

# GRAND STREET COMMONS - AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALLEY VACATION

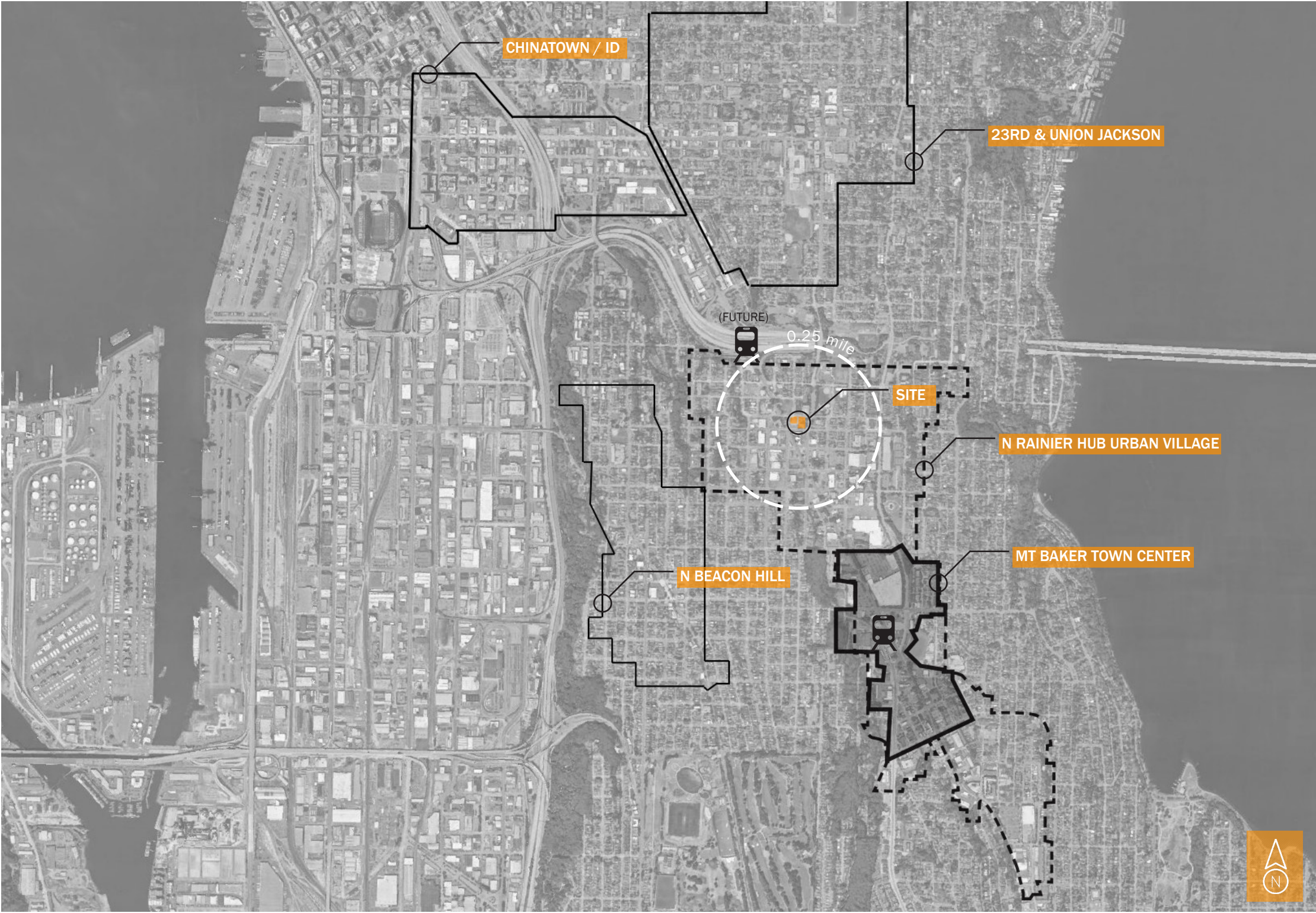
## SEATTLE DESIGN COMMISSION PRE-PETITION MEETING

1815 23RD AVENUE S  
SDCI Project # 3035070  
NOVEMBER 21, 2019



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PROJECT URBAN BOUNDARY

The project is located in the North Rainier HUB Urban Village.

NEIGHBORING URBAN BOUNDARIES

- Downtown Urban Center
- Chinatown / ID Urban Center Village

- Town Center
- Mount Baker Town Center

- Residential Urban Village
- 23rd and Jackson Residential Urban Village
  - North Beacon Hill Residential Urban Village



The alley vacation will support Mt. Baker Housing’s affordable housing project on the south block of the Grand Street Commons project in the heart of the N. Rainier Hub Urban Village.

Opportunity to exchange a **low value alley** for **high value affordable housing**.



PROJECT OVERVIEW



DESIGN TEAM

Architecture: Runberg Architecture Group  
Landscape Architecture: Hewitt  
Civil: KPFF Consulting Engineers

Grand Street Commons

Grand Street Commons is a transit-oriented 3-block development in the Judkin’s Park neighborhood. The development team is working with the Washington Department of Ecology to clean up the brownfield sites which are contaminated from their recent industrial past. Creative housing solutions and a variety of commercial programming will be incorporated into the new mixed-use, mixed-income community.

Mt Baker Housing & Lake Union Partners

**Mt. Baker Housing** formed in 1988 from the anti-displacement efforts of members from the local Mt. Baker neighborhood and residents of Mt. Baker Village Apartment; a majority of whom were refugee immigrants from genocide in Cambodia and war in Vietnam. Residents of our properties, now spanning from North Rainier, through Columbia City and down to South Rainier/Rainier Beach, have been with us long-term and have generational ties to their neighborhood.

**Lake Union Partners** is an urban real estate firm specializing in residential mixed-use and commercial projects in metropolitan markets throughout the West. We are a team of creative and experienced developers who build projects with design integrity and sensitivity to local neighborhoods.

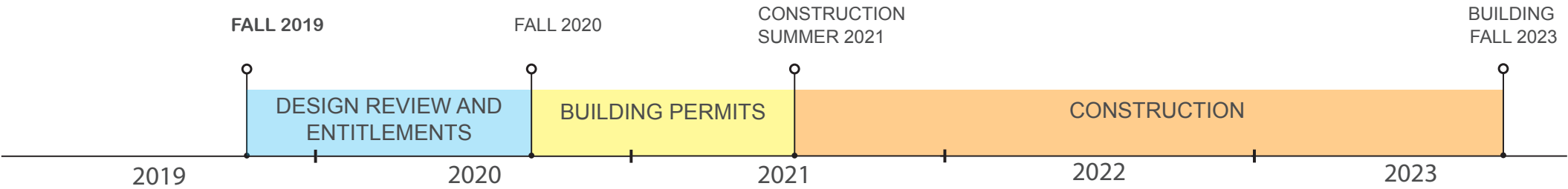
Development Program

**South Block:** Mt. Baker Housing

Pending approval of the alley vacation, this building will provide 200+ units of affordable housing for families at 60% AMI.

**West and East Blocks:** Lake Union Partners

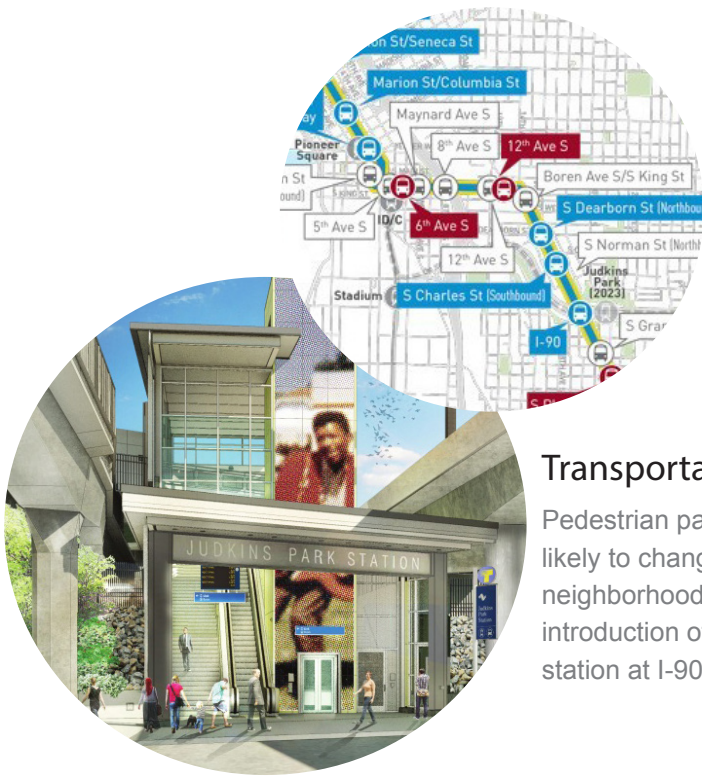
The East and West buildings will provide over 550 new rental apartments combined. The apartments will be primarily market rate rental housing; affordable housing will be provided via MHA onsite performance and MFTE.





GRAND STREET COMMONS | VISION STATEMENT

To create a mixed income, transit-oriented community featuring Office of Housing funded family units at 60% AMI, market rate apartments and additional affordable units via MHA onsite performance and MFTE programming. This new neighborhood center will feature a variety of retail and commercial uses, pedestrian friendly streets, green public spaces, and proximity to the Judkin’s Park Light Rail Station.



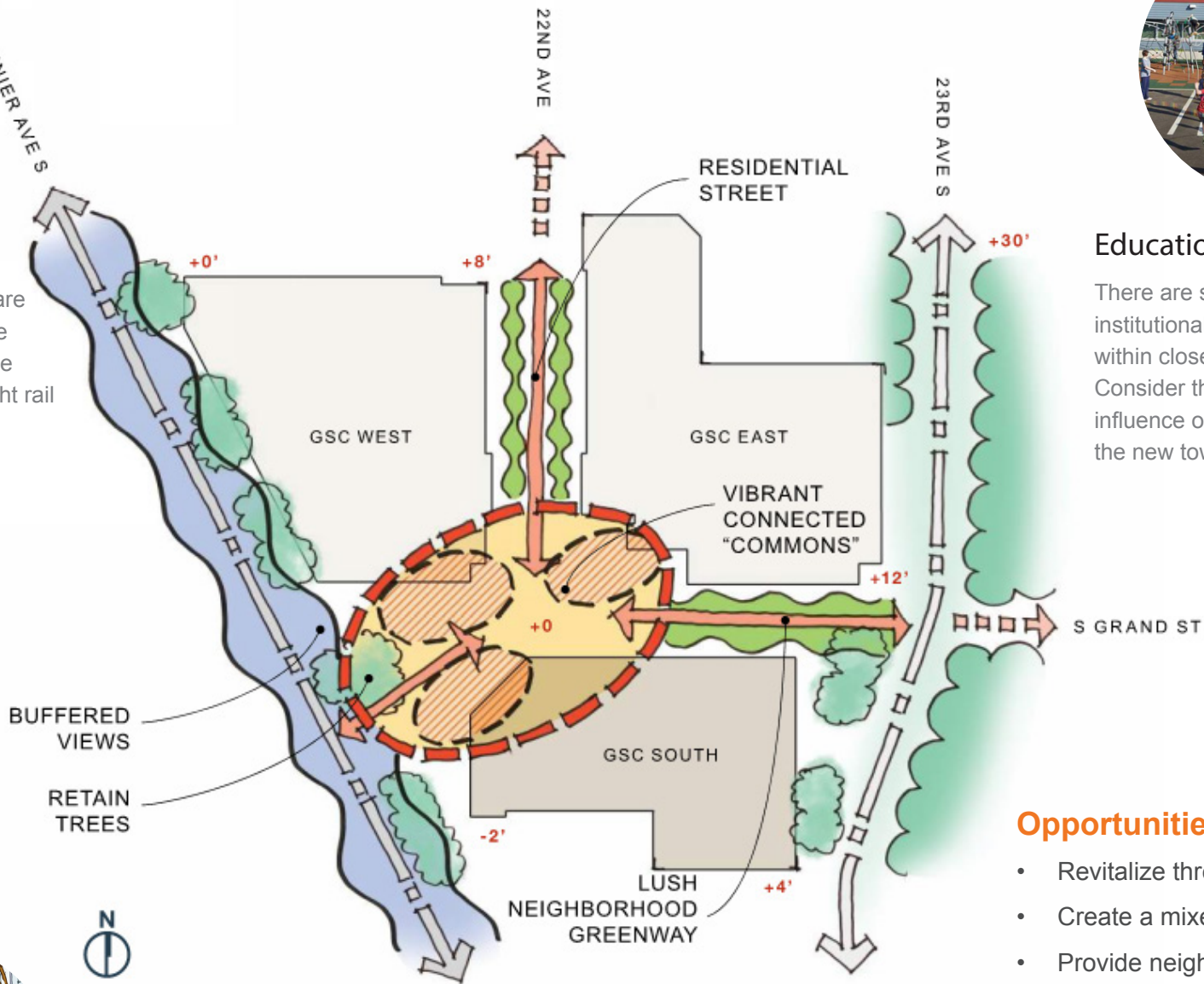
Transportation

Pedestrian patterns are likely to change in the neighborhood with the introduction of the light rail station at I-90.



Environment

Brownfield sites provide great opportunity for regeneration and rebirth, turning blight into a restorative and productive environment.



Education and Culture

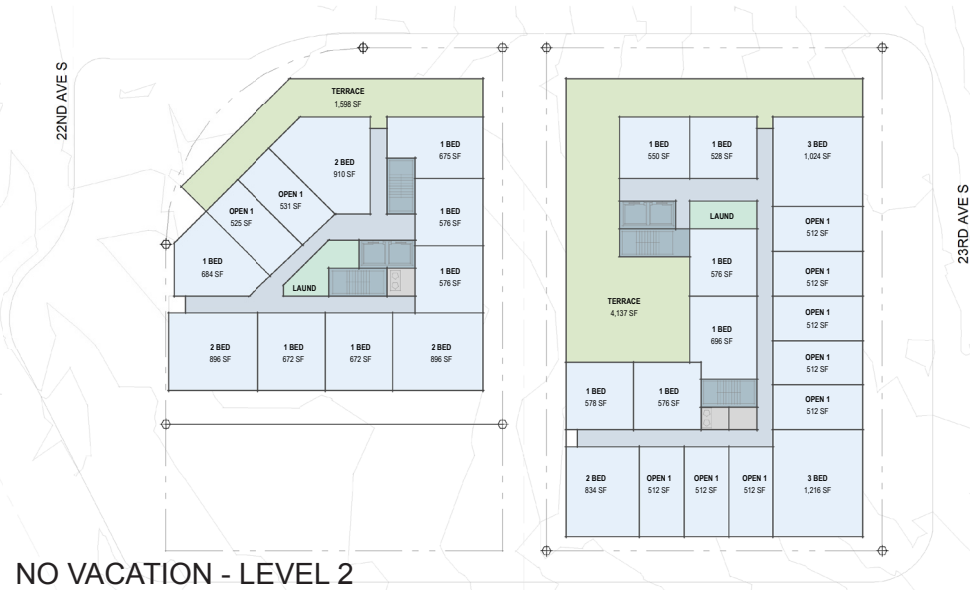
There are significant cultural, institutional and educational centers within close proximity of the site. Consider their programming as influence over the development of the new town center.

Opportunities

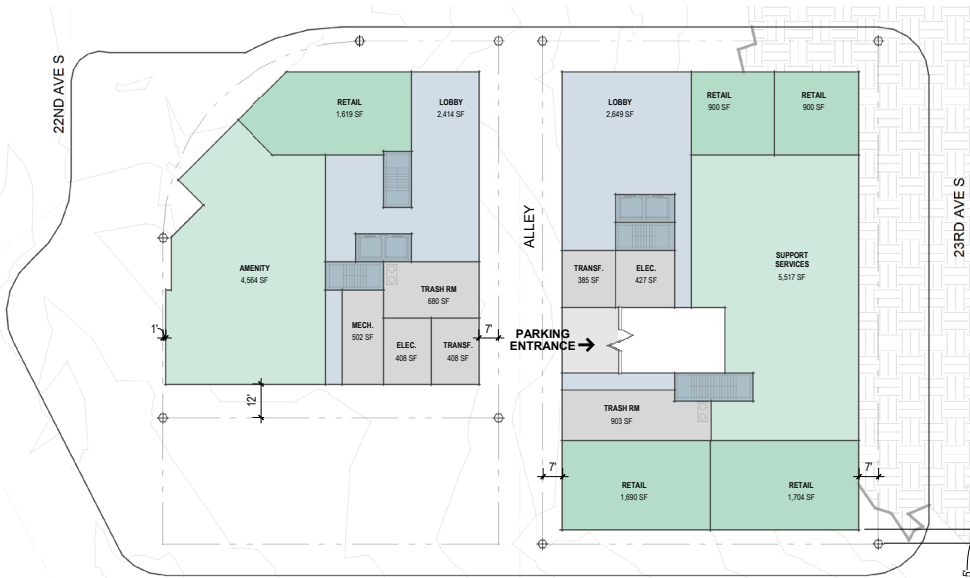
- Revitalize three brownfield sites into a healthy center for urban living.
- Create a mixed-use, mixed-income community near transit.
- Provide neighborhood open space that supports and connects the existing green spaces, education and cultural institutions in the neighborhood.
- Create an active pedestrian experience with enhanced ROW improvements and public open spaces that will benefit both new residents and the neighborhood at large.



## ALLEY VACATION IMPACT | ADDITIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING



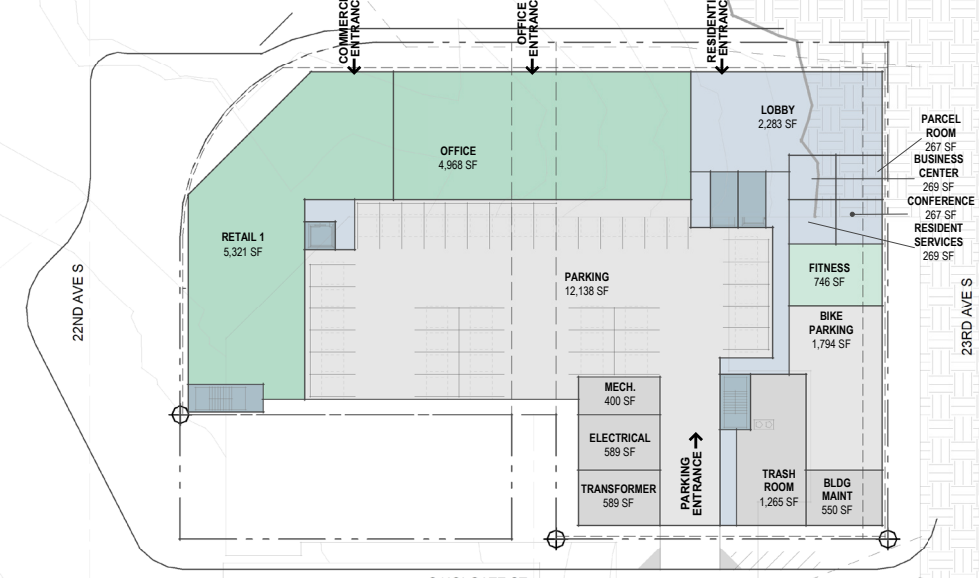
NO VACATION - LEVEL 2



NO VACATION - LEVEL 1



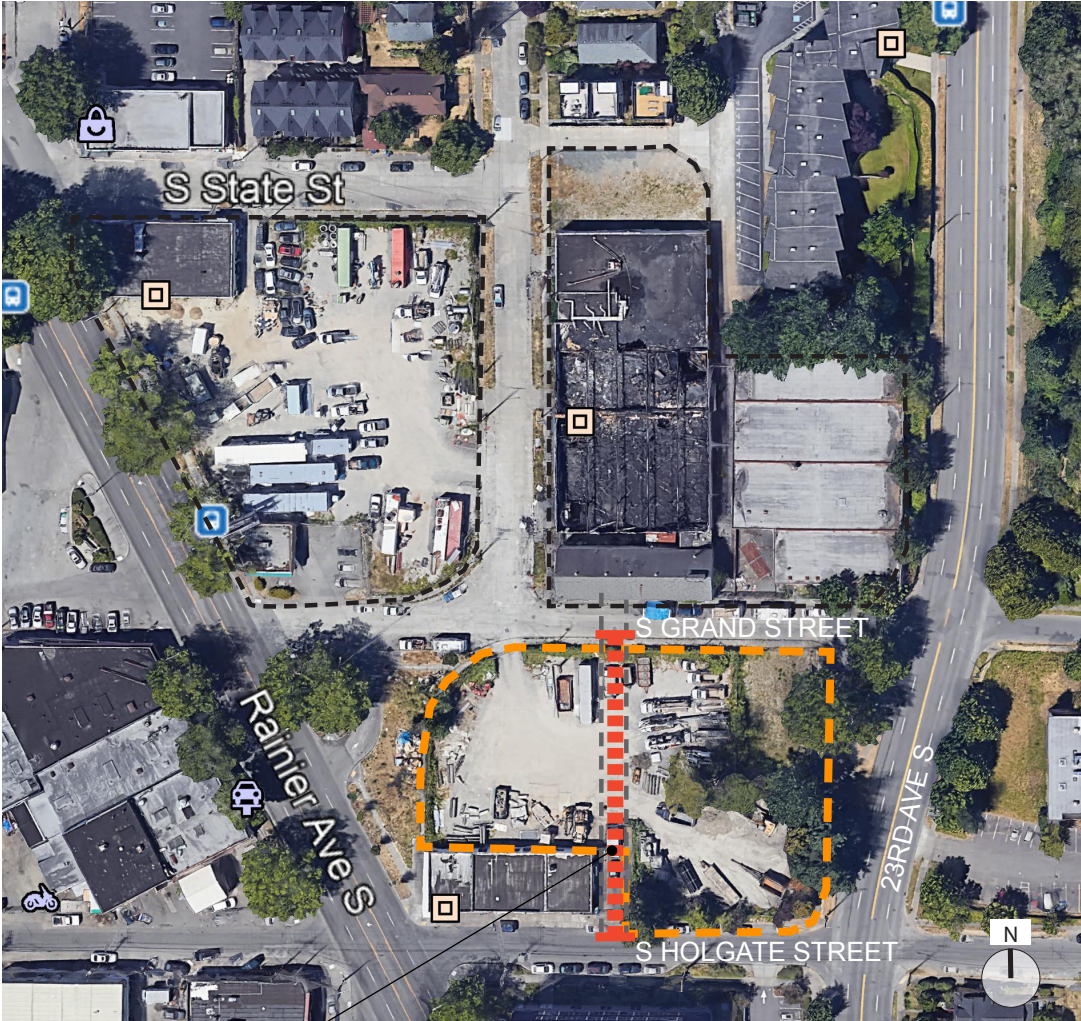
WITH VACATION - LEVEL 2



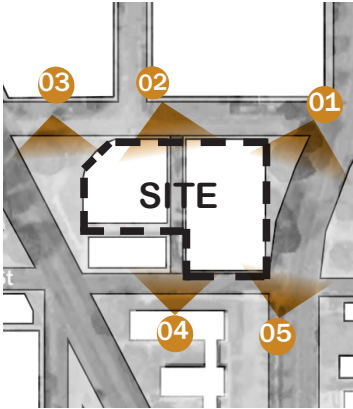
WITH VACATION - LEVEL 1

	WITHOUT ALLEY VACATION	WITH ALLEY VACATION	RESULT OF ALLEY VACATION
# OF BUILDINGS	2	1	One less building <b>eliminates redundancy in building services, consolidates parking and loading access points, reduces operation costs and improves security.</b>
COST OF CONSTRUCTION	\$77,198,455	\$85,377,966	More efficient construction and elimination of redundant services such as vertical circulation, lobbies and trash space reduces the total cost of construction by approximately \$70,000/unit.
# OF APARTMENTS	157	202	Provides <b>45 additional units</b> of affordable housing. In addition, the percentage of family sized units increases from 21% to 29% in the single building configuration.
OH / COST PER UNIT	\$137,345	\$83,309	<b>40% reduction</b> in cost per unit for the Office of Housing funding. This generates 45 additional housing units while simultaneously saving over \$4.7 million in Office of Housing costs.





ALLEY



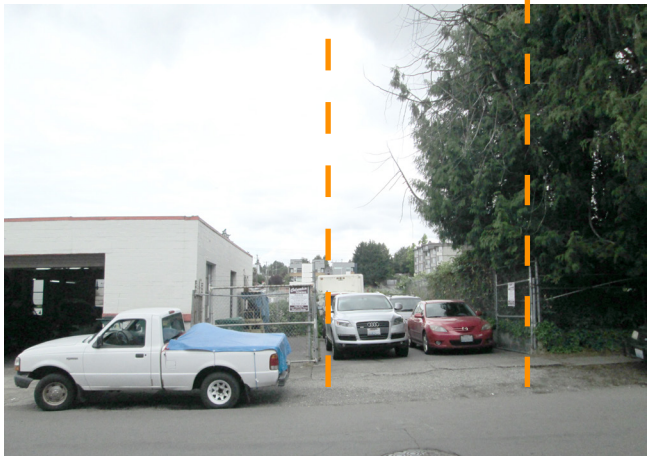
01 VIEW OF SITE FROM THE NORTHWEST



02 ALLEY VIEW FROM S GRAND STREET (NORTH END OF ALLEY)



03 VIEW OF SITE FROM NORTHWEST



04 ALLEY VIEW FROM S HOLGATE STREET



05 23RD AVE S

HOLGATE STREET



ALLEY





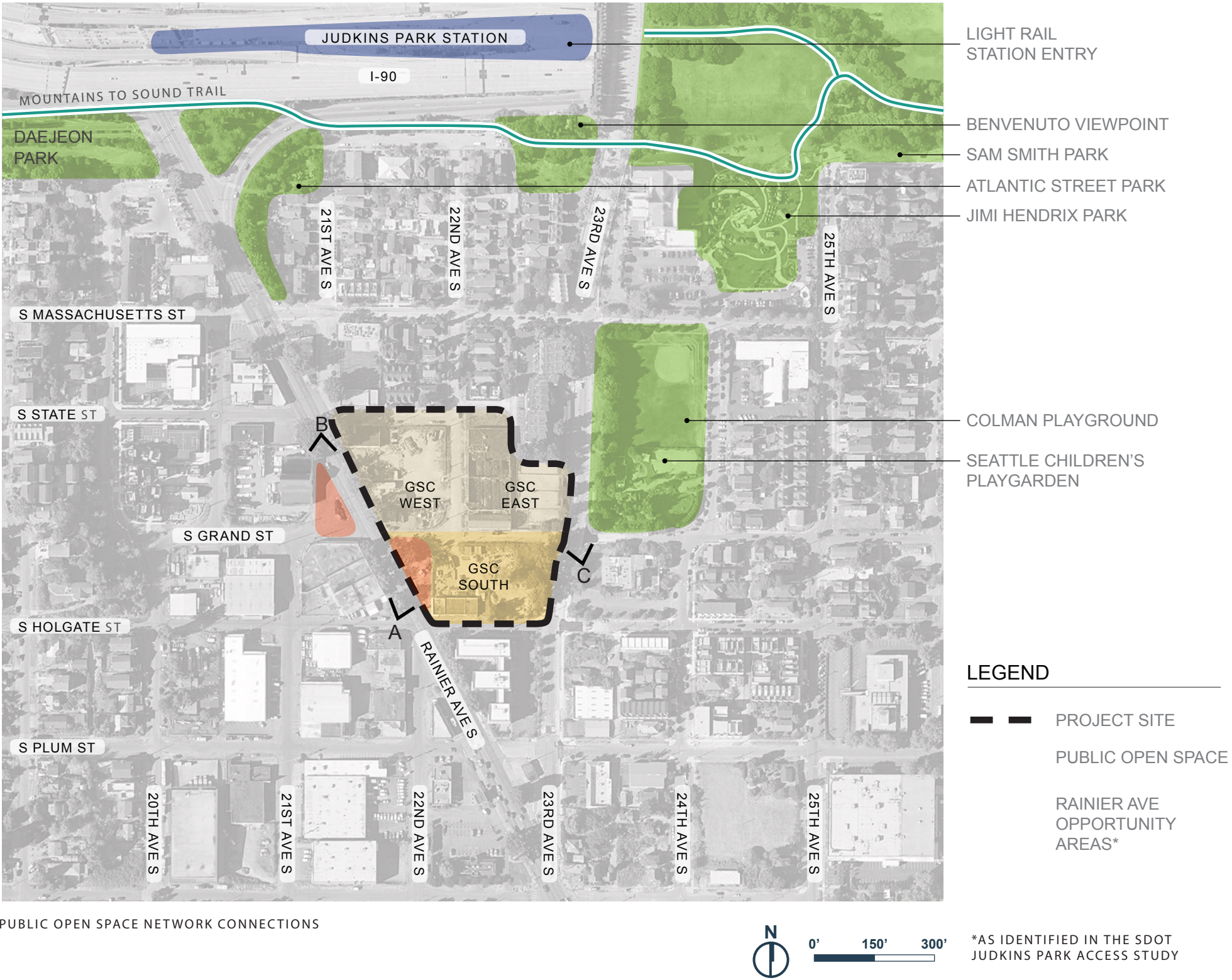
A RAINIER AVENUE OPPORTUNITY AREAS (EAST SIDE)



B RAINIER AVENUE OPPORTUNITY AREAS (WEST SIDE)



C 23RD AVE S AND GRAND ST INTERSECTION







A



B



C



D



E  
ALLEY NETWORK CHARACTER



F



ALLEY NETWORK FRAGMENTATION

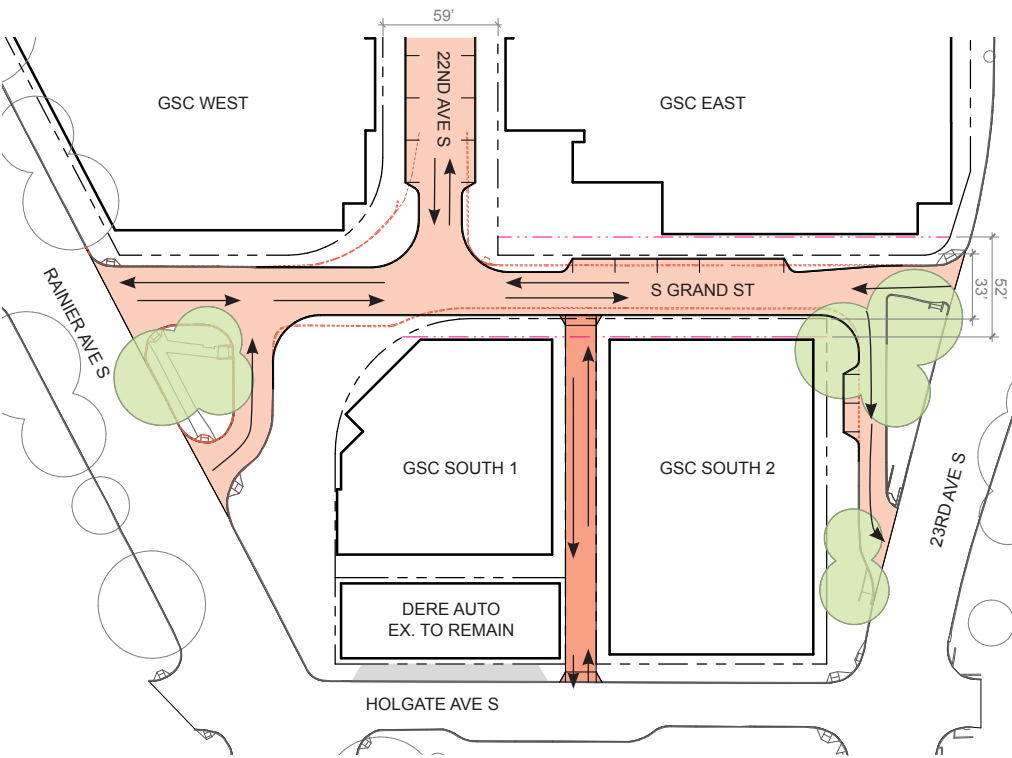
LIGHT RAIL  
STATION ENTRY

LEGEND

- PROJECT SITE
- ADJACENT ALLEYS
- PROJECT SITE ALLEY PLAT

\*UTILITY NETWORK IS NOT LOCATED  
WITHIN THE PROJECT SITE ALLEY.





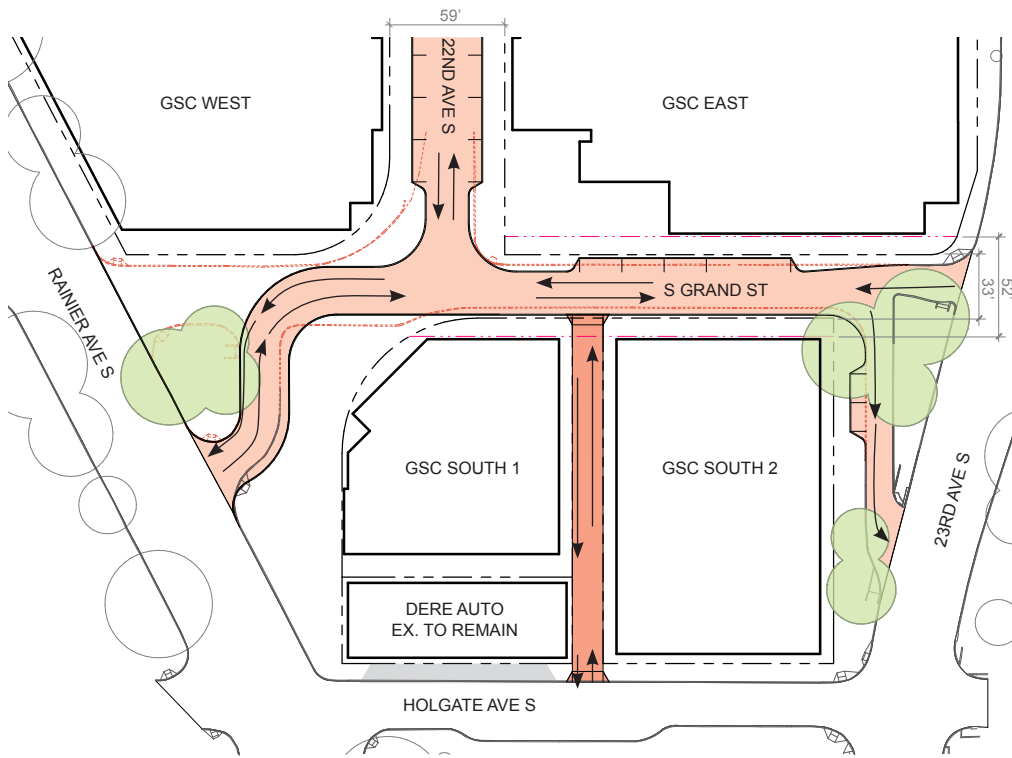
## NO ALLEY VACATION EXISTING GRAND ST. ALIGNMENT

### CONSIDERATIONS:

- Increased traffic flow on Grand St: Alley/garage access will add to traffic volume.
- Traffic calming is limited: Retains straight 22' wide roadway per Streets Illustrated and SDOT base requirements.
- Less desirable for retail tenants: One sided parallel parking/loading.
- Underutilized space: Road geometry of intersection of Rainier Ave and Grand St. is undesirable (per SDOT Judkins Park Station Access Study recommendations).
- Alley does not provide utility access for the site.

### LEGEND

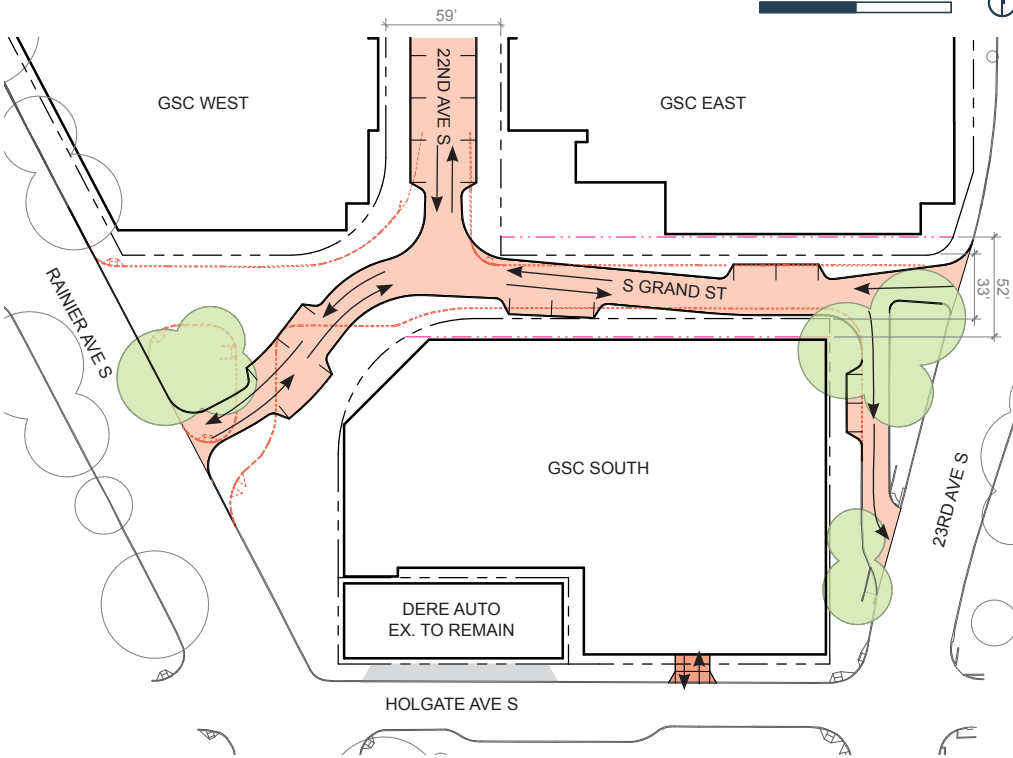
- TRAFFIC DIRECTION
- ROADWAY SYSTEM
- VEHICULAR ALLEY
- EXISTING CURB
- PROPERTY LINE
- EXISTING TREES TO REMAIN



## NO ALLEY VACATION GRAND ST. REALIGNMENT AT RAINIER AVE.

### CONSIDERATIONS:

- Increased traffic flow on Grand St: Alley/garage access will add to traffic volume.
- Traffic calming somewhat improved: 22' wide travel way per Streets Illustrated and SDOT base requirements.
- Less desirable for retail tenants: One sided parallel parking/loading.
- Rainier Ave and Grand St intersection geometry slightly improved: Further existing spur road realignment may be needed to provide desired geometry while reducing impact to existing trees and maintaining useable pedestrian area.
- Alley does not provide utility access for the site.



## ALLEY VACATION GRAND ST. REALIGNMENT

### CONSIDERATIONS:

- Reduced traffic flow along Grand St: Functions better as a Neighborhood Greenway.
- Traffic is calmed: Road geometry and SDOT allowable 18' wide travel way slows traffic.
- Better parking/curbside management: East and west bound parking/loading options allows greater retail vitality and further slows traffic.
- Realigns Rainier Ave and Grand St. for safer intersection while maintaining existing trees and maximizing pedestrian area (per SDOT Judkins Park Station Access Study recommendations).








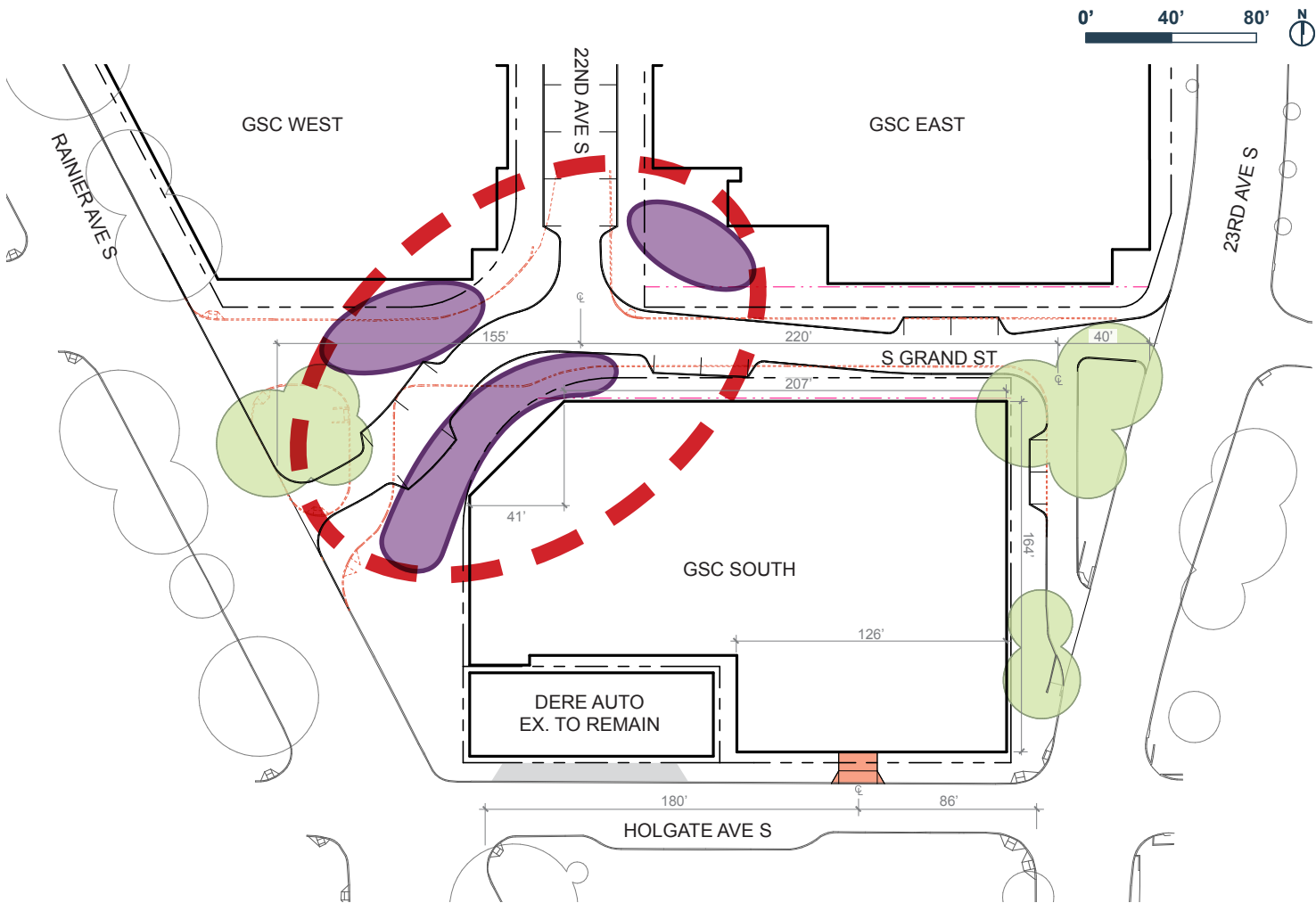


NO ALLEY VACATION

- CONSIDERATIONS:
- Less desirable open space orientation: Rainier Ave frontage has limited connectivity to Grand St.
  - Disconnected “Commons”: Connection to other open space opportunity areas is reduced.
  - Compromised pedestrian access: Two road crossings to GSC south area reduce safety.

LEGEND

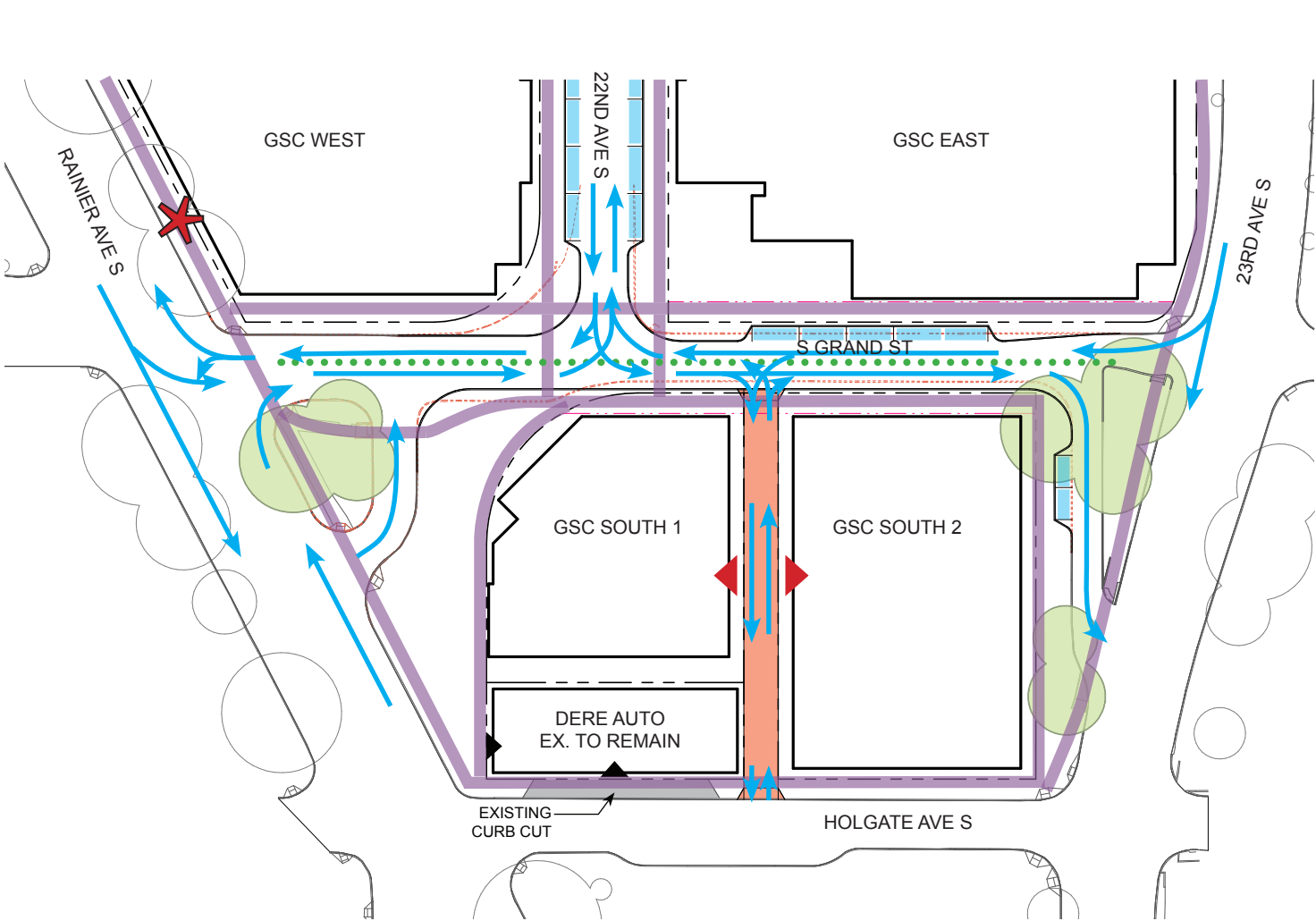
-  PEDESTRIAN OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITY
-  VEHICULAR ALLEY / ACCESS
-  EXISTING CURB
-  PROPERTY LINE
-  EXISTING TREES TO REMAIN



ALLEY VACATION

- CONSIDERATIONS:
- Improved open space orientation: Open space along Rainier Ave and Grand St is more usable.
  - A connected “Commons”: Creates a variety of open spaces that relate to each other and the building adjacencies will result in a more unified space.
  - Safer pedestrian access: Reduced road crossings will increase safety.



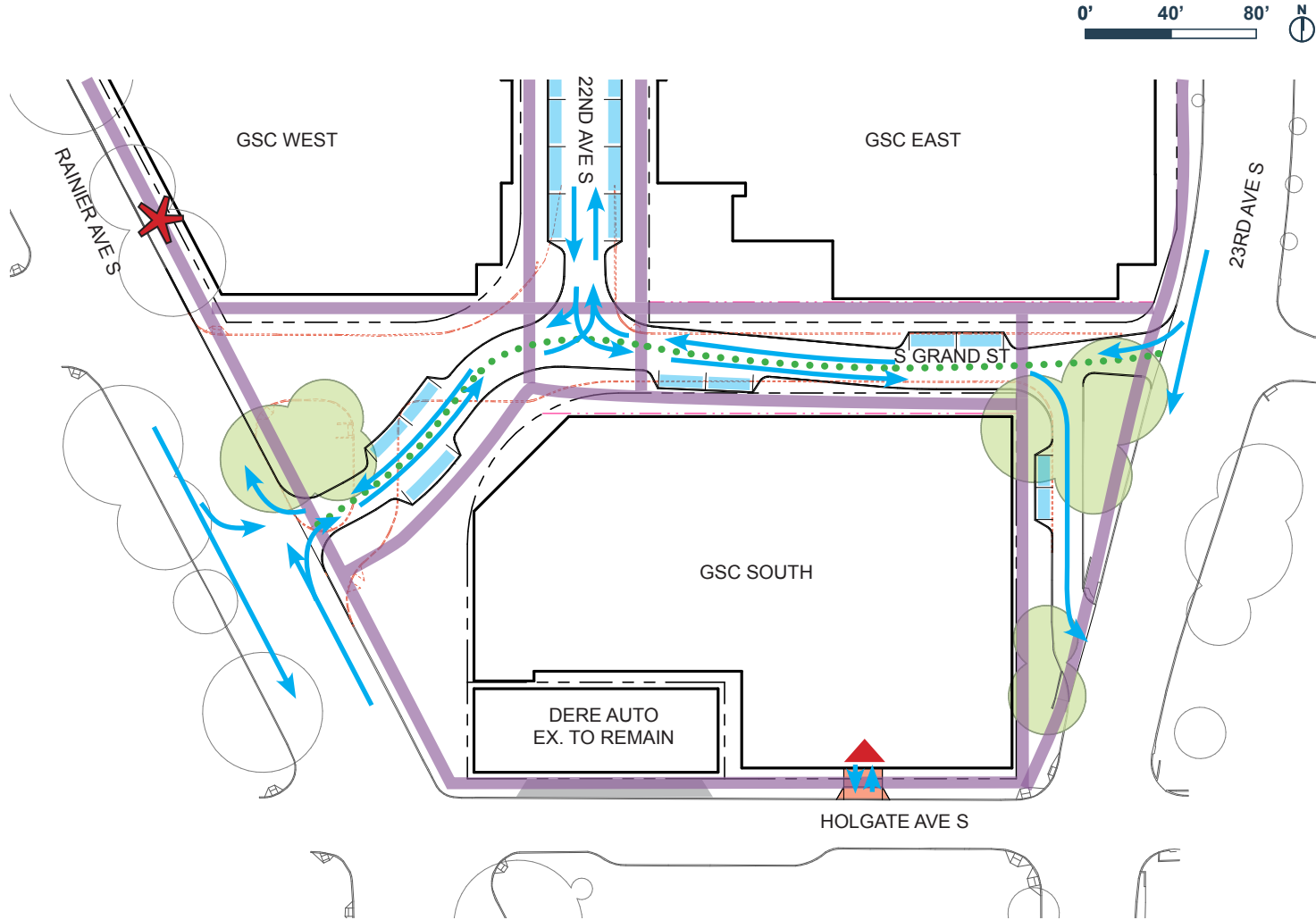


NO ALLEY VACATION

- CONSIDERATIONS:
- Increased pedestrian+bicycle+vehicle conflicts: Alley at Grand St. introduces vehicular conflicts that don't currently exist.
  - Intersection/alley separation: Turning movements into & from alley at Grand St. could impact the intersection of 22nd and Grand St.
  - Less safe: Isolated pedestrian island at Rainier Ave. and Grand St. is underutilized and unsafe.
  - Prioritizes vehicles: Wider straight travel ways results in a narrower pedestrian area with limited visual containment and buffering.

LEGEND

	VEHICULAR CIRCULATION		GARAGE ENTRY
	PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION		ENTRY INTO EXISTING DERE AUTO
	PLANNED NEIGHBORHOOD GREENWAY		EXISTING BUS STOP
	PARKING / LOADING		EXISTING TREES TO REMAIN
	EXISTING CURB		
	PROPERTY LINE		

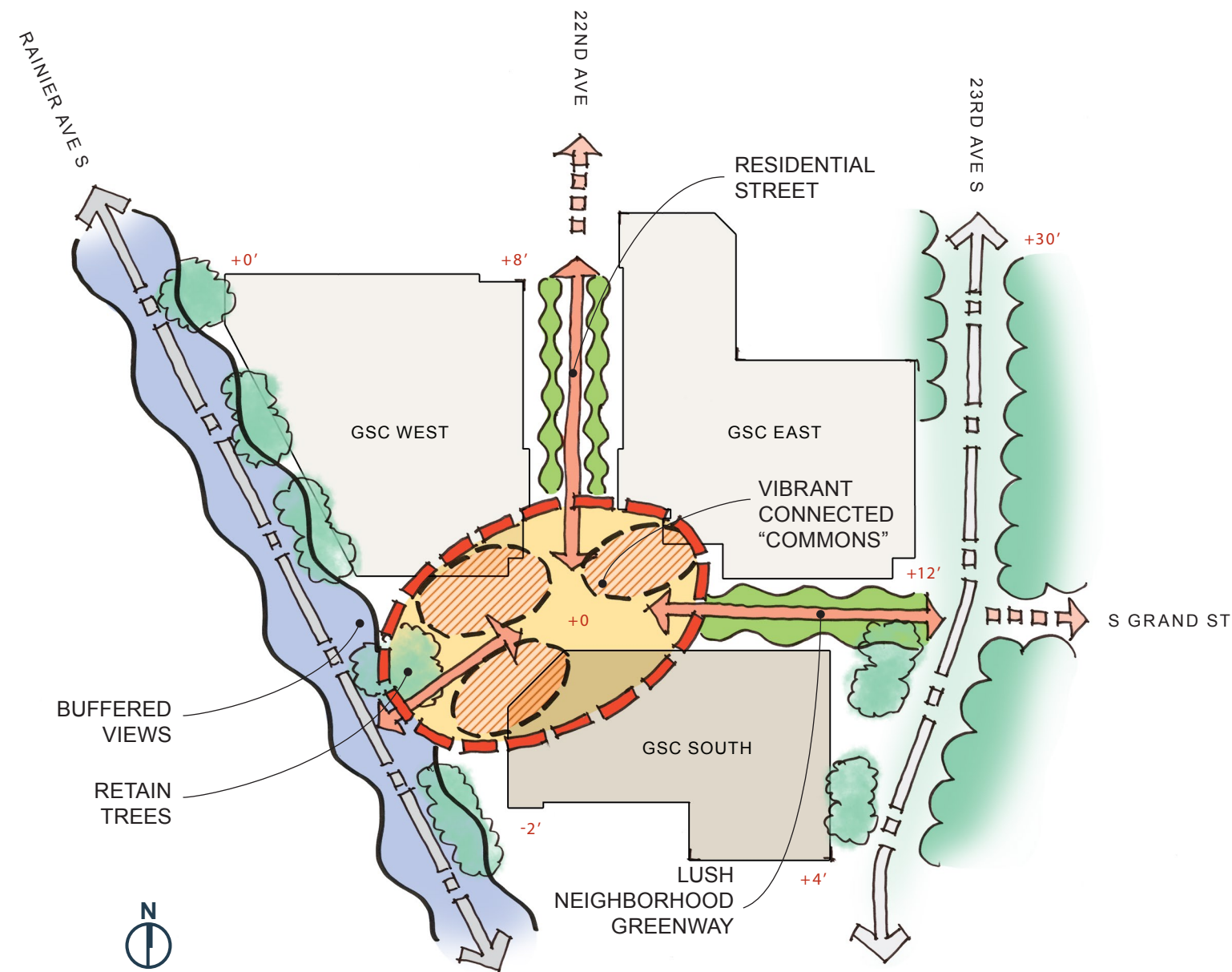


ALLEY VACATION

- CONSIDERATIONS:
- Reduced pedestrian+bicycle+vehicle conflicts: Grand St. functions better as a Neighborhood Greenway.
  - Traffic volumes reduced : Garage access from Holgate St reduces traffic volumes on Grand St.
  - Increased safety: Consolidated roadway reduces number of pedestrian crossings.
  - Better pedestrian experience: More narrow curved road results in wider pedestrian areas with better place making opportunities.



## SUMMARY



### Opportunities | Public Trust

- **Circulation:** The South Block alley is a good candidate for a vacation as it does not support the existing right-of-way network, therefore there would be no disruption in current circulation patterns or service access generated by eliminating the alley.
- **Access:** The surrounding streets will provide adequate access to the proposed project as well as the existing neighbor at the corner of Rainier Ave S and S Holgate Street if the alley is eliminated.
- **Utilities:** There are no utilities running through the alley, so no utilities would need to be relocated if the alley is vacated.
- **Free Speech and Public Assembly:** Eliminating the alley would remove the required curb cut from S Grand Street and improve pedestrian safety along that right-of-way and enhance the public realm, thereby enhancing that right-of-way's contribution to Free Speech and Public Assembly.
- **Open Space:** The alley vacation supports the urban design vision for a new neighborhood commons along S. Grand Street and its intersection with Rainier Ave S.
- **Views, light and air:** Currently, this block is primarily vacant as demo has been completed and remediation analysis is underway. The sole remaining neighbor is located on the SW corner of the block, so their access to views, light and air will be preserved along S Holgate Street and Rainier Ave S.
- **Land Use and Urban Form:** The proposed alley vacation will not alter vehicular and pedestrian movement patterns as it is not currently in use. Development potential is increased by the alley vacation, allowing additional affordable housing to be built in the neighborhood.

### Opportunities | Public Benefit

## Exchange a low value alley for high value affordable housing.

- **Affordable Housing:** 2018 City of Seattle Street Vacation Policies at Section IV.B.1 states: “Public benefits may include, but are not limited to....1. Physical public benefits such as...Spaces that support goals for race and social equity, such as on-site affordable housing....” Here, with the alley vacation, the applicant proposes construction of an additional 45 units of on-site, non-required affordable housing. In addition to supporting the City’s goals for race and social equity, the alley vacation would result in 202 units of non-required affordable housing at a lower cost to public funders.
- **Open Space:** 2018 City of Seattle Street Vacation Policies at Section IV.B.1 states: “Public benefits may include, but are not limited to....1. Physical public benefits such as...Creating or enhancing publicly-accessible plazas, open spaces, or other green spaces” and “Streetscape enhancements beyond that required by codes” and “Enhancing the pedestrian or bicycle environment” and “improvements to the pedestrian...environment...” Here, the applicant proposes construction of an active pedestrian experience with enhanced ROW improvements that will benefit both new residents and the neighborhood at large.



# APPENDIX



DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT



The project is located in an area of the city where North-South movement is accessible and convenient, offering pedestrian and bike paths, vehicle and public transportation routes to Capitol Hill, First Hill, North Beacon Hill, Mount Baker Town Center, and beyond.

CONSTRAINTS

- Noise from nearby light industrial uses
- Noise from Rainier Ave S & I-5
- High voltage power lines on 22nd Ave S for south portion of lot
- Future SDOT plans to narrow 22nd Ave S

OPPORTUNITIES

- Fast transit routes to Capitol Hill, First Hill, North Beacon Hill, & Mount Baker Station as well as future transit station to Eastside
- Corner site can provide visible neighborhood marker
- Transitioning neighborhood design

- Main Vehicular Route
- Bus Route
- Bicycle Route
- Main Pedestrian
- Park
- Future BRT
- Environmental/Traffic Noise

Walk Score

**73**

**Very Walkable**

Most errands can be accomplished on foot.

Transit Score

**67**

**Good Transit**

Many nearby public transportation options.

Bike Score

**79**

**Very Bikeable**

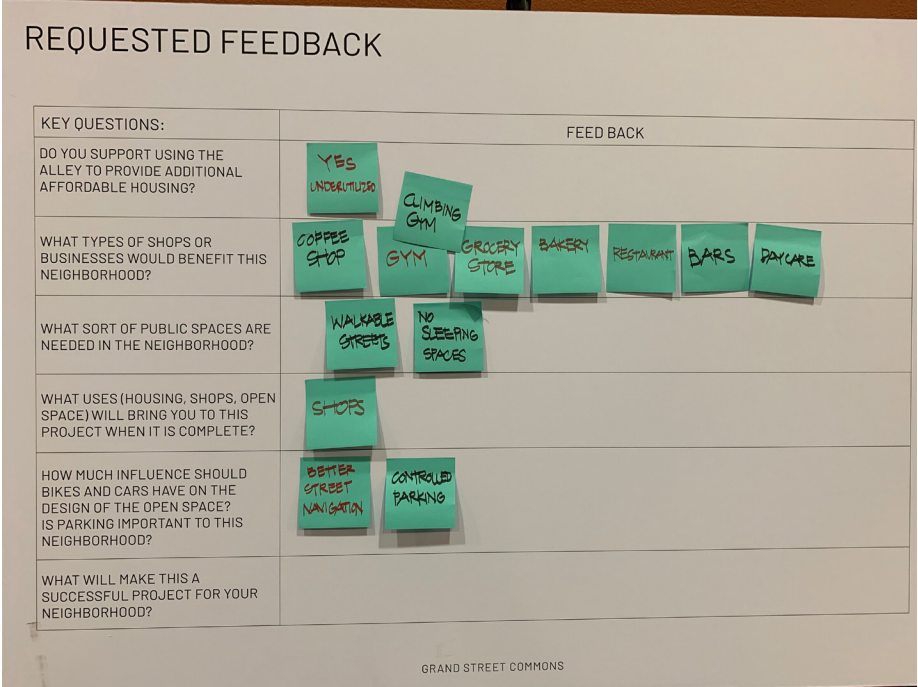
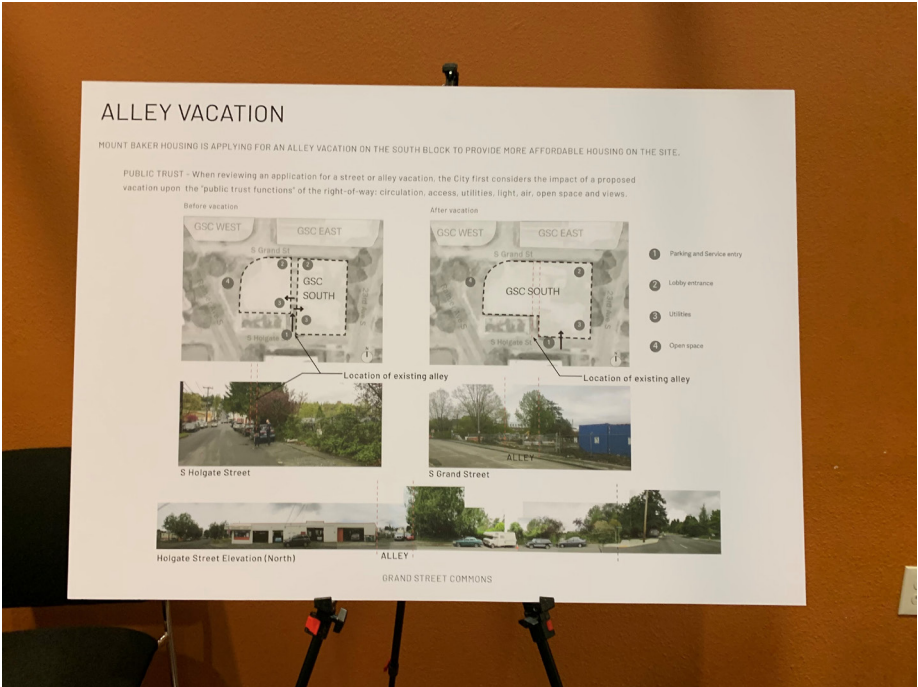
\*Future Bus Rapid Transit Stop as indicated by SDOT Pedestrian Master Plan (July 2016)



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN



NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH MEETING - OCTOBER 24, 2019



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

The Community Engagement Plan for Grand Street Commons was submitted to the Department of Neighborhoods for review and approval in September 2019. The plan includes both printed and digital outreach to residences and businesses within 500 ft radius of the sites. The project team will attend local community meetings throughout the entitlement process to share the project’s progress with the neighborhood. The development team will also host open house events for neighbors to learn more about the project and provide their feedback.

The first open house took place on October 24, 2019 in the Mount Baker Village Apartments Community Room at 2580 29th Ave S. The following is a sampling of comments collected from community members in attendance at that meeting:

- Pedestrian connections are important in and around the blocks.
- Repeated concern about homeless encampments in the neighborhood. Neighbors like the idea of gathering space but are concerned about how it will be used. Several requested it be designed in a way to discourage camping.
- Neighbors would appreciate more retail to walk to in their neighborhood. Requests included new bars and restaurants, retail, dry cleaning, and professional services.
- Liked the idea of TH units along 22nd Ave S.