

# RECONNECT SOUTH PARK

## Potential Futures Analysis Report



**Seattle**  
Office of Planning &  
Community Development



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Reconnect South Park Potential Futures Analysis evaluates four approaches to reimagining and modernizing the SR 99 corridor between S Holden Street and Tukwila International Boulevard. The study was conducted by the City of Seattle and a technical consultant team in partnership with the community-based Reconnect South Park Coalition. The goals and measures used in this analysis were based on community-defined priorities and extensive Coalition-led engagement. *The Potential Futures Analysis Report presents a summary of the work to date, with additional analysis details and citations in the Potential Futures Analysis Technical Documentation.*

## Context

South Park is one of Seattle's most close-knit neighborhoods, known for its strong community leadership, small businesses, and environmental stewardship. Yet it also faces some of the region's highest cumulative environmental and health impacts.

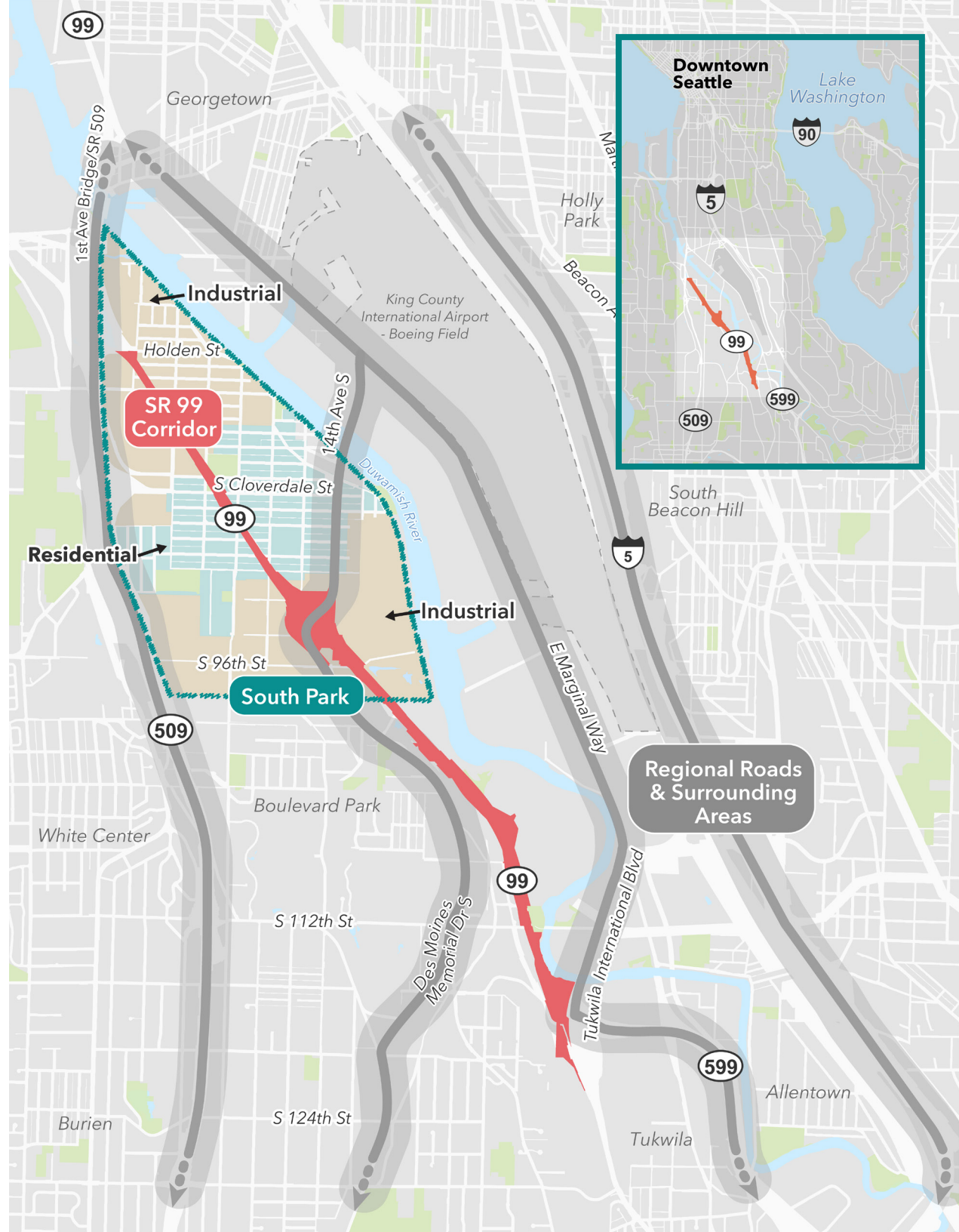
In 2021, residents began leading an effort to reimagine the SR 99 corridor through their neighborhood to support health, opportunity, and long-term well-being.

Built in the 1950s and 60s, SR 99 cuts diagonally through the community grid, creating 22 dead ends and concentrating traffic, noise, and diesel pollution beside homes, schools, and community spaces. These impacts contribute to South Park ranking in the 99th percentile for negative health outcomes within Seattle. Today, less than 10 percent of people driving on SR 99 start or end their trips in South Park; most are regional traffic just passing through. South of the neighborhood, SR 99 continues alongside the Duwamish River, running within 20 feet of the riverbank in places — directly affecting habitat for salmon and other species.

Within one mile, four other major highways and arterials already provide continuous north-south routes. This segment of SR 99 remains a limited-access highway occupying nearly 117 acres of public land, yet it carries traffic volumes similar to a busy city street. The Potential Futures Analysis evaluates how this corridor could be modernized to balance regional mobility with community health, safety, and long-term public value.








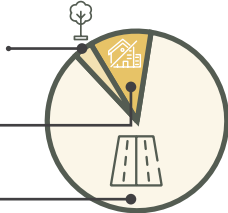
# Purpose of the Analysis

The Potential Futures Analysis compares four high-level scenarios for the SR 99 corridor using community-defined goals: health and well-being, affordability and economic opportunity, mobility and connectivity, healthy environment, and cost and feasibility. The foundation for the report framework was built on two years of structured community engagement that reached more than 3,000 residents, workers, and neighbors across 70 events, as well as community surveys, 94 small business interviews, youth design workshops, and a co-created Freight 101 with the Port of Seattle. This report does not recommend a preferred option or make any commitments. Its purpose is to give readers a clear understanding of how the four approaches compare by presenting them side by side and showing how each could shape future conditions along the corridor. The findings are intended to support informed discussion about the corridor's future. Any future changes to the corridor would require additional study, environmental review, and formal agency decision-making.



# The Four Potential Futures

The four Potential Futures assessed in this report take different approaches to the SR 99 Corridor between S Holden St and Tukwila International Boulevard/SR 599.

Scenario	Core Description	How Could Land Change?	How Could Vehicle Traffic Change?
 <b>REROUTE + RECLAIM</b>	<p>SR 99 has been removed through South Park and the land that it occupies today has been repurposed for things like parks, green space, and housing that is affordable to people in South Park.</p> <p>Streets that currently dead end at the highway are reconnected again as neighborhood streets, making it much easier to safely bike, walk, or drive around South Park.</p>	<p><b>59</b> acres for environmental and shoreline restoration</p> <p><b>41</b> acres for housing, parks, and industry</p> <p><b>17</b> acres for streets</p> 	<p>About 2/3 less traffic in South Park. Limited changes in daily traffic on regional routes like I-5 and SR 509.</p>
 <b>NARROWER BOULEVARD</b>	<p>SR 99 has been modified to function as a city street with sidewalks and one travel lane in each direction.</p> <p>New intersections and crossings connect people walking, biking, or driving to both sides of the neighborhood.</p> <p>With reduced roadway width, land from SR 99 is reclaimed for community uses adjacent to the new boulevard.</p>	<p><b>48</b> acres for environmental and shoreline restoration</p> <p><b>31</b> acres for housing, parks, and industry</p> <p><b>38</b> acres for streets</p> 	<p>About 1/2 less traffic in South Park. Limited changes in daily traffic on regional routes like I-5 and SR 509.</p>
 <b>WIDER BOULEVARD</b>	<p>SR 99 has been modified to function as a city street with sidewalks and two travel lanes in each direction.</p> <p>New intersections and crossings connect people walking, biking, or driving to both sides of the neighborhood.</p> <p>With less highway infrastructure, reclaimed land from SR 99 is repurposed for other community uses.</p>	<p><b>44</b> acres for environmental and shoreline restoration</p> <p><b>27</b> acres for housing, parks, and industry</p> <p><b>46</b> acres for streets</p> 	<p>About 1/4 less traffic in South Park. Minimal changes in traffic elsewhere.</p>
 <b>BRIDGES + TRAILS</b>	<p>SR 99 remains intact through this corridor. There are new bridges and trails for safe pedestrian and bicycle access across and along SR 99. Buffers like tree planting and sound walls are between SR 99 and surrounding homes and community uses.</p> <p>Some areas of land are reused for community uses, with a little bit for environmental restoration.</p>	<p><b>4</b> acres for environmental and shoreline restoration</p> <p><b>13</b> acres for parks and industry</p> <p><b>100</b> acres for streets</p> 	<p>Minimal change in traffic in South Park and along regional routes.</p>

# Initial Findings

This analysis compares four Potential Futures against a future baseline. The baseline is a projection of what conditions would look like in 2050 if SR 99 stays exactly as it is, in a region that has grown larger and where planned transit and road improvements have been built. Using a baseline can create the impression that today's conditions are neutral; they are not. The existing corridor carries regional traffic and freight, but it also imposes ongoing costs to health, safety, and the environment — and as aging infrastructure, it will require future public investment regardless of the path chosen. Maintaining the current corridor would not be a cost-free choice, it is simply the starting point for comparison.

Within that frame, each Potential Future opens a different set of possibilities. In this preliminary comparison, **Reroute + Reclaim** shows strong performance across safety, health, environmental, and economic measures within the study area, alongside changes to existing travel patterns. The Boulevard options offer intermediate benefits with less change to regional transportation. **Bridges + Trails** improves local crossings and preserves existing regional traffic patterns, but generates fewer environmental, economic, and health benefits than the other scenarios. Further technical analysis would refine understanding of how each approach interacts with the broader regional network and communities outside of South Park.

Key findings include:

## LAND AND PUBLIC SPACE

Depending on the scenario, between roughly 17 and 100 acres of land currently occupied by highway infrastructure could be repurposed for housing, parks, industry, small business space, and environmental restoration.

## HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

Reroute + Reclaim and Narrower Boulevard show the greatest potential reductions in air and noise pollution exposure in South Park and along regional roadways anticipated to see changes in traffic and the highest potential for park and trail expansion.

## MOBILITY AND SAFETY

All futures improve local connections and walking and biking conditions, though how they do it varies. Some do more to separate people from traffic, others do more to restore street connections and reduce dead ends. Wider Boulevard would reopen local streets but could put more people on foot closer to moving traffic.

## REGIONAL TRAFFIC

Under any of the scenarios that change SR 99, traffic would spread across multiple existing routes, and the daily change on each route would be small compared to what it already carries. In other cities where highways have been removed or converted to boulevards, the traffic shifting to other roads has typically been less than models first suggest, because some travelers change their route, their timing, their mode of travel, or whether they make the trip at all. This analysis reports the modeled numbers without adjusting for that pattern. However, traffic congestion is already a significant challenge in Seattle, and future studies will be needed to better understand how changes could affect peak-period travel times, route reliability, and conditions on nearby corridors and in adjacent communities.

## AFFORDABILITY AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY






Redevelopment of reclaimed land could create significant opportunities for new homes, local and industrial businesses, supporting infrastructure, and jobs. At the same time, changes to the corridor could increase pressure on housing costs and existing businesses if not actively managed. Shaping these outcomes is a central focus of the next phase, with dedicated funding for technical analysis and a community-led process to develop and implement strategies that support long-term stability, access to opportunity, and shared benefit.










## FEASIBILITY

This analysis affirms that multiple approaches to modernizing or reimagining SR 99 are feasible and could generate a variety of long-term benefits. Further study, environmental review, and formal agency decision-making would be required before any changes.

# Evaluation Summary

The following figure provides a summary of all measures, including a composite evaluation for each goal area.

KEY				
				
Much Worse	Worse	Same	Better	Much Better

Category	Measure	 REROUTE + RECLAIM	 NARROWER BOULEVARD	 WIDER BOULEVARD	 BRIDGES + TRAILS
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b> 	<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing Composite</b>	+	+	•	•
	Air Pollution	+	+	+	•
	Noise Pollution	+	+	•	•
	Street Safety for Vulnerable Road Users	+	•	-	•
	Access to Parks and Public Spaces	+	+	+	+
	Public Health	+	+	+	•
<b>Affordability &amp; Economic Opportunity</b> 	<b>Affordability &amp; Economic Opportunity Composite</b>	+	+	+	•
	Affordable Housing	+	+	•	•
	Neighborhood Stability	+	•	•	-
	Local Business Growth	+	+	+	•
	Job Opportunities	+	+	+	+
<b>Mobility &amp; Connectivity</b> 	<b>Mobility &amp; Connectivity Composite</b>	+	+	+	•
	Regional Traffic	-	-	•	•
	Local Vehicular Traffic	+	+	•	•
	Neighborhood Reconnection	+	+	+	+
	Improved Walking and Biking Infrastructure	+	+	+	•
	Public Transit Connections	+	+	+	•
<b>Healthy Environment</b> 	<b>Healthy Environment Composite</b>	+	+	+	•
	Runoff Reduction and Water Quality Improvement	+	+	+	•
	Climate Resilience	+	+	+	•
	Trees and Environmental Restoration	+	+	+	•
	Ecosystems and Habitat Restoration	+	+	+	•
<b>Cost &amp; Feasibility</b> 	<b>Cost &amp; Feasibility Composite</b>	•	•	-	•
	Net Public Value	+	+	•	-
	Construction Disruption	-	-	-	•
	Regulatory Feasibility	•	•	•	•

# Limitations

This analysis establishes a consistent, technically grounded first comparison of how these futures could perform on community-defined goals. It provides a clear basis for evaluating the options, while additional work is needed to understand how they would function in practice. Key areas for further study include detailed design, environmental performance, market response, and how changes could affect peak-period travel, reliability, and nearby communities.

Future phases will refine these areas and test how the corridor performs as part of the broader system. That work will require close coordination with neighboring communities, community-based organizations, freight partners, and local, regional, state, and federal agencies to ensure corridor continuity and shared long-term benefit.

# Next Steps

The findings of this analysis will inform a community-driven visioning process to be developed into a **Community Vision Plan**, accompanied by a **Community Investment Plan** focused on housing stability, small-business support, and long-term stewardship. Together, these efforts aim to modernize a mid-century corridor into a 21st-century public asset that advances health, safety, reliability, community well-being, and long-term regional value.





# Reconnect South Park: Potential Futures Analysis

## We want to hear from you!

We will be engaging with community members throughout the project with surveys, meetings, online tools, workshops, and community conversations.

Interested in having your voice heard? Want to get emails about events? Have a great idea? Reach out to us!

### CITY OF SEATTLE WEB PAGE:

<https://www.seattle.gov/opcd/current-projects/reconnect-south-park>

### RECONNECT SOUTH PARK COMMUNITY COALITION WEB PAGE:

<https://reconnectsouthpark.org/>

### PREPARED FOR:

Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development  
600 4th Ave Floor 5  
Seattle, WA 98104

### PREPARED BY:

Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc  
1201 Third Ave, Suite 2800  
Seattle, WA 98101

### WITH:

Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc.  
Cityfi, LLC  
Fehr & Peers  
MAKERS Architecture and Urban Design

