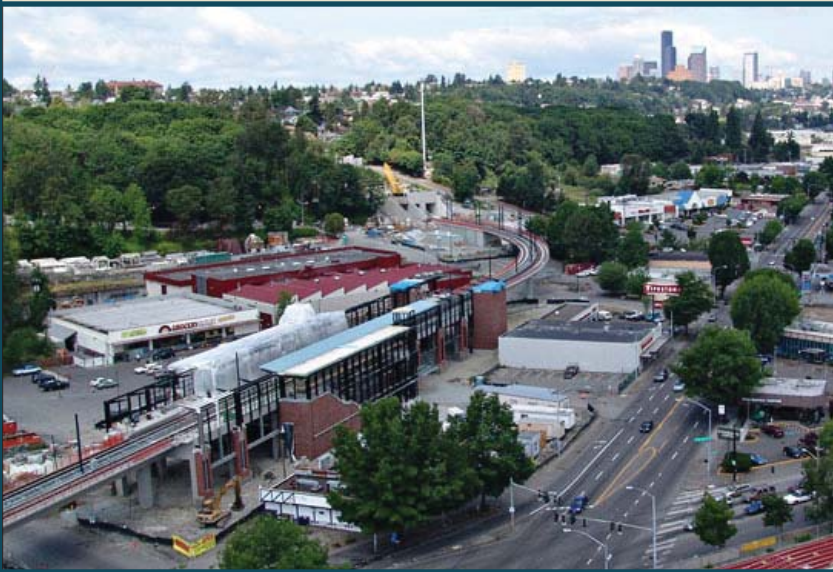


# MOUNT BAKER TOWN CENTER

## Urban Design Framework



**October 2011**



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Concept from 1999  
Neighborhood Plan.

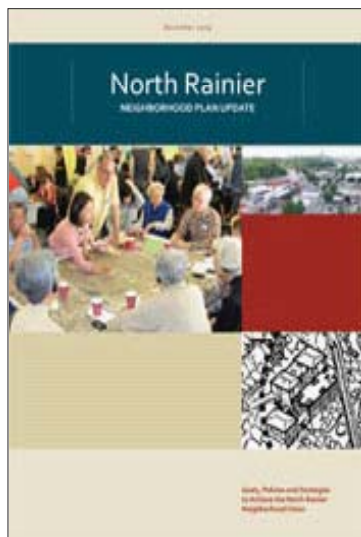
## INTRODUCTION

Since 1999, many members of the North Rainier community worked together to create the vision for the Mount Baker Town Center through a series of planning processes beginning with the *North Rainier Neighborhood Plan* (February 1999). A recent update to the plan (January 2010) identified a need to look more closely at the Town Center. The purpose of this Urban Design Framework is to guide the future work and investment of the community, developers and the City to make that vision a reality. It identifies the existing conditions and specific planning and design strategies necessary to achieve the community's vision.



Community members at a North  
Rainier planning workshop.

The Urban Design Framework focuses on the area referred to in previous plans as the North Rainier Town Center, the North Rainier Town Center and the McClellan Station Area Overlay District, a special zone to encourage the development of a diverse, mixed-use community with a pedestrian orientation close to transit. The City intends to change the name of the zoning district surrounding the Mount Baker station to the Mount Baker Station Area Overlay District. For the purposes of this Urban Design Framework, the Town Center and the Mount Baker Station Area Overlay District are considered the same area.



2010 Neighborhood Plan Update.



## Mount Baker Town Center – The Vision

The *North Rainier Neighborhood Plan*, adopted by City Council through ordinance number 119671, envisions “an interweaving of people of various backgrounds who live and work in a culturally and economically diverse area... The retail core is strong and still maintains its ethnic roots. Business, light industrial, and high-tech job opportunities provide welcome employment for the entire Puget Sound region.” It goes on to say:

*“The Town Center is envisioned as the heart of the neighborhood, the place where people will gather, shop, stroll and enjoy community life. It will be the location where the greatest commercial and mixed-use density will occur, where transit connects people to the region, and where public places and open spaces help create a sense of identity and welcome. The increased density will support a safe environment from the volume of people engaged in a mix of activities.*

*To create a thriving, safe, attractive, pedestrian- and transit-friendly residential/commercial center which serves as a gateway to Southeast Seattle; supports the residents and businesses currently in Southeast Seattle; and reflects/ supports the cultural and economic diversity of Rainier Valley.*

*“A Town Center that concentrates housing, commercial uses, services and living-wage employment opportunities; that is well served by transit and non-motorized travel options; and that is well designed and attractive to pedestrians.*

*A vibrant business district that serves North Rainier residents and is a destination shopping area with stores that serve the greater Rainier Valley.”*



A Vibrant Walkable Town Center.



Claremont apartments on Rainier Avenue S.



LINK Light Rail Station. © iiltnemo via Flickr.



Mount Baker Park Beach.  
© Seattle.roamer via Flickr.





Town Center/ Mount Baker Station Area Overlay District.



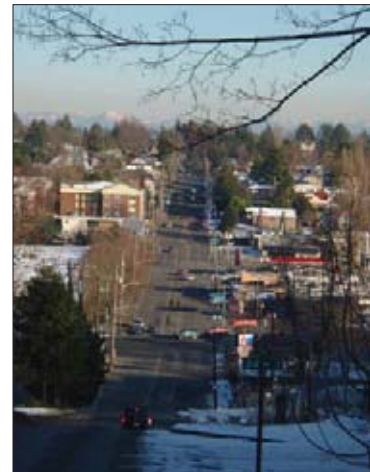
## Mount Baker Town Center - Today

The Mount Baker Town Center lies at the north end of the floor of the Rainier Valley, south of I-90 and just three miles south of downtown Seattle. It is surrounded by the primarily single family neighborhoods of Beacon Hill and Mount Baker. LINK Light Rail Station lies at the confluence of two major roadways, Rainier Avenue S. and Martin Luther King Jr. Way S. (MLK Jr. Way S.). Each of these arterials carries over 30,000 average vehicle trips per day. Two historic Olmsted boulevards, Cheasty Boulevard S. and Mount Baker Boulevard S., converge but do not connect at this location, but link the Town Center to significant open spaces and recreational resources.

Historically, the area has been a hub of commercial activity. The commercial core of the neighborhood is currently characterized by a number of auto-oriented businesses and older strip development. It is surrounded by more sparsely developed residential and open space areas, and is bounded to the west by the steeply-sloped Cheasty Greenbelt.



Existing “auto-oriented” pattern of streets and buildings.



View of the Cascades from McClellan and 24th.



View north towards downtown Seattle.



Franklin High School.



Town Center Action Team.

## Achieving the Vision

In May 2010, North Rainier community members formed a Town Center Action Team to assist in the implementation of goals, strategies and actions identified in the *North Rainier Neighborhood Plan*. In September 2010, this team met to further define the details and generate ideas on how to change the physical form of the neighborhood to make the Town Center more vital, walkable and economically successful. This document, the result of those discussions, is a blueprint for cementing community goals, coordinating private and public action, and prioritizing capital investment decisions.

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



An example of new development with greenspace amenity.

**Create a “main street” shopping district** on Rainier Avenue S. and S. McClellan Street (Figure 1 - yellow area).

**Create a walkable, bikable Town Center** with a complete network of sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure.

**Reinforce the identity of the Town Center** with gateways and landmarks.

**Catalyze change** with the redevelopment of opportunity sites, especially those fronting the prime retail corner (Figure 1 - orange circle).

**Leverage light rail** to create a transit accessible shopping destination for the greater Rainier Valley.



LINK Light Rail has improved access to and from the Town Center. © Oran Viriyincy via Flickr.

**Connect the Town Center to neighborhoods and open spaces** with complete streets, historic boulevards and uphill pedestrian connections.





**Figure 1 — Opportunities**





**Figure 2 – Concept Plan for the Town Center**

The transformation of the Town Center will occur incrementally over a long period of time. Figure 2 represents one illustration of how these ideas might play out through public and private investment. It shows how large building footprints and surface parking can be replaced with a more human-scaled development and public realm improvements. The Urban Design Framework recommendations that follow will elaborate on these big ideas and set the stage for new development over time. More detailed “design guidelines,” still to be developed, will guide future private development proposals.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

The Urban Design Framework recommendations are organized as follows:

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

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



Retail with weather protection for pedestrians.



A sharrow—a lane shared by car and bikes.



Bio-swale in the High Point neighborhood.





Lowe's is the largest opportunity site.



A supermarket designed for a pedestrian-oriented urban street.



Open space as part of new commercial development.

## Land Use and Built Form

### Existing

The current pattern of land use and built form of the Town Center exhibits a suburban character—auto-oriented, single-story commercial buildings set on large blocks with deep setbacks and parking between buildings and the sidewalk. As a retail and service destination, it draws people who patronize both independent, culturally diverse businesses, as well as chain stores. Service retail and light industrial uses, an important source of local jobs, are scattered among the retail stores. Institutional and public uses, such as LINK Light Rail Station, the Transit Center and Franklin High School, generate pedestrian traffic. Existing open space within the Town Center is limited the steeply-sloped Cheasty Greenbelt and LINK Light Rail Station plaza.

### Recommendations

Creating a vibrant Town Center will require a significant change in land use and urban form. Proposed zoning, over time will allow auto-oriented commercial will give way to a richer mix of uses while retaining existing light industrial uses. Built form will become more urban—continuous street walls, taller buildings built to the sidewalk. These changes will bring more people and urban vitality to the Town Center.

- **Main Street Retail** — Focus pedestrian-oriented “main street” retail on Rainier Avenue S. and S. McClellan Street to create a place for shopping and eating, and meeting friends and neighbors.
- **Single Family** — Transition selected parcels of existing single-family residential uses adjacent to the Town Center to multifamily residential or mixed-use development.
- **Opportunity Sites** — Encourage redevelopment of “opportunity sites” (e.g. Lowe’s and QFC) to mixed-use development that includes a high quality pedestrian environment, retains existing retail uses, but also includes some affordable places to live and run a business.

- **Outdoor Retail** — Develop an open air, multicultural market at the station or in new open space, to provide affordable commercial space and enliven public space. The market could be designed with stalls or mobile carts that are driven away at the end of each day.
- **Building Height** — In general, increase allowable height from 65 feet to 125 feet on sites fronting Rainier Avenue S. where the community has determined additional height is acceptable. (See Zoning p.22 for more detail.)
- **Building Setbacks and Massing** — In general, establish upper level setbacks along Rainier Avenue S. and S. McClellan Street to preserve the views to Mount Rainier and provide more light and air. Larger setbacks may be desired in some locations to maximize sun in new open space.



Example of a mixed-use building with Upper Level setback.



A unique bike rack as part of the streetscape.

*Use mobile vending units (vending carts and delivery vans) to provide goods and services for which there might not be enough demand to support a freestanding business and to augment in-store sales.*

*—Retail Development Strategy for Rainier Valley, December 2009*



Mobile Street Vending



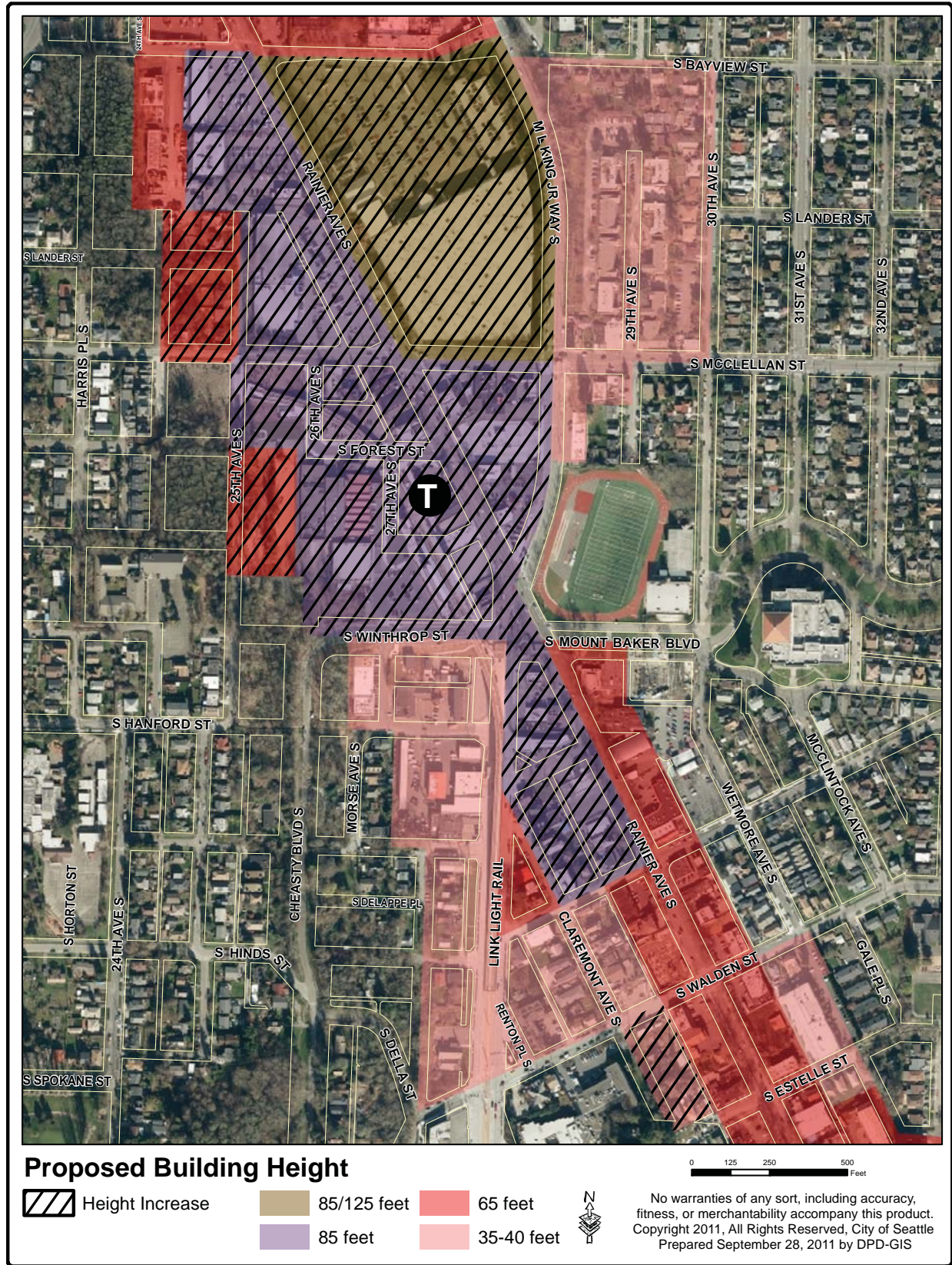


Figure 3 – Proposed Building Height

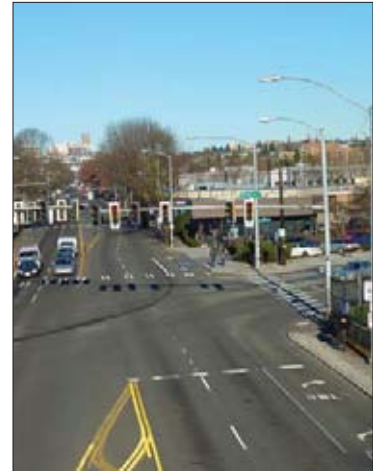


## Circulation

### Existing

The Town Center is intersected by three arterials (Rainier Avenue S., MLK Jr. Way S. and S. McClellan Street) that carry high volumes of traffic. Rainier Avenue S., also State Road 167, carries the largest volume of traffic. The designated “major truck street” to transport freight through the area includes portions of Rainier Avenue S. and MLK Jr. Way S. These two arterials intersect at an odd angle making it difficult for pedestrians to cross safely, and providing a poor level of service for vehicles. Two historic Olmsted boulevards—Cheasty Boulevard S. and Mount Baker Boulevard S.—were designed to connect, but are interrupted by this intersection.

In general, many elements that support a good walking or biking environment are lacking— things like wide sidewalks, short pedestrian crossings, street trees, buffers, bike lanes or sharrows. A pedestrian bridge, constructed to improve safety, is only lightly used. Connectivity between Beacon Hill and the Town Center is constrained by the steep topography—only S. McClellan Street connects down the slope. Ample transit in the Town Center—light rail and buses—connects residents and businesses to other Rainier Valley communities and downtown Seattle. The Town Center is also a transit transfer point, and many commuters must cross busy Rainier Avenue S. to make connections. However, pedestrian crossings along Rainier Avenue S. are too far apart, especially near the Light Rail Station and the Transit Center.



The intersection of Rainier Avenue S. and MLK Jr. Way S. is challenging for pedestrians.



Pedestrian bridge at the intersection of MLK Jr. Way S. and Rainier Avenue S.



LINK Light Rail has improved access to and from the Town Center. © Oran Viriyincy via Flickr.



Example of an improved pedestrian connection uphill.



A traffic calming curb bulb narrows the right-of-way at intersections.



Green bike lane and bike box make intersections safer.

## Recommendations

Creating a vibrant, walkable Town Center requires retrofitting the auto-focused arterials into streets that accommodate all users — complete streets. One promising option, the “Bowtie Traffic Concept”, would change Rainier Ave S. and MLK Way Jr. Way S. (between S. Bayview Street and S. Bryon Street) from two-way streets to one-way streets, a move that would make room for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

**Accommodate all travel modes on arterials.** Continue to evaluate the “Bowtie Traffic Concept” —a one-way street couplet that accommodates bikes and pedestrians, eliminates the skewed intersection, and allows Cheasty Boulevard S. and Mount Baker Boulevard S. to connect. Pedestrian crossings along Rainier Avenue S. become easier, especially near the station. This concept will require additional analysis, comparison with other options in discussion with the community, businesses and property owners.

**Provide bicycle infrastructure.** Implement the recommendations of the *Seattle Bicycle Master Plan* to add new bicycle infrastructure (lanes, sharrows, signage) within the Town Center that is part of the citywide bicycle route system.

**Make the sidewalk network complete and safe.** Widen sidewalks on the three major arterials to 9 to 12 feet. Implement the recommendations of the *Seattle Pedestrian Master Plan* and the *Southeast Seattle Transportation Study*—fill gaps, widen, add buffers, remove obstructions, use curb bulbs, medians, pavement markings to allow pedestrians to move along and across arterials safely.

**Analyze the feasibility of installing mid-block pedestrian crossings where blocks are long.** Use mid-block crossings to connect LINK Light Rail Station and the Transit Center, and break down the scale of large blocks. Insert mid-block pathways as large blocks are redeveloped.

**Increase pedestrian connections uphill.** Give adjacent communities increased access to local businesses and transit in the Town Center. New or improved steps or pathways are recommended for the street ends at S. Lander Street and S. Hanford Street.

*See the following section, Streetscape Concepts, for additional and complementary recommendations related to the design of streets.*





## Streetscape Concepts for the Town Center



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

### Existing

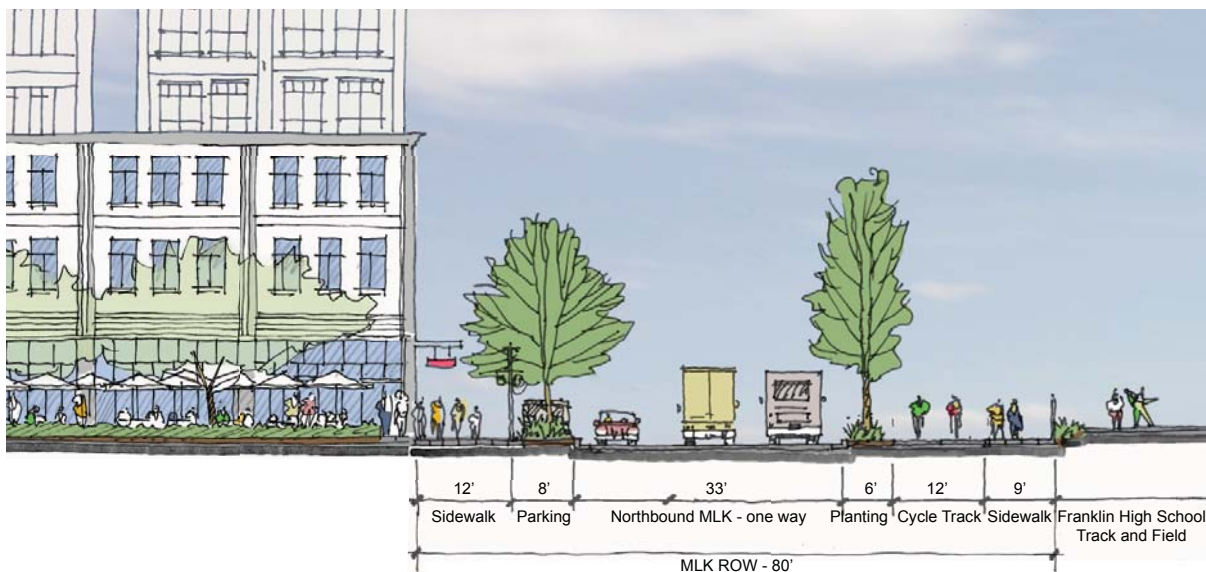
Streetscape refers to the physical design of the public realm – the space between buildings. It includes not only the road, but also the adjacent sidewalk areas. The current streetscape of arterial roads lacks some elements that support a good pedestrian environment—things like continuous and comfortably-wide sidewalks, short and safe crossings, buffers between sidewalks and traffic.

### Recommendations

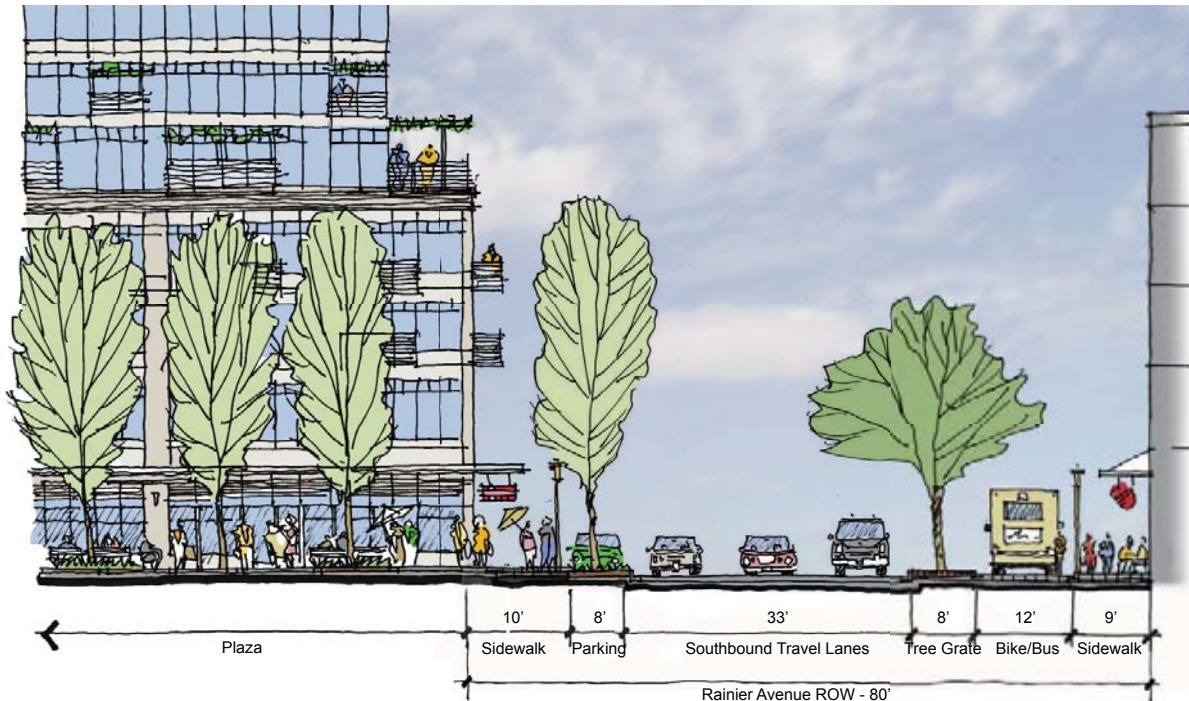
Streetscape recommendations focus on the three arterial streets—Rainier Avenue S., MLK Jr. Way S. and S. McClellan Street. The streetscape concepts illustrated below align with the “Bowtie Traffic Concept” (see page 14). Elements emphasize pedestrian comfort and safety such as pedestrian lighting, directional signage, landscaping, overhead weather protection, and improved crosswalks with curb bulbs for safer and shorter crossings. On-street parking helps buffer pedestrians from traffic. Audible signals and special paving could be integrated into the streetscape design to assist members of the Lighthouse community and mobility impaired pedestrians.



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



**MLK Jr. Way S.** (from S. Bayview Street to S. Walden Street) is reconfigured with three one-way travel lanes, parking lane, wider sidewalks, landscaped curb bulbs, street trees, and bicycle infrastructure (bike lanes or two-way cycle track).



**Rainier Avenue S.** (from S. Bayview Street to S. Walden Street) is reconfigured with three one-way travel lanes, one parking lane, wider sidewalks, street trees, landscaped curb bulbs, a shared roadway for bicyclists and a dedicated northbound bus lane, but further study of these concepts is required. Should the Transit Center relocate, the bus lane could be converted to accommodate a separated two-way cycle track.

*Walking conditions along and across streets with high traffic volumes and high speeds are uncomfortable, especially locations that have long blocks and auto-oriented development.*

—Seattle Pedestrian Master Plan

**S. McClellan Street** (from MLK Jr. Way S. to S. 25th Street) is reconfigured with two travel lanes with sharrows, two parking lanes, wider sidewalks, and street trees. A central lane would be designed to include left turning pockets and potentially a landscaped median or other gateway feature.

**S. Winthrop Street**, a connector between Mount Baker Boulevard S. and Cheasty Boulevard S., is enhanced to have the distinctive lushly landscaped character of a historic Olmsted boulevard. Bicycles are accommodated within shared roadways with special signage as part of the citywide bicycle route.

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





Cheasty Boulevard S.

## Open Space and Gateways

### Existing

The current open space system is described as a “ring of green” surrounding the Town Center—the Cheasty Greenbelt, the Olmsted Boulevards and the slopes along the east side of MLK Jr. Way S. The LINK Light Rail Station includes a large plaza that leads to Rainier Avenue S. Other larger community and regional open spaces, such as MLK Jr. Park and Mount Baker Park, lie beyond the Town Center.

*Of the Southeast Sector’s five urban villages, the North Rainier Hub Urban Village has the largest gaps in Usable Open Space with over half of the urban village located farther than 1/8 mile from park sites.*

—Open Space Gap Report



Public art can be a neighborhood landmark.

### Recommendations (See Figure 5)

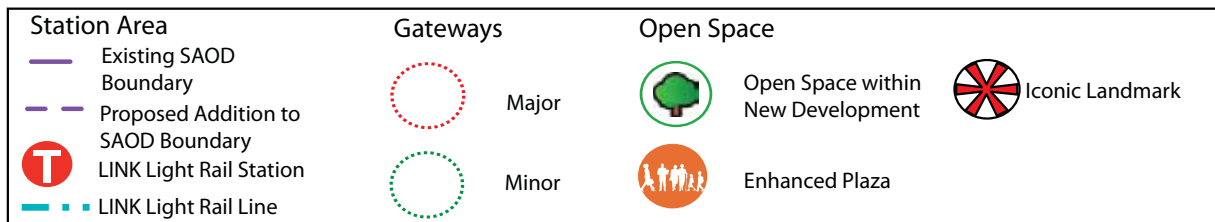
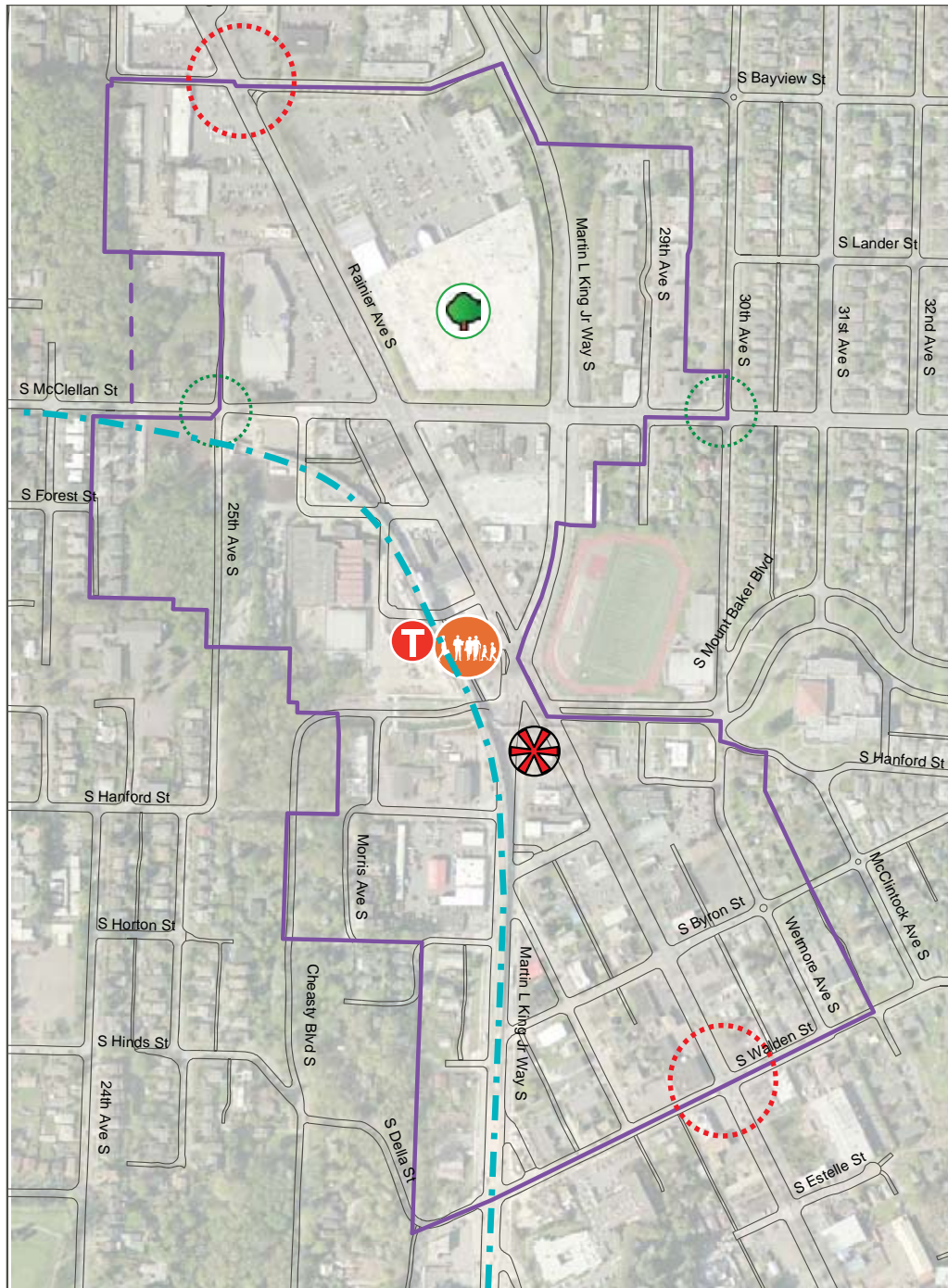
The community desires open spaces that invite people to gather and encourage physical activity. Future development and infrastructure improvements can improve access to open space and bring new greenspace to the core. Access to the Cheasty Greenbelt and other parks can be improved through new pathways, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Gateways and landmarks—highly visible landscape or structural features—can enhance the identity and express civic pride of the Town



Mobile vendors could animate the station plaza.



A mid-block open space is part of new development.



**Figure 5 – Proposed Open Space and Gateways**





A civic space for informal gatherings.



Example of gateway within a road right-of-way.



New pathways that are part of redevelopment can break down large and long blocks to a pedestrian friendly scale.

Center by announcing arrival in a distinct special place. Signage, structures, lighting, landscaping, banners and even buildings can create gateways or landmarks.

- **Create new open space in the core.** Use new developments and public improvements to increase greenspace within the Town Center. Redevelopment of the 13-acre Lowe’s site, the largest opportunity site, should include an open space and pathways system that can break down this large block into a more pedestrian friendly form.
- **Animate and enhance the station plaza.** The station plaza is an underutilized open space. Furnishings (e.g. movable tables and chairs), and active uses (mobile vending) could transform this space into a community gathering place. Mobile vending would not only enliven the space, but could help existing businesses expand, or provide an affordable way to launch a new business.
- **Establish gateways.** Major gateways are recommended for Rainier Avenue S. near S. Bayview Street and S. Walden Street. Minor gateways are recommended for S. McClellan Street near S. 25th Street and S. 30th Street.
- **Establish an iconic landmark.** The prominent intersection Rainier Avenue S. and MLK Jr. Way S. calls for an iconic civic landmark to strengthen the identity of the not only the Town Center, but the entire Rainier Valley community. The design will benefit from broad community input to ensure the landmark is memorable, meaningful and a source of civic pride.



An example of a civic gathering space.

## Sustainable Strategies

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

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

Green stormwater infrastructure should be integrated into the design of future streetscapes (medians, curb bulbs, curbside planting strips, pavement, historic boulevard landscapes) and open space (parks, plazas, pedestrian connections). These practices should be considered on a site-by-site basis in all new development— buildings, streets, trails and open space. More information at [www.seattle.gov/util/About\\_SPU/Drainage\\_&\\_Sewer\\_System/GreenStormwaterInfrastructure/index.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/util/About_SPU/Drainage_&_Sewer_System/GreenStormwaterInfrastructure/index.htm)

**Green Building Technology** refers to an array of strategies that result in a building that uses sustainable materials and is highly energy and water efficient. The City has a several incentive programs to encourage green building technology (see Sustainable Development, page 24).



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



A green roof tops the new Ballard Library.



Green stormwater infrastructure can be designed to provide informal seating.



## IMPLEMENTATION

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

### Zoning

#### Existing

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

#### Recommendations

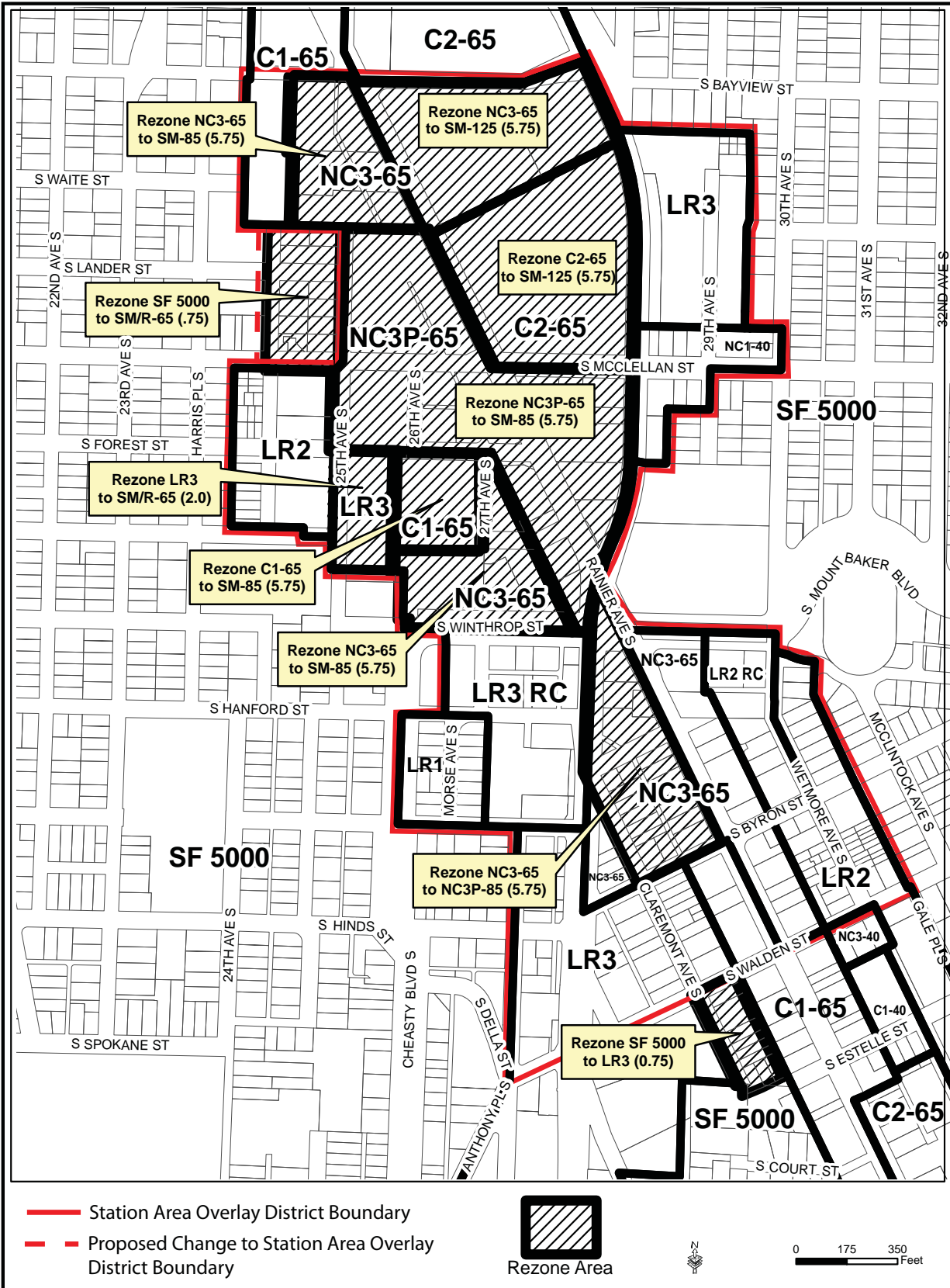
The *North Rainier Neighborhood Plan* recommends “rezoning key opportunity sites to encourage the redevelopment of parcels surrounding the light rail station in a manner that incorporates housing, commercial services (such as a grocery store and small businesses) and amenities.” The community acknowledged commercial zoning was not appropriate, and considered zones and building heights that would help transition the current auto-oriented commercial corridor to a walkable, vital mixed-use Town Center. A detailed description and analysis of rezone recommendations are contained in the *Director’s Analysis and Recommendation on the Mount Baker Rezone Proposal*.

**Use Seattle Mixed Zoning** – The initial strategy, included in the Draft Urban Design Framework, recommended a shift to mostly Neighborhood Commercial 3 (NC3) zone with building heights as high as 125 feet. Subsequent discussion and analyses led to a different recommendation, the use of the more flexible Seattle Mixed (SM) zone, and heights of 85 and 125 for key parcels fronting Rainier Avenue S.

Both NC3 and SM encourage street activating retail uses and transparent facades, and discourage auto-oriented retail and services. Both zones allow building heights of 125 feet. The maximum floor area ratio (FAR) for SM 125 is 4.5 versus 6.0 for NC3 125. SM is a better fit for North Rainier due to its flexibility to accommodate some manufacturing. This will encourage some existing businesses to remain and potentially expand, and will position North Rainier to attract cutting edge businesses whose space needs are still evolving. Also, SM prohibits surface parking lots as a primary use. This ensures that valuable land in the Town Center will never be converted to commuter parking.

**Increase Height** — Increase the allowable heights in the NC and SM zones as shown in Figure 3. These changes will allow more dense mixed-use and residential development. The resulting development could activate the street with street-level retail and house a critical mass of people to live, work or shop in the Town Center.

**Rezone Select Parcels to Be Consistent with Adjacent Zones and Properties** — Two areas have been identified for zoning changes



**Figure 6 – Proposed Zoning**



supported by existing property owners.

- Single family parcels located between 24th Avenue S. and 25th Avenue S. to SM/R with a 65 foot height limit. The proposed designation is more consistent with the surrounding LR2 and proposed SM zones. The boundary of the Station Area Overlay District should be changed to include this area.
- Single family parcels west of Rainier Avenue S. and south of S. Walden Street to LR3. These parcels are surrounded by commercial or low rise residential uses on three sides.

**Rezone Commercial and Neighborhood Commercial Parcels to Seattle Mixed** — This zone allows flexibility for existing businesses to thrive and potentially bring new types of businesses to the area over the next 20 years. It can accommodate a broader range of businesses and mixed-use building forms in the Town Center, but still includes development standards to activate streets with retail use and transparent building facades.

### Sustainable Development

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

#### Green Factor

The Green Factor is a landscape requirement

designed to increase the quantity and quality of planted areas in Seattle while allowing flexibility for developers and designers to meet development standards. It currently applies to new development in commercial and neighborhood commercial zones outside of downtown, and multifamily residential zones. The requirement is designed to encourage larger plants, permeable paving, green roofs, vegetated walls, preservation of existing trees, and layering of vegetation along streets and other areas visible to the public. Bonuses are provided for food cultivation, native and drought-tolerant plants, and rainwater harvesting.

#### Priority Green

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

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

## Analyses Requested by City Council

City Council Resolution 31204 requested that the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) study and analyze some specific implementation tools as part of the Urban Design Framework. Complete analyses, discussions and recommendations regarding these items are included in the *Director's Analysis and Recommendation on Mount Baker Rezone Proposal*. Findings are summarized below:

- **Development capacity under existing and proposed zoning.** The proposed rezones are anticipated to add 362 housing units over the next 20 years.
- **Proposed incentive structures for public benefits.** The recommended maximum building heights of 125 feet allows the use of incentive zoning provisions where a minimum of 60 percent of the bonus floor area must be used to provide affordable housing. Other public benefits (open space, public realm improvements) could be provided in exchange for the remaining 40 percent of bonus floor area.
- **Transfer of development rights.** Participation in a transferable development rights program is not recommended due to potential conflicts with City policy and community priorities, as well as the high transactions costs that would be incurred.
- **Minimum density.** The use of minimum densities is not recommended because under current market conditions, this requirement may be a disincentive to new development and the expansion of existing businesses.

## Other Implementation Resources

### Multi-Family Tax Exemption Program

The Multifamily Property Tax Exemption (MFTE) Program provides a tax exemption on the residential improvements on multifamily projects in exchange for the provision of affordable housing. The current rules allow a tax exemption for 12 years if 20 percent of the units are set aside for moderate-wage workers to rent or buy. Rental units are income restricted based on the average household median income (AMI). The 2011 income limits for rental units are 65 percent of the AMI for a studio (\$39,520 for an individual, \$45,175 for a couple), 75 percent of the AMI for a one-bedroom (\$45,600 for an individual, \$52,125 for a couple), and 85 percent of the AMI for a two-bedroom or larger (\$51,680 for an individual, \$59,075 for a couple). The 2011 Income limits for sale units are 100 percent of the AMI for a studio or one bedroom (\$60,800 for an individual, \$69,500 for a couple), and 120 percent of the AMI for a two-bedroom or larger (\$72,960 for an individual, \$83,400 for a couple).

### Funding and Implementation Toolkit for Transit Communities

The Seattle Planning Commission created this online toolkit to provide decision makers, private partners and community groups with information about funding programs, implementation and planning tools commonly used to develop the essential components that create vibrant lively transit communities. The toolkit focuses on three broad categories of “livability elements”: infrastructure, community development and parks/open space. The toolkit includes local,



state and federal sources from small programs like the Opportunity Fund for community initiative park development to larger sources like federal Community Block Grants that fund affordable housing, neighborhood revitalization, community facilities and services and economic development. The toolkit can be viewed on the Commission's website at <http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/projects/transit.htm>.

### **Public Investments in Streetscape Improvements**

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

## Summary of Actions

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

<b>PROPOSED ACTIONS</b>	City of Seattle	Community	King County Metro	Washington DOT	Private Development	Sound Transit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● = 1 to 3 years</li> <li>◐ = 3 to 5 years</li> <li>○ = more than five years</li> </ul>						
<b>Land Use + Built Form</b>						
Focus “main street” retail on S. McClellan Street and Rainier Avenue S.	○	○			○	
Rezone selected single family parcels where appropriate.	●					
Encourage the redevelopment of opportunity sites (e.g. Lowe’s, QFC, Transit Center).	○		○		○	○
Develop an open air, multi-cultural market.	●				●	●
Increase allowable heights.	●					
Encourage setbacks on pedestrian-oriented retail streets.	●					
<b>Circulation</b>						
Accommodate all travel modes on arterials and boulevards where feasible.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Reconnect Cheasty Boulevard S. and Mount Baker Boulevard S.	○			○		
Improve bicycle infrastructure.	○					
Make the pedestrian network complete and safe.	○				○	○



<b>PROPOSED ACTIONS</b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● = 1 to 3 years</li> <li>◐ = 3 to 5 years</li> <li>○ = more than five years</li> </ul>	City of Seattle	Community	King County Metro	Washington DOT	Private Development	Sound Transit
<b>Circulation Continued</b>						
Improve pedestrian and bicycle access to Mount Baker Station.	◐				◐	◐
Analyze the feasibility of providing mid-block crossings on long blocks.	○	○			○	
Provide pedestrian connections uphill.	○	○				
<b>Streetscapes</b>						
Redesign Rainier Avenue S., MLK Jr. Way S. and S. McClellan Street as complete streets.	○	○		○	○	
Restore the natural and designed landscapes of Cheasty Boulevard S. and Mount Baker Boulevard S.	○	○				
<b>Open Space and Gateways</b>						
Establish new open space in the core of the Town Center.	○	○			○	
Animate and enhance the station plaza.	●	●				●
Establish gateways and landmarks.	○	○			○	
<b>Sustainable Strategies</b>						
Integrate green stormwater infrastructure into design of streetscapes, open space and boulevards.	●				●	
Promote green building technology in new development.	●				●	
<b>Zoning</b>						
Implement proposed zoning changes to increase flexibility and allow more density.	●					

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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DPD Planning Team

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Moon Callison  
Patrice Carroll  
Nora Liu

Seattle Planning Commission

Seattle Design Commission

GGLO, LLC

Mithūn, Inc

Great City

Seattle City Council

Council President Richard Conlin  
Councilmember Sally Bagshaw  
Councilmember Tim Burgess  
Councilmember Sally J. Clark  
Councilmember Jean Godden  
Councilmember Bruce Harrell  
Councilmember Nick Licata  
Councilmember Mike O'Brien  
Councilmember Tom Rasmussen

North Rainier Community Action Team Members

Town Center

Sue Cary  
Pat Chemnick  
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Mo-Chee Li  
Giovanni Della-Libera  
Robert Mohn  
Gloria Ramirez  
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Dan Rosenfeld  
Cary Roth  
Eskinder Tedla  
Paul Thienes

Lighthouse for the Blind

Nathan Brannon  
Doug Ito, SMR Architects  
David Jefferson  
Mark Landreneau  
Dana Marmion  
Peggy Martinez  
David Miller  
Nancy L. Swaney  
Jason Wells

Thank you to all the community members who  
have generously given their time and energy  
since 1999 to plan the future of North Rainier.



# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A - Zones and Districts

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

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

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

**Lowrise 2 Residential Commercial (LR2 RC)** — This zone serves as a transitional zone between commercial zones and single family residential zones. It provides a variety of multifamily housing types and small commercial uses at street level in existing multifamily neighborhoods and along arterial streets. A mix of small to moderate scale multifamily housing is encouraged including apartments, townhouses and rowhouses.

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

**Lowrise 3 Residential Commercial (LR3 RC)** — This zone serves as a transitional zone between commercial zones and single family residential zones. It provides a variety of multifamily housing types and small

commercial uses at street level in existing multifamily neighborhoods of moderate scale. LR3 accommodates residential growth within growth areas (urban centers, urban villages and the Station Area Overlay District). A mix of small to moderate scale multifamily housing is encouraged including apartments, townhouses and rowhouses.

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

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

**Commercial 2 (C2)** — This zone provides auto-oriented, primarily non-retail commercial area characterized by larger lots, parking and a wide range of commercial uses serving community, citywide or regional markets. Typical land uses include warehouses, wholesale, research and development, and manufacturing uses. Residential use is generally not allowed, but exceptions meeting specific criteria may be considered through a conditional use process.

**Seattle Mixed (SM)** — This zone is applied to achieve the goal of a diverse, mixed-use community with a strong pedestrian



orientation. The zone permits a wide range of uses and promotes density to encourage a mixed-use neighborhood. This zoning designation balances the need for flexibility and a variety of activities with the need to provide adequate direction to ensure the presence of housing and commercial activities critical to the success of an urban neighborhood.

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

**Pedestrian Designation (P)** — The P designation preserves and encourages an intensely retail and pedestrian-oriented shopping district where non-auto modes of transportation are strongly favored. The P designation restricts street level use to pedestrian-friendly commercial uses that enliven the sidewalk environment. A pedestrian designation can be applied to any neighborhood commercial zone along principal pedestrian designated streets. The P designation preserves and encourages a pedestrian-oriented shopping district by limiting building setbacks, reducing retail parking requirements, and controlling the location of parking lots and access to behind or under buildings fronting on a principal pedestrian street.

## **Appendix B**

# **Council Resolution Number 31204**



RESOLUTION 31204

1  
2 A RESOLUTION outlining specific actions, deliverables, and a schedule for completing  
3 neighborhood plan updates for the North Beacon Hill, North Rainier, and Othello  
neighborhoods.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

16  
17 Section 1. Implementation Plans. The City Council requests that the Executive build upon  
18 the community outreach efforts in 2009 and actively engage the North Beacon Hill, North  
19 Rainier, and Othello neighborhoods to develop implementation plans (previously referred to as  
20 "Approval and Adoption Matrices") for each of the updated neighborhood plans. The City  
21 Council anticipates a successful engagement effort will include the elements outlined below.

22  
23 a) The engagement effort should enable the public to provide feedback through a variety  
24 of mediums, including public meetings and the use of online surveys.

25 b) The engagement effort should involve diverse and meaningful community  
26 participation, measured by the number and diversity of participants attending community  
27



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

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

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

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

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





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

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

11       Section 3. Urban Design Framework Plans. The Council requests that the Department of  
12 Planning and Development (DPD) develop urban design framework plans for the North Beacon  
13 Hill, North Rainier, and Othello neighborhoods, drawing upon the proposed neighborhood plan  
14 updates and based on the Concept B options presented in the neighborhood plan updates and  
15 recommended for further study by DPD. In addition, DPD should provide opportunities for  
16 residents and businesses to participate in the development and review of the urban design  
17 framework plans prior to submitting them to the City Council. Prior to beginning work on any  
18 related zoning or development regulation legislation, DPD should submit the urban design  
19 framework plans for Council review. At a minimum the urban design framework plans should  
20 include structure height and bulk concepts; right-of-way improvement concepts; preferred use  
21 locations; proposed incentive structures for public benefits; open space concepts; pedestrian  
22 connections; an analysis of whether transferable development rights can accomplish any of the  
23 goals and policies in the plan updates; and an analysis of the employment and residential growth  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28



1 capacity at buildout under the proposed concepts as compared to existing zoning. If a  
2 neighborhood plan update considers the potential use of minimum densities, the urban design  
3 framework plan should contain a rationale for minimum density standards that are proposed.


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

13  
14 Section 4. Legislation Enacting Land Use Changes. The Council anticipates that after it  
15 has reviewed the urban design framework plans, it may direct DPD to prepare legislation for  
16 Comprehensive Plan amendments or regulatory amendments to implement concepts contained in  
17 the framework plans. The Council requests that land use legislation be submitted to Council in  
18 time for concurrent review with the annual Comprehensive Plan bill adopting future land use  
19 map amendments and updating goals and policies for the neighborhood plans.  
20  
21  
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1 Section 5. Schedule. To the extent possible, DPD and DON should complete the actions and  
2 deliverables within the timeframes noted in the schedule included in Attachment A. If any of the  
3 items cannot be completed within the timeframes indicated, Council anticipates that the sequence  
4 in which it acts upon items will be similar to that reflected in the schedule in Attachment A.

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

8   
9 \_\_\_\_\_  
10 President \_\_\_\_\_ of the City Council

11   
12 \_\_\_\_\_  
13 Michael McGinn, Mayor

14  
15 Filed by me this 29<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2010.

16  
17   
18 \_\_\_\_\_  
19 City Clerk

20 (Seal)





**Attachment A: Schematic Schedule**

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



## **Appendix C**

### ***North Rainier Neighborhood Plan***

January 2010

# North Rainier

## NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN UPDATE



## Recommendations to City Council



Goals, Policies and Strategies  
to Achieve the North Rainier  
Neighborhood Vision



In the North Rainier Neighborhood Plan Update process initiated in 2009, a diverse community of stakeholders articulated priorities for the future of their neighborhood, identifying goals and shaping the policies and strategies to achieve them. They benefited from the compelling vision of the existing Neighborhood Plan, first completed in 1999, which established a vision for an interweaving of people of various backgrounds who live and work in a culturally and economically diverse area that maintains its ethnic roots. Central to this is the goal of creating a compact, mixed-use neighborhood or “Town Center” near the light rail station. Major steps have been taken in North Rainier in the past decade, including the opening of a new light rail station and improvements to Cheasty Boulevard and other parks. As the community made clear in the update process, however, significant work remains to be done, and there are newly emerging priorities and new strategies to pursue.

The workshops, meetings, and ongoing discussions that have shaped the update underscore the widely

shared goal of increasing the community’s choices for how to live, work, and enjoy life in their neighborhood. There are several new recommendations intended to help maintain the community’s diversity and ethnic roots. These include strategies to preserve opportunities for small and ethnic businesses, create a multicultural community center, and encourage park facilities and programming that are culturally relevant to different communities.

Participants continue to recognize the potential of light rail service to create a neighborhood Town Center that is a cornerstone of a more sustainable community. They have envisioned how more households would increase opportunities for the diversity of businesses and services that they value. At the same time, they have emphasized that they need a Town Center that works for them, where growth and change include housing for diverse incomes and household sizes; connecting to their homes and businesses with safe, green, and walkable streets and sidewalks is equally important.

The update recognizes the potential for the large sites to the north of S. McClellan St. to bring significant new residential and commercial development that could transform the Town Center into a vibrant community and destination. Consequently the update includes strategies to further study a range of height increases in the Town Center. This reflects the potential for compact development, including a small number of towers. Completion of an urban design plan, design guidelines and street designs will give clear guidance to development. In addition, as part of the vision for the Town Center, the update proposes to create a “Main Street” for the Town Center along the blocks of Rainier Ave. S. between S. Bayview St. and MLK Jr. Way S. rather than pursuing a roundabout as promoted in the 1999 plan.

The update’s format and structure are designed to allow a civic partnership of the community, City, and public and private organizations to work together to make this vision a reality.

## How the Update Is Organized

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

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

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

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

In the decade after the plans were completed, there have been significant changes in Seattle and its neighborhoods, including growth in housing, and major investments in public amenities. Also, during this time the population of the city also greatly diversified. Following extensive discussion and review of the existing Neighborhood Plans and their effectiveness, in 2008, the Mayor and City Council recognized the

need to revisit the plans through broad and inclusive discussions with the community, including new strategies for civic engagement. The update process was begun in 2009 to: confirm the neighborhood Vision, refine the plan Goals and Policies in order to take into account changed conditions, and update work plans to help ensure that each community’s vision and goals are achieved through the implementation of the strategies and actions.

The North Rainier Neighborhood Plan was chosen by the Mayor and City Council as one of three plans to be updated in 2009. The arrival of light rail service brings increased development interest and new residents to the neighborhood. These changes present great opportunities to realize North Rainier’s goal to create a vibrant, transit-oriented Town Center, one in which residents, businesses, and visitors enjoy the lively, diverse, and distinctive character of the neighborhood. This plan update articulates community goals so that the City, developers

and neighborhood residents can all work together to bring about the neighborhood vision.

Over the past year, dedicated community members worked with City staff to assess and address those conditions that have changed since the 1999 North Rainier Neighborhood Plan. New neighbors and new voices joined those who participated ten years ago. Together, community members discussed what they value in the neighborhood, and outlined their shared goals and ideas about how to achieve those goals.

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

**Vision, Goals, Policies and Strategies** – are the key components of this update. The Vision is from the 1999 Neighborhood Plan and holds true today. The Goals, Policies and Strategies build upon one another to help fulfill the North Rainier Vision. They are a distillation of what we heard from the community and will guide the City’s work as well as inform future development that occurs in the neighborhood.

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

**Appendices** – include several important resource documents including a shared work plan for the City and neighborhood to guide implementation and the original Neighborhood Plan.

Over the course of the past year, a broad cross section of community members engaged with the City through both innovative and time-tested tools. From hands-on workshops and smaller-scale interactive meetings with community-based organizations, to online updates and questionnaires, neighbors used a variety of ways to be involved. Reaching a broad range of those who live and work in North Rainier, including those who have been historically underrepresented in the planning process, was a primary objective of the update process. During 2009, community members expressed their views at 48 neighborhood and City-sponsored meetings and events in North Rainier. Long-time veterans of neighborhood planning, stewards of the important work begun in the 1990s, and a new generation of neighborhood planners came together to build a broader base of civic engagement. Bicultural and/or bilingual Planning Outreach Liaisons (POLs) connected with 13 underrepresented communities. The POLs hosted 38 community workshops where historically underrepresented North Rainier community members participated—strengthening the bridge between the City of Seattle, residents, community organizations, and businesses.

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

about planning and create deeper understanding of the issues and richer input. For example, sight-impaired and mobility-impaired workers at the Lighthouse for the Blind came together to discuss specific issues and recommendations for making open spaces and streets better places for people with disabilities.

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

In May small groups of neighbors and City staff worked together at a Town Hall meeting at the Northwest African American Museum to address themes that emerged from the March and April workshops. Neighbors worked through hands-

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

In September 2009, community members attended two open houses to review draft goals and recommendations that grew from the themes, issues, goals and desired improvements voiced by the community throughout the preceding months. Outreach continued through the final months of the year, including the work of POLs, who reached out to their communities to both review draft plan recommendations and to lay the groundwork for their ongoing engagement in the update's implementation phase.

Throughout the plan update process, the workshops and meetings have been structured to engage community discussion and guidance, followed by reporting back, all of which has informed the next steps of drafting and finalizing recommendations. This broad engagement and detailed recording of community comments throughout the process created ongoing transparency that serves as the underpinning of this update to the North Rainier Neighborhood Plan.



A sustainable community is one that values and plans for its long-term social, economic, and environmental health. Seattle's Comprehensive Plan states this as four values that are the bedrock of the City's commitment to sustainability: community, environmental stewardship, economic opportunity and security, and social equity.

North Rainier is a Hub Urban Village with remarkable existing and potential strengths as a sustainable community. A core principle of Seattle's approach to sustainability is that it must be addressed at the neighborhood level, and that it is critical to directly engage the people who live, work, and visit our communities to shape a sustainable future. Through the update process, the neighbors' commitment was clear to making their neighborhood remain and improve as a place that is walkable, livable, and meets the promise of its new light rail service—offering more choices to the people who live and work there. That choice can have an impact on one of the most significant environmental standards—reducing greenhouse

gas emissions—by reducing vehicle miles traveled. If you don't have to get in your car to get groceries, go to work, or enjoy an afternoon in a park or neighborhood downtown, you can make the more sustainable choice, a local decision that can affect the global challenge of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Yet as community dialogue made clear throughout the update process, the arrival of light rail on its own does not guarantee sustainability. For people to make more sustainable decisions, they need to see that there are more and better choices, and to recognize the direct impact of sustainability on their lives. For example, Great City worked with the community to complete a Green Infrastructure Audit. This work has complemented and informed the update process, and underscores how a community-informed process—identifying how sustainability directly affects their lives—is key to establishing a new standard. The citywide, regional, and global decision-making remains crucial—Seattle has led the world as a city in signing on to the Kyoto Pro-

ocol in 2005 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and this work continues. But global standards only work if there are local commitments.

As Neighborhood Plan Updates move forward, the City will continue to work with communities to develop further measures of sustainability, from walkability, to the availability of fresh, healthful food, to green infrastructure of trees and open space. At the same time, the update process has made clear that sustainability does not need to be set out as separate and apart from the overall recommendations, because communities already see it as integral to their overall vision for the future.



Community members discussing the future of the North Rainier urban village

## North Rainier Neighborhood Plan Vision, February 1999, Excerpt

Entering the North Rainier Valley we are impressed by the neat, well-maintained, well-landscaped main thoroughfares that accommodate all major modes of transportation. We are an interweaving of people of various backgrounds who live and work in a culturally and economically diverse area which maintains its ethnic roots. Business, light industrial, and high-tech job opportunities provide welcome employment for the entire Puget Sound region.

The residential environment comprises multifamily, single-family, and mixed-use housing in clean, safe neighborhoods affordable to a broad range of people. Housing densities increase near the core of the urban village and around transportation hubs. Multifamily housing is not concentrated in one area, allowing increased density while not overwhelming the community.

Residential areas are peaceful, quiet and safe. They are inviting to pedestrians, children, families the elderly, and people with special needs. Anyone is able to walk or roll along the streets at all hours of the day or night. Consistent maintenance keeps areas clean, neat, and safe. Pocket parks and P-Patches are interspersed throughout the neighborhoods. Iron bars covering doors and windows are seen no more, having been replaced by vibrant architecture and colors, open doors, and a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere that has drawn residents back to the

community. Neighbors know and care about each other. Children are welcome and have plenty of safe places to play.

North Rainier Valley is a destination for recreational activities. Continuous bicycle paths and routes meander from Lake Washington through the residential areas, through parks, the city, and outlying areas. The green spaces are linked together. Playfields and courts allow for all ages and skill levels to gather and compete. Venues are set up for regional sports.

The valley is a draw for film, theater, music, dance, and visual arts. Public squares, religious institutions, schools, and community centers are also gathering places for activities for neighborhood residents. The community enjoys and celebrates diversity. Commitment to helping immigrants become an integral part of this neighborhood, programs are set up to accommodate new immigrant populations and aid them with English classes, cultural interaction, and advocacy for their needs. Such programs are increasingly shared in and with other parts of the City.

Our ongoing commitment to the education of our youth is the cornerstone of the North Rainier Neighborhood. Schools are consistently and fully used for adult education, after-school activities, and a wide variety of educational and tutorial opportunities. Citizens are actively involved in outreach and volunteer programs. High-quality school programs have become a draw for business and employment.

The businesses are strong, stimulating and economically stable. Various new commercial and industrial activities have recently entered the scene and retain the diversity and ethnic heritage that make our Rainier Valley unique. A full range of services is available without having to leave the community. Zoning coordinates industrial, commercial, and residential uses to their mutual advantage. Businesses actively participate in community activities. Retail property is well kept and accessible to all.

Public transportation has become easier to use than the automobile-oriented systems of the 20th century. Major routes are safe for bikes, pedestrians, autos and transit users and are completely accessible for the visually and physically impaired. The streets themselves are tree-lined and smooth. Transit systems link the east, west, north and south areas of Seattle, and the entire Puget Sound region in a way that is nonintrusive to the fabric of the neighborhood. The commute is easy for folks from other areas to visit, work, and shop in the North Rainier Valley.

Mount Rainier remains a landmark vista in the heart of Rainier Valley. The pulse of our area is vibrant. The future is grand.

This section of the Update describes goals to preserve, enhance and improve the day-to-day life of community members. It also outlines strategies and to help achieve these goals.

Note: Numbers in parentheses, such as (NR-P6), after Goals and Policies refer to the 1999 Neighborhood Plan Goals and Policies as they were incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan. Refer to the appendix to see how the Comp Plan Amendment updates the Neighborhood Plan with new and revised goals and policies that emerged from the 2009 Update process.

## Goal 1

**A vibrant, business district that serves North Rainier residents and is a destination shopping area with stores that serve the greater Rainier Valley.**

### Discussion

Community members want a shopping district; a place they can go for their daily to monthly needs. A number stated that they would like a place to buy clothes and shoes without going to Southcenter. Others spoke of the desire to have a place where they would spend an afternoon meeting friends, eating and shopping.

### Policies

**1.A.** Encourage the inclusion of affordable commercial space in new development.

**1.B.** Strive to facilitate the vitality of existing retail and businesses that help meet the neighborhood's employment goals and serve as destination businesses for customers from the Rainier Valley and beyond in addition to meeting the daily needs of residents.

### Strategies

**1.** Strengthen the Rainier Valley Chamber of Commerce and encourage increased membership from local businesses so that business owners can work together and with the community to create a vibrant neighborhood business district. The Chamber can also provide a venue for peer support and mentoring as well as a venue for its members to raise its concerns to the City and to pursue grants and technical assistance.

**2.** Look for opportunities in projects receiving City funding to create affordable commercial spaces.

**3.** Support and expand the existing diverse mix of generally small-scale businesses by

- using design guidelines that provide guidance for creating business spaces that are culturally appropriate (such as storefronts that open onto sidewalks),
- providing technical assistance and access to financing to small businesses in the retail corridor,

- encouraging membership in local business associations, and
- encouraging peer support and mentoring.

**4.** Supporting partnerships to strengthen the business district, such as

- SCORE/Small Business Development Center,
- Community Capital Development,
- University of Washington Entrepreneurial Law Clinic,
- Rainier Valley Community Development Fund, and
- HomeSight.

**5.** Retain a grocery store and pharmacy in the Town Center.

**6.** Improve the existing Town Center and make it more inviting using the City's Neighborhood Business District Fund and Neighborhood Street Funds. Work with the community to identify projects and initiatives in which the community's effort would be matched by funds from the Neighborhood Matching Fund. Improvements may include

- streetscape amenities, such as benches and banners;
- activating public spaces with street vendors;
- business district marketing map and brochure; and
- encourage community-driven activities that support gatherings which draw customers such as street fairs, farmers markets, etc.

## Goal 2

**Ethnic and cultural diversity is a continued presence in the businesses and community.**

### Discussion

The cultural diversity of the commercial district is valued and supported by the community. The broader community would like these often small, independently owned, culturally focused businesses to remain as the North Rainier Urban Village grows and transforms. Owners of small, ethnic businesses spoke of the need to both expand their market and to support continued affordability.

### Policies

- 2.A.** Promote the location of cultural community centers and services in the transit-accessible areas of the neighborhood.
- 2.B.** Provide technical and financial support to small businesses that meet the needs of the ethnic and cultural communities in the neighborhood.
- 2.C.** Encourage community-based efforts for cross-cultural integration among the business owners as well as among the broader community.
- 2.D.** Encourage the construction of physical improvements and activity programming that are culturally relevant to people with disabilities throughout the Town Center.

### Strategies

- 1.** Explore new and existing models of financing mixed-use development projects that provide affordable commercial space as well as affordable housing in City-funded mixed-use projects.
- 2.** Promote the location of cultural community centers and services in the neighborhood.
- 3.** Promote peer support, mentoring, technical assistance, and other means of improving business capacity for businesses interested in broadening their market.
- 4.** Promote opportunities for cross-cultural integration among the business owners as well as among the broader community. Seek opportunities to create a vibrant, stable multicultural shopping area.
- 5.** Explore feasibility of using the Station Area Overlay District or incentive zoning to create affordable commercial space.
- 6.** Implement programming and improvements that are culturally relevant to people with disabilities throughout the Town Center, such as innovative aesthetic enhancements to the public realm, and parks that incorporate audible, visual and tactile configurations.
- 7.** Support community-driven gathering activities that increase awareness and education of the community's multicultural population and create a multicultural identity and destination point for Seattle.





## Goal 3

**Development within the Town Center prioritizes housing that serves households across a range of incomes.**

### Discussion

Many community members noted that there is little housing in the Town Center of the North Rainier Urban Village and suggested improving pedestrian and transit connections into the center, as well as increasing the vitality and personal safety of the Center by increasing the number of housing units there. More market-rate housing is needed, as well as affordable housing. Concerns were expressed that increased development will increase rents

and force residents to move away. Affordable housing, including family housing and affordable senior housing is important.

### Policies

**3.A.** Encourage a mix of home prices and sizes through active use of incentives and funding.

### Strategies

**1.** Encourage and/or require mix of home prices and sizes through active use of incentives, direct City funding, and surplus property programs.

**2.** Leverage public funds to support affordable housing near to the light rail station.

**3.** Encourage affordable family-sized homes through incentives, direct City funding, and surplus property programs.

**4.** Use City funding to leverage other funding to preserve existing and create new subsidized housing.

**5.** Apply Comprehensive Plan affordable housing targets to the North Rainier Urban Village and periodically evaluate progress.

**6.** Set affordable housing objectives and use incentives, direct City funding, and surplus property programs to fill gaps.

## Goal 4

**North Rainier Hub Urban Village is known as a “Green Hub” providing green jobs and training, and green development.**

### Discussion

North Rainier is a Hub Urban Village with the capacity for an increase in jobs. Community members felt that the presence of the University of Washington as a land owner and the tradition of North Rainier Urban Village as a commercial and light manufacturing area suggests an opportunity to build a green technology incubator.

### Policies

**4.A.** Support training programs and jobs in North Rainier that capitalize on the green technology market in order to support the role of North

Rainier as the Hub Urban Village within the Rainier Valley.

**4.B.** Identify and promote opportunities for green infrastructure and development.

### Strategies

**1.** Consider creating a green technology-focused extension program by working with organizations such as the University of Washington.

**2.** Build on the “green ring” provided by Cheasty Greenspace and Mt. Baker Boulevard by stressing the use of complementary green building technologies in development regulations and incentives.

**3.** Continue to pursue zoning and design review changes that support the inclusion of green building components.

**4.** Look for opportunities for a Living Building Pilot Program project in North Rainier.

**5.** Complete a green infrastructure analysis exploring potential opportunities such as UW Laundry, Rainier Ave. S. redesign and stormwater facility work.

**6.** Consider building a “green” demonstration and education site for the community in relation to the green jobs and technology program that could provide visible, passive education about wind and solar technologies and other green building technologies to encourage engagement in green jobs or local use of alternative energy. This could also be a destination site that supports small businesses.

## Goal 5

**A community that supports and provides opportunities for neighborhood youth.**

### Discussion

The North Rainier Urban Village is home to Franklin High School – a center for both youth education and youth activities. The community would like to see more programs to positively engage its young people.

### Policies

**5.A.** In fulfilling its role as the Hub Urban Village for the Rainier

Valley, North Rainier should include training programs and jobs for youth that prepare them for family-wage jobs in the area and region.

### Strategies

1. Continue to fund programs that engage youth in positive and safe ways such as
  - Youth in Focus photography classes;
  - Seattle Chamber Players composition workshop at Franklin High School; and
  - Northwest African American Museum public sculpture classes.

2. Develop more coordinated information resources for youth to learn about and engage in various activities at a range of community service centers, learn about jobs and job training, as well as engage in supported physical activity in local green and open spaces.

3. Work more closely with local schools to create seamless access for youth to community amenities and services.

## Goal 7

**North Rainier is known as a safe and hospitable neighborhood through its residents' increased awareness of community-based crime prevention programs. (NR-G10)**

### Discussion

Throughout Southeast Seattle the community's concerns about public safety negatively affects their use of transit and parks, and walking or bicycling to local shopping areas.

### Policies

**7.A.** Promote uses around transit facilities such as businesses open into the evening hours, and housing that provides "eyes on the street."

**7.B.** Seek opportunities for the community and the Seattle Police Department to strengthen partnerships.

### Strategies

1. Create neighborhood design guidelines that emphasize pedestrian-friendly elements in new developments and ensure "eyes on the street."

2. Provide sufficient police presence around transit facilities until the time that the level of development provides sufficient activity to reduce the need for police presence.

3. Define and protect emergency access routes to and through the Town Center for reliable access by police and fire vehicles.

4. Increase the mix of uses and residential density in the Town Center to increase the numbers of people using the public spaces including the sidewalks.

5. Build positive working relationships among community members and Seattle Police Department.

6. Complete a Health Impact Assessment to increase the success of implementation at reducing disparities in health.

7. Install pedestrian-scale lighting throughout the Town Center, using design and color to distinguish the area as a vital pedestrian environment.

8. Support community-based projects that include activities that positively impact public safety issues including the development of community groups that share information and education about public safety as well as groups that implement programs or physical improvement projects, such as litter clean up, festivals, gathering spaces, public art, lighting improvements, banners for business districts, etc.

## Goal 6

**A “ring of green” surrounding the urban village with strong connections to the greenbelts, boulevards and parks, augmented with a hierarchy of open spaces.**

### Discussion

The community values the existing parks and open spaces. Many expressed that the parks and open spaces are key to why they enjoy living in the area. There will be a need for a variety of parks or open spaces in the Town Center as it gains residents, which will support the area as a shopping destination. The form and programming of open spaces should also meet the differing needs of the diverse community.

### Policies

- 6.A.** Seek to preserve environmentally sensitive hillsides, particularly those in the Cheasty Greenbelt, and seek to protect them from further residential development. (NR-P6)
- 6.B.** Support partnerships with Parks, SDOT, DON, utilities, nonprofit organizations and the community to enhance street-end stairs, and create safe trails where appropriate through the surrounding greenbelts.
- 6.C.** Enhance community pride through establishment of a multicultural community center, multicultural community festivals, youth mentoring, and other youth programs that support positive and safe activities for youth. (NR-P10)
- 6.D.** Design parks and open spaces and programming to accommodate users of diverse ages, interests and cultures.

**6.E.** Consider using levy funds, general funds and partnerships with developers, to create a hierarchy of public and private open spaces that are publicly accessible and address the gaps identified in the Parks Gap Analysis.

**6.F.** Support local agriculture and access to locally grown food through public mechanisms such as P-Patches and the Cultivating Communities program, as well as nonprofit and private mechanisms including farmers markets and on-site landscaping.

### Strategies

- 1.** Improve and augment the Cheasty and Mt. Baker Boulevard network by
  - improving street-end stairways,
  - constructing new trails from Beacon Hill to the Town Center that offer easier grades than those on streets such as S. McClellan St.,
  - enhancing the streetscape on S. McClellan St., and
  - incorporating destination / active spaces along the network.
- 2.** Consider working with nonprofit organizations or a private developer to establish a multicultural community facility.
- 3.** Implement park programming and improvements that are culturally relevant to the neighborhood, such as increasing opportunities for soccer, and separate swimming times for women.
- 4.** Pursue the potential for acquiring new parks space within the urban village through the Parks and Green Spaces Levy funds for Neighborhood Park Acquisition.

**5.** Pursue the potential for acquiring new P-Patch community gardening space and urban agriculture space as part of and in addition to the 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy.

**6.** Implement the Parks and Green Spaces Levy project to renovate and improve Atlantic Street Playground.

**7.** Implement the Parks and Green Spaces Levy project to renovate and improve Rainier Park Playground.

**8.** Use opportunities, such as the 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy project at Children’s Play Garden and other Parks Department programs to increase accessibility and create open spaces that are relevant to people with disabilities.

**9.** Continue to implement the Pro Parks Levy designs for Jimi Hendrix Park, including elements that improve connections to the Northwest African American Museum and the surrounding neighborhood.

**10.** As funding becomes available, create additional structured and unstructured play areas for children.

**11.** Increase the vibrancy and safety of the public realm with wider sidewalks, landscaping and pedestrian lighting.

**12.** Promote the development of more P-Patches and other methods to increase access to locally based food sources and to build community.



Rainier Avenue S at S Bayview Street looking south.



Existing Zoning - Likely Build Out



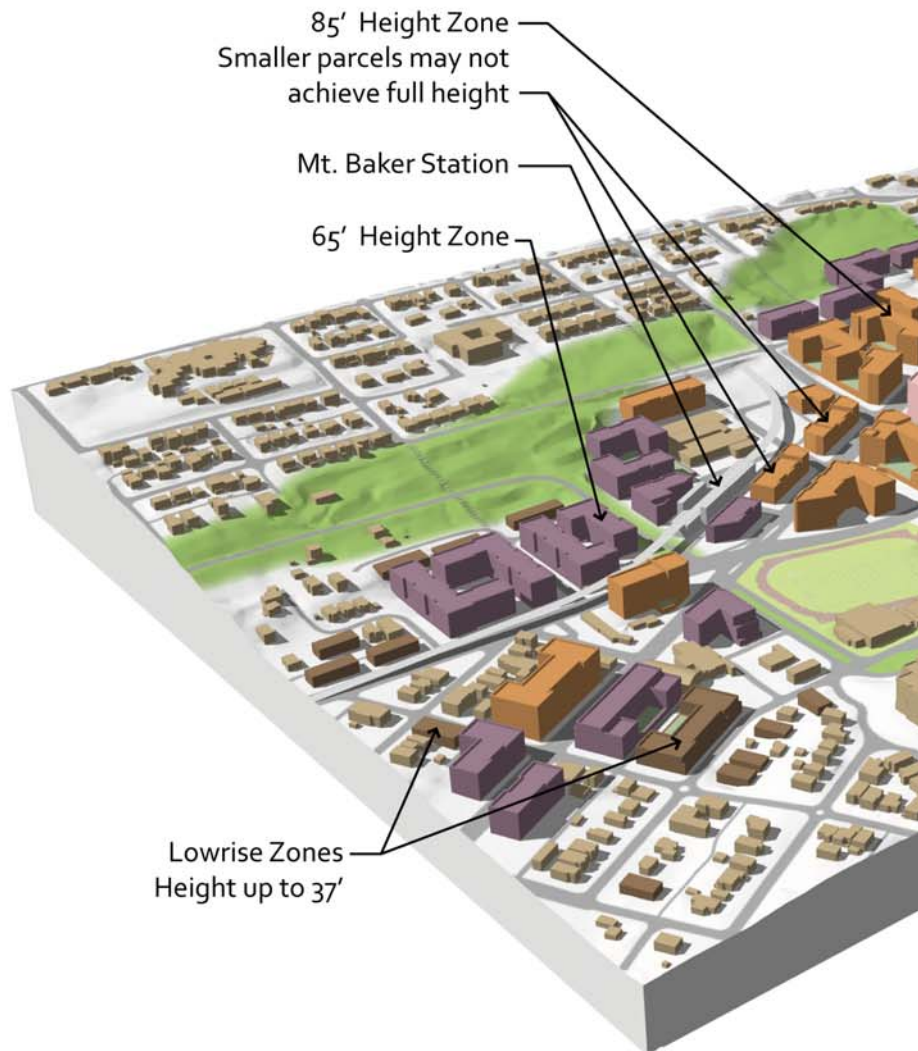
Concept A-Likely Build Out



Concept B-Likely Build Out  
Recommended for Further Study



Existing Zoning  
Likely Build Out

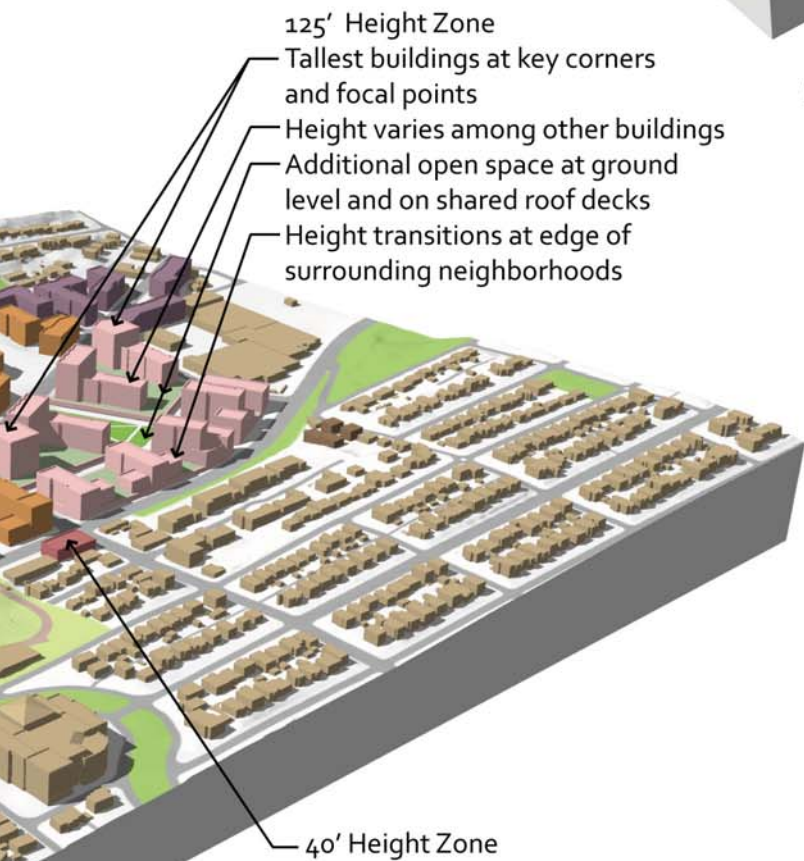


These building height concepts were created from community discussion and review from meetings that summer and fall. Using tools such as urban form zoning, and street design plans, the community will further define the plan to achieve the goals and vision of their neighborhood plan. See appendix for more details.

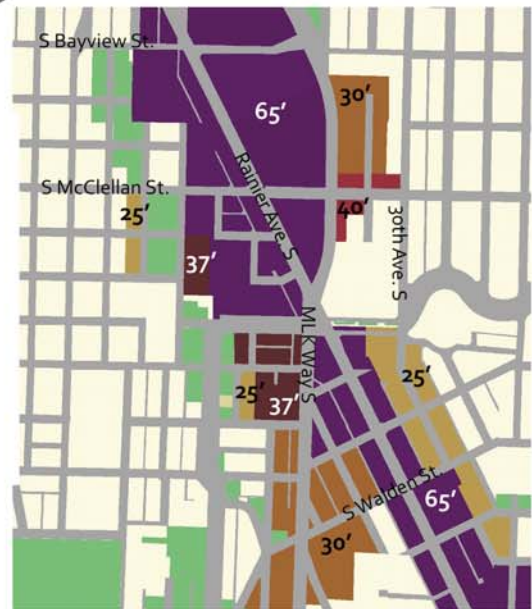
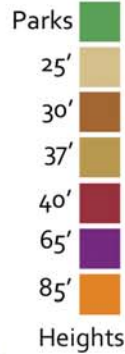




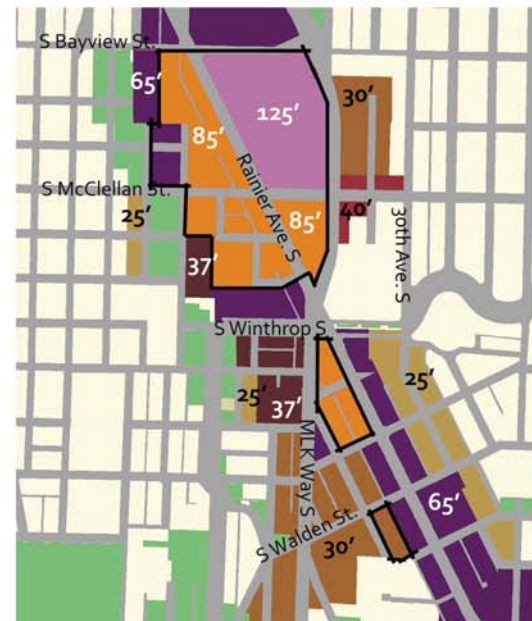
**Concept A**  
 Selective  
 Increase to 85'  
 Likely Build Out



**Concept B**  
 Selective increase  
 to 85' and 125'  
 Recommended for further study



**Existing Height Limits**



**Recommended Height Limits**

Discussions in spring 2009 and refined with community urban design framework plans, neighborhood design guidelines, and the desired form and characteristics of this Town Center to provide a context for additional land use recommendations.

## Shaping a Transit-Oriented Town Center

This section focuses on the community members' ideas for the physical elements – streets and urban form – that support their goal to create a strong Town Center that is attractive to residents as well as visitors. Residents and business owners alike recognize the potential of light rail to serve as a catalyst to help shape a more pedestrian-oriented Town Center.

To be a vital place that offers all the desired amenities, there must be sufficient density of housing businesses and jobs, good design, diversity of activities and people, and desirable destinations. These elements are also central to realizing a sustainable urban community where walking and transit are the preferred ways to get around.

### Goal 8

**A Town Center that concentrates housing, commercial uses, services and living-wage employment opportunities; that is well served by transit and nonmotorized travel options; and that is well designed and attractive to pedestrians.**

**A vibrant, business district that serves North Rainier residents and is a destination shopping area with stores that serve the greater Rainier Valley.**

### Discussion

Creating a Town Center for North Rainier was a central component of the neighborhood plan and station area plan. Community members continue to support this, and offer a more definitive vision about the character of the area, the mix of uses and the connections to the surrounding single family areas. While most of the recommended public improvements have been completed, the envisioned new development and critical elements of streetscape improvements have not. Property owners now see opportunities to create redevelopments that would be defining elements of the Town Center.

### Policies

**8.A.** Foster development of a shopping district comprised of businesses that provide products and services meeting the needs of community members from different cultural backgrounds.

**8.B.** Assess utility capacity within the Town Center for its ability to support the desired future density.

**8.C.** Strengthen local business associations that include and support the presence and growth of businesses owned by immigrant and minority community members.

**8.D.** Support and expand the existing diverse mix of generally small-scale businesses.

**8.E.** Include a portion of single-family area located between 24th Ave. S. and 25th Ave. S. north of S. McClellan St. within the urban village and within the Station Area Overlay District, and support a multifamily zoning designation for the area that would allow more compact residential development. (See pages 12 and 13.)

**8.F.** Within mixed-use zones in the Station Area Overlay District, define and consider minimum residential densities in new buildings in order to create the critical mass of people and activity for a Town Center.

### Strategies

**1.** Use mechanisms such as urban design framework plans, neighborhood design guidelines, and street design plans to describe the desired form of future development.

**2.** Create neighborhood design guidelines and an urban design framework plan for the North Rainier Town Center area. Plan elements could include

- building height options;
- incentive features;
- breaking down scale of super blocks to create a balance of inwardly and outwardly focused development;
- use of green building strategies such as those that address drainage, building efficiency; tree canopy; and opportunities for district energy systems;
- open space that invites people to gather and to engage in physical activity;



# Shaping a Transit-Oriented Town Center

- pedestrian connections and sidewalk widths; and
- guidelines to help ensure that new housing doesn't create a "wall" of undesirable facades that is counter to the feel of the neighborhood.

**3.** Through processes that engage community stakeholders consider and evaluate the application of zoning designations and related development regulations that are most likely to achieve the neighborhood's urban design vision. Include evaluation of new regulatory and programmatic tools as they become available. Rezone key opportunity sites to encourage redevelopment of parcels around the light rail station in a manner that incorporates housing, commercial services (such as a grocery store and small businesses) and amenities. (See pages 12 and 13.)

- 4.** Evaluate proposed height and land use changes within the Town Center. (See pages 12 and 13.)
- 5.** Address zoning on west side of Rainier Ave S. immediately south of S. Walden St. There are eight single-family parcels adjacent to parcels zoned NC<sub>3</sub>-65 and L-3. Rezone these parcels to be more consistent with adjacent properties.
- 6.** Expand the Town Center area to focus new mixed use development south of S. Bayview St. and north of S. Byron St.
- 7.** Consider including within the urban village a portion of single-family area located between 24th Ave. S. and 25th Ave. S. and north of S. McClellan St., and rezoning to be more consistent with adjacent zoning, and

to allow more compact residential development.

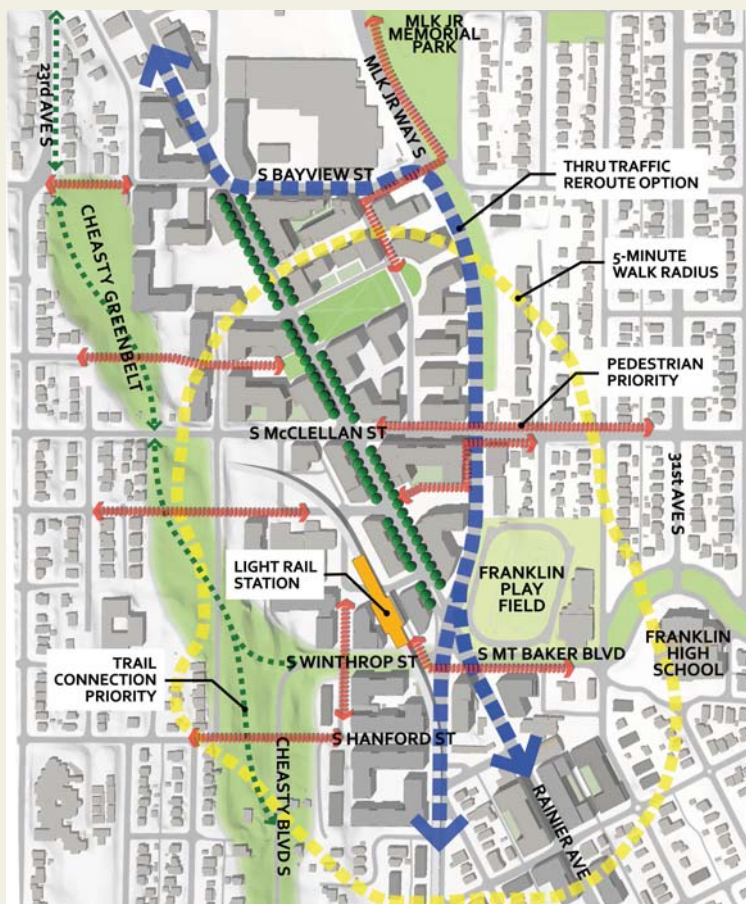
- 8.** Within mixed-use zones in the Station Area Overlay District, consider minimum residential densities (related to the zoning designations).
- 9.** Maintain and expand collaboration with Sound Transit, King Country Metro, property owners, and community members to pursue redevelopment opportunities in the Station Area Overlay District, such as surplus Sound Transit parcels and the Metro bus layover, to create dense, mixed-use projects that establish a vital pedestrian environment, provide affordable housing, and support the development of small businesses.

**10.** Continue to pursue redevelopment of the triangle block containing the bus transfer facility. Possible solutions could include undertaking a joint development project incorporating the bus transfer facility, or finding a new location for the bus transfer facility on the west side of Rainier Ave. S. and redeveloping the block.

**11.** Pursue opportunities to create a multicultural shopping area/center/market.

**12.** Work with Seattle City Light, Seattle Public Utilities and the Department of Information Technology when considering changes to zoning to evaluate if there are area-specific capacity problems resulting from the potential increase in development capacity.

**13.** Encourage the use of City grant programs to improve the Town Center and make it more inviting.



Places and Connections

## Goal 9

**A neighborhood served by a network of safe streets with amenities for pedestrians and bicyclists. (NR-G3)**

### Discussion

It was clearly acknowledged that this is currently an auto-oriented neighborhood. Both Rainier Ave. S. and MLK Jr. Way S. are dominated by vehicular traffic and are difficult to navigate as a pedestrian or bicyclist. Many people are afraid for their personal safety while waiting on the street for a bus. Nearby residents who could actually walk to the stores said they choose not to because it is unsafe and difficult to walk from store to store. In the future, this area is envisioned as a destination shopping area where it is possible to run multiple errands in one trip during the day or evening. Currently, the area does not feel secure because there are no “eyes on the street” from local businesses and residences.

### Policies

**9.A.** Create seamless pedestrian and bicycle links within the Town Center, and to the surrounding community facilities.

**9.B.** Prioritize development of universally accessible routes between the Town Center and locations such as Lighthouse for the Blind and Center Park.

**9.C.** Ensure that standards for new development projects will accommodate a vibrant pedestrian environment throughout the Town Center.

**9.D.** Enhance access throughout the Town Center for people of all ages and abilities.

### Strategies

**1.** Create a pedestrian network of pathways throughout the Town Center, connecting retail, services and the light rail station. Specific actions could include the following:

- Implementation of the Southeast Transportation Study (SETS ) projects #10 and #11 to calm traffic and improve the streetscape along S. McClellan St. from 23rd Ave. S. to Mt. Baker Blvd. Projects #10 and #11 include relocating utility poles and signal controller cabinets where necessary to ensure a clear walking path, adding a missing sidewalk link, widening sidewalks, installing planting strips, installing curb extensions, and adding pedestrian lighting. Additional work may include working with Metro to relocate trolley wire poles out of the pedestrian pathway.
- Work with property owners and developers to break up the large block and/or parcels into smaller pieces, providing walking routes through the sites and connections to the surrounding street grid, as well as consolidating the number of driveways as redevelopment occurs to provide an improved pedestrian environment.
- Complete the sidewalk network to make better connections between destinations.
- When enhancing access throughout the Town Center for people of all ages and abilities, pay particular attention to connections to

transit and shopping areas from the Lighthouse for the Blind and the Center Park.

- Identify sites that would benefit from unique art or pavement treatments to support a vibrant walking environment.
- 2.** Identify desired off-street circulation patterns and work with developers of large parcels to create internal circulation that promotes walking within developments and between the sites.
- 3.** Modify the Land Use Code to define minimum widths for sidewalks and landscaped planting strips on all streets in station areas with pedestrian designations. Define areas that are appropriate for, and associated sidewalk dimensions that are supportive of sidewalk cafes and/or stores that open to the sidewalk.
- 4.** Improve street ends to create more connections between neighborhoods.
- 5.** Create a more secure environment for people and business using the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to enliven temporarily vacant sites. Ideas could include temporary markets.
- 6.** Create active, family-oriented spaces within the Town Center to invite positive use that enhances public safety.



## Goal 10

**Rainier Ave. S. is a highly functioning multimodal “complete street” that serves as the spine of the Rainier Valley and retains its existing vistas of Mount Rainier. (NR-G4A)**

**Continue to develop Martin Luther King Jr. Way S. as a “complete street,” and part of the neighborhood’s network of streets with amenities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. (NR-G4B)**

**A transformed Rainier Avenue S. between S. Bayview St. and Martin Luther King Jr. Way S. that functions as a pedestrian-oriented main street.**

### Discussion

Almost everyone agreed that Rainier Ave. S. and the abutting development in its current form are not conducive to creating a vibrant Town Center. By reducing traffic on Rainier Ave. S., the streetscape would be made more appealing for pedestrians and still be able to adequately accommodate transit.

A “traffic-calmed” Rainier Ave. S. would most likely promote further streetscape improvements.

Community members recognize the area’s transportation challenges, with better bus, walking and biking environments a high priority. While the community acknowledges the constraints of available rights-of-way, the area needs sidewalks wide enough for safe walking, with outdoor cafes and adequate bus shelters; on-street parking in the commercial areas to act as a buffer between traffic and pedestrians; and bike lanes.

### Policies

**10.A.** Promote alternative transportation programs, such as bicycle commuting, local hiring, van pools, and transit ridership. (NR-P13)

**10.B.** Support actions that improve the pedestrian and transit functions along Rainier Ave. S. between S. Bayview Str. and MLK Jr. Way S. so that the section becomes more of a local main street for the North Rainier neighborhood.

### Strategies

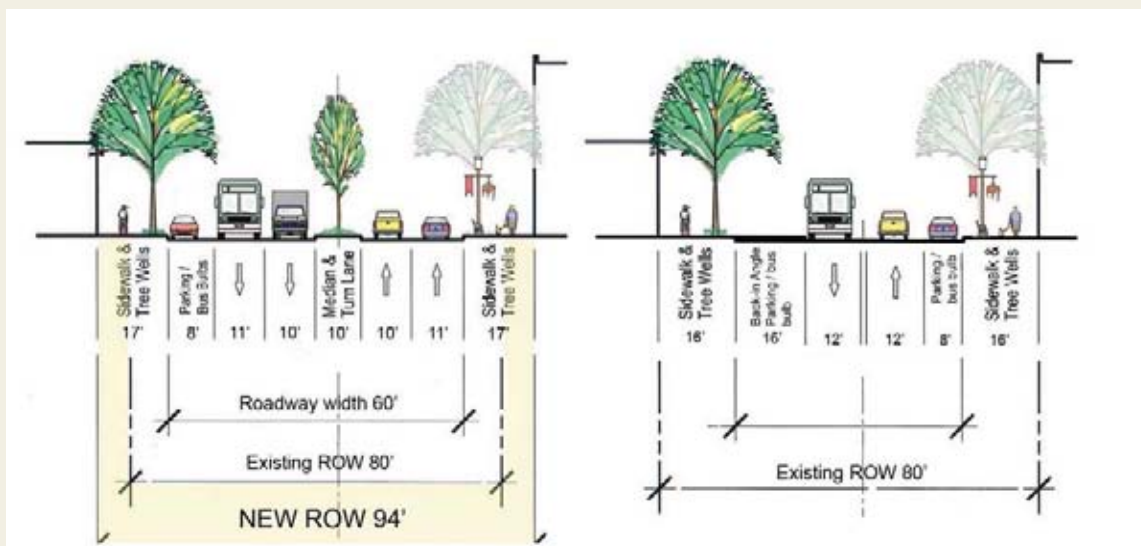
**1.** Implement the recommendations from the Southeast Transportation Study (SETS), which serves as the blueprint for programming transportation improvements in Southeast Seattle.

**2.** Use the Pedestrian Master Plan as a tool for prioritizing pedestrian improvements and Neighborhood Street Fund projects.

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

**4.** Continue to pursue a bicycle route along Rainier Ave. S. or parallel street that takes advantage of the flat grade in the valley floor.

**5.** Look for opportunities to develop transportation corridors that might encompass several roads. For example, consider if Chief Sealth Trail can function as the major north/south bike route, enhancing the connections from it to commercial areas.



Rainier Ave S Expanded ROW Option

Rainier Ave S Reroute Option

## Goal 10 (continued)

6. Consider adding destination spaces along Chief Sealth Trail, such as play areas, community gardens and pocket parks, to encourage use.

7. Use health impacts assessments to help ensure that transportation projects consider accessibility, livability and health quality.

8. Evaluate an “MLK Jr. Way S. re-route” that would route through-traffic from Rainier Ave. S. to MLK Jr. Way S. from the Rainier Ave. S./MLK Jr. Way S. intersection. See conceptual street cross-section options on page 17.

- This strategy calls for the rerouting of through-traffic from Rainier Ave. S. to MLK Jr. Way S. at the Rainier Ave. S. and MLK Jr. Way S.

intersection and back to Rainier Ave. S. by way of S. Bayview St. *(Note: The re-route strategy would require more detailed modeling and operational analysis to understand the traffic volumes that would be diverted, effects upon congestion especially at intersections, geometric requirements, and the need to acquire additional rights-of-way (ROW). Both existing and future conditions would need to be studied before any decision can be made about this alternative. Currently, there is no funding for such an analysis, engineering, design, or construction.)*

9. Develop street design cross-sections for Rainier Ave. S. that support a more pedestrian-oriented shopping area.

- SDOT will complete a conceptual design for Rainier Ave. S. from the Rainier Ave. S. and MLK Jr. Way intersection to S. Bayview St. that shows a possible new cross-section which includes landscaped median where possible, and other features such as a parking lane. This design would require additional ROW from private landowners. *(Note: Before any design alterations could be accomplished, SDOT would have to conduct an operational analysis of any proposed changes. This analysis would include impacts upon levels of congestion, especially at intersections, and transit speed and reliability. Both existing and future conditions may need to be studied. Currently, there is no funding for such an analysis, engineering, design, or construction.)*

## Appendices

The appendices are posted online at [www.seattle.gov/dpd/NeighborhoodPlanUpdates](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/NeighborhoodPlanUpdates)

### Work Plan

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

### Glossary

### Updating the Comprehensive Plan

This document shows how the revised North Rainier Neighborhood Plan Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan updates and weaves together the Goals and Policies from the 1999 Neighborhood Plan and those that emerged from this 2009 Update process.

### Recommended Changes to the City's Comprehensive Plan

### Neighborhood Plan

completed in 1999

### Baseline Report

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

### Meeting Materials and Notes

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

## Acknowledgments

In acknowledgment of the participation of thousands of committed Seattleites.

### Including:

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Rainier Chamber of Commerce  
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Feet First  
Great City  
International Sustainable Solutions  
Scan Design Foundation  
Sound Transit  
University of Washington,  
College of Built Environments  
Neighborhood Planning Advisory  
Committee

### Planning Outreach Liaisons

Somali speaking community  
Amharic speaking community  
Oromiffa speaking community  
Tigrinya speaking community  
African American community  
Vietnamese speaking community  
Tagalog speaking community

Chinese speaking community  
Khmer speaking community  
Seniors & People Living with  
Disabilities  
Youth  
Native American & Alaskan Native  
community  
Spanish speaking community

### Commissions

Seattle Planning Commission  
Seattle Design Commission

### City of Seattle Lead Participants

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

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





