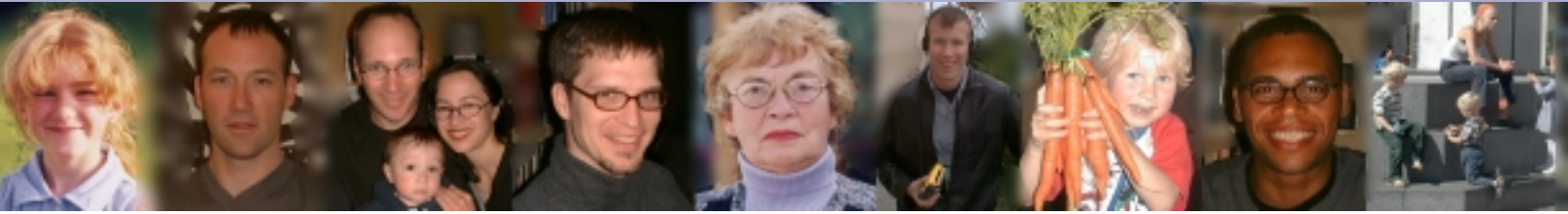




# Envisioning Light Rail in Seattle

## Link Light Rail in Seattle's Neighborhoods



 CITY OF SEATTLE STATION AREA PLANNING	RESOLUTION # 30165	08.2000	
EXHIBIT A			



## A City-wide Vision for Light Rail in Seattle

In 1996, Puget Sound voters in three counties agreed to tax themselves to construct a new mass transit system. At the heart of this system is Sound Transit's Link light rail—a safe, reliable light rail system that will carry up to 120,000 riders a day by 2010. Link light rail will have a phenomenal impact on Seattle and the region. It will run from SeaTac to north Seattle and will serve as the backbone for mass transit in Seattle. It's a major step in developing a regional transportation system, and will set the stage for future investment and expansion of mass transit in Puget Sound.

This document offers a city-wide vision for light rail in Seattle, and describes how the City hopes to use light rail to make Seattle an even better place to live, work, and play. Getting there will require the cooperation of governments, communities and businesses. The City, Sound Transit, and other governmental agencies are working together with local communities and businesses to make this vision a reality. The

community and private sector will be key to implementing many of the concepts discussed in this document. The vision for light rail presented here can help guide both City and private sector action as Link light rail becomes an integral part of Seattle and its neighborhoods.

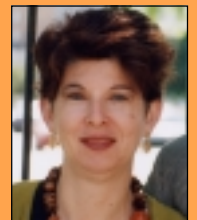
While Sound Transit is ultimately responsible for building and operating the light rail system, the City of Seattle is keenly interested in making sure that the best possible system is built for our residents, workers, and visitors. With this in mind, the City has three major goals for light rail in Seattle:

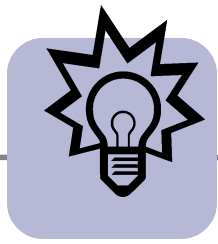
- Make it easier for people to get around with safe, efficient, and reliable transit;
- Promote positive change and invigorate our neighborhoods; and
- Help manage the rapid growth of our region.

**Q:** What will light rail do for you?

**A:** Get you everywhere you need to go!

Brenda is visiting Seattle for the first time to see her friends on Bainbridge Island. She flies in to Sea-Tac airport, worried about how she'll get to the island. Her friends suggested she take the new light rail system to the ferry. "It's quicker than driving, that's for sure," they claimed. Brenda is skeptical, but walks past the long line at the rental car desk and follows the signs to the Sound Transit station. Picking up a schedule and system map, she buys a ticket and in a few minutes a train arrives. Half an hour later, Brenda gets off at the Pioneer Square station and follows the signs to Colman Dock. It's a few blocks away, but it's a beautiful walk and she's traveling light. The next passenger ferry will arrive in 12 minutes; plenty of time to call her friends and tell them to meet her in Winslow. Although there's a 2 ferry wait for automobiles, she boards the ferry as a walk-on passenger and she's off to meet her friends at the ferry dock.





## Providing More Options for Getting Around Town

The Link light rail line will connect many of Seattle's largest employment centers, residential districts, and key destinations. It will be a great way to get around without having to pay for gas and parking. If you live near the light rail stations, you may not even need to own a car! The way to make light rail work for the entire city is to connect it with all the other ways of getting around in Seattle and the Puget Sound region.

On the regional level, Link light rail will connect Seattle riders to flights at SeaTac Airport, to Sound Transit commuter rail and Amtrak trains at King Street Station, to Washington Ferries at Colman Dock, and to regional and express buses throughout the system. Travelers will have a convenient way to get in and out of the city, and be able to get around without a car once they're here. Light rail will also provide a new way for commuters to get to jobs in Seattle and the surrounding region, taking more cars off the freeways and surface streets.

In Seattle's neighborhoods, light rail service will complement existing bus service and reduce some of the demand on the busiest north-south routes. Some of those buses can be reasigned to provide better east-west transit and improve connections to the light rail system from other parts of the city. Frequent, reliable bus service between the light rail stations and communities that aren't served by light rail will be crucial to ensure that everyone benefits from the system. City efforts like the Seattle Transit Initiative are focused on making these connections, looking at other intermediate capacity alternatives, and there by getting the most out of light rail.

Sound Transit and the City are working together to connect key pedestrian and bicycle routes to stations and provide storage racks for bicycles. Wide, tree-lined sidewalks and decorative street lights around the stations will make walking to the stations safer and more enjoyable. Other bicycle facilities, like lockers and showers, are being looked at to make light rail even more attractive to bicyclists.

Light rail won't replace every automobile ride and isn't the solution to all our traffic problems, but it can provide an alternative for many trips. It is a key part of the City's Trans-

portation Strategic Plan which will complement other transit options so that more automobile travel and car ownership can be avoided. Linking light rail with buses, car sharing, the mono-rail, taxi service, employee shuttles, the waterfront streetcar, and all the other ways of getting around town will make light rail more effective and change the way we travel.



## Building Communities and Strengthening Neighborhoods

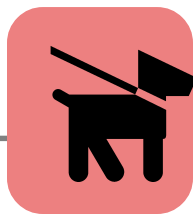
Building the Link light rail system is not just an effort to improve transit, it is an enormous public investment in our neighborhoods. The City wants this investment in light rail to invigorate the communities served by light rail and make them even better places to live and work.

### How will you use light rail? *Light rail makes life easier!*



Martin, a nurse who works "the night shift" on First Hill, leaves his apartment in Columbia City, walking past his car to the new light rail station. It's only a few block walk along the wide sidewalks on well lit, tree-lined Edmunds St. to the station. He loves not having to drive to work and pay for parking. He can get to his late-night job safely, quickly, and reliably with Sound Transit's 18-20 hour a day service, and it only takes him 16 minutes to get to the First Hill station directly across from the hospital.

When Martin gets back to the Edmunds station in the morning, he stops by the local Columbia City grocer to pick up breakfast, and treats himself to a fresh cup of coffee at the new sidewalk café. Sipping his coffee, he takes in the neighborhood and realizes he's got it pretty good. Tomorrow, he'll suggest that some of his co-workers take a look at the new apartments and condos he saw that morning above the First Hill station. They looked attractive and were reasonably priced. Or hey, maybe they could find something right here in the neighborhood; Columbia City is the place to be!



## What is Transit-Oriented Development?

Transit-oriented development (also called TOD) is a term used to describe how to build around major transit stations in a way that takes advantage of access to transit and helps promote transit use in the community. Transit-oriented development focuses on creating compact neighborhoods with housing, jobs, shopping, community services, and recreational opportunities all within easy walking distance of a transit station. This means that one can get from home to the office, grocery store, childcare facility, restaurant, dry cleaner, library, or park without using a car. Buildings with street-level retail and housing or offices above provide this mix of land uses around the station. Transit-oriented development focuses neighborhood activity on the street and requires inviting sidewalks and public space for pedestrians. In many instances, existing zoning and design guidelines already support TOD. The City can further support transit-oriented development by modifying its codes and regulations to remove obstacles to TOD, by creating incentive programs and educating developers about TOD, and by focusing public investment near stations to help promote TOD.



Between 1995 and 1999, 37 Seattle neighborhoods engaged in neighborhood planning and spent a lot of time and energy to develop ideas and recommendations for how to make their communities better. Many neighborhoods anticipated the development of light rail and their visions provide a blueprint for the future of our city.

The neighborhood plans recommend a variety of improvements, such as:

- parks and open space;
- community gathering places;
- successful neighborhood businesses that provide services and products for the community;
- improved community services, like childcare, community centers, and libraries;
- traffic and transportation improvements; and
- housing options and ownership opportunities.

The City's Station Area Planning effort builds on these neighborhood plans. Attracting and focusing both public and private investment around the light rail stations will play a big part to ensure that those positive changes happen.

Sound Transit will provide some amenities, like public plazas, as a part of the stations. City action or regulations will be needed for other improvements, like making changes to Seattle's streets and traffic patterns. Other objectives, such as promoting work-

ing-wage housing and small locally-owned businesses, will require City incentives together with the work of the private sector and other agencies like King County, the Seattle Housing Authority, and the School District.

The light rail system will focus attention and investment from the public and private sectors in our communities and can be the catalyst for achieving community goals and building better neighborhoods.



## Helping Manage Growth

Building an integrated system for moving people without relying on the automobile is key to managing the rapid growth occurring in Seattle. The City hopes to focus new residential and employment growth in urban villages, where existing zoning and land use patterns are better able to accommodate it. These compact, walkable communities are natural homes for light rail stations, where a large base of nearby residents can easily walk or bike to the stations and where local businesses provide shopping, services, and jobs. Urban village communities will benefit from the easy access to transit, as well as from the investment that light rail will attract.



## Link Light Rail in Seattle

There are 16 stations planned for the Seattle-section of Link light rail in phase I (see route map). The route runs from SeaTac through Tukwila, and makes its first Seattle stop at the Henderson Station at the intersection of Henderson Street and Martin Luther King, Jr. Way.

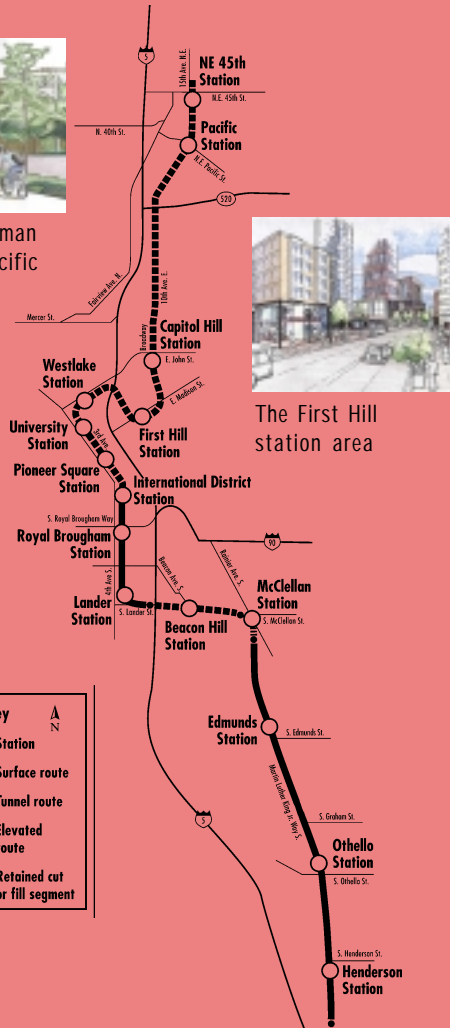


The route then travels north along MLK, Jr. Way, rising to an elevated platform at the McClellan Station, and entering a tunnel beneath Beacon Hill. Link light rail continues on the surface through SoDo and uses the existing Downtown Transit Tunnel to get through downtown Seattle. The route continues north in a tunnel under First Hill and Capitol Hill, travelling beneath Portage Bay in a tunnel to reach the University District. Sound Transit is seeking funds to continue through the Roosevelt District to reach Northgate in the first phase of the project, adding two more stations to the line.

Two Seattle stations were deferred for the first phase of construction. The Beacon Hill station will be "shelled out" in the first phase, and will not be open in 2006 when Link light rail begins service. Similarly, the Royal Brougham station will not be built until funding becomes available.



The Burke-Gilman Trail in the Pacific station area



The First Hill station area

In some communities, the availability of light rail, buses, and other means of transportation will allow development to occur in new ways that support transit use. New "transit oriented development," with shops on the street level and apartments or offices on the upper floors, provide exciting places to live, work and shop. They can be designed to complement the existing character of the neighborhood, and bring people onto the street. More

people walking around in the neighborhood enhances public safety and supports businesses in the neighborhood. Those living near a station will likely spend less money on their cars, leaving more money for home ownership and other priorities. Light rail reinforces the City's growth management strategy and helps provide an alternative to auto-dependent sprawl in the region.



## Tough Issues, Valid Concerns

**T**he new Link light rail system will bring change, and with that change come some real concerns. Resolving these issues will take some hard work and the City will need to work closely with Sound Transit, community groups, businesses, and other agencies to develop solutions that make light rail work for everyone.

### Sound Transit Process: Getting to Northgate, Deferred Stations, and Future Expansion

One of the most immediate challenges is making sure Link light rail gets to Northgate as soon as possible. The 1996 vote that funded Sound Transit included a light rail route that terminates at NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street in the University District, continuing to Roosevelt and Northgate if additional funding becomes available. Since then, it's become clear that getting to Northgate in the first phase is an important goal.

A Northgate station provides a key connection to transit in north Seattle. Reaching Northgate brings an estimated 16,000 more riders a day to Link light rail. North Seattle bus riders will have a convenient transfer point to get to light rail without having to head into town on crowded highways and surface streets. Getting to Northgate in the first phase would also relieve pressure on the University District to act as a temporary "end of the line" for the system.

Two Seattle stations were deferred for the first phase of construction. The Beacon Hill station will be "shelled out" in the first phase—one entrance shaft and the station platform area will be dug out so that in the future, when funds are available, the station can be completed without interfering with light rail train operations through Beacon Hill. The Beacon Hill station will not be open in 2006 when Link light rail begins service. Similarly, the Royal Brougham station will not be built until funding becomes available.

Funding the Northgate extension is a top priority, and establishing a successful first phase of light rail will lead the way for future investment and expansion of the Link system. The first phase of construction provides the region with a "starter system" on which to build. Link light rail is an investment for the long-term that will be a benefit throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Southeast Seattle and the Community Development Fund



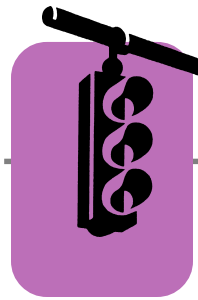
Light rail will provide an important new connection between Rainier Valley and other parts of the city and region. It will also be an enormous public investment in the area. Ensuring that light rail contributes to local economic and community development

is particularly important in Southeast Seattle. The Rainier Valley is beginning to benefit from increased community-based revitalization and reinvestment, especially in historic neighborhood centers. New development around the Southeast stations needs to support these efforts. The City will work with communities and businesses around the light rail stations to promote development that meets community needs and fulfills the visions of their neighborhood plans.

One important tool for leveraging the investment of light rail is the Rainier Valley Community Development Fund. This \$50 million fund is a financial commitment on the part of Sound Transit, the City, and King County, to ensure that the community benefits of Link light rail can be fully realized in the Rainier Valley. The fund can be used for community and economic development activities that assist residents and businesses impacted by light rail construction, above and beyond what Sound Transit is legally required to provide. It can also be used to invest in projects that would increase transit use in the Southeast Seattle. The City, King County, and Sound Transit are committed to strong and direct community involvement in both the establishment and long-term management of the fund.

### Promoting Housing, Not Displacing Communities

Finding affordable housing is a major concern for many Seattle residents, and light rail offers an opportunity to create more housing in neighborhoods that can support growth.



Promoting townhouses, apartments and other housing near the stations provides more rental and home ownership opportunities and takes advantage of access to transit. This is a key element of Seattle's housing policy. The City will encourage new housing near the stations that helps provide housing that's affordable and convenient for Seattle's residents.

At the same time, established neighborhoods are concerned that light rail investment and new housing development will displace existing residents and businesses. Preserving existing low-income housing is of particular importance to the City. By carefully targeting redevelopment in the areas surrounding light rail stations, the City will seek to focus investment where it can have the greatest positive impact and avoid displacing established residential and business communities.



### Economic Vitality: Building Businesses and Town Centers

While light rail can help support economic development, it must work within the context of the existing economic situation.

Simply building the transit system will not guarantee economic vitality. The City must work with communities to create policies and programs that will help make the most of light rail for the surrounding business districts.

The City's efforts will focus on supporting existing businesses, including small local and ethnic businesses, and balancing increased investment in distressed areas against dislocation that might be triggered as property values rise. In the short term, the economic vitality of affected neighborhoods will require that the City and Sound Transit provide effective relocation support and resource assistance to residents and businesses who are displaced or impacted by construction of the light rail system. Retaining local businesses during the construction period is crucial for the long-term viability of affected neighborhood business districts.

### Safe Stations and Safe Neighborhoods

Making sure that light rail stations and the surrounding neighborhoods are safe, attractive places is a key concern of the City and Sound Transit. Busy stations and bustling neighborhoods promote safety by putting "eyes on the street." Compact, walkable communities, with nearby residences, shops, and offices, promote round-the-clock activity in the areas around the stations. This kind of visible activity is one of the best deterrents to crime. There are also ways to design community spaces to prevent crime and uncivil behavior. Providing good lighting and clear lines of sight is crucial, as well as ensuring that stations and the surrounding areas are clean and well maintained.

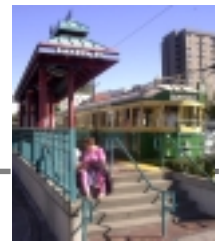
The Seattle Police and Fire Departments will continue to be engaged in addressing public safety concerns and developing specific strategies for each station area as light rail development proceeds. The City will strive to ensure residential safety on neighborhood streets by implementing appropriate traffic calming measures desired by residents.

### Balancing Parking and Light Rail



The role of parking in the communities around the light rail stations is critical. Providing too much parking around stations can compromise some of the benefits of light rail and possibly encourage more automobile use, pollution, and congestion.

Since Seattle's light rail stations will serve the centers of our residential neighborhoods and commercial districts, the City does not want to build new large park-and-ride facilities that would displace existing businesses and residents; available land could be better used to provide housing, businesses, or offices. In addition, commuter parking near the stations brings little economic benefit to the local communities and can result in more traffic and pollution in our neighborhoods. While park-and-ride facilities help commuters use the light rail system, the City wants to encourage more people to get to Seattle's stations by bus, walking, or biking. There will be an "end-of-the-line" park-and-ride at the Northgate Station, which will be a destination for some north King County commuters until Link is extended in the future. Park-and-ride facilities will also be located south of the



### Our City of Seattle goals for station areas:

- Encourage housing commercial, and retail uses that support transit and generate pedestrian activity.
- Use urban design to enhance community identity of station areas and make them attractive, safe, and convenient places.
- Provide public facilities that encourage transit ridership.
- Create a safe environment around stations.
- Enhance the existing transportation network, support transit-oriented development, and promote good walking, bicycle, and transit connections.

Adopted by City Council  
Resolution # 29867  
December 1998



Seattle city limits at the Boeing Access Road Station, the South 154<sup>th</sup> Station in Tukwila, and the South 200<sup>th</sup> Station in SeaTac.

The City also wants to discourage “hide-and-ride” parking—when commuters park their cars in a neighborhood along the light rail line and take the light rail to work, rather than taking a bus or paying for parking. Hide-and-ride is of particular concern for local businesses that depend on an adequate supply of short-term parking for their customers. It can also be an issue for local residents who are concerned about increased traffic on local streets. Making better use of the existing parking supply for local businesses and residents is crucial before pursuing more expensive options. The City and Sound Transit are working on a variety of measures and strategies to discourage hide-and-ride parking and manage the available parking in the communities around the stations.

### Living Through Construction



Building Link light rail is a huge undertaking and dealing with construction will not be easy. Some sections of streets will have to be torn up, heavy trucks will be travelling to and from construction sites, and some buses, cars and pedestrians will need to be rerouted to get to their destinations.

In addition, some businesses and residents must be relocated by Sound Transit to make room for construction. Sound Transit will pay these businesses and residents “just compensation” for their land and buildings. Sound Transit will also provide relocation assistance services to displaced businesses and residents. These may include replacement housing payments, rental assistance payments, and reimbursement of moving expenses.

The City and Sound Transit will work closely with impacted business owners to minimize the adverse effects of light rail construction. Maintaining access to businesses is crucial and, in some cases, bus stops and store signs will be relocated to maintain business visibility. Assistance to impacted businesses that are not actually displaced by construction may come in the form of marketing support during the construction period and loans that don’t require repayment until after construction is complete. Assistance to displaced businesses may include tenant improvement financing and loans to tenant businesses that will allow them to become property owners.

To ensure the long-term viability of neighborhood businesses, the City will identify ways to ensure technical assistance for marketing and development, affordable space, and skilled employees. The City will emphasize encouraging opportunities for business development, skill training and education that will bring new opportunities to low and moderate income residents, especially in the Rainier Valley.

### How do we achieve the vision?



Through Station Area Planning, the City has been working with affected neighborhoods, Sound Transit, and other agencies to develop a detailed vision to guide future development around each of the light rail stations. This vision, together with a set of objectives and tools to help achieve the vision, is provided in the “concept-level station area planning recommendation” documents for each station. These concept-level recommendations draw extensively on the adopted neighborhood plans of the surrounding neighborhoods and reflect the unique character of those communities.

