestrian-scaled lighting with healthy street trees and other landscaping.

Stormwater management incorporated within the sidewalk areas.



Land Use Tools and Strategies

Neighborhood Commercial zones encourage retail uses at street level and discourage surface parking lots.

Active streets include sidewalk cafes and street vendors.

Design guidelines encourage compatibility with the existing neighborhood and promote pedestrian friendly streets.

Eliminate minimum parking requirements and consider maximum parking limits for residential and commercial uses.

Encourage residential zones that include mostly lowrise, limited midrise and single family adjacent to transit stops.

Create or use historic overlays and transit overlays tied to mode and density.

Allow bicycle parking in the right-of-way in addition to on-street parking, which may or may not be metered.

Map pedestrian designations that require pedestrian-oriented retail along arterials within commercial zones and reduce minimum parking requirements for business owners.

Develop mechanisms to provide low-income and workforce housing in transit communities. Ideas include:

- Partner with affordable housing developers and encourage public-private partnerships.
- Identify areas of existing affordable housing that should be preserved and key locations where it could be built or incorporated into market rate housing.
- Identify ways to encourage larger homes for non-traditional and extended families (3+BR).
- Create transit overlay zones that focus on preserving existing and encouraging new affordable and workforce housing.

Bicycle Boulevards, Lanes, & Sharrows

There are three main types of markings and symbols that designate space for bicyclists in the ROW designating space for bicyclists: bike boulevards are non-arterial streets with low levels of traffic and slow auto speeds often characterized by traffic circles and diverters in addition; bike lanes are on arterials with a minimum of four feet (five when adjacent to on-street parking) and improve safety and traffic flow where many cyclists travel; sharrows are typically located on narrower streets without enough room for bike lanes that still improve safety.



SDOT photo of bicycle boulevard markings.

Find out more in the Bicycle Master Plan:
<http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/bikemaster.htm>

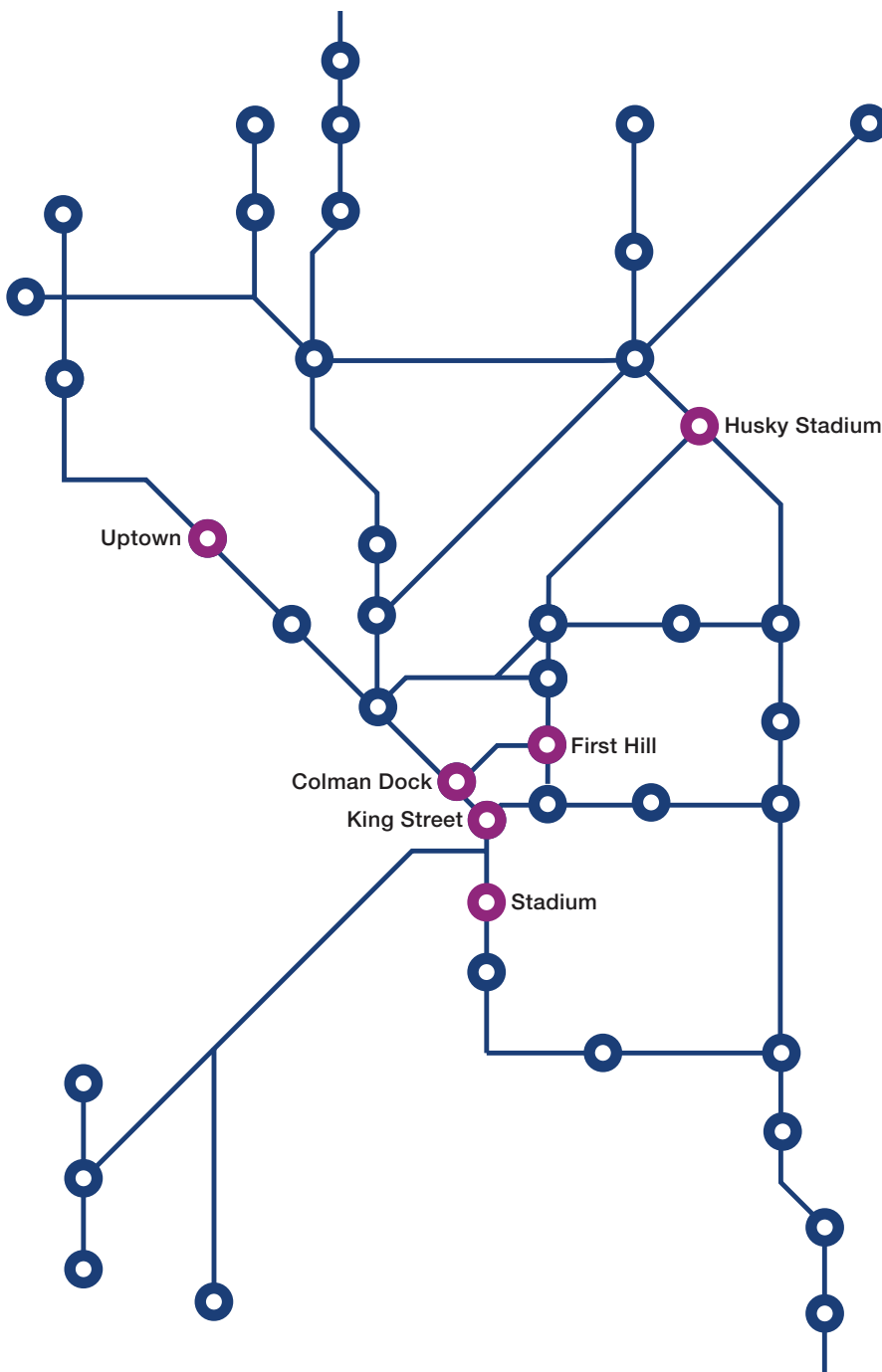
Special Districts

Vision

Special Districts are locations served by transit such as major institutions, entertainment districts, sports arenas, multimodal hubs or other facilities.

Peak Activities

Often, special events in these districts (e.g. sporting events, concerts, cultural activities) bring very large numbers of people to the area in pulses. Other Special Districts (e.g. hospitals, universities) have large numbers of employees in motion throughout the day.



Transit provides essential connections between Special Districts and other neighborhoods in Seattle and often the region. Frequent service during peak and off-peak periods is augmented in Special Districts with special transit service during large events.

Characteristics and Goals

While there is no “typical” Special District, a successful Special District can be characterized by the following:

Moderate to high densities of jobs and a modest amount of housing in a variety of building types.

Special Districts typically have a major attraction, such as Seattle Center or Swedish Hospital, that draw large numbers of people to the area.

Retail in the area serves people who live, work, and visit these neighborhoods and is typically found at the ground floor along arterials. Businesses range from small, locally owned shops to large department and grocery stores.

Residential uses can be found at street level off principal pedestrian streets.



Wide sidewalks and plazas accommodate a large number of pedestrians, sidewalk cafes, and street vendors.

Open space includes large and small public plazas that serve multiple purposes.

Generously landscaped Green Streets infuse a sense of the natural environment amidst the higher intensity land uses.

Paid parking is found on some of the surface streets and in structured garages, and some surface lots.



Green Streets

Green Street designations typically apply to non-arterial streets that are designed to create a lively pedestrian environment by enhancing pedestrian circulation, maximizing open space, and providing verdant landscaping.

Downtown, Green Streets are built when sites are redeveloped in exchange for increased flexibility in development standards. In other neighborhoods Green Streets can be

built through private development, action from neighborhood groups, or as part of a natural drainage systems (NDS) project constructed by Seattle Public Utilities.

Find out more in the ROW Improvement Manual:
http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/rowmanual/manual/6_2.asp

Essential Components for Livability

Special Districts are distinguished by moderate and high intensity, sporadic uses that tend to dominate the character of the neighborhood by attracting large groups of visitors in addition to residents and workers.

Vibrant Street Life

The pedestrian environment designed to accommodate large crowds during peak periods and remain safe during off-peak times.

Investments in sidewalks, street furniture, landscaping, and public art add vitality and interest to the street.

Promenades accommodate large groups, displays, and vendors. These enhance the Special District by creating an inviting public realm.

Complete Streets

Safe streets accessible to all users and well-lit by pedestrian-scaled lighting with healthy street trees and other landscaping.

Stormwater management is incorporated within the sidewalk areas.



Photo by brand0oon

Getting to Transit is Easy

Safe and clean transit stops and stations with lighting, seating, trash receptacles and real time signage.

Appropriately wide sidewalks with continuous pedestrian-level lighting and mid-block pedestrian connections.

Overhead weather protection and wayfinding near transit facilities.

Bicycle lanes and bike parking/storage where appropriate.



Photo courtesy of Top Pot Doughnuts

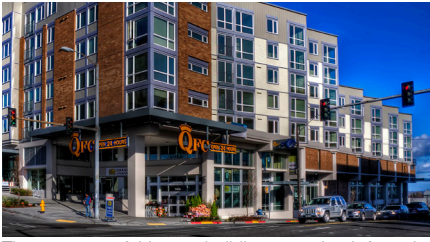
Sidewalk Cafés & Mobile Food Carts

Sidewalk cafés and mobile food carts help create lively neighborhoods and strengthen business districts. Food carts also provide new opportunities for people to start relatively low-cost small businesses. The City recently streamlined the permitting process for sidewalk cafés; since the new regulations went into effect, many new permits have been issued. New regulations for mobile food carts are currently being developed and are likely to be approved in 2011.

Find out more about sidewalk café permitting:
http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/stuse_sidewalkcafe.htm



New signs at King County Metro bus stops are easier to read. Photo by Oran Viriyncy.



The entrance of this new building steps back from the street to accommodate pedestrians adjacent to a bus stop. Photo courtesy of HEWITT.

Transit Stop Improvements

Even small improvements to bus shelters and other transit stops make it easier and more convenient for people to ride transit; these improvements also help make neighborhoods more generally attractive. While transit agencies like King County Metro and Sound Transit are typically responsible for maintaining stations and shelters, the City, property owners, and neighborhood groups can also help improve and provide basic maintenance of transit stops.

Find out more in the transit master plan: <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/transitmasterplan.htm>

Land Use Tools and Strategies

Include a full spectrum of commercial and mixed use zoning that encourages street level retail and discourage surface parking lots.

Overlay zones such as transit and historic to further specific goals such as enhancing character or the public realm.

Pedestrian designations that require pedestrian-oriented retail along arterials within commercial zones and reduce minimum parking requirements for business owners.

Incentives to provide less event parking and promote transit use.

Major Institution overlays that encourage more neighborhood-serving retail uses.

Pedestrian and bicycle connections between the major attractions and surrounding neighborhoods.

Active pedestrian use of sidewalks that includes sidewalk cafes and street vendors.

Program spaces to take advantage of the space on non-event/non-peak times.

Large activated plazas/gathering spaces when special events or surges of activity do not occur.

Safe, walkable route between transit node and major attractions that are within a five or ten minute walk.

Businesses to serve nearby residential populations (if applicable) in addition to visitors and employees.

Industrial Job Center

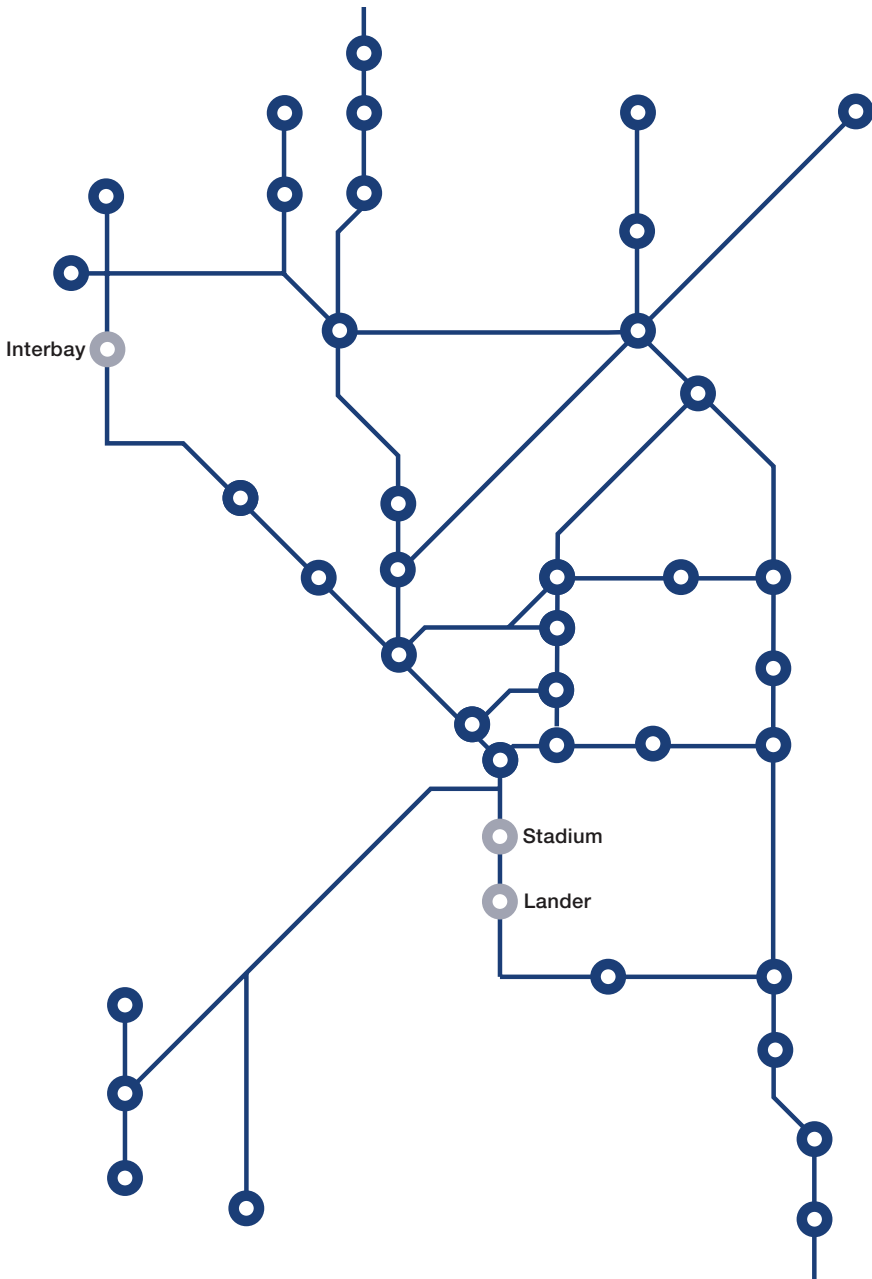
Vision

Industrial Job Centers include large and small industrial businesses and ancillary commercial uses that serve the workforce. Residential use is not allowed and other non-industrial uses are highly discouraged in order to protect these areas from encroachment and development pressures. The presence of some large employers means that transit service is an asset to this area when workers can move safely and easily between transit and the workplace.

Peak Activities

Industrial Job Centers are active throughout the day – morning and evening commuting for some workers but many industrial uses operate 24 hours per day.

Transit provides connections between the Industrial Job Centers and locations in Seattle and the region; service is most frequent during peak commuting periods.



Characteristics and Goals

A successful Industrial Job Center is characterized by the following:

Low to moderate densities of jobs per acre; no residential use.

Buildings typically one or two stories, though prominent exceptions exist, such as cranes and some older warehouse buildings.

Limited variety and scale of retail serving mostly employees although some retail uses draw people from other neighborhoods, and some retail is associated with manufacturing.

Sidewalks, pedestrian and bike facilities will enable the thousands of workers to get to and from transit.



Open spaces focused on serving workers and providing environmental benefits.

A combination of on-street parking and surface parking lots.

Retail and restaurants are located on arterials and close to major transit stops and employers.

Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and safety measures to ensure compatibility with freight mobility.



Little Ship (T18), 2000
Mary Iverson
Oil on Canvas
Seattle City Light 1% for Art
Portable Works Collection

Industrial Lands

Industrial areas play an important role in the local and regional economy; the Comprehensive Plan, countywide and regional planning goals include the preservation of these important employment centers. The City's policies and regulations help maintain industrial lands by restricting residential uses and limiting other non-industrial uses.

Find out more in the Planning Commission's report:
<http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/industrial.htm>

Essential Components for Livability

Industrial Job Centers support the foundation of our regional economy. Although people generally do not live in these areas, there are essential components that will help maximize investment in transit and make it easier for people who work in Industrial Job Centers to commute to work without a car.

Getting to Transit is Easy

Safe and continuous sidewalks and adequate lighting and landscaping in patterns or configurations that do not have negative implications for industrial uses.

High priority integration with transit service.

Signage and wayfinding along pedestrian/bike routes.

Aesthetically pleasing, continuous, direct, and convenient linkages.



Complete Streets

Separate bike and pedestrian facilities from larger vehicles in freight priority corridors to minimize noise and visual impacts and increase safety for all.

Streetscape enhancements, such as street trees, on pedestrian/bike routes that don't conflict with freight movement.

Landscaped open space accommodates stormwater and may also provide bioremediation.



Seattle Center 5th Ave. N. Garage, designed by NBBJ/GGN; photo by Lara Swimmer

Carbon Neutral Seattle

In 2005, Seattle became the first large US city to commit to the Kyoto protocols; that target was met in 2008 when Seattle's greenhouse gas emissions were 7% below 1990 levels. Today, more than 1,000 cities have pledged to combat global climate change. In 2010, Seattle City Council announced an even more ambitious goal of achieving carbon neutrality. The City continues to work with individuals, community organizations, businesses, and other government agencies to address global climate change.

Find out more about Seattle Climate Action NOW:
<http://www.seattlecan.org/>

Freight Mobility Action Plan

Whether transporting apples from Washington orchards or iPhones from China, freight keeps our economy moving. Seattle's Department of Transportation created the first Freight Mobility Master Plan in 2002. The plan helps to implement the Comprehensive Plan, identifies specific actions that will improve freight mobility such as street improvements, railroad grade separations, and public outreach.



Photo: Z T Jackson

Find out more at:

<http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/freight.htm#plan>

Land Use Tools and Strategies

Aggressive size of use limits for non-industrial uses. Residential zoning is expressly prohibited with no multifamily, neighborhood commercial, mixed or single family zoning.

No minimum parking requirements. Maximum requirements in consort with strong workplace commute trip reduction programs and incentives that get workers safely and efficiently to and from transit. Includes worker bike-share programs, employer shuttles and private security officers.

A transit overlay created specifically for special districts and industrial jobs centers. Development standards associated with transit overlay zones may be in conflict with the industrial uses.

Limits to heights and floor-area-ratio ensure that industrial land is protected for industrial uses.

Minimum sidewalk widths that provide direct connections between major transit stops and businesses.

Specific limits commuter Park and Ride lots.

Food trucks (and similar uses) to locate close to major transit stops.

Funding & Implementation Strategies

Ultimately the success of Transit Communities requires three integral components: investment in transit; appropriate zoning for focused, higher density development; and necessary investment in the essential components for livability. The following section examines a host of funding and implementation tools that can create vibrant and livable transit communities.

The multi-billion dollar question is how will all of the facilities and infrastructure, such as parks, open space, libraries, sidewalks, plazas, pedestrian improvements and lighting be paid for? Without the essential components, urban life becomes unattractive and inhospitable. With them the quality of life for all Seattle residents and workers is vastly improved.

There are a host of tools available to both the public and private sector. For example, Seattle voter-approved levies fund parks, community centers, schools, libraries, affordable housing, and street improvements. Likewise, private development dollars can be leveraged to create livability components.

In this section of the report we highlight some of the tools, actions, and strategies used to provide essential components for livability by highlighting a few recent planning efforts in Seattle that have successfully leveraged tools and strategies to start transforming transit communities.

Online Funding and Implementation Toolkit

A more extensive Funding and Implementation Toolkit can be viewed on the Commission's website (www.seattle.gov/planningcommission). The toolkit provides decision makers, private partners and community groups with information about funding programs and planning tools commonly used to develop the essential components that create vibrant, lively transit communities.



Federal Sustainable Communities Partnership

In 2009, three federal agencies partnered to improve access to affordable housing, increase transportation options, and combat global climate change. The departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Transportation (DOT) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are working together to coordinate federal investment in ways

that can help build and support transit communities.

Find out more about the Sustainable Communities Partnership:
<http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/partnership/>



The online toolkit focuses on three broad categories of “livability elements”: Infrastructure investments may include right-of-way improvements, sidewalks, Green Streets, or bike lanes/facilities; community development may occur through affordable housing, public services, schools, historic preservation; while parks & open space may address playfields, plazas, and p-patches in addition to parks.

The toolkit includes local, state, and federal sources from small programs like the Opportunity Fund for community initiated parks development and acquisition to large sources like federal Community Development Block Grants that fund affordable housing, neighborhood revitalization, community facilities and services, and economic development.

Implementation tools highlight planning and zoning processes and strategies such as Planned Actions, SEPA mitigation or Incentive Zoning used to provide public benefits as part of the development process. And zoning designations such as Green Streets, Pedestrian Designations, and Historic Districts that require certain uses while restricting others with the express purpose of enhancing community character and preserving unique identity.

Examples of Tools and Strategies Transforming Seattle Transit Communities

Transit is transforming Seattle. Transformational change is occurring in many of Seattle’s Transit Communities as a result of recent transit investments. Other neighborhoods are just beginning to optimize transit investments by building communities that are vibrant, livable places for residents, workers, and visitors.

Building successful transit community takes time and effort. Many actions, over an extended time period, are required to actualize the vision. Some actions can provide a catalyst to leverage others and the momentum begins to build. Properly aligning the land uses and developing a clear and focused infrastructure investment strategy are crucial building blocks on which the vision is realized.



Photo courtesy of Weber Thompson

Following are two examples of Seattle Transit Communities that are beginning to see the transformational results of many actions and investments over time – Northgate and Othello.

Transit Community Case Study: Othello

Energized by the opening of the Link light rail station and the redevelopment of the NewHolly Hope VI community, this vibrant, diverse neighborhood in many ways typifies a successful Mixed Use Neighborhood. Rich in transit, this urban town center features a 7.6-acre park; a vibrant, culturally diverse small business district; and adjacent affordable housing. The area continues to develop through a nexus of private and public efforts and funding that work synergistically to enhance these hallmarks of the Othello neighborhood.

Parks

Habitat rehabilitation of Othello Park supported by King County Wild Places in City Spaces Matching Grant, King County Juvenile Court, and Seattle Parks and Recreation.

Playground and lighting improvements partially funded by the Parks and Green Spaces Levy.

Master planning efforts to link the area's green spaces supported through a Ribbon of Parks Association Neighborhood Matching Grant.

Private citizen dollars were pledged to Othello Park with leveraged Large Matching Fund (DON) dollars.

Revitalization and safety efforts of the Othello Park Association International Music & Arts Festival supported from N2N grants; area-nonprofits Seattle Neighborhood Group, HomeSight and Mount Baker Housing; and private contributions from local businesses, organizations, and residents, supported through Parks & Recreation staff.

TOD developer Othello Partners, currently building 351 market-rate apartments in a mixed-use project bordering Othello Park and Othello Station, has collaborated with neighborhood efforts at Othello Park and contributed funding.

Economic Development Efforts

Small business owners with support from the Rainier Valley Community Development Fund and HomeSight formed the MLK Business Association (MLKBA) to strengthen and advocate for business community in the Othello Town Center.

OED-financed study of the retail environment in Southeast Seattle proposes action items for local businesses, residents, and organizations interested in diversifying and improving available services.

MLKBA, African Business Association of Seattle (ABAS) and Sound Transit collaborated to promote pedestrian safety around the light rail station.

Station area update solicited feedback and ongoing participation with immigrant business owners through innovative use of planning outreach liaisons (POLs) to connect with various communities.

The Healthy Corner Store Initiative uses CDC dollars to bring healthy foods to Rainier Valley including Othello (Public Health).

Small business owners formed the MLK Business Association (MLKBA) to strengthen and advocate for business community in the Othello Town Center with support from the Rainier Valley Community Development Fund and HomeSight (OED).

Transit-Oriented Development and Planning

DPD and community members and groups collaborated on a Station Area Plan Update and development of a broader Urban Design Framework.

Seattle Housing Authority kept the town-center feel at the center of the NewHolly development, leveraging local and federal funding sources.

Private/public TOD mixed-use development includes examples from Othello Partners and Union Gospel Mission.

Developer-community conversations by Othello Station Community Advisory Team supported by Small Sparks and Small and Simple grants (DON).



Kids playing on slide at Othello Park



Rooftop deck view from The Station, developed by Othello Partners. Image: Othello Partners

Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

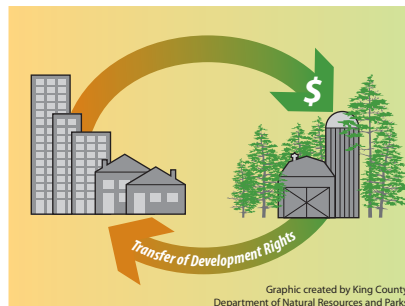
In the course of building Link light rail, RCI/Herzog contributed recycled excavated soils and concrete and worked with SDOT on design, permits and environmental analysis in building the trail along the Seattle City Light right-of-way.

Neighborhood Street Fund awards improved curbs and sidewalks in the Othello area.

2011 Bridging the Gap Large Project funding (SDOT) will improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and access from Seward Park to Othello Station to Chief Sealth Trail.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program

TDR programs allow property owners in urban areas to purchase development rights from owners in rural areas, so that urban areas can grow while rural areas remain protected from sprawl. In King County, this program has protected well over 100,000 acres of natural resource land and aims to protect an addition 850 acres of farm land, which would protect 49 local farms.



Graphic courtesy of King County.

Find out more about King County's TDR program:
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/stewardship/sustainable-building/transfer-development-rights.aspx>

Transit Community Case Study: Northgate

Over the past 10 years, coordination and investment has helped transform this auto-oriented area into a transit community. The City of Seattle has worked in collaboration with Sound Transit, King County, local community groups, and private developers.

Parks, Library, and Community Center

The Thornton Creek Water Quality Channel Habitat was constructed by Seattle Public Utilities with funds contributed by the Washington State Department of Ecology and multiple City departments; design guidance was provided by the Northgate Stakeholders Group.

Transformation of the 3.74 acre Hubbard Homestead Park, which was formerly a park and ride lot, was partially funded by the 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy.

The Maple Leaf Community Garden was constructed with money from the Pro Parks Levy Opportunity Fund, a Neighborhood Matching Grant, Seattle City Council, and Seattle Public Utilities.

A rainwater harvesting system at the Northgate Community Center, “the Vault,” was constructed along with a new library and community center that were funded through levies for parks and community centers and the Libraries for All bond measure.

The art walk and disk golf course at Mineral Springs Park were constructed using funds from the Pro Parks Levy.

Predominately funded through a two of voter approved levies, Pro Parks and Libraries for All, the co-located Northgate library, park and community center opened in 2006. The corresponding street improvements make it easy, safe and pleasant to walk or bike from the nearby transit hub and transit oriented developments.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

Streetscape improvements along 5th Avenue NE, including wider sidewalks, street trees, lighting improvements, and public art were made using contributions from a variety of City departments, King County Metro, a federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Grant, and private donations.

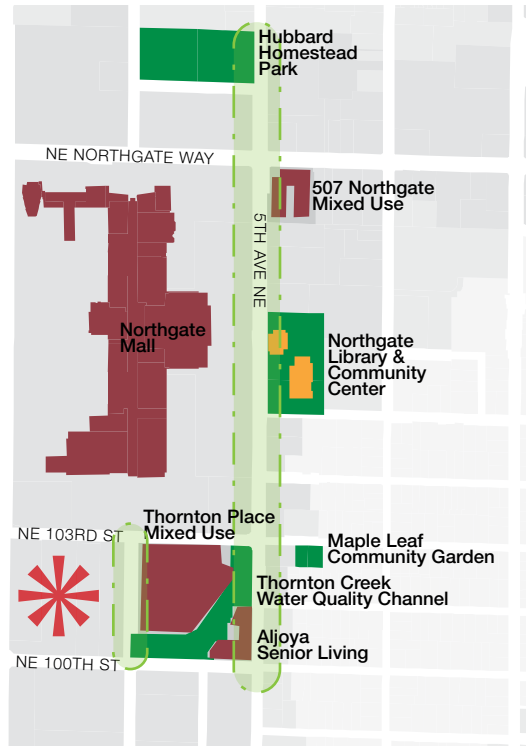
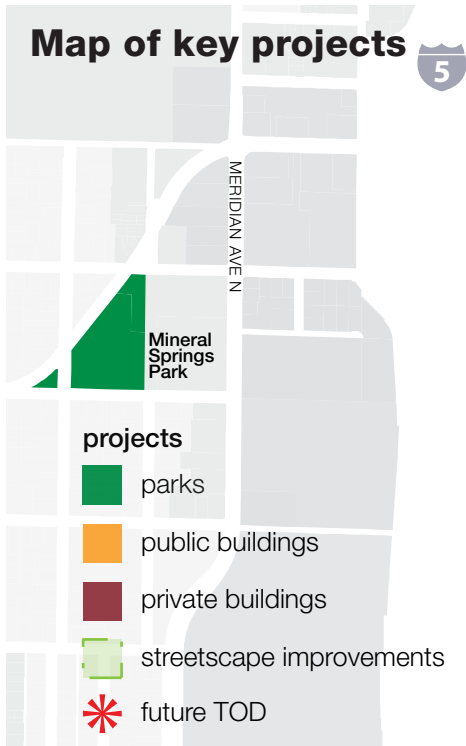
Funding from King County and SDOT extended 3rd Avenue NE, which improves pedestrian access adjacent to the existing transit center.

Many other pedestrian and bicycle improvements were funded through a combination of gas tax revenue, grants, loans, impact fees, and Bridging the Gap.

Additional pedestrian improvements were made as part of private redevelopment at the Northgate Mall, 507 Northgate, Thornton Place, and Alioya Senior Living.



Photo courtesy of SvR Design Company.



Transit-Oriented Development and Planning

King County Department of Transportation has partnered with the City of Seattle, Sound Transit, the Seattle Housing Authority, North Seattle Community College, and other stakeholders to create a TOD Catalyst Investment Strategy that was recently awarded a \$5 million grant from the HUD/FTA/EPA Sustainable Communities Initiative that builds on TOD work done in 2002-2003.

Urban Design Guidelines that were initially developed in 2003 were recently updated to strengthen the pedestrian environment and improve open space.

A Coordinated Transportation Investment Plan developed in 2007 builds on the Open Space and Pedestrian Connections Plan.

The Northgate Public Art Plan identifies and guides public art opportunities and was developed by Seattle artist Benson Shaw in conjunction with City departments and community groups.

Technical Urban Design Guidelines encourage consistent urban design within the public ROW.

An empty lot south of Northgate Mall has been transformed into a vibrant mixed use community at the heart of the transit connection. Lorig Associates developed Thornton Place adding nearly 500 condominiums and apartments, retail, and a 16-screen cinema. Just to the southeast ERA Care developed a senior living center with approximately 120 units. The Water Quality Channel runs through the site and offers residents and visitors an urban respite.

Recommendations

Transit investment should support transformative change in a community.

The Planning Commission's Seattle Transit Communities report outlines strategies to better align the City's land use policy in communities well-served by existing and planned frequent transit. These strategies optimize local and regional investment in transit by accommodating more households and jobs within walking or biking distance of frequent, reliable transit service. As a key step to creating these transit communities, Seattle needs to fund and develop the essential components for livability that support transformational change toward vibrant, livable, compact communities.

What follows are specific recommendations identifying changes, opportunities and actions to transform specific Seattle neighborhoods into successful transit communities.

1 Strengthen Comprehensive Plan Policies

Coordinate the Comprehensive Plan Urban Village strategy growth targets with the Capital Improvement Plan and other City capital investments that provide essential components of transit community livability.

Develop clear goals with respect to "breathing room" and "open space" in the Comprehensive Plan to provide a basis for a higher level of service than is required by the Land Use Code.

Integrate the concepts of transit communities as a primary filter for allocating city investments and planning resources. This would be accomplished by revisiting the Urban Village Strategy through the 7-year update of the Comprehensive Plan to establish a more refined hierarchy among designated urban villages.

Create a clear, strong connection between the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and other plans and codes that implement the Comprehensive Plan to better articulate how various plans, strategies, and action agendas relate.

Review and amend Comprehensive Plan policies that may inhibit the development of successful transit communities. Depending on the specific location, zoning could be changed to accommodate additional households and jobs; for example, LU59 emphasis on the protection of single family zoning may not be appropriate in transit-rich areas.

2

Revise Zoning

Taller buildings can play a positive role in defining a core with enough households and jobs to support transit and street life. For instance, many of the transit communities designated ‘Mixed-Use Center’ could accommodate mixed-use buildings that are significantly taller than nearby buildings at/or directly adjacent to its transit node or station.

Align zoning within a five minute walk or bike ride to frequent, reliable transit service. For instance, evaluate Single Family zoned land within transit communities to identify the opportunities for rezones to higher density or intensity as appropriate in each situation.

Through sign code amendments, explore opportunities to allow advertising that would provide street furniture and other essential components for livability in exchange for advertising.

Reconsider the general commercial zones in all transit communities. For instance, the Commercial-1 zone designation currently allows auto-oriented use and design features often inconsistent with the characteristics and environment needed to establish successful transit communities.



Photo courtesy of Weber Thompson

Establish parking maximums and shared parking programs in transit communities.

Consider inclusionary zoning in transit communities to provide for more affordable housing consistent with State law.

Evaluate and apply appropriately, Pedestrian Zone designations, Station Area Overlay districts and other zoning tools in all designated Transit Communities. The goal is to ensure pedestrian-oriented uses, enhanced public life within the right-of-way, and pedestrian-friendly streetscape improvements as new developments or public projects are designed/built.

Allocate additional transit service to support areas with potential to become Transit Communities

This report is focused on aligning land use strategies and investments where a high level of transit service already exists. However, there are neighborhoods where additional transit service would better enable or establish a future Transit Community. The Transit Master Plan is currently being updated and will help determine where increased transit service might engender change.

3 Update the Land Use Code

Continue the strategy of close coordination between urban design, land use code and community development efforts to provide certainty to neighbors and developers.

A critical mass of households and jobs within walking distance will ensure that we have adequate transit ridership are Seattle Transit Communities. Properly supported and equipped with essential components for livability, transit communities can graciously accommodate the vast majority of Seattle's new households and jobs.



Significant local culture and identity are assets for successful neighborhoods. Create tools and strategies to protect and establish affordable commercial space and community resources that reflect Seattle's diverse cultures.

4 Improve Access to Transit

Utilize the Transit Master Plan update project to create strategic alignment of transportation capital investment planning and transit service levels with existing or planned densities.

Provide optimal non-motorized access to the transit system by implementing the Walk, Bike, Ride initiative, the Pedestrian Master Plan, and Bike Master Plan.

Ensure good access for all by implementing context-sensitive and complete streets and other infrastructure that promotes mobility.



Photo by Oran Viriyincy

5 Encourage Diverse Households

Revise affordable housing program performance measurements to better consider the combined housing and transportation costs, recognizing that lower overall household costs may be achieved in transit communities.

Focus Seattle Housing Levy dollars and other affordable housing investment towards transit communities where additional housing is desired.

6

Support Carbon Neutrality

Provide integrated public open space within transit communities, linking parks, plazas and other public spaces with Green Streets and similar pedestrian-oriented connections. Incorporate natural drainage practices as both infrastructure and urban amenity.

Provide abundant street trees to improve the pedestrian environment, reduce stormwater runoff, provide urban wildlife habitat, and sequester carbon emissions.

Include appropriate habitat enhancements within transit communities as part of open space planning.



Photo courtesy of Weber Thompson

Align City policies to reduce automobile-related emissions and vehicle-miles traveled, and help achieve Seattle's carbon neutrality goals, which are intricately related to creating land use patterns that allow people to walk, bike, and take transit rather than drive.

7

Leverage Funding and Collaboration

Align City planning initiatives and capital investments with federal Sustainable Communities priorities and funding guidelines to achieve maximum leverage of outside resources.

Create a City-managed Transit Communities Fund using appropriate funding sources that focus on providing essential and necessary elements of livability.

Use existing funding sources such as levies, matching grants, etc. to better focus resources towards transit communities.

Explore opportunities to implement joint development agreements (i.e. housing above a public facility), especially in proximity to light rail stations where land may be available for redevelopment following construction.

Ensure that surplus public land near transit stops is redeveloped in a manner that is consistent with the principles of transit oriented development.

Build effective partnerships between public agencies and the private sector to leverage funding for necessary investments supporting transit oriented communities.

Support establishing state level incentives such as tax increment financing.

Explore dedicated revenues to be used to create a planning and implementation fund for transit communities such as an impact fee based on trip generation similar to San Francisco, increasing the commercial parking tax, increasing meter revenue, and introducing congestion pricing, among others.

8 Prioritize Greatest Near-Term Priorities

The Commission looked at 41 transit communities and identified 14 that best met the Guidelines for Determining Near-Term Priorities as stated on the following page. Our recommendations include employing community-based planning tools most appropriate to the needs in these communities as defined in Using the Right Planning Tool section.





The Commission recommends that the City prioritize planning and implementation resources in these transit communities. We also recommend consideration of specific land-use changes along with the additional investments needed to provide each transit community with essential components that maximize livability.

14 Transit Communities with the Most Urgent Near-Term Planning Needs





ACTIVE AS OF 2010 *on-going planning & implementation*

 Broadway	Station Area Plan/Implementation Plan
 King Street Station	Station Area Plan
 Mt. Baker	Station Area Plan/Implementation Strategy
 Northgate	Urban Design Framework
 Othello	Station Area Plan
 South Lake Union	Urban Design Framework/Implementation Plan

IN THE QUEUE *recent or near-term planning efforts*

 Broadview	Corridor Plan/Infrastructure Plan
 Rainier Beach	Station Area Plan
 Roosevelt	Station Area Plan
 The Junction	Station Area Plan/Urban Design Framework

NEW PLANNING PRIORITIES

 Ballard	Station Area Plan
 Columbia City	Station Area Plan
 University District	Urban Center Plan/Urban Design Framework
 Uptown	Urban Center Plan

GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING NEAR-TERM PRIORITIES

The Commission recommends prioritizing planning and investments in 14 transit communities based on three overarching guidelines: land use readiness, transit readiness, and balancing factors.

Land Use Readiness

How important is this community in supporting our Urban Village Strategy? How desirable is the development environment (development pressure, market viability)? Is zoning well aligned with opportunities for place-making? Have recent or current planning efforts paved way for taking necessary actions to enhance this as a high priority transit community? How much development capacity exists?



Photo by Oran Viriyincy.

Transit Readiness

Is transit in place? When will it come online? What is the level and quality of transit service? (# of transit lines, headways, number of routes, frequency, and span of service) What are the opportunities based on mode? (Development typically has a stronger response to fixed modes)



Photo by Oran Viriyincy.

Balancing considerations

Are there greater leveraging opportunities with other development? Is there other funding availability (grants, contributions)? Is there community support for planning and implementation? Has the City made existing commitments? How do we balance social and geographic equity?



Photo courtesy of Capitol Hill Housing.

Using the Right Planning Tool

Recognizing that different neighborhoods have different needs, Seattle City planners have developed a set of tools that strategically address these diverse neighborhood needs and conditions. The Planning Commission applied this set of tools to address the varying needs of our priority transit communities.

Station Area Plan

More focused than a neighborhood plan, a Station Area Plan (SAP) uses land use and zoning recommendations to leverage land use and place-making opportunities close to high-capacity transit. Meant to supplement rather than replace an underlying plan, a SAP allows for strategic increases in the bulk and height of buildings and may implement key neighborhood plan recommendations such as creating a vibrant town center.

Community Development Strategy

This interdepartmental effort implements a range of community development objectives related to physical planning, economic development, human services or other issues. A Community Development Strategy typically has a short timeframe and may involve the Department of Planning and Development, Office of Economic Development, Office of Housing, Seattle Department of Transportation, and other City agencies.

Corridor Plan

This is a type of plan that connects existing neighborhood or station-area plans where there is a shared vital transportation link, or land use issues and opportunities. Without replacing underlying plans, a Corridor Plan focuses on establishing overall policy recommendations for shared issues, such as creating standards for pedestrian infrastructure around bus rapid transit stops along a transit corridor.

Urban Center Plan

This large-scale, integrated plan is anchored in an area's designation as a regional "urban center," or an area singled out to receive proportionately more population density and job growth. Urban Center Plans are organized around this vision and establish goals, policies and objectives with growth management as a clear priority. These plans typically build on existing neighborhood plans and are adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Urban Design Framework

This "bridge" tool connects broad goals and policies with specific physical planning recommendations, adding three-dimensional detail to neighborhood or station-area plans. An Urban Design Framework focuses on implementation and may make recommendations on urban design, land-use mix, street and public spaces, sustainable design, and more. Focused on integrating urban design with zoning and other land-use tools, an Urban Design Framework includes cross-departmental implementation of regulatory, capital, and programmatic actions.





The 14 Transit Communities with the Most Urgent and Important Planning Needs

The following pages detail the Commission's recommendations about the 14 transit communities with the most pressing needs. Recommendations include diagrams that illustrate key opportunities, frequency of transit service, and existing zoning as show in the legend below. The Commission also identifies key actions that describe some of the essential components needed in these neighborhoods.






Commissioners and City staff at one of the July 2010 work sessions.

LEGEND











-  Mixed Use Center
-  Mixed Use Neighborhood
-  Special District
-  Industrial Job Center

 key transit station

frequency of transit service

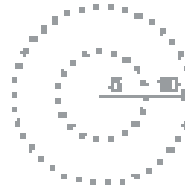
-  <15 min. existing
-  <15 min. planned
-  >15 min. existing

zoning & land uses

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
|  single family |  commercial |  civic buildings |
|  multifamily: lowrise |  institutional |  open space |
|  multifamily: mid/highrise |  industrial |  waterbodies |
|  mixed use | | |

-  gateways / opportunities
-  bike connections
-  pedestrian connections
-  key pedestrian frontage
-  key potential redevelopment
-  key intersection

approximate walkshed (in minutes)



Broadway

Broadway is a successful transit community and significant new transit service will begin soon: the First Hill Streetcar will begin service in 2013 and light rail service is scheduled to begin in 2016. This area already has excellent bus service with high ridership and boasts the lowest per capita auto ownership in the city. Residents avidly walk and bike in this dense, diverse, active urban neighborhood. Citywide and regional destinations include Seattle Central Community College, Seattle University, and Cal Anderson Park. Housing serves a broad range of households. The Commission recommends a Station Area/Implementation Plan.



KEY ACTIONS

Work with Sound Transit to ensure that transit-oriented development at the Capitol Hill light rail station and nearby staging areas is well integrated with the community.

Help Sound Transit prioritize projects for transit-oriented development.

Modify zoning to increase density and building height, particularly in the immediate vicinity of the Capitol Hill station. Use inclusionary and incentive zoning to derive benefit from additional height allowance.

Address and explore livability issues including open space, flexible ground-floor commercial and retail space, easier permitting for food carts and street cafes, festival streets and woonerfs, and on-street bike corrals.

Improve pedestrian connections to Pike/Pine, First Hill, and downtown. Improve the quality of east-west sidewalk connections to transit on Broadway.

Coordinate with Seattle Central Community College's Major Institution Master Plan update to open up the frontage on Broadway.

King Street

King Street Station is the most transit-rich place in Washington state. Intercity passenger rail, commuter rail, light rail, numerous bus routes, and ferry service all exist in close proximity. Its position at the nexus between the Downtown Commercial Core, Pioneer Square, the Chinatown-International District, the Central Waterfront, two sports stadiums and the southern industrial areas offers high growth opportunities for multiple business and development market segments. The Commission recommends a multi-modal, multi-nodal Station Area Plan that will help integrate transit service, urban design, and implementation actions throughout the area.



KEY ACTIONS

Continue coordination of various development plans, including Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement, Central Waterfront, Yesler Terrace, South Downtown, and the North Lot, with specific emphasis on networked public open space and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

Use the planned First Hill Streetcar station to catalyze further enhancements to the pedestrian environment, utilizing matching funds where possible.

Establish a clear, consistent wayfinding system to help people navigate between transit modes, and to and from major draws.

Implement the South Downtown zoning changes to enable renewed investment.

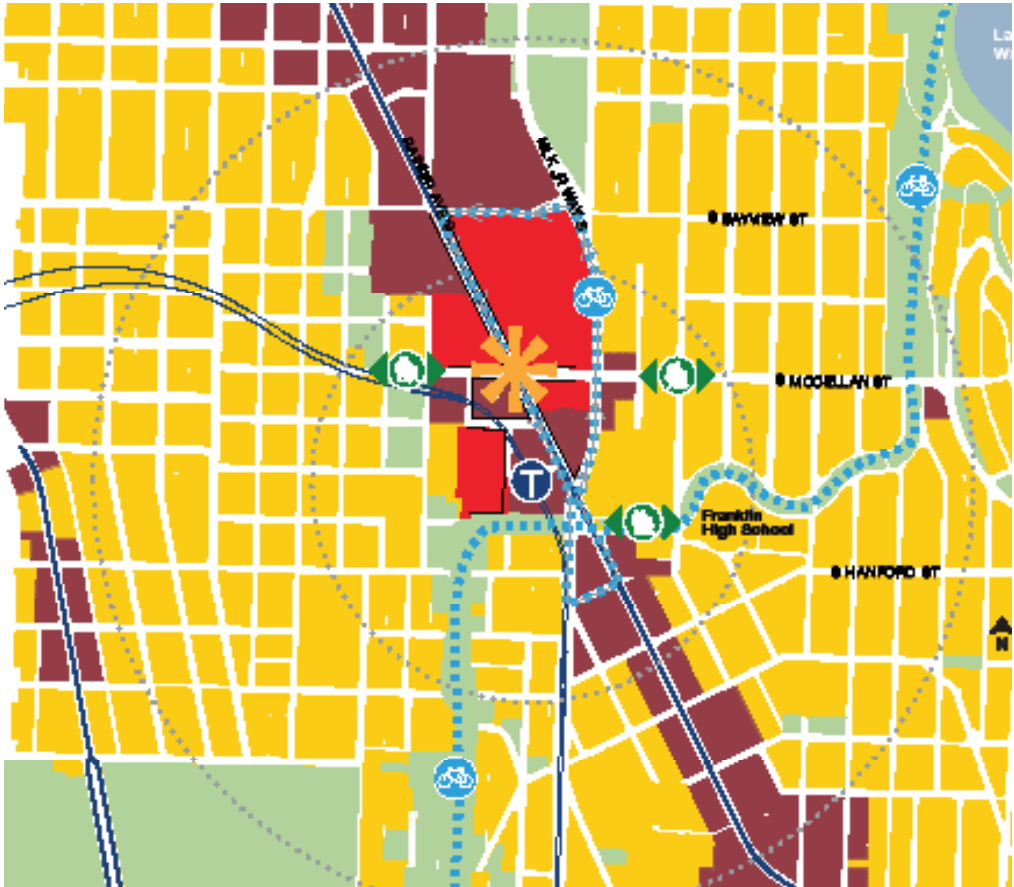
Preserve the cultural diversity of the International District, the historic character of Pioneer Square, and the affordable artists' lofts that exist throughout these neighborhoods.

Increase the number and type of households in Pioneer Square and Yesler Terrace.

Conduct an urban design plan to unify the open space between the King Street and Union Station buildings. Ensure sidewalk and streetscape standards encourage walking and biking.

Mt Baker

The Mt Baker light rail station opened in 2009 and the East Link Rainier Station is scheduled to open in 2020. This transit service presents a tremendous opportunity to create a vibrant Mixed Use Center that could support a strong residential and employment base. Many improvements are necessary in order to maximize the transit investment. The Commission recommends implementing the North Rainier Work Plan.



KEY ACTIONS

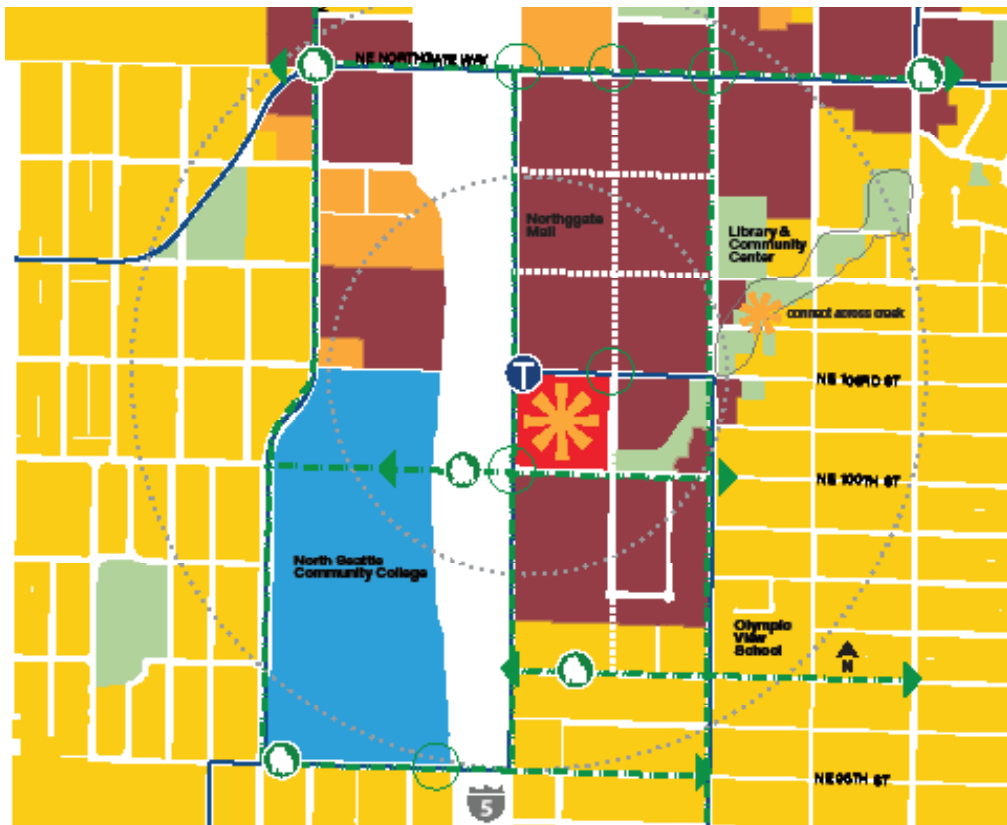
Adopt North Rainier Neighborhood Plan update zoning concept B, which includes rezones with appropriate height limits to help create a Mixed Use Center.

Identify property owners interested in creating catalytic development and explore public/private partnerships that might create jobs and improve the pedestrian environment.

Build on and implement the neighborhood plan update by improving and expanding connections to the Mt Baker Station and the planned Rainier Station; in particular, improve pedestrian connections to Franklin High School, Somali Community Services, Seattle Lighthouse for the Blind, and the residential Mt Baker neighborhood to the east. Improve connections to and usability of the Cheasty Greenspace.

Northgate

Northgate is a burgeoning transit community success story where a 1950s auto-dependent area is being transformed into a mixed-use, transit-rich community. A light rail station is scheduled to open in 2020 adjacent to the existing transit center that will connect to downtown Seattle and SeaTac Airport and eventually north to Lynnwood. A new library and community center were constructed to the east of the transit center and mall, separated (and connected) by a pedestrian-friendly 5th Avenue. Thornton Creek is now day-lighted and surrounded by over 500 new housing units adjacent. With the support of public investment, revitalization continues to take place in this urban center that is quickly morphing into an important transit community. The Commission recommends finalizing the Urban Design Framework.



KEY ACTIONS

Continue implementing the Northgate Urban Design Framework and create guidelines for the Northgate Way corridor.

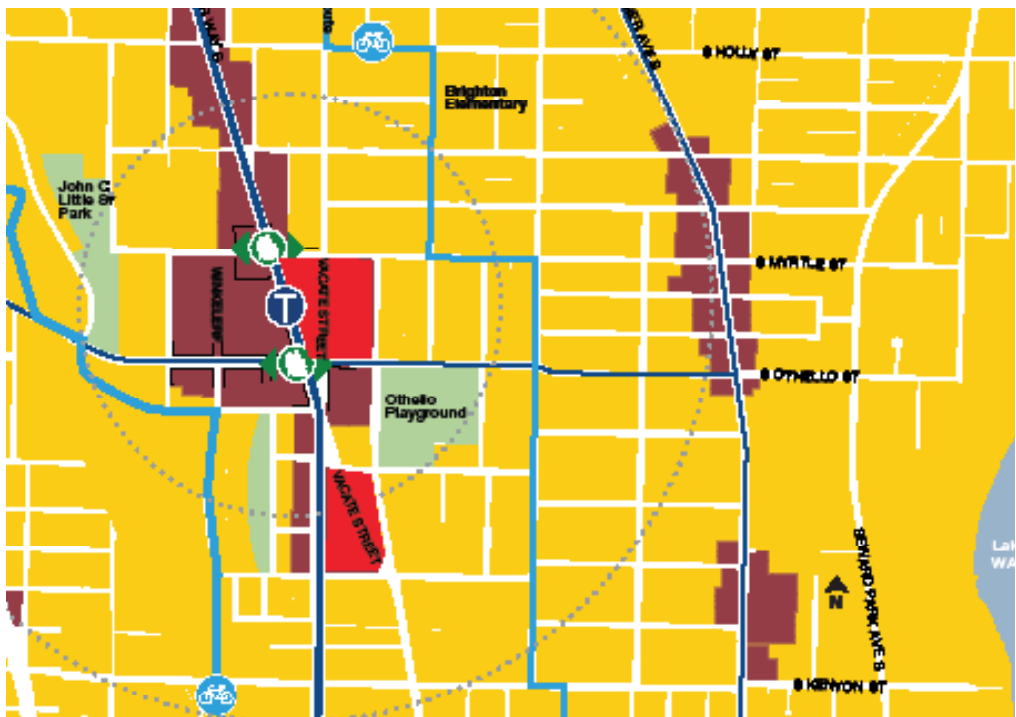
Create pedestrian and bicycle improvements that connect the east and west sides of I-5 to provide better access to the transit center, particularly for North Seattle Community College.

Ensure the relationship between the bus facility and future light rail station is pedestrian focused and transfers from bus to rail are seamless. Look at ways to better connect the transit center to the mall.

Encourage a variety of housing types near the Northgate Transit Center, including housing for families.

Othello

Known as one of the most diverse neighborhoods in the nation, Othello includes the recently redeveloped NewHolly campus; the expansive Othello Park, the target of current revitalization planning and funding and adjacent development; and a panoply of independent, ethnic businesses. The Othello Link light rail station opened in 2009, presenting a great opportunity to enhance the vibrancy of this diverse Mixed Use Neighborhood. The neighborhood plan update provides a blueprint for the future of the neighborhood. Continued implementation of the recent station area plan, with careful attention to maintaining the character of the existing business district, will help ensure future growth includes current residents and preserves the rich ethnic and cultural fabric. The Commission recommends implementation of the Othello Work Plan.



KEY ACTIONS

Adopt Othello Neighborhood Plan
Update zoning concept B, which includes rezones with appropriate height limits that would help enhance this Mixed Use Neighborhood.

Leverage funding opportunities at Othello Park to help connect the park, the light rail station, and surrounding neighborhoods, enhancing safety and the pedestrian environment.

Encourage publicly funded mixed-use developments that use new commercial space models to increase affordability.

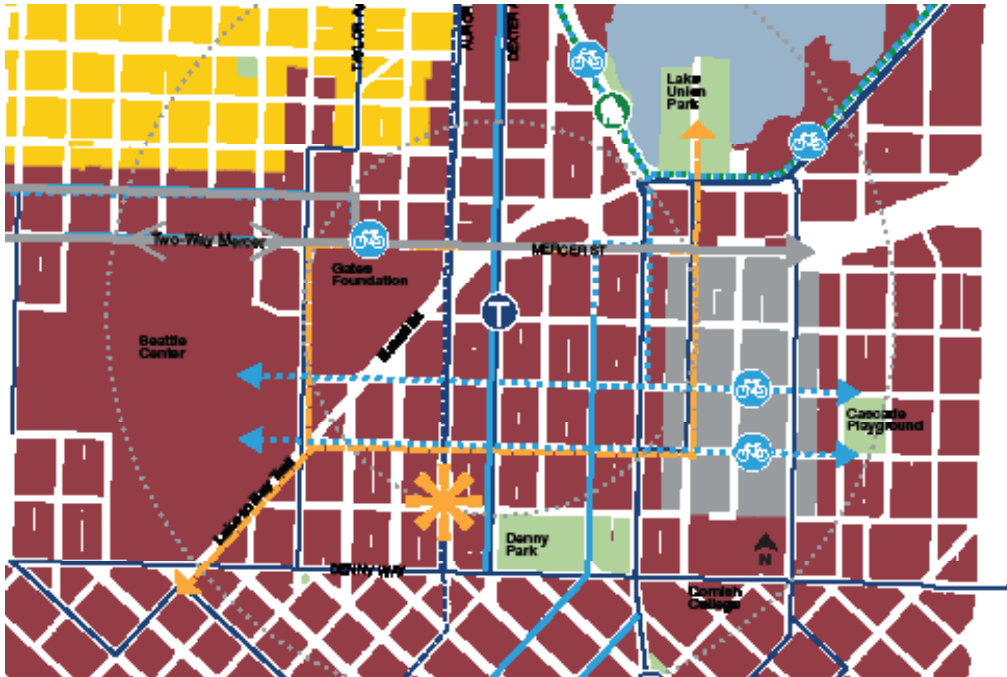
Improve pedestrian and bicycle access to and around the light rail station, particularly east-west connections between Beacon Hill to the west and Seward Park to Lake Washington.

Draft policy and strategies that provide affordable commercial space and work to preserve the cultural diversity of businesses and their regional base.

Partner with Sound Transit to develop affordable housing on their surplus properties.

South Lake Union

South Lake Union is a burgeoning employment center focused on biotech, medical research, and internet commerce industries. This transit community is also a growing urban residential neighborhood and has been a focus of policy level planning for a number of years. Development pressure and market desirability are likely to remain relatively high. Transformational momentum has started with the addition of the new park, the South Lake Union Streetcar, and the Mercer Corridor project. The Commission recommends the development of an Urban Design Framework/Implementation Plan.



KEY ACTIONS

Use the urban design framework to coordinate SR-99 and Mercer Corridor projects, Thomas Street redesign project, Lake-to-Bay trail, and the buffered bike lanes proposed on Dexter. Follow up with appropriate rezones and a strong implementation plan.

Promote high-density development around walkability and livability.

Improve streetcar service with shorter headways. Connect route to the First Hill Streetcar once implemented.

Improve east-west connections to Seattle Center, Uptown, and Lake Union.

Consider narrowing 8th and 9th Avenues, Thomas and John Streets and widening sidewalks to enhance public realm. Make better use of Dexter's wide right-of-way.

Encourage development of workforce housing and family-sized units.

Install essential infrastructure including community center, library, senior center, daycare, and schools, public plazas and open space, and mature street trees.

Develop an open-space plan that provides for public plazas, mature street trees, pocket parks and kid-friendly areas. Consider city-owned land for this purpose.

Broadview

RapidRide is scheduled to begin service along Aurora Ave N in 2013. Current land uses and zoning could be amended to create a transit community around this service. More households have moved here in recent years, yet basic infrastructure has not kept pace. Suburban-scale big box retail draws shoppers from Shoreline and Snohomish County; the large-scale blocks make it difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to get around the area. There is a sizable senior population. Ingraham High School is just over one-quarter mile away from the planned RapidRide stations. The Commission recommends the preparation of a Corridor Plan.



KEY ACTIONS

Improve connections for pedestrians and cyclists with bike lanes and sidewalks that link the residential neighborhoods to transit.

Implement traffic calming and road dieting, and build accessible sidewalks with curb bulbs and protected pedestrian crosswalks. Reduce roadway crossing distances for pedestrians through curb bulbs, protected medians, and other measures.

Improve wayfinding between parks and the Interurban Trail.

Create an urban design plan to break up “super blocks” and improve pedestrian connections.

Explore rezones to Neighborhood Commercial zoning (currently Commercial 1 and 2), especially along Aurora Avenue.

Improve and maintain regional connections to Northgate Urban Center, North Seattle Community College, City of Shoreline, and Shoreline Community College.

Increase landscaping along Aurora Ave N to improve corridor aesthetic, safety, tree canopy, and air quality. Coordinate Seattle Public Utilities roadside stormwater infrastructure improvements with sidewalk projects.

Rainier Beach

The southern gateway to Seattle, Rainier Beach is an active and culturally diverse community with access to Lake Washington, several parks and Kubota Garden, a vibrant Community Center and new public school complex. It is a community with a growing family population. Bisected by Rainier Avenue S and missing a focused transit center, much work could be done to create a vibrant Mixed Use Neighborhood that maximizes the investment in the light rail station, which opened in 2009. Although there are many successful businesses Rainier Beach lacks a community hub and walkability along major streets is unpleasant. Concept-level station area planning recommendations were approved in 2000 and a new effort to update the neighborhood plan is currently underway. The Commission recommends that a Station Area Plan be prepared for this neighborhood.



KEY ACTIONS

Transform Henderson into a boulevard that connects the light rail station with Lake Washington and creates a pleasant and safe environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Improve east-west connections to the light rail station, particularly focusing on connections to Chief Sealth Trail, the community center, and other parks, schools, and open space.

Improve connectivity between buses and the light rail station.

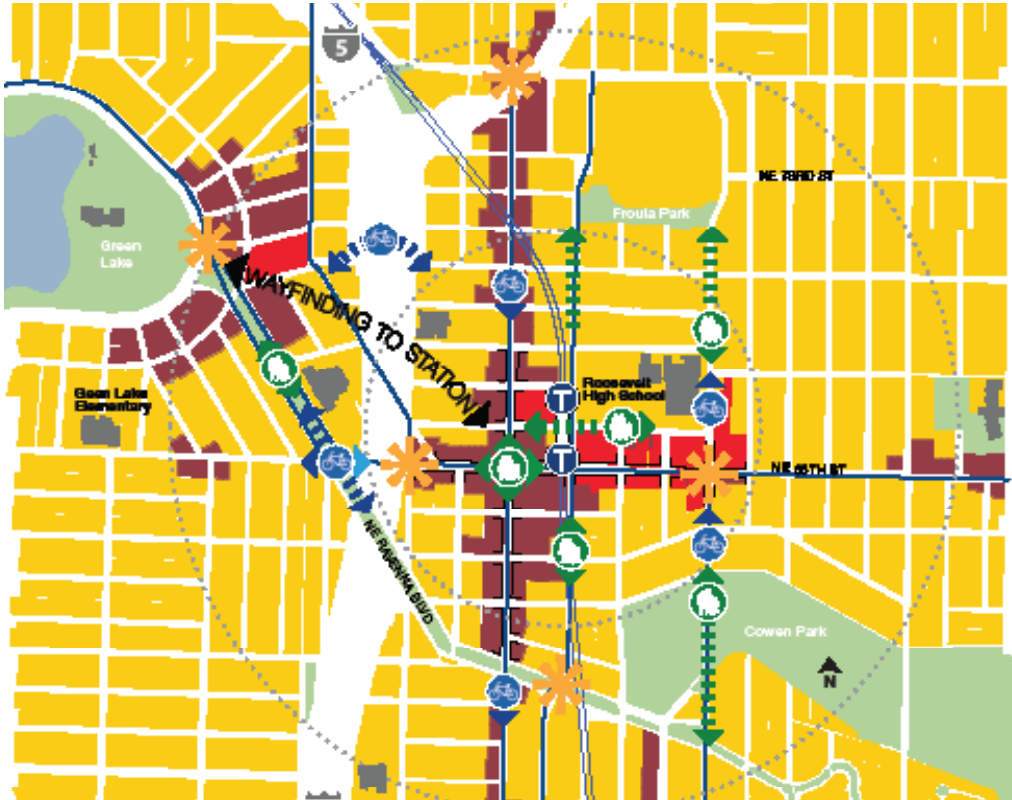
Provide better connections between transit, community facilities/schools, and retail areas to create both a strong heart to the community and safe pedestrian and bicycle routes.

Increase residential density around the station and along Rainier Avenue S to create a town center.

Support SDOT's investment in the Rainier Avenue bus corridor to improve speed and reliability.

Roosevelt

Updated goals and policies for the Roosevelt Neighborhood Plan were adopted in 2006 and community members support focusing new mixed use development around the light rail station that is scheduled to open in 2020. The Commission recommends a Station Area Plan that implements the goals and policies of the neighborhood plan update.



KEY ACTIONS

Build on neighborhood interest around station area planning and identify key development opportunities, particularly at light rail construction staging areas.

Create a pedestrian wayfinding system between the light rail station, bus service, and the business district.

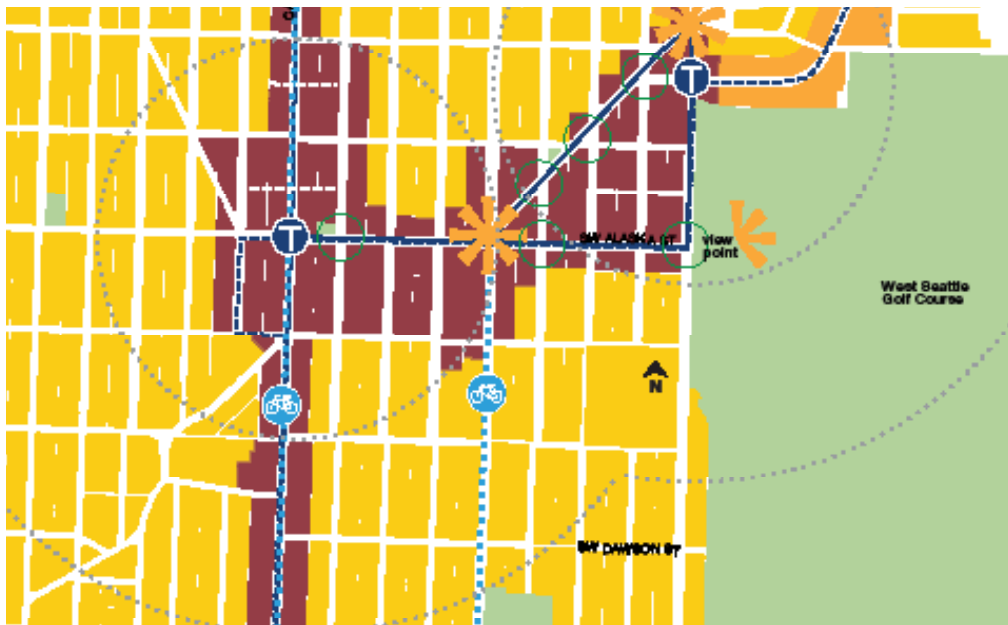
Continue to work with Sound Transit to ensure that transit-oriented development at the Roosevelt station and nearby staging areas is well integrated with the community. Consider joint development of a mixed-use project in the above-ground portion of the transit station.

Improve pedestrian and bicycle access throughout the business district, with strong connections to the light rail station. Improve north-south bicycle facilities on Roosevelt Way NE and 12th Avenue NE and east-west bicycle facilities on NE 65th Street to provide station access. Create pedestrian connections between Roosevelt High School and the two planned Roosevelt Station entrances.

Consider rechanneling NE 65th Street between 20th and 12th Avenues NE to better accommodate pedestrian and bike infrastructure and calm traffic.

The Junction

The Junction provides a great opportunity to create a model transit community. The area is an important gateway to West Seattle for people on bikes, transit, and cars. Redevelopment potential, in combination with the future RapidRide stations in the Triangle area, warrants a station area planning effort that focuses on right of way improvements, urban design, zoning and land use particularly for the area in between the two nodes. There are significant opportunities to provide mixed use, compact development bringing more diverse housing, a variety of uses, more jobs and more walkability near transit. This will also strengthen its role as the center of West Seattle. The Commission recommends an Urban Design Framework.



KEY ACTIONS

Consider zoning to allow building heights above 85 feet close to the transit stops, revisit auto-oriented zoning, and encourage multifamily.

Develop a streetscape concept plan to preserve breathing room as development occurs.

Preparation of Triangle Specific Design Review Guidelines will ensure that the design of adjacent land uses encourages a lively, walkable, and safe environment for pedestrians.

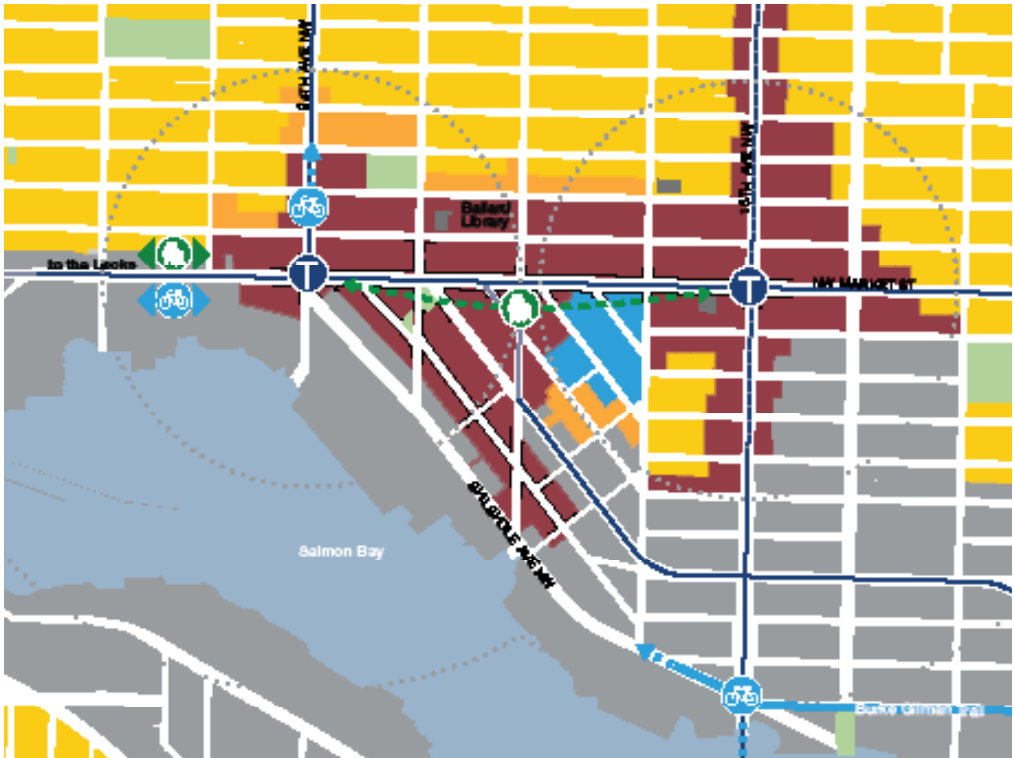
Provide for safer crossing and bicycle routes, more trees, wider sidewalks, traffic calming, and better lighting.

Update the West Seattle Junction Design Guidelines to create stronger retail frontages and allow for well-landscaped sidewalks and connections between the Triangle and the retail core on California Avenue SW.

Place special emphasis on pedestrian crossings at the intersection of 35th Avenue SW with SW Alaska Street and SW Avalon Way.

Ballard

Ballard has exceeded residential and job growth targets. Metro Transit's RapidRide will begin service on 15th Avenue NW in 2012. The historic district has a vibrant street life that supports job growth and small businesses. The Art Walk and farmers' market are popular and the library is a strong community focal point. Ballard is a community for all ages and is especially attractive for young families with children. Mini-parks are well used. These strong place-making features provide a palette on which to optimize this important Mixed Use Center by enhancing transit opportunities and resources.



KEY ACTIONS

Treat the RapidRide stop at 15th Avenue NW and NW Market Street as a “station area” and create a vibrant and inviting transit node through increased housing, jobs, and retail businesses along with essential bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements. Connect this area to the “heart” of Ballard to the west.

Review Commercial zoning along 15th Avenue NW in the vicinity of the RapidRide station to ensure nearby land use is pedestrian friendly.

Provide wayfinding around the RapidRide station that directs pedestrians and bicyclists to destinations including downtown Seattle, the University of Washington, Ballard parks and waterfront, and historic Ballard.

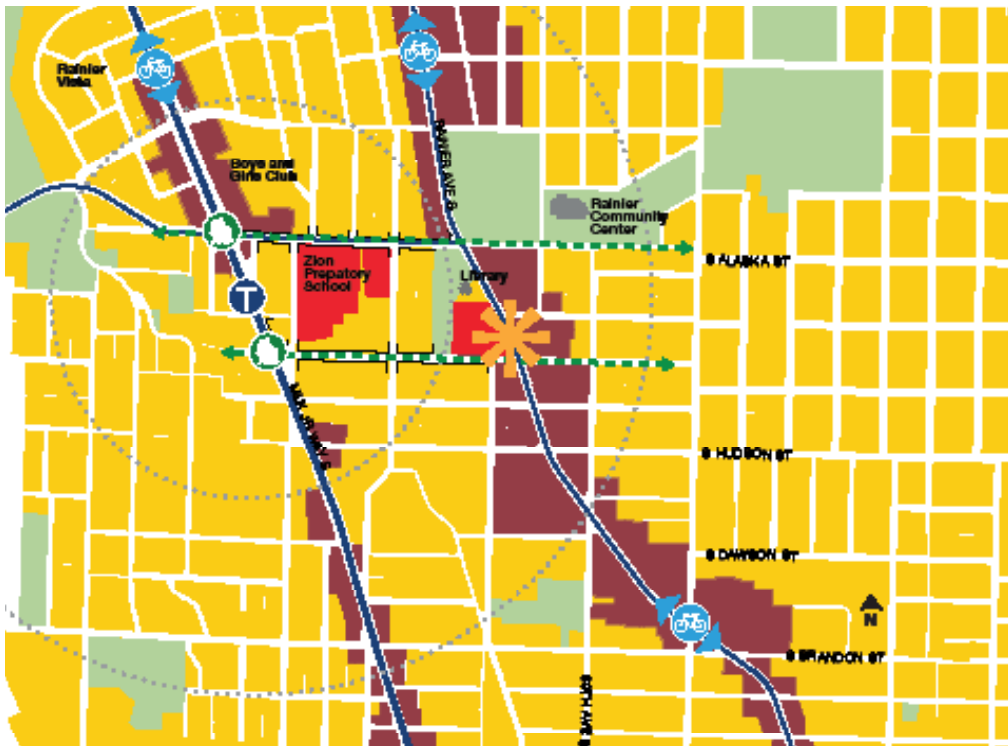
Focus incentive zoning programs and other intentional housing efforts on workforce and family housing.

Protect the nearby industrial jobs base by preserving the industrial zoned land.

Complete the Burke-Gilman Trail.

Columbia City

Columbia City is the revitalized business and arts center of Southeast Seattle and a landmark historic district. Adjacent affordable housing, several area schools, and a booming farmers' market help support a growing, diverse community. The Route 7 bus service on Rainier Avenue has one of the highest ridership routes in Metro's system. Though Link light rail service began in 2009, more could be done to help residents access transit and physically connect the restaurants and shops with the transit station. The Commission recommends building on the 2000 /2001 Columbia City/Edmunds Station Area Plan with a new station area plan that emphasizes improving connections between the light rail station, the Columbia City business district, and Hillman City to the southeast.



KEY ACTIONS

Improve east-west connections to light rail, particularly on S Alaska and S Edmunds Streets. Establish a clear wayfinding system that guides pedestrians and bicyclists between the light rail station, business district, library, Rainier Community Center, and other key activities/locations.

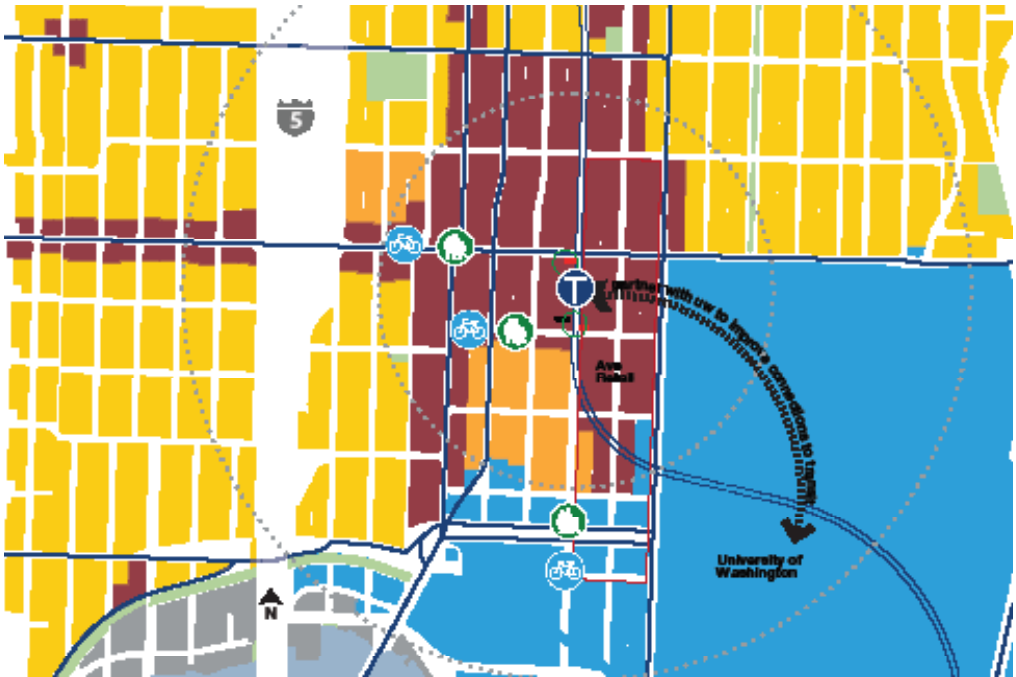
Identify potential rezones and explore public-private partnerships to redevelop surplus Zion Preparatory School land.

Explore options to reduce automobile speed along Rainier Avenue S through the Columbia City and Hillman City business districts and increase accessibility and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Continue to implement SDOT's investment in the Rainier Avenue bus corridor to improve speed and reliability. Augment transit service with improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

University District

The University District is one of the few Urban Centers in Seattle that has not undergone a significant planning effort since the initial neighborhood plan was adopted in 1998. In 2016, the Husky Stadium light rail station is scheduled to open and in 2020, the Brooklyn Station is scheduled to open. The Commission recommends preparation of an Urban Center Plan and Urban Design Framework.



KEY ACTIONS

Consider an early 'Planned Action EIS' process to facilitate transit-oriented development at the Brooklyn light rail station site, focusing on key urban design features.

Ensure redevelopment adjacent to the Brooklyn station includes active street edges and connections to station.

Require street-level urban space on the redevelopment sites in return for density incentives; combine this space with the two station entrance plazas to create public squares/plazas.

Create a more connected pedestrian and bicycle network, and supporting infrastructure (bike storage, etc.), throughout the neighborhood to increase access to transit.

Reconfigure Brooklyn Avenue and NE 43rd Street with wider sidewalks and bicycle facilities that increase non-motorized access to the station.

Incorporate small plazas, pocket parks, wide sidewalks, street trees, and active street edges to promote pedestrian activity.

Use parking policy to encourage transit use and consider using parking revenue to fund transit amenities such as shelters and signage.

Coordinate UW operated campus transportation (shuttles/circulators, parking lot shuttles etc.,) with buses and light rail to improve access for transit users.

Uptown

Uptown has experienced considerable growth and will continue to undergo significant investment and change. Projects include the realignment of the street grids around the SR 99 tunnel north portal, two-way West Mercer and Roy Streets, and the Thomas Street overpass connection to the waterfront. RapidRide service is scheduled to begin in 2012. The Seattle Center has a new master plan. The Gates Foundation is adding over 2000 new jobs to the area. The Planning Commission recommends an Urban Center Plan that addresses mobility, housing opportunities, and other essential components.



KEY ACTIONS

Work closely with WSDOT and SDOT to design new street grids, signalization, and streetscapes that coordinate with new bus service, streetcar planning and bike/pedestrian connections.

Work with Metro and DPD on good placemaking strategies that enhance the community and support ridership.

Develop major bike infrastructure and facilities including the Lake-to-Bay Trail and Uptown Loop Trail.

Increase pedestrian infrastructure at Queen Anne Avenue and First Avenue North.

Integrate Seattle Center back into the heart of the neighborhood with porous edges, streetscape, and walkability.

Create better transportation connections to and from Seattle Center.

Explore new zoning and land use strategies in the Uptown Triangle that capitalize on the area's proximity to both transit and downtown.

Consider multifamily housing around Seattle Center and consider family and senior needs in area housing.



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