

## Equitable Transit Oriented Development in Southeast Seattle

This document summarizes the City of Seattle’s transit-oriented development (TOD) objectives, opportunities and challenges for the Mt. Baker and Othello light rail station areas.

### City of Seattle Transit Oriented Development Objectives:

- Build TOD consistent with community neighborhood visions and plans.
- Increase economic activity, create jobs, increase housing density and improve place-making.
- Form new partnerships to support equitable TOD
- Leverage public investments in light rail and other City investments.
- Increase community capacity.

## OTHELLO STATION

### VISION (from neighborhood plan):

- Create safe, vibrant town center that supports the economically and culturally diverse community of Othello.
- Support and maintain a healthy retail mix with a strong multiethnic business identity.
- Attract multicultural space.
- Encourage and require a mix of home prices and sizes through the active use of incentive, direct City funding, and surplus property programs.
- Leverage public funds to support affordable housing in the urban village, especially close to the light rail station.

### OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES:

#### Property Ownership

- Significant vacant/underutilized parcels zoned for mid-rise development. Three large publicly owned parcels adjacent to the station: one owned by Sound Transit and two by the Seattle Housing Authority (see map).
- Fragmented land ownership at northwest corner of Othello and MLK.
- Many smaller undevelopable sites owned by Sound Transit.



<b>VITALS</b>	
<b>TOD OPPORTUNITY:</b>	Short to Mid-Term (55-75)
<b>ZONING:</b>	Comp. 2012 at 85ft
<b>LAND UNDERUTILIZED:</b>	High
<b>COMM. RENTS:</b>	\$17.24/sf (2010)
<b>AVG APT RENTS</b>	\$924
<b>MEDIAN INCOME:</b>	\$32,610 - 52,17

**Presentation to the City Council Committee on Economic Resiliency and Regional Relations  
June 4, 2013**

**Public Infrastructure**

- Public infrastructure is in place.
- Othello Park redevelopment ongoing.

**Existing Projects**

- Community Cornerstones work focused on land acquisition, activating underutilized commercial space, business development, community leadership, and multi-cultural space.
- Only in Seattle multi-year business organizational strategy.
- The Office of Housing has loaned \$2 million to the Seattle Housing Authority to assist potential developers in providing additional 60-80% market rate housing at the southwest corner of Othello and MLK. Seattle Housing Authority is actively exploring development options with private developers.
- Sound Transit is interested in marketing its property near the Othello Station for projects that meet its TOD objectives.

**Resources/Tools**

- \$7 million Community Cornerstones Equitable TOD Loan Program for land acquisition.
- Area eligible for New Market Tax Credits, Multifamily Tax Exemption and Rainier Valley CDF funds.
- Business Case Manager working towards building stronger, more stable business models.
- Council passed legislation allowing Development Agreements on land owned by transit agencies (currently only allowed at Broadway).

**Market Strength**

- Mid-term potential for displacement of low-income residents/businesses.
- Weak real estate sub-market and relatively high land costs makes private developers hesitant and investors more risk averse (i.e. requiring higher returns).
- Vacant commercial space and low-performing businesses.

## **MT. BAKER STATION**

### **VISION (from neighborhood plan):**

- A vibrant, business district that serves North Rainier residents and is a destination shopping area.
- Ethnic and cultural diversity is a continued presence in the businesses and community.
- Development within the Town Center prioritizes housing that serves households across a range of incomes.
- North Rainier HUB Urban Village is known as a “Green Hub” providing green jobs and training, and green development.
- A Town Center that concentrates housing, commercial uses, services and living-wage employment opportunities.
- Rainier Ave S is a highly functioning multimodal “complete street”.



### **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

#### **Property Ownership:**

- Significant contiguous TOD sites owned by ST.
- 13 acre Lowe’s site.
- Many smaller undevelopable sites owned by ST.

#### **Public Infrastructure**

- Transportation issues inhibit TOD: Rainier & MLK intersection and Metro stops and turn around located across the street from station.
- 102’ storm line under QFC eliminates TOD potential. QFC owner has been willing to relocate pipe on edge of his property –increase sidewalk width.

#### **Existing Projects:**

- DPD Rezone Legislation: SM to allow flexibility in uses, 85’ in general, 125’ at Lowes to use incentive to create open space. As proposed in Neighborhood Plan update (2010), and Urban Design Framework (2011).
- One property owner has submitted contract rezone proposal.

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- Area eligible for New Market Tax Credits, Multifamily Tax Exemption and Rainier Valley CDF funds.
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**Market Strength:**

- Near-term potential for displacement of low-income residents and businesses.
- Some private developer interest due to moderate real estate market strength.
- Station area TOD potential is blocked by the triangle immediately in front of station.