

Plaza on 5th Ave. S Safety Enhancements

May 2024



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Introduction



The 5th Avenue Plaza is an important community element with strong ties to the historic context within the International Special Review District and Pioneer Square Historic District while serving as one of the busiest transportation hubs of the area. It is a link between the ISRD and Pioneer Square that is important for both communities. Guidance for work in the 5th Avenue Plaza is provided in SMC 23.66.310, the ISRD Design Guidelines (current and proposed revisions) as well as Pioneer Square Design Guidelines.

In an effort to improve the space and community connections the Jackson Hub Concept Plan was developed in a community driven process in 2019.

This proposed project and scope of work are designed to work toward meeting some of the Jackson Hub design objectives while following the historic district guidelines and SMC 23.66.310 which include addressing the benches, removing planters that create pedestrian pinch points, obstruct sightlines, and provide safety concerns as well as removal of a stage that also provides pedestrian pinch points and safety concerns.

The proposal for this space is transitional to improve issues of pedestrian flow of traffic and safety as Sound Transit and the community work toward vision and planning for long term use of the space.

Project Context



History of Union Station

In 1911, Union Pacific Railroad and the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad served Seattle's Union Station. Here, past generations have caught trains traveling across the continent. With the rise of air and auto travel, trains stopped serving Union Station in 1971. By the late 1990s, Union Station's main headhouse was restored, winning the 2000 Historic Preservation Award. The station's defunct tracks were redeveloped into today's form: office and retail space. Around the same time, the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (DSTT) was born, including the integrated International District/Chinatown Station (or "IDS.") Sound Transit owns its headquarters in the Union Station headhouse, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

History of International District/Chinatown Station

IDS was originally built by the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle, or Metro Transit, which later merged with King County. IDS opened to buses in 1990. Link began operating alongside buses in 2003. By 2019, the northern bus terminal was redeveloped into the Washington State Convention Center Expo, leaving only Link trains running through IDS. The DSTT project and IDS Plaza was a successful example of early design team collaboration with architects and artists* working together on final project designs including the Chinese zodiac art (retained), trellises (retained), stage and planters (requesting removal).

*<https://www.historylink.org/File/2702>

https://www.4culture.org/public_art/downtown-seattle-transit-tunnel/

4Culture Staff Report 9/9/2020

Project Context



Land use goals & objectives

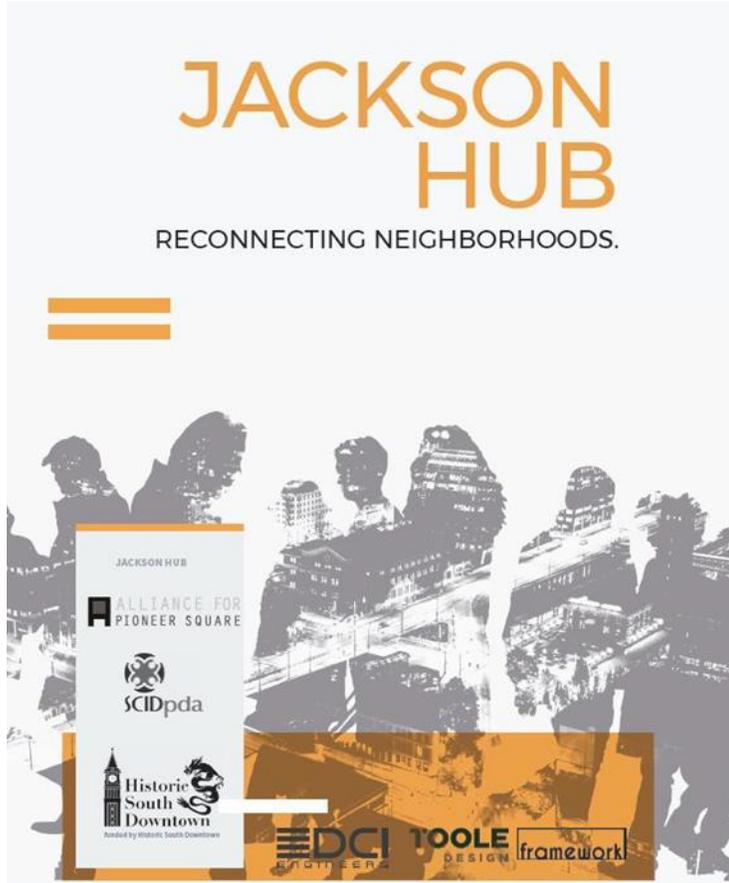
Today's Union Station campus (including IDS) is guided by International Special Review District (ISRD) Design and Pioneer Square Design Guidelines as well as Union Station Corridor goals and objectives listed in Chapter 23.66.310 of Seattle Municipal Code. The 1986 Union Station Planned Community Development Guidelines aim to:

- Preserve and rehabilitate the historic Union Station headhouse.
- Conform with the scale & mixed-uses of neighboring Chinatown-International District zoning.
- Incorporate a linear public open space along Fifth Avenue, enhancing the pedestrian experience and connecting Pioneer Square with the Chinatown-International District through the Weller Street pedestrian bridge. This also provides connectivity between Link, Sounder, Amtrak, Streetcar and various bus routes.
- Sufficient parking, with an underground structure connecting to the multi-story parking garage at Fourth Avenue South & Seattle Boulevard South.
- Retention of view corridors from Jackson & King streets.

Original plaza design followed these design guidelines, but years of use have demonstrated that refinements are necessary.

Sound Transit's proposed 5th Avenue Plaza improvements are consistent with these aforementioned goals. In the years since the space was developed it has become increasingly apparent that the planters designed for the space diminish the sightlines and lessen the pedestrian experience with safety concerns. Additionally, the stage has not been utilized, is a pedestrian pinch point and provides security challenges.

Project Context



Modern planning context

In 2019, a community-driven process created the Jackson Hub Concept Plan. This plan was developed by DCI Engineers, Toole Design & Framework under the leadership of the Seattle Chinatown-International District Preservation & Development Authority (SCIDpda) and the Alliance for Pioneer Square, a City-chartered independent agency and a non-profit organization, respectively. Funding was provided by the Historic South Downtown Community Preservation & Development Agency, which was created by the Washington State Legislature.

Together, 5th Avenue Plaza (IDS), Union Station & King Street Station create Seattle's busiest transportation gateway. Recognizing the numerous connections between transit modes, the Jackson Hub Concept Plan stated five design objectives to improve the urban fabric: safe & comfortable; engaging; connected; embedded; and iconic. These core goals were vetted through public outreach processes, providing guidance throughout the design process.

At the tactical level, the Plan called for prioritizing neighborhood icons; identifying key pedestrian paths; eliminating clutter; updating roof structures & expanding pinch points; and grouping amenities outside walkways. Sound Transit acknowledges some specific recommendations in the plan appear to be contradictory. As such, we are striving to align our scope with the democratically developed land use & design objectives.

Specifically, there are inconsistencies with the current design of the plaza and the objectives in the Jackson Hub- including the position of the plaza's performance stage and noted planters which are located in key pedestrian pathways, create pinch points in pedestrian traffic, and are located within key walkways.

Sound Transit is proposing to remove the stage and relocate performances to a dedicated busking area next to the covered walkway (adjacent to Fifth Avenue South.) This improves pedestrian pathways and sightlines along the busy north-south corridor, reduces pinch points in pedestrian traffic flow, improves spaces for performers by designating a sheltered area for this purpose and eliminates existing rodent habitat improving health and safety of visitors in the space.

Project Context



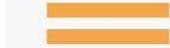
Project elements and planning alignment

IDS Plaza Improvements Project Element	Alignment with Planning Objectives
Remove performance stage. Designate busking area under covered walkway, adjacent to Fifth Avenue South.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhancing the pedestrian experience by removing pinch points for north-south travelers. 2. Removing rodent habitat improves health, cleanliness, and safety. 3. Designate and encourage busking, embedding cultural activities into the plaza (away from heavy pedestrian traffic.)
Strategically remove bamboo planter boxes.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhancing the pedestrian experience by removing pinch points for north-south travelers. 2. Creating clearer sightlines and eliminating blind corners improves safety. 3. Removing rodent habitat improves health, cleanliness, and safety.
Preserve public art elements that are embedded into the plaza's architecture, such as the Chinese Zodiac pavers and the poetry on certain beams.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintains publicly accessible cultural assets that help make Jackson Hub iconic.

Project Context

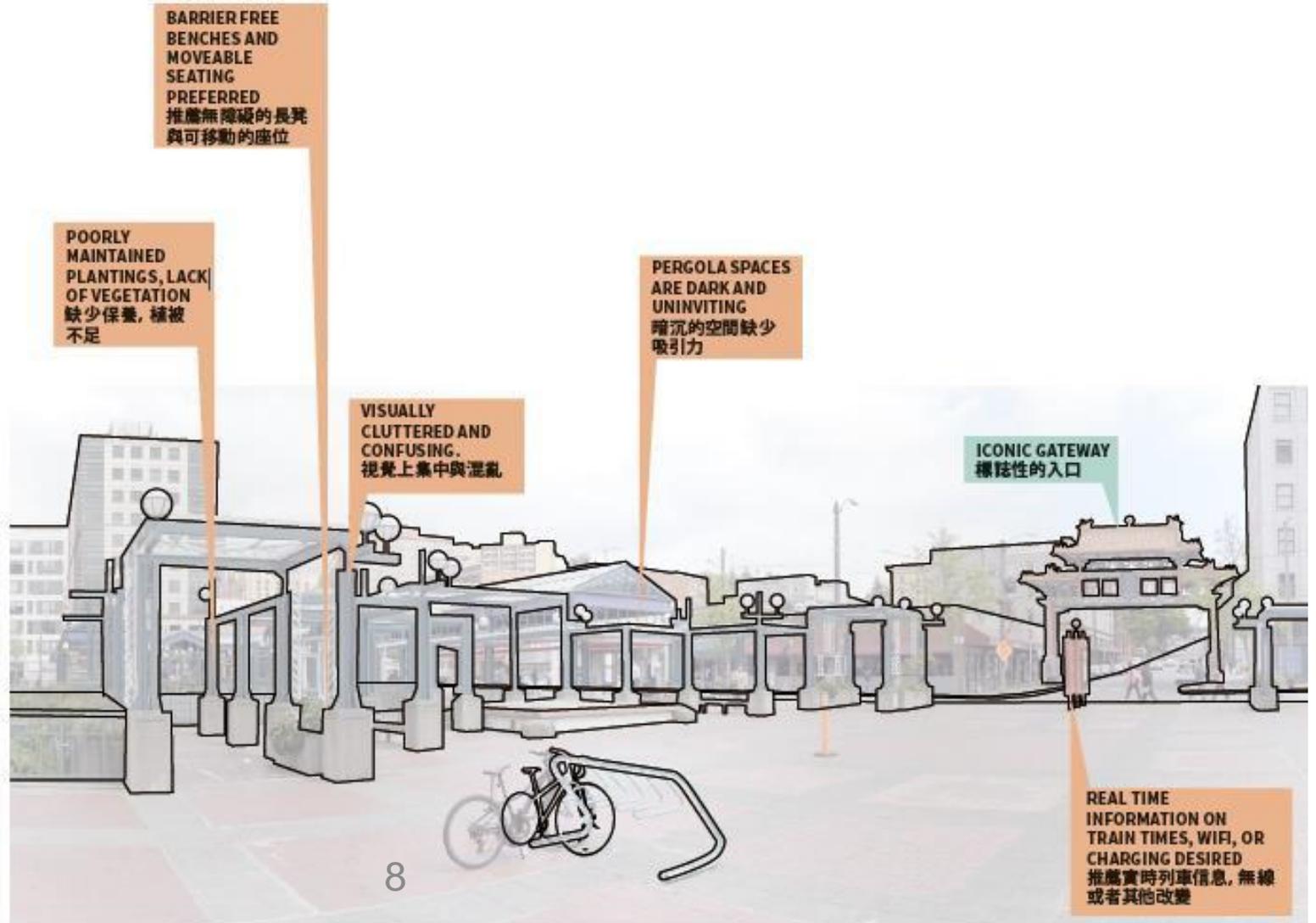
JACKSON HUB

RECONNECTING NEIGHBORHOODS.



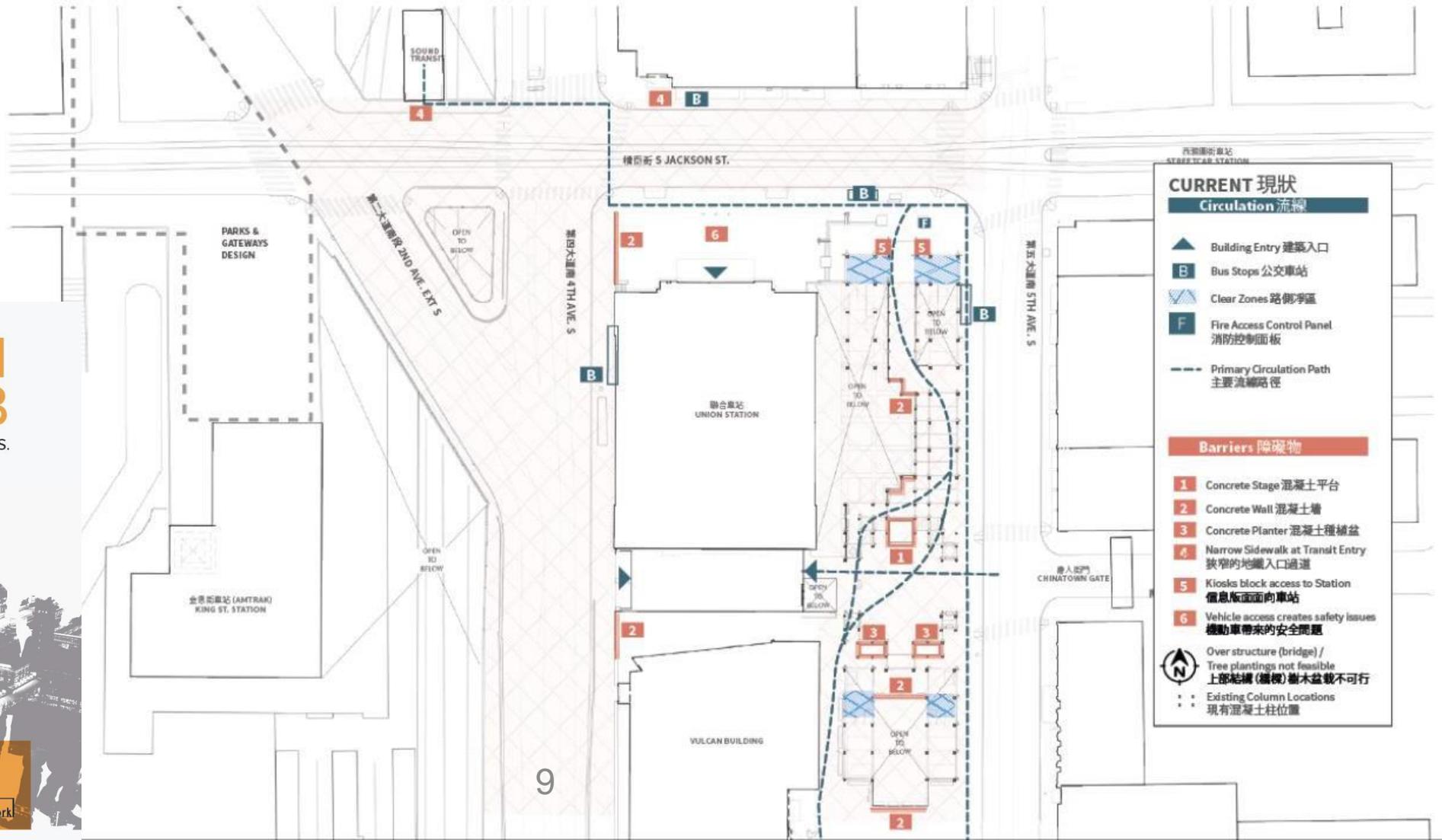
EXPERIENCE & PUBLIC SPACE

PLAZA ON 5TH AVENUE S.



Project Context

SITE CONSTRAINTS & OBSTRUCTIONS



JACKSON HUB
RECONNECTING NEIGHBORHOODS.

JACKSON HUB
ALLIANCE FOR PIONEER SQUARE
SCIDpda
Historic South Downtown
DCI TOOLE framework

Project Context

Deaccession of Planters and Stage as Artwork

The planters and performance stage were artwork elements that were installed as part of a larger installation on the DSTT International District/Chinatown Station Plaza following SMC 23.66.310 Union Station Corridor goals and objectives. Sound Transit requested that 4Culture deaccession the stage platform and the concrete planter boxes to minimize security risks, improve sightlines and reduce pedestrian pinch points.

After thorough review of the status of planters and the stage, 4Culture agreed there was sufficient justification for deaccession. Please see 4Culture staff report (attached) for additional context on the original construction/placement of the stage platform and planter boxes and detailed analysis of justification for deaccession. Furthermore, deaccession of the stage and planters was warranted under Sections 1.3.2.4 and 1.3.2.7 of the King County Public Art Collection Policy and granted by 4Culture on 09/09/2020.

*The art trellises are not proposed for removal in this project.

**Chinese Zodiac pavers and poetry on certain beams will also be retained.

***Proposed work will not affect visibility or access to the Seattle Pai-Lau/Chinatown Gate.

Scope of Work

Scope of Work

This project will include the removal of the performance stage (A) as well as seven concrete planters (B1-B5) and (C1-C2).

Where the stage and planters have been removed, new pavers to match color, material, and pattern will be installed (see attached photos).

There are sixteen benches around the plaza that are deteriorating and in need of replacement in-kind (D2-D4) and painting (D1-D4). This scope of work includes painting the metal work on the two previously restored benches (D1) as well as replacement in-kind for the remaining fourteen benches with new wood planks, the contractor is proposing cedar planks, and paint to match the original construction of the benches. Measurements have been taken to assure wood will be the same dimension and configuration. The metal work will be painted using the original color used on the plaza elements in a high-performance paint as specified in Sound Transit's design manual. All future painting projects will also use this same color in a high-performance paint.

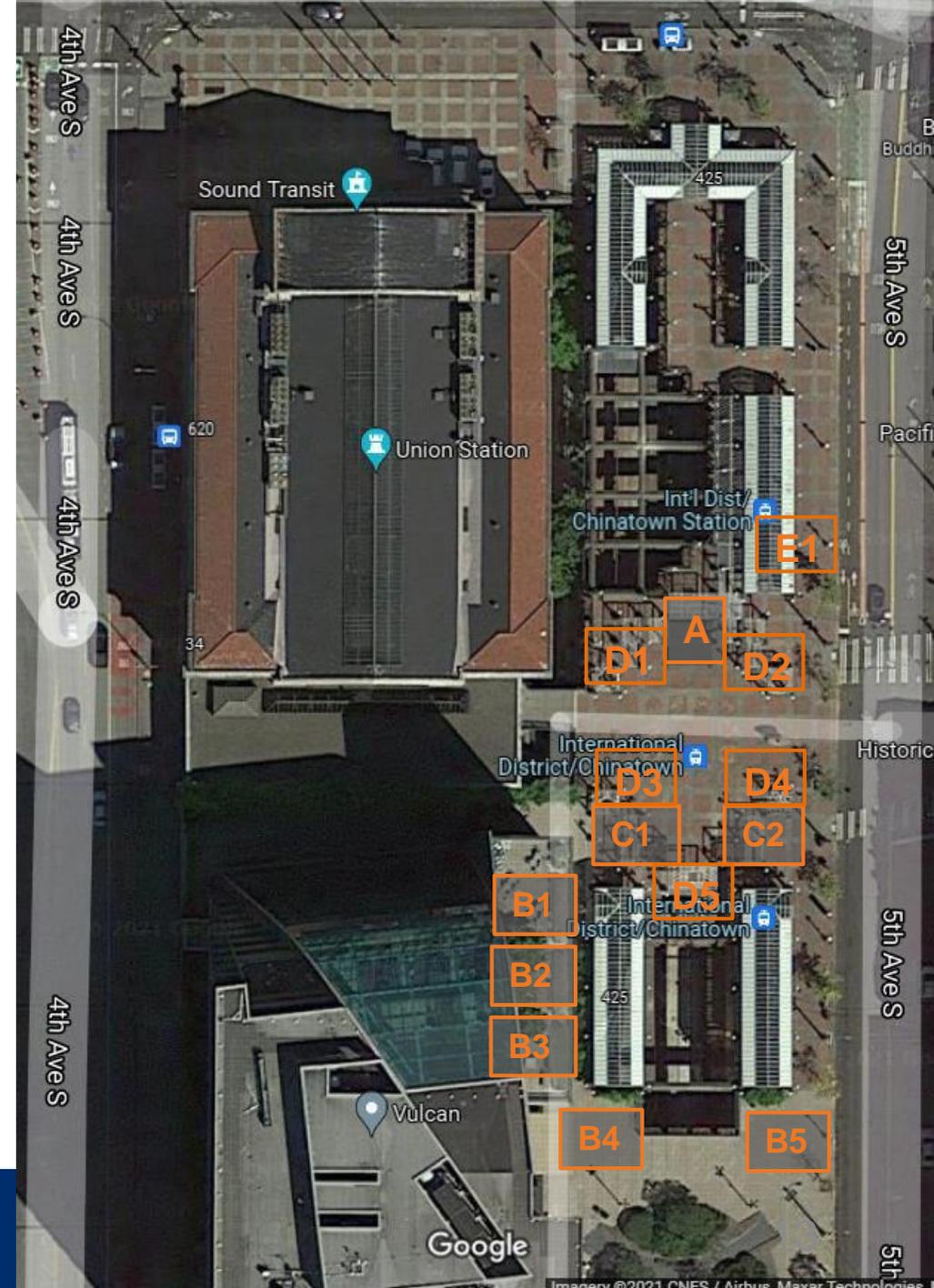
A busking star (E) is proposed to identify a consistent location for buskers, out of the flow of pedestrian traffic, to provide entertainment the stage was intended to offer. A busking designation will require minimal maintenance while providing entertainment for nearby pedestrians. This star location is closer to the sidewalk, allows a busker to seek shelter while performing in inclement weather, or flexibility to stand closer to the sidewalk for performance in nicer weather.

Site Plan

- A. Remove Performance Stage
- B. Remove 5 planter boxes (west and south of south light rail entrance)
- C. Remove 2 large planters (north portion of the south light rail entrance)
- D. Restore 16 benches
- E. Add busking location

*Restore with existing pavers

Plaza on 5th Avenue S.



A - Performance Stage (existing condition)



- Wood deteriorated and unstable
- Creates pedestrian pinch point and impedes flow of traffic

A – Performance Stage (Removed)



B – Planters (existing condition)

Removal will:

- Reduce pinch points for pedestrian traffic
- Improve sightlines
- Eliminate blind corners, improving safety
- Remove rodent habitat for health and safety of the public

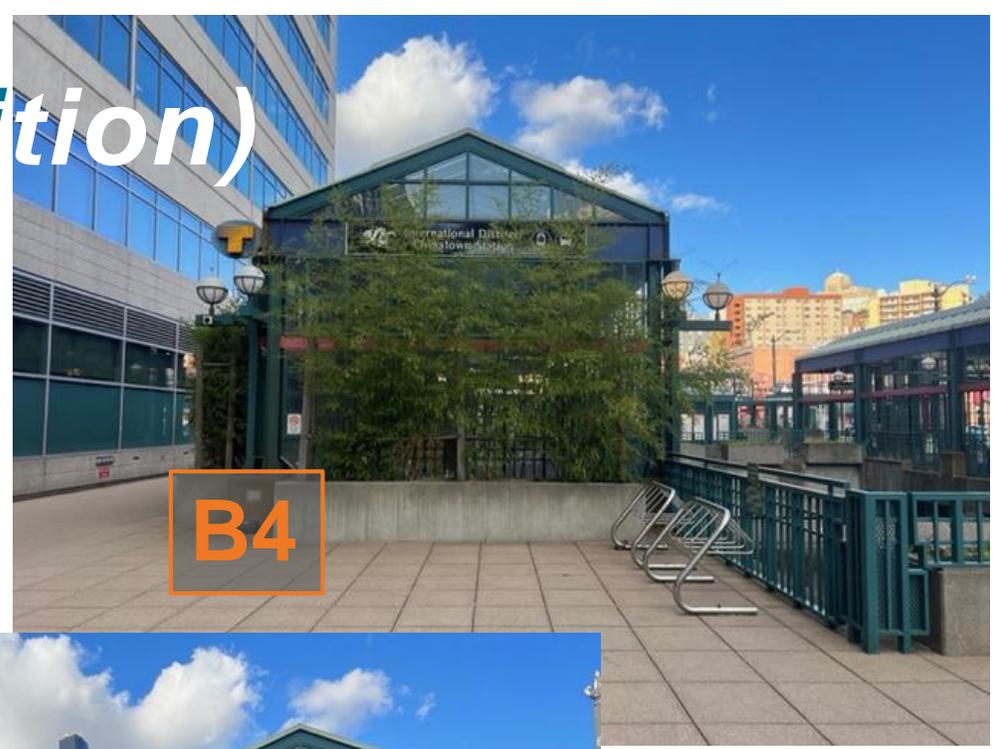


B – Planters (removed)



B – Planters (existing condition)

Small planters along rail not included in current scope.



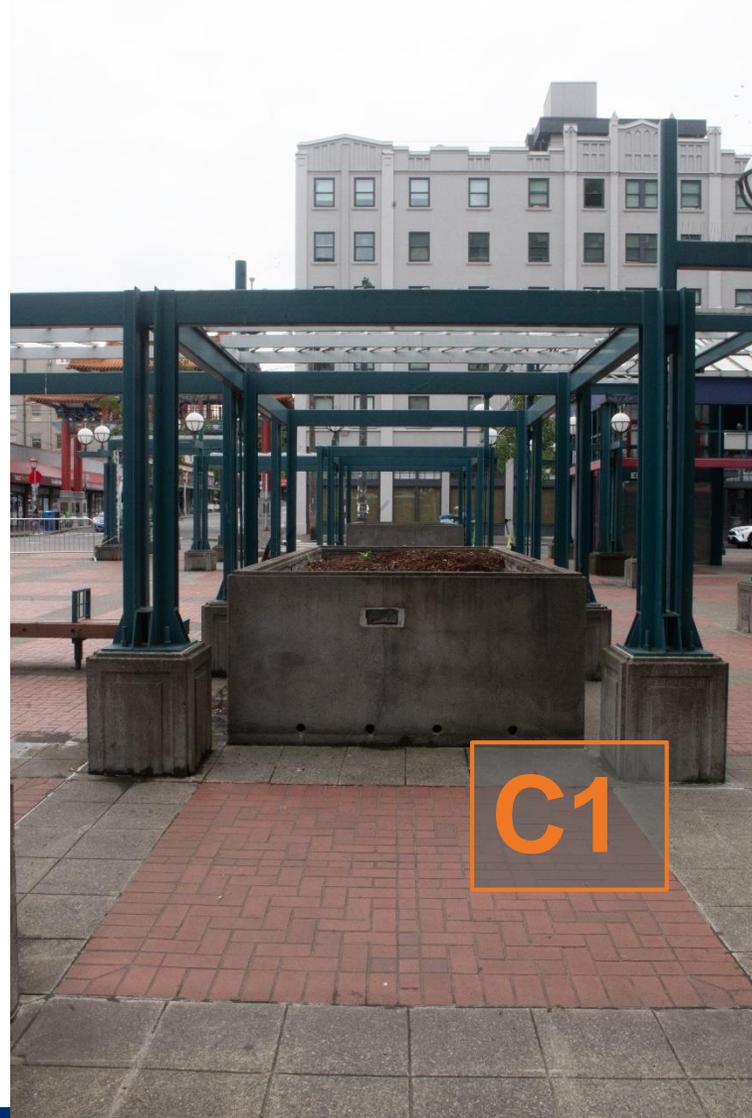
B – Planters (removed)



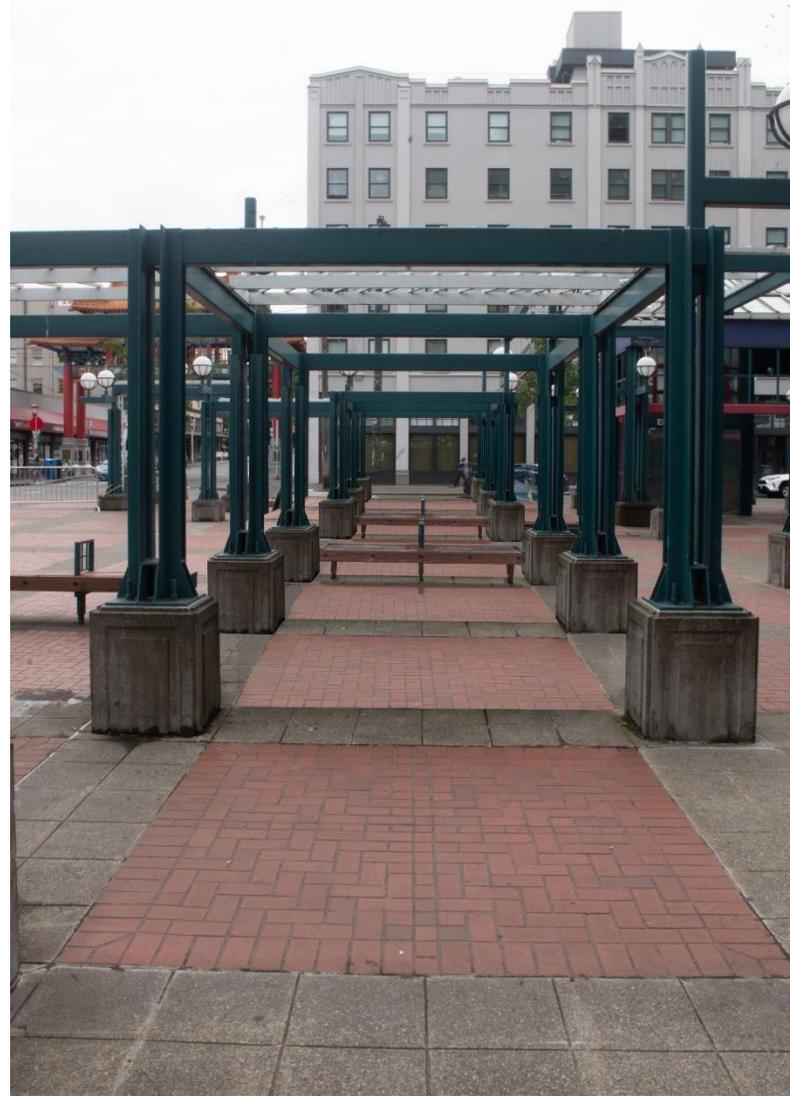
C – Large Planters (existing condition)



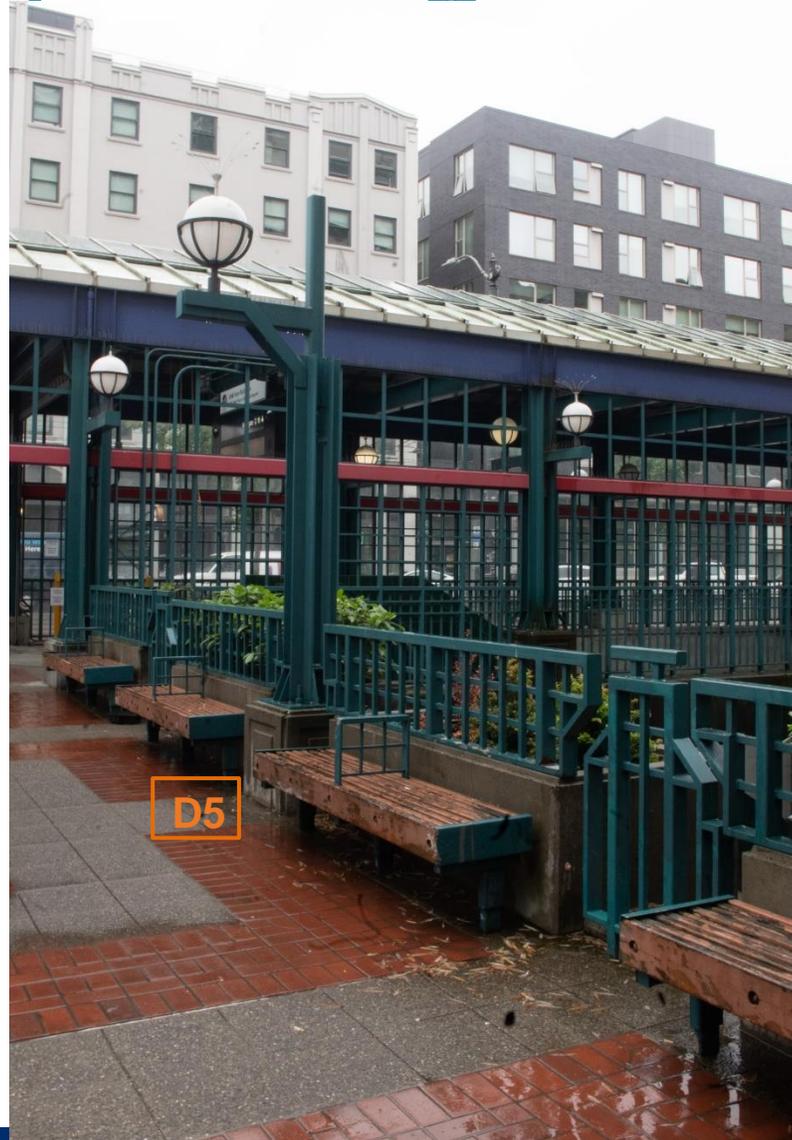
C – Large Planters (existing condition)



C – *Large Planters (removed)*



D – Benches (existing condition)



- Benches at D1 are paint only.
- D2, D3, & D4 Benches will be restored in-kind of wood of same dimension and painted to match original installation. (Brown wood: Sherwin Williams SW 9127 At Ease Soldier)
- Metal work will be painted to match using high-performance paint in color originally specified for the plaza. (Green metal: Sherwin Williams SW 6482 Cape Verde)
- Small planters along rail will remain in place, removal is not included in current scope.

D – Benches Restored



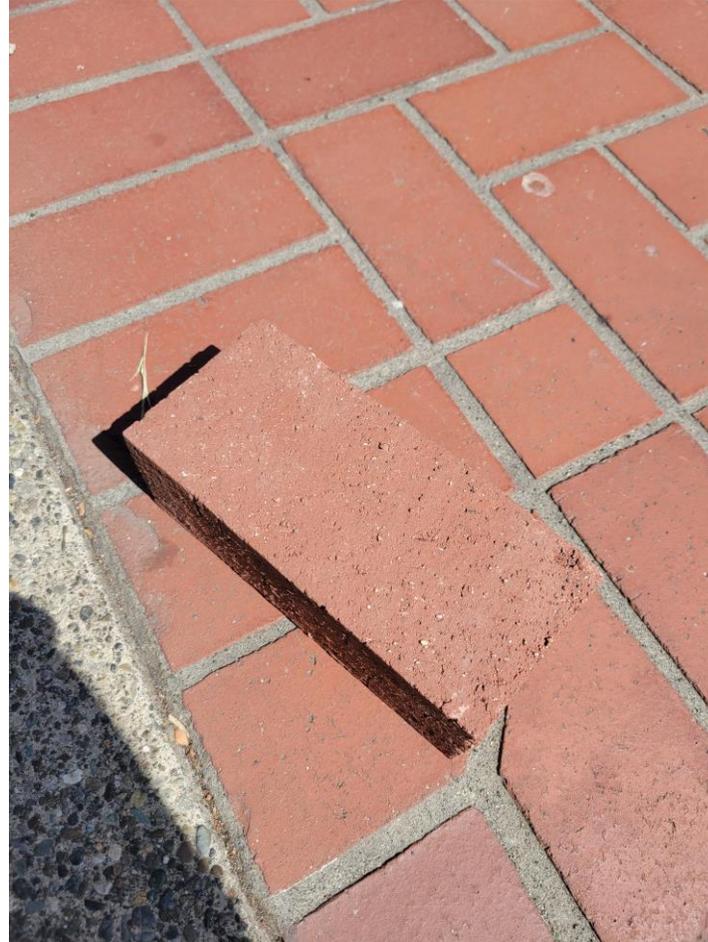
E – Busking Location



- Location out of pedestrian pinch point.
- Option for buskers to use shelter or sidewalk during performances.

Material Matching

Brick Sample on
existing surface
near location
requiring patches

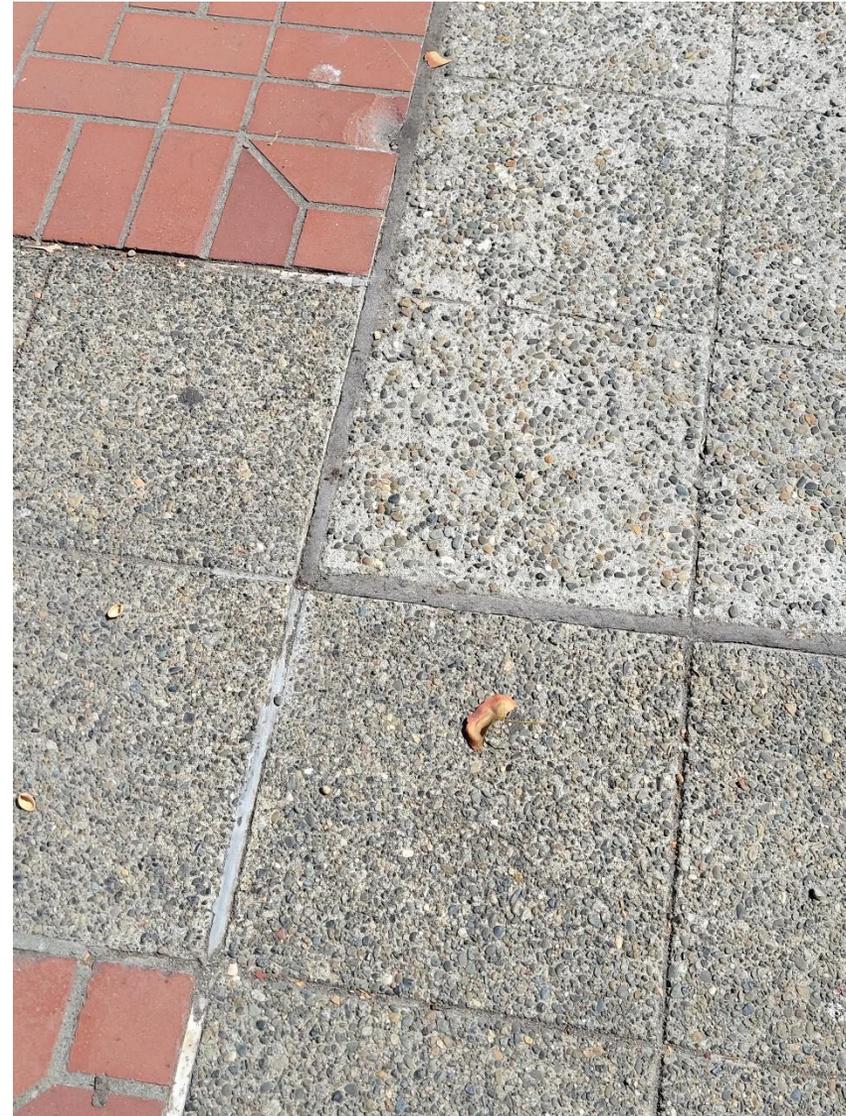


Material Matching

Weathered Concrete

The original material is a poured concrete which has weathered to expose the aggregate. This photo shows a recent patch and what the project will emulate as closely as possible.

*If required, patched concrete could be colored to create appearance of aging in addition to exposing aggregate.



Material Matching

Paver sample on existing surface near location where patching will be required by the planters labeled B.



WHEN RECORDED RETURN TO:

Sound Transit
Union Station
401 South Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104
Attention: Managing Legal Counsel

E3233949

EXCISE TAX AFFIDAVITS
4/19/2023 4:23 PM KING COUNTY, WA
Tax Amount:\$10.00



20230419000716

QUIT CLAIM DEED Rec: \$333.50
4/19/2023 4:23 PM
KING COUNTY, WA

CHICAGO TITLE NCS
REF# 194533-56

(131)

QUIT CLAIM DEED

Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel

Grantor: KING COUNTY, a home rule charter county and political subdivision of the State of Washington

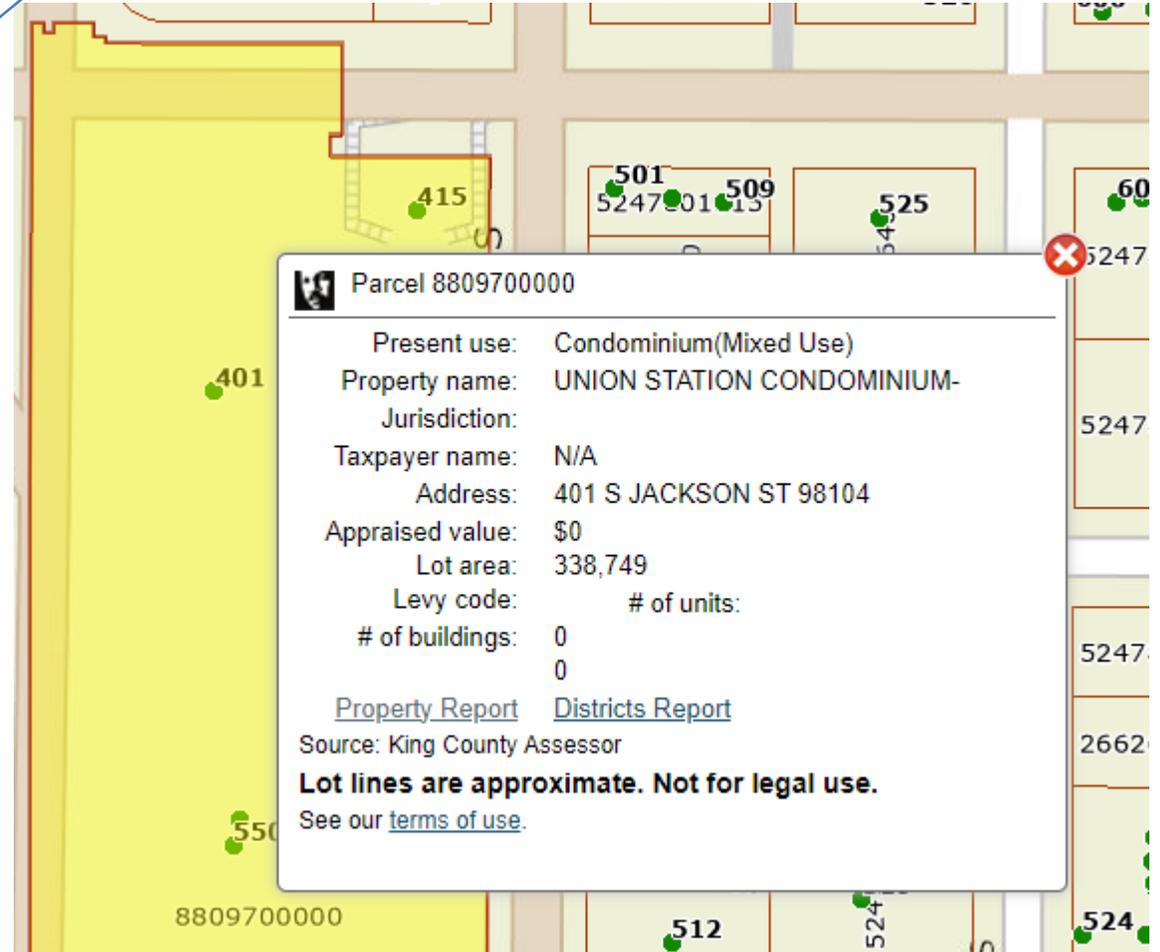
Grantee: CENTRAL PUGET SOUND REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY, a regional transit authority

Legal Description: Ptns of Blocks 26 and 27, and ptn of vacated King Street adjoining said blocks, vacated by Seattle Ordinance No. 18078, as shown on D.S. Maynard's Plat of the Town (now City) of Seattle, recorded in Vol. 1 of Plats, Pg. 23, Records of King County, WA'; see Exhibit B-1 for remainder of legal description

Tax Parcel No.: 8809700000, 5247801292; see Exhibit B-7 for remainder of tax parcels, all located in King County, Washington

1. THE GRANTOR, KING COUNTY, a home rule charter county and political subdivision of the State of Washington, and THE GRANTEE, CENTRAL PUGET SOUND REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY, a regional transit authority organized under chapter 81.112 RCW, are parties to that certain Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel Transfer Agreement dated April 18, 2023 (the "Transfer Agreement"). Pursuant to the Transfer Agreement, Grantor and Grantee have entered into that certain DSTT Transfer and Conveyance Agreement dated April 18, 2023 (the "Conveyance Agreement") whereby Grantor transfers to Grantee the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel located in King County,

Property Ownership Parcel # 8809700000



Thank you.



 [soundtransit.org](https://www.soundtransit.org)

