



IMAGINE

GREATER DOWNTOWN

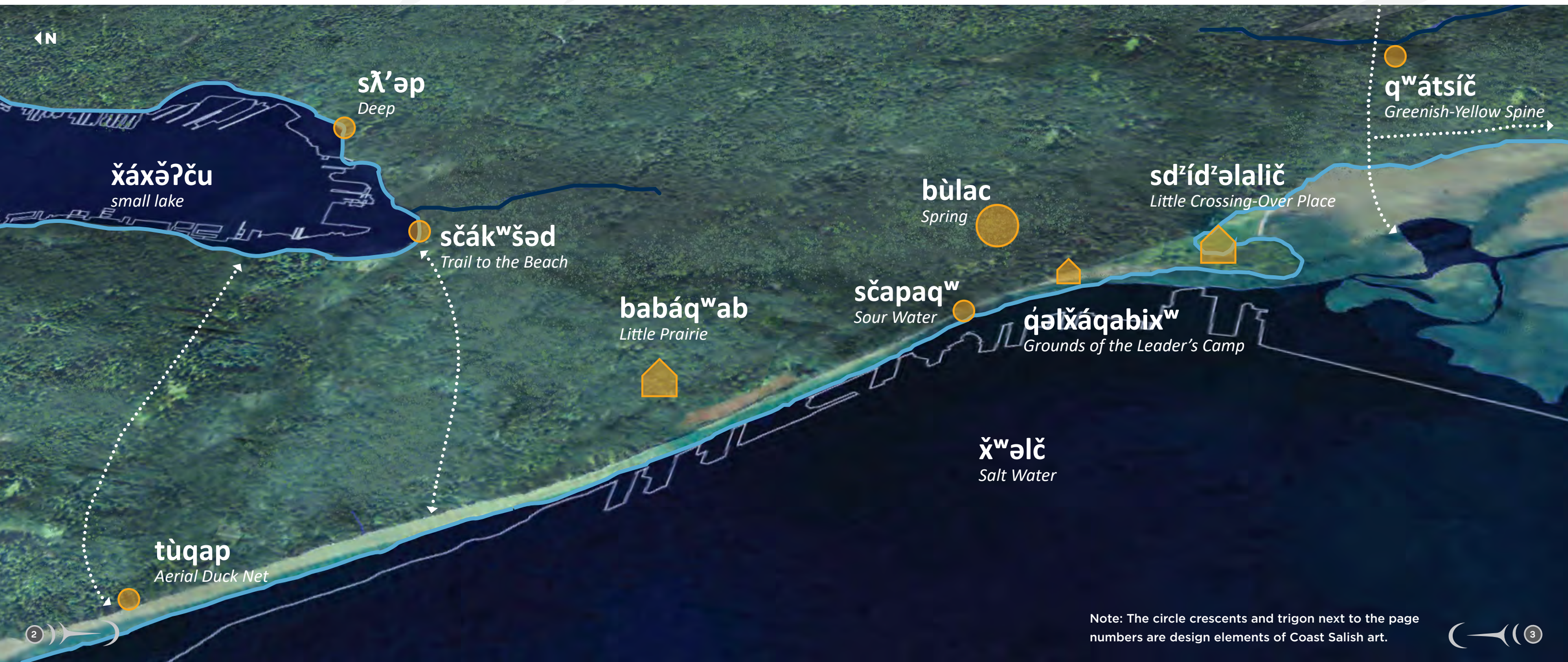
Big Ideas for the Heart of Seattle

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Imagine Greater Downtown sets out a vision for how we can improve public spaces and mobility in the center of our city.

As we look to the future, we actively recognize that we live, learn and work on Indigenous land—the current and ancestral homelands of the Central Coast Salish people. We commit ourselves to learning from them and working together as we create a more equitable future for all our people.

Adapted from the Waterlines project by the Burke Museum, this map shows the pre-colonial landscape of Seattle before shorelines were extended, lagoons filled, and rivers rerouted. The place names in Southern Lushootseed identify historic locations of known Indigenous settlements and significant places listed in *Native Seattle* by Coll Thrush, 2007.



Note: The circle crescents and trigon next to the page numbers are design elements of Coast Salish art.



**In 2035, the heart of Seattle
will be a place for us all, with
diverse neighborhoods, active
streets, and inviting public spaces.**

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	8	3	NEXT STEPS	106
	What's the big idea with these Big Ideas?	10		Measuring success	108
	Timeline of innovations	12		Realizing our vision for Greater Downtown	110
	Heart of our city and region	14		Advance South Waterfront planning and community discussion	111
	Assets and challenges	16		Develop a street network study	112
	Planned investments	22		Continue collaboration for transit stations and hubs	113
	Vision and values	24		Develop neighborhood public life action plans	114
	A framework for the future	26		Transform and activate I-5 overpasses and underpasses	115
2	THE BIG IDEAS	28			
	The journey to the Big Ideas	30			
	Indigenous beginnings	31			
	The Big Ideas	32			
	Streets we love, streets that work	34			
	Excellent transit experience	46			
	Great hubs, active spaces	58			
	Stitch the I-5 divide	70			
	Greening Greater Downtown	80			
	Connect us to the water	88			
	Neighborhood hearts for community life	96			

Imagine Greater Downtown is a partnership between the City of Seattle, King County Metro, Sound Transit, and the Downtown Seattle Association in coordination with the Washington State Department of Transportation and the Port of Seattle.



01

INTRODUCTION



WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA WITH THESE BIG IDEAS?

Seattle's Greater Downtown is the vibrant heart of a growing region. From Uptown to the Chinatown-International District, and from the Waterfront up to Capitol Hill, downtown neighborhoods encompass many histories, journeys, and special places in a setting of unparalleled natural beauty.

As we deconstruct the Alaskan Way Viaduct to foster a great new Waterfront for all, as new light rail lines, tunnels and stations expand our connectivity, and as a new convention center, hotels, offices, and thousands of new homes become a part of our urban fabric, the future begs the question: What's next? How can we make Greater Downtown even better?

This vision plan identifies what we need to work on now to make sure that the heart of our great city is the best it can be. Greater Downtown needs to be a great place to live, grow up, and grow old. A place that is vibrant, unique and fun. A place that reflects our past, protects what we love, embodies our present and who we are, and boldly forges an even better future.

Imagine Greater Downtown is focused on streets as places for public life as well as movement. It is a vision that points us in the direction we want to go. It will guide our next generation of partnership opportunities and planning to ensure that the future heart of Seattle is a place we all love.

This document includes a vision and a work plan. It incorporates projects and existing plans already underway, others in development but not yet committed to, and some completely new ideas. It is a compilation and refinement of hundreds of ideas—big and small—generated by residents and agencies.

The six partner agencies that created this document share a commitment to the heart of Seattle and the people we serve. While these agencies have different focuses and missions, they all serve the same customers in Seattle's core. The Big Ideas represent the North Star that will guide us as we strive for an inclusive and sustainable Greater Downtown.

“We want to make sure our streets and parks are vibrant. We want to be a city that is inclusive, welcomes people from all walks of life. We want to be a place where people can easily get where they want to go and the joy is in the journey. However, this is only going to happen if we work together to make sure we have a vision and direction pointing where we want to go.”

-Mayor Jenny Durkan



TIMELINE OF INNOVATIONS

To imagine what can happen in 20 to 30 years, just look at Seattle's history. Imagination, initiative, innovation, and partnership have transformed Seattle over time.



Source: Seattle Municipal Archives

Before 1850
Native people have lived in this area for more than 4,000 years and continue to do so today. Local tribes lived in villages along the rivers, bays, and lakes, including the village where Chief Seattle resided—now the location of the King Street Station¹

1850-1860
European and Chinese settlers arrived in the mid-19th century

1889-1910
The Great Seattle Fire devastated the city, prompting the rebuilding and expansion of Seattle by 1910

1900-1929
The Denny Regrade removed Denny Hill and established the present day street grid in Belltown and Denny Triangle



Source: Seattle Parks

1950-1976
The Freeway Era brought the construction of the Alaskan Way Viaduct in 1950; the Federal Highway Act Passed in 1956; and I-5 was built from Seattle to Everett in 1965; Freeway Park was opened to the public in 1976

1985-2001
Construction began on the Washington State Convention Center in 1985 and was completed in 1988; and a major expansion was completed in 2001 to double the exhibition space and add a hotel, office, and sky-bridge



Source: Sound Transit

1996-2024
The initial Sound Transit Ballot Measure passed in 1996; ST2 and ST3 passed in 2008 and 2016, respectively; and the ST2 system with 55 miles of light rail will be complete in 2024



Source: Seattle Waterfront

2001-2021
The Nisqually Earthquake damaged the Alaskan Way Viaduct; in 2019 the Viaduct is removed; and in 2021 the Waterfront Seattle projects transform public access and views

2016-2041
Voter approved light rail expansion will expand regional connections to Greater Downtown, build a new light rail tunnel with six Greater Downtown stations, and provide connections to Ballard and West Seattle

2020-2035
Greater Downtown vision becomes reality!



HEART OF OUR CITY AND REGION

Seattle's 10 Greater Downtown neighborhoods are at the center of a complex, vital, and growing city and region. What happens in these neighborhoods radiates beyond their boundaries. Public streets, parks, and plazas comprise nearly half the urban fabric, serving to connect transport and enrich the lives of millions of people each year.

10 Unique Neighborhoods

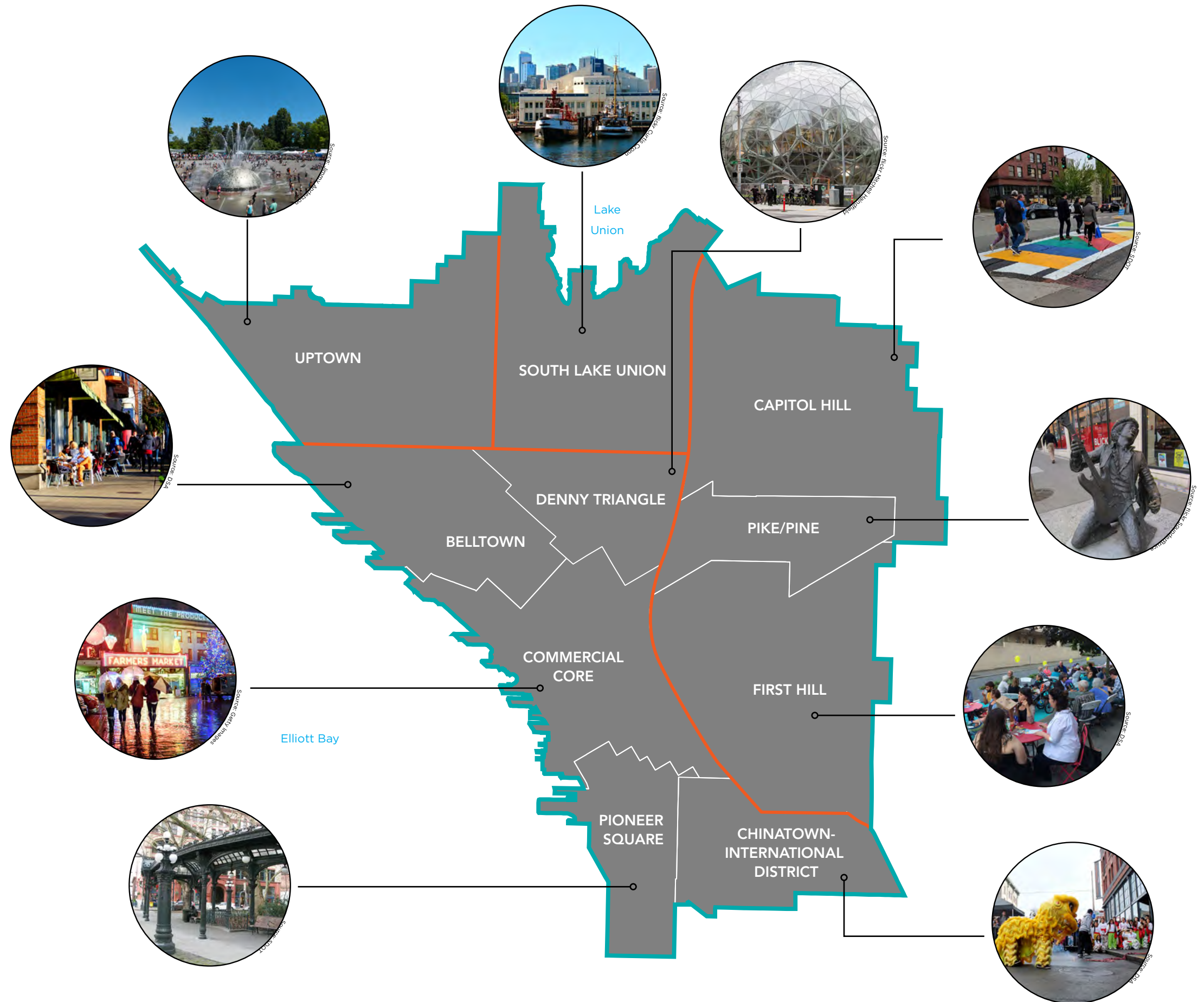
Every neighborhood is unique. Each has histories, character, and places that Seattleites love, cherish, and hope to preserve and celebrate. Each is dynamic, with new people, developments, neighborhood businesses, landmarks, and places to love and call home.

4 Urban Centers

Greater Downtown includes four Urban Centers, a regional planning designation for targeted areas to support regional job and housing growth. Growing smart in Uptown, South Lake Union, First Hill/Capitol Hill, and Downtown will help preserve the beauty and natural resources people in Puget Sound cherish.²

1 Greater Downtown

All of these neighborhoods together make one **Greater Downtown**. Here 15% of Seattle's residents and half of Seattle's employees live and work alongside many visitors on just 5% of the city's land area. Greater Downtown is the heart of Seattle and the region.³



ASSETS AND CHALLENGES

Greater Downtown’s natural setting and history have shaped growth, economic development, and the character of our built environment. The most pressing challenges facing Greater Downtown also define the biggest opportunities ahead.

✓ **Asset**
Natural Splendor

Seattle reflects the best of Pacific Northwestern natural beauty. Mt. Rainier, stunning Cascade peaks, and the Olympics hovering over the Sound reveal their splendor each clear day. East-west streets slope toward hills with breathtaking views, and ferry rides on the water offer skyline and mountain range backdrops.



Source: Tiffany Von Armin

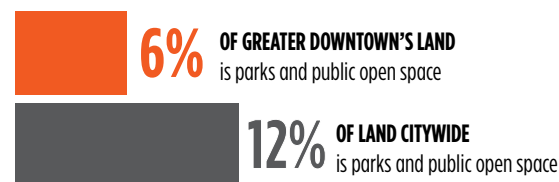
✓ **Asset**
A Place Called Home

Greater Downtown neighborhoods are not just places to work and visit. Increasingly many people call them home. Over 100,000 people, or one-fifth of Seattle’s population, live in Greater Downtown neighborhoods and more will choose to move here to avail themselves of the benefits of living within a short walk of all the city has to offer. Residents desire safe strolling streets, and great public places to gather, relax, and celebrate.



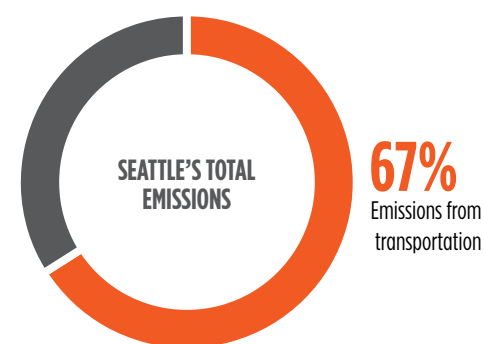
Source: Valentina Zhukova

! **Challenge**
Balancing growth with parks and open space



Parks and public open space make up only 6% of Greater Downtown’s land compared with 12% citywide.⁴ As density increases, open space is critical for livable neighborhoods. Furthermore, the percentage of young people in downtown is growing disproportionately fast. The population under age 18 grew five times as fast as the rate for the city and 13 times as fast as the region from 2010 to 2018.⁵

! **Challenge**
Mitigating climate change



The fresh air and mild climate Seattleites prize is at risk given the mounting effects of climate change. Poor air quality and greenhouse gas emissions threaten the environment locally and globally, and ambitious goals to achieve carbon neutrality face a stark reality: two thirds of Seattle’s GHG emissions come from transportation.⁶

! **Challenge**
Eliminating disparities in environmental justice and health

There is up to a 10 YEAR difference in life expectancy among Greater Downtown neighborhoods

In Greater Downtown, people in Yesler Terrace, Chinatown-International District, and Belltown—home to many seniors, low-income households, and people of color—are disproportionately likely to have poor long-term health outcomes.⁷ Physical environments and transportation options strongly influence factors that can prevent adverse health outcomes, such as physical activity, psychological well-being, and exposure to pollutants.

! **Challenge**
Finding solutions to the homelessness crisis and supporting people experiencing homelessness

SAFETY is the top concern of unsheltered people

Rising housing costs have had a visible impact on the city’s most vulnerable residents. Over 11,000 people experience homelessness in the Seattle/King County Area.⁸ In Seattle, roughly 3,500 people experience unsheltered homelessness. Homelessness and the safety of everyone in Greater Downtown is a top priority for Seattle and the region.

✓ Asset
Growing Transportation Options

The region is investing in transit and other sustainable travel options at an unprecedented rate. In 2018, more people commuted on transit, by foot, and by cycling than ever before and single-occupancy vehicle trips have dropped nearly 10 percentage points since 2010.⁹ As Sound Transit's light rail connects more of the region, light rail capacity to Greater Downtown will grow from 12,000 people per hour (2019) to 48,000 people per hour (2035).¹⁰



✓ Asset
Economic Engine

Nearly 300,000 people come to work in Greater Downtown each day.¹⁴ White collar, service, tradespeople and construction workers all travel downtown to build the city's growing infrastructure and keep the city running. The two most important manufacturing and industrial areas—situated just north and south—generate tens of thousands of family-wage jobs through freight and international maritime trade; warehouse storage and distribution, and transportation facilities and services that support high density downtown activities. These activities rely on streets to and through Greater Downtown to make deliveries, pick-ups and connections.

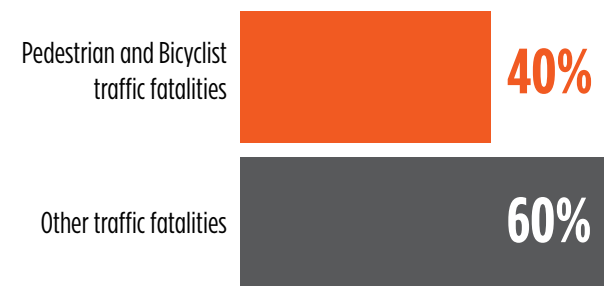


! Challenge
Adapting streets for a transit-oriented future



Transit ridership is growing, absorbing roughly 70% of all new commuters since 2010. In 2017, nearly half of all commuters used bus, light rail, or streetcar to get to and from work, twice the rate of the next highest mode.¹¹ Yet only 1% of Greater Downtown's streets are dedicated transit lanes. Technology innovations to improve mobility for goods and people are also leading to more traffic congestion on our streets, reinforcing the need to carefully manage valuable public street space.

! Challenge
Achieving zero traffic deaths



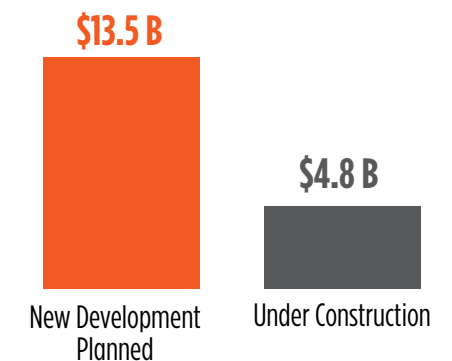
Pedestrians and bicyclists are involved in 6% of all traffic crashes, yet represent 40% of all traffic fatalities in Seattle. Many of Seattle's crash locations are on arterial streets in Greater Downtown.¹² 23% of city blocks in Greater Downtown have a grade steeper than 5%.¹³ Steep hills, along with substandard sidewalks and traffic signals that prioritize cars, create challenges for people walking and rolling. Major arterials such as Mercer, Denny, Boren, and 4th Avenue are frequently cited as safety concerns and physical barriers between places people live, work, and recreate.

! Challenge
Managing traffic congestion and new technologies



How people and goods travel is changing and straining roadways. Average travel times to or through Seattle on I-5, the SR 520 bridge, and the I-90 bridge triple during the afternoon peak. Uber and Lyft were responsible for 24 million car trips in the City of Seattle in 2018—up almost 20% from 2017.¹⁵ Online shopping has grown by 15% annually for the past 11 years, and is now 9% of total retail sales in the U.S.,¹⁶ which means there is increased demand for package delivery on Seattle's busy streets.

! Challenge
Optimizing the public right-of-way for public and private uses



Greater Downtown is 5% of Seattle's land area, but experienced approximately half (49%) of the city's development since 2010.¹⁷ Many functions are competing for the limited space in the public right-of-way, which constitutes 40% of the Greater Downtown land area. Greater Downtown has nearly \$13.5 billion in new development planned, including \$4.8 billion under construction.¹⁸ Land acquisition for new open space is very challenging given the strong real estate market.

✓ Asset

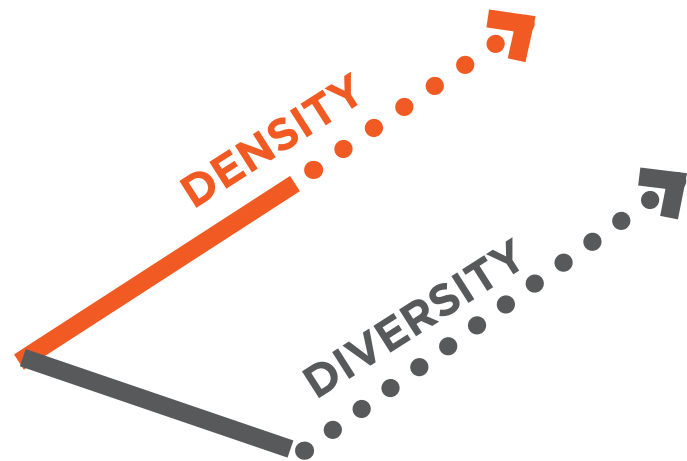
Diverse Cultures

Native tribes first settled along the shores of what are now Elliott Bay and Lake Union, and along the tidal flats of the Duwamish River. Since then there have been many waves of migration to the Seattle area from around the world. Despite redlining and historic exclusion of people of color in Seattle and many U.S. cities, Greater Downtown is home to a rich and unique blend of cultures, identities, and ancestries. One in five residents in Greater Downtown is foreign born.¹⁹



! Challenge

Curbing displacement of existing communities of color



Greater Downtown has the highest concentration of affordable and supportive housing in Seattle, yet rents are rising everywhere. Residents of Chinatown-International District and First Hill are at a high risk of displacement due to a combination of high housing demand, high development potential, and a large population of people who are less able to withstand housing cost increases and more likely to encounter discrimination or other barriers to housing access.²⁰

✓ Asset

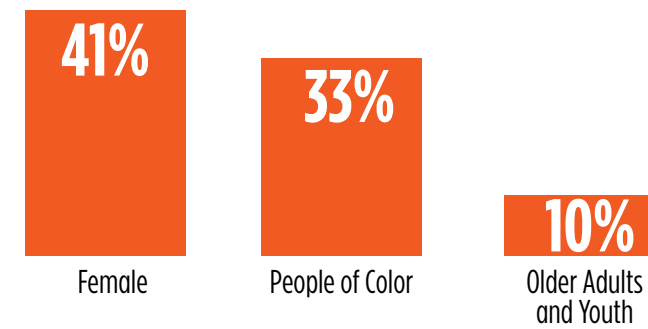
A Global Destination

It's no secret Seattle has become an attractive global destination—2017 marked eight straight years of growth in tourism. About 40 million people visited Seattle in 2017 and spent \$7.4 billion in the city and King County.²¹ While visitors are attracted to the state and region as a whole, many visit and stay downtown to take advantage of cultural destinations, entertainment, convention facilities, sports venues, and unique neighborhoods. The Port supports regional visitation through airports and cruises, bringing over 23,000 jobs and \$1.8 billion in business revenue to the region.²²



! Challenge

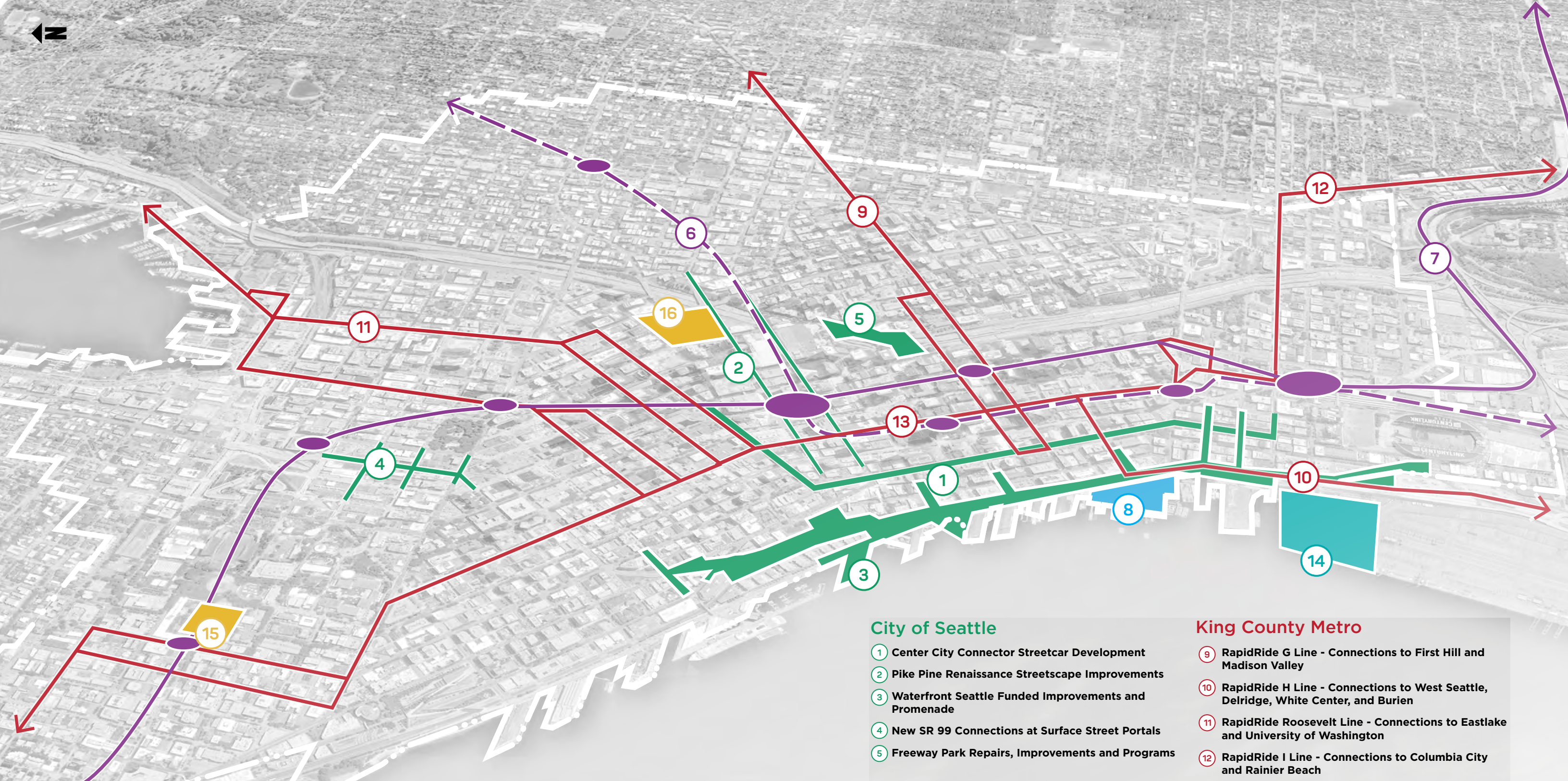
Creating inviting spaces for all people and identities



Public life observational data shows that females, youth (less than 15 years old), and older adults (over 65 years old) have been underrepresented users of our streets and sidewalk space when compared to Census data.

Demographics of people observed staying still and hanging out on sidewalks

A sense of safety and belonging is difficult to quantify, and is an important factor in how people experience Greater Downtown. During Imagine Greater Downtown outreach, people shared that they avoid certain areas during the evenings and non-daylight hours. Some people, especially people of color, feel unwelcome in certain neighborhoods. They fear harassment from law enforcement, private business owners, and neighborhood residents for spending time in public spaces. Public life survey data indicates that although there are more people using our streets in the downtown urban center and other center city neighborhoods to engage in optional activities—such as talking to others, eating/drinking, and playing—other neighborhoods have a higher proportion of passersby stop, stay, and linger.²³



PLANNED INVESTMENTS

Many investments and projects are already underway in Greater Downtown. Imagine Greater Downtown builds on these investments, highlighting next steps and new priorities that require interagency collaboration.

City of Seattle

- 1 Center City Connector Streetcar Development
- 2 Pike Pine Renaissance Streetscape Improvements
- 3 Waterfront Seattle Funded Improvements and Promenade
- 4 New SR 99 Connections at Surface Street Portals
- 5 Freeway Park Repairs, Improvements and Programs

Sound Transit

- 6 Existing Light Rail System and Stations
- 7 Future Light Rail Expansions and Six New Downtown Tunnel Stations

Washington State Department of Transportation

- 8 New Colman Dock Ferry Terminal Renovations

King County Metro

- 9 RapidRide G Line - Connections to First Hill and Madison Valley
- 10 RapidRide H Line - Connections to West Seattle, Delridge, White Center, and Burien
- 11 RapidRide Roosevelt Line - Connections to Eastlake and University of Washington
- 12 RapidRide I Line - Connections to Columbia City and Rainier Beach
- 13 Upgrades to RapidRide C and D Lines (ST3)

Port of Seattle

- 14 Cruise Terminal at Terminal 46 North

Public/Private Development

- 15 Seattle Center Arena Redevelopment
- 16 Washington State Convention Center Expansion

VISION

In 2035, the heart of Seattle will be a place for us all, with diverse neighborhoods, active streets, and inviting public spaces.

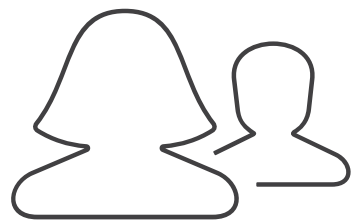
VALUES

Community values—as articulated through public input and crafted by the project’s Advisory Group—were the core drivers for the Big Ideas and the plan to achieve them.



Children play in the streets during a Summer Streets event in downtown Seattle.

People First



Cultivate Community: Create places and experiences that bring people together and encourage positive interactions

Promote Health: Support active lifestyles and clean and safe environments that foster physical and emotional well-being

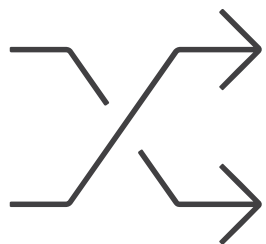
Racial, Economic and Social Justice



Lead with Equity: Improve outcomes for the most vulnerable groups and individuals

Proactive Participation: Initiate, invite, listen to, respect, and empower all people

Access to Opportunity for All



Provide Efficient and Attractive Mobility Options: Implement distributed, convenient, reliable, and accessible mobility options

Connect Safely: Ensure that streets and public spaces are safe, accessible, and comfortable

Prioritize People and Goods: Create efficiency where needed to keep streets moving

Environmental Stewardship



Be Bold Leaders: Model climate-positive policies and actions for a sustainable future

Let Nature Thrive: Foster connections with nature and integrate natural settings into daily life

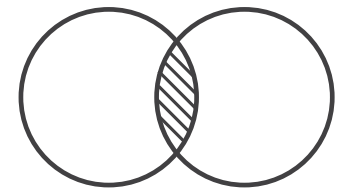
Cultural Diversity



Celebrate Seattle: Enhance each neighborhood’s identity and individual belonging in streets and public spaces

Honor All Cultures: Acknowledge the triumphs and challenges of Seattle’s collective past

Collaboration

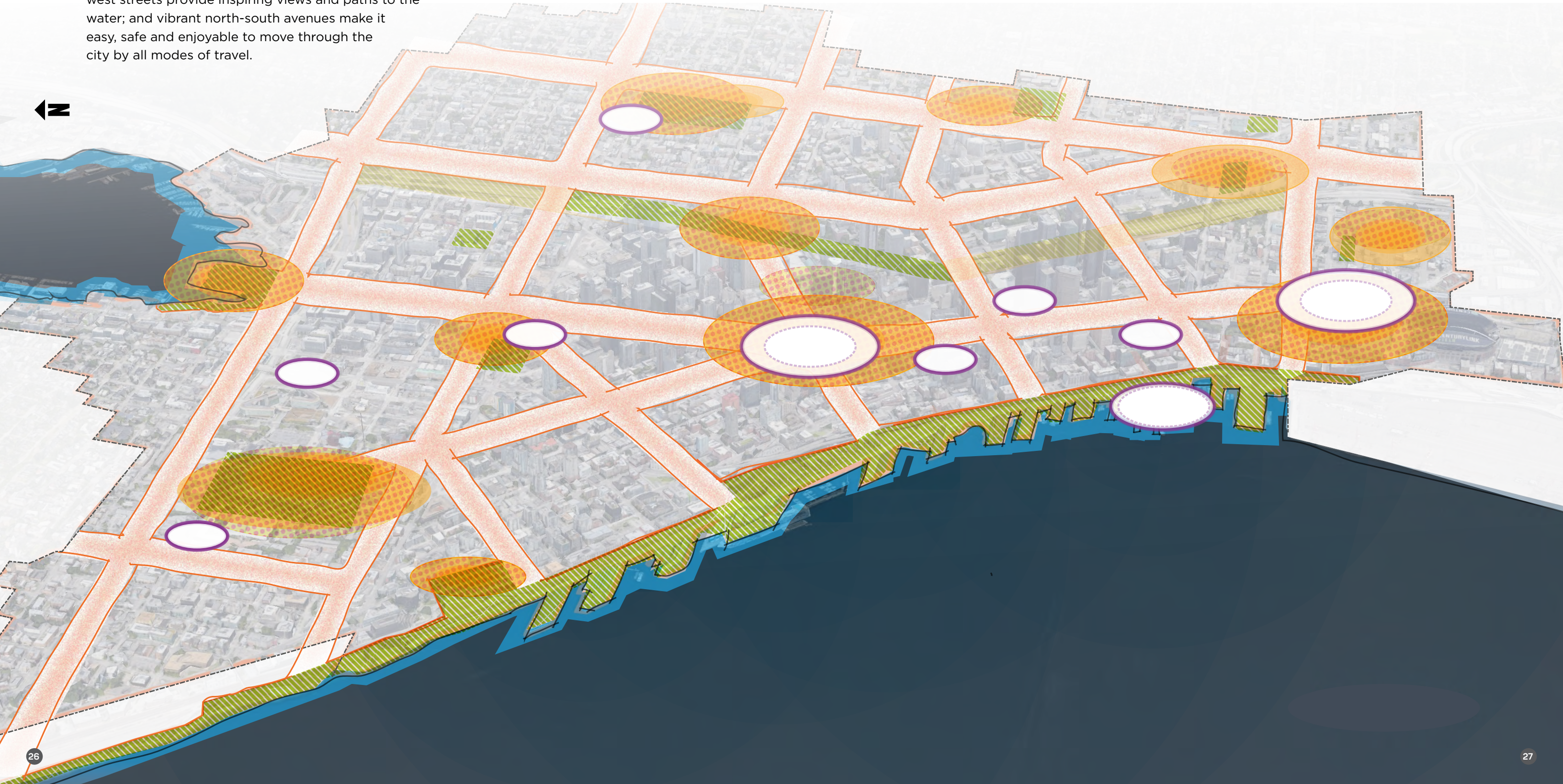
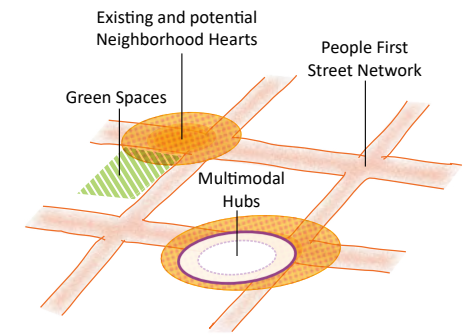


Co-Create Success: Engage people to develop shared outcomes that invest in future generations

Take the Long View: Steadily build an honorable legacy together

A FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE

Building on the planned investments outlined on pages 22 and 23, Imagine Greater Downtown envisions an evolving city form defined by great **Multimodal Hubs** connected to active **Neighborhood Hearts** and inviting **Green Spaces**, such as an expanded freeway lid. Each of these places—whether existing or new—celebrates culture, supports healthy living, and brings people together. A network of **People-First Streets** connects each of these places—east-west streets provide inspiring views and paths to the water; and vibrant north-south avenues make it easy, safe and enjoyable to move through the city by all modes of travel.



02

THE BIG IDEAS



THE JOURNEY TO THE BIG IDEAS

This vision framework is the product of hundreds of ideas gathered through community input and shared knowledge. Seattleites, Greater Downtown residents, and staff across coordinating agencies worked together to craft the vision that follows.

Since summer 2018, the project team:

- Attended over 50 different events for public input
- Hosted community conversations
- Listened and spoke at community meetings
- Collected comments in online open houses
- Brought together an advisory group of engaged stakeholders

The engagement process and work of the Advisory Group shaped the vision, values, and the many ideas to achieve them. Led by the Executive Steering Committee, input was organized into 7 Big Ideas that form the organizing pillars of the Framework Vision.

The Advisory Group is composed of 23 Greater Downtown residents and workers. They represent different non-profits, commercial businesses, neighborhood groups, races, ethnicities, and abilities.

A More Inclusive Process

The Executive Steering Committee for this vision represents leaders from the seven coordinating agencies. They called for a more inclusive and thorough approach to community visioning and engagement. The project outreach team hired liaisons within diverse communities to identify groups and residents that traditional planning processes often fail to reach—particularly communities of color, ethnic minorities, and low-income individuals. Engagement helped put racial and social justice at the heart of this plan.

This vision and ideas for a brighter future would not have been possible without the participation of so many people.

Idea Generating Process



“Every part of this country is sacred to my people. Even the rocks, which seem to lie dumb as they swelter in the sun along the silent seashore in solemn grandeur, thrill with memories of past events connected with the lives of my people.”

-Seeathl (attributed)

INDIGENOUS BEGINNINGS

Since time immemorial, Coast Salish people have lived and thrived along the shores of the Salish Sea.

Seattle’s namesake—

SI’AL, CHIEF SEEATHL

a leader of Duwamish and Suquamish heritage—welcomed the first white settlers here and taught them to survive, in a spirit of collaboration and co-existence. But as more settlers arrived Indigenous people were marginalized and forced out, both through purposeful action and neglect, resulting in the racial inequalities that exist today—an experience shared by other communities of color in Seattle.

As we plan for our community’s future, we honor and build upon the stories, experiences and voices of everyone who has come before and who shapes and shares our city today. In particular, we recognize the stewardship of Seattle’s Indigenous people and their special relationship with the land and this place. We commit to learning from them and working together as we strive to build a city for all.



THE BIG IDEAS

The following framework describes the seven Big Ideas that will transform Greater Downtown.



Streets We Love, Streets That Work

Create safe, sustainable, and well-organized streets for every form of travel

- 01. Connect neighborhoods with people-first streets
- 02. Create premium networks
- 03. Enhance the 3rd Ave transit spine
- 04. Promote safe, sustainable, and zero-emission streets
- 05. Ready streets for micromobility and other forms of emerging mobility
- 06. Manage congestion to address climate change and advance equity
- 07. Facilitate seamless goods delivery



Excellent Transit Experience

Make transit is the preferred mode to access and travel through Greater Downtown

- 01. Invest in frequent, reliable transit service corridors
- 02. Connect Greater Downtown with a network of hop-on, hop-off spines
- 03. Create a comfortable and convenient transit experience for everyone
- 04. Provide spaces for art, performance, and public life on the move
- 05. Expand water transit
- 06. Achieve affordable and people-centered transit travel
- 07. Create functional and accessible spaces in the public right-of-way around transit facilities
- 08. Create great transit station environments



Great Hubs, Active Spaces

Form seamless mobility connections, and reinforce the cultural and community values of accessing crossroads in Greater Downtown

- 01. Reinforce hub areas as Seattle's town squares
- 02. Create places of convenient connection
- 03. Integrate plazas and pedestrian connections at the Jackson Hub
- 04. Cover the BNSF tracks
- 05. Improve physical and cultural connections
- 06. Connect plazas to support the growing Westlake Hub



Stitch the I-5 Divide

Reconnect neighborhoods and improve access over, under, and across I-5

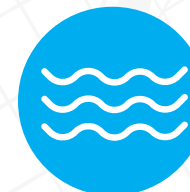
- 01. Increase open space over I-5
- 02. Implement a Melrose Promenade 2.0
- 03. Bring light and purpose to the spaces under I-5
- 04. Connect north neighborhoods with a Thomas St bridge and overlook
- 05. Enhance the Harborview overlook
- 06. Rethink freeway entrances and exits downtown



Greening Greater Downtown

Infuse more parks and nature in the urban landscape

- 01. Grow the parks and open space network to meet the needs of the most densely populated neighborhoods
- 02. Connect with nature, the land, and Native culture
- 03. Restore habitat and invite nature into Greater Downtown
- 04. Use trees and rooftops to grow the green canopy



Connect Us to the Water

Bring interactive experiences to the lake, sound, and public spaces

- 01. Realize the full Waterfront Seattle vision
- 02. Trace historic water lines and Indigenous history
- 03. Get people on the water



Neighborhood Hearts for Community Life

Enhance neighborhoods with inviting places and destinations

- 01. Create or enhance a community heart in each neighborhood
- 02. Make the city a canvas to celebrate local culture, topography, and history
- 03. Adopt policies to promote active and vibrant street life
- 04. Create spaces to gather and enjoy, by communities, and for communities
- 05. Bring water to the neighborhoods

LEGEND

-  People-First Network
-  3rd Ave Transit Spine



STREETS WE LOVE, STREETS THAT WORK

Create safe, sustainable, and well-organized streets for every form of travel

In 2035, people and goods traveling to and around Greater Downtown have legible, safe, affordable, and reliable options no matter how they choose to travel.

- Street space is prioritized for people walking, biking, using transit, delivering goods, and for emissions-free transit vehicles of all kinds.
- A legible network of great walking streets fosters a culture of vibrant public life.
- Riding and rolling in wheelchairs, scooters, and electric skateboards are safe and accessible transportation options for people of all ages and abilities.
- More streets are designed to support convenient, reliable transit service.
- Streets and mobility choices afford people of color, low-income people, and vulnerable communities equal access to work, housing, and places to play and gather.
- Emerging technologies such as ride-hailing, micromobility devices, and autonomous vehicles are integrated with existing travel options and meet our goals of equity, inclusion, safety, and affordability.
- Freight and delivery vehicles can move all types of goods easily and efficiently to their destinations.
- Greater Downtown has a carbon-neutral transportation system by 2050.²⁴

CONTEXT

Building on Existing Efforts

- Public agencies and private sectors are exploring **ways to move more people on foot, transit, bicycles, and other shared mobility modes**. Transformative projects are underway in Greater Downtown:
 - » **Waterfront Seattle** is making space for biking, walking, and public life along and connecting to the redesigned Alaskan Way.²⁵
 - » **Pike Pine Renaissance** is improving the experience of people walking on Pike and Pine streets, creating a connection from Capitol Hill to the waterfront.²⁶
 - » **Center City Connector Streetcar** is joining the existing South Lake Union and First Hill Streetcar lines to allow easy transit connections throughout the core of downtown.²⁷
- The buildout of funded phases of Sound Transit regional light rail system (**ST2 and ST3**) will be **completed by 2041**, expanding the regional system to 116 miles, with six new stations in Greater Downtown.²⁸
- King County Metro has committed to **a zero-emission fleet by 2040**.²⁹
- The University of Washington's Urban Freight Lab is **pioneering innovations in freight systems and technology**.³⁰

Addressing Key Challenges

- Seattle's growth and geographic constraints **require moving more people and goods in a fixed amount of public street space**.
- A **disproportionate amount of street space is devoted to private vehicle movement** and storage in Greater Downtown.
- Bus speeds on Seattle's major surface street transit pathways (2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th avenues) **average less than seven miles per hour during the PM peak hours (3-6 p.m.)**³¹—transit travel times vary as buses are susceptible to delay from traffic incidents.
- People are moving through streets in new ways**, and more change is coming. Our mobility system needs to be flexible and prepared.
 - » Between 2016 and 2018, venture capitalists **invested \$54 billion in the United States in mobility-related urban technology**. Nearly 70% of tracked venture capital was spent on urban technology.³² Continued investment will lead to rapid deployment of mobility options
 - » **Some forms of autonomous vehicles (AVs) will likely arrive in Seattle** during the timeframe of this plan.
- Seattle's **bicycle mode share dipped below 3%** of commute trips in 2018.³³ Important links in an all ages and abilities bicycle network are yet to be implemented.



ADVANCING EQUITY

In 2035, transportation networks can create access to opportunity with equitable, affordable transportation options for multi-generational families, people of color, and low-income residents in every community. Streets can support families, youth, seniors, and people of all abilities, with safety as the top priority. As more and more new mobility options come to Seattle, technologies, services, and products can be shaped to be accessible to everyone, not only to the wealthy.

How we get there: By understanding the mobility needs of priority communities; focusing on participatory planning, design, and budgeting; engaging diverse communities on decision making; and centering our work around equity and environmental justice.

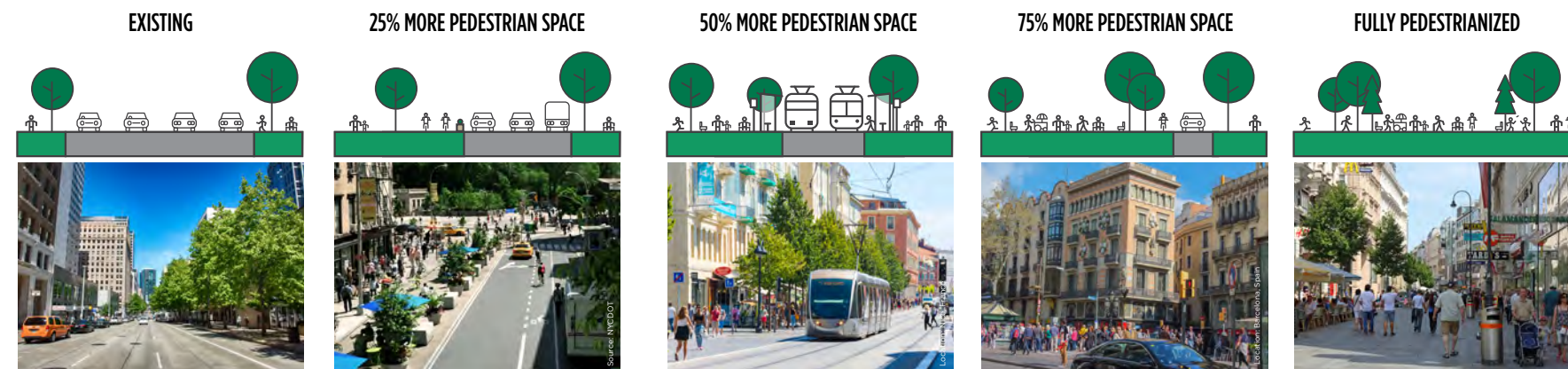


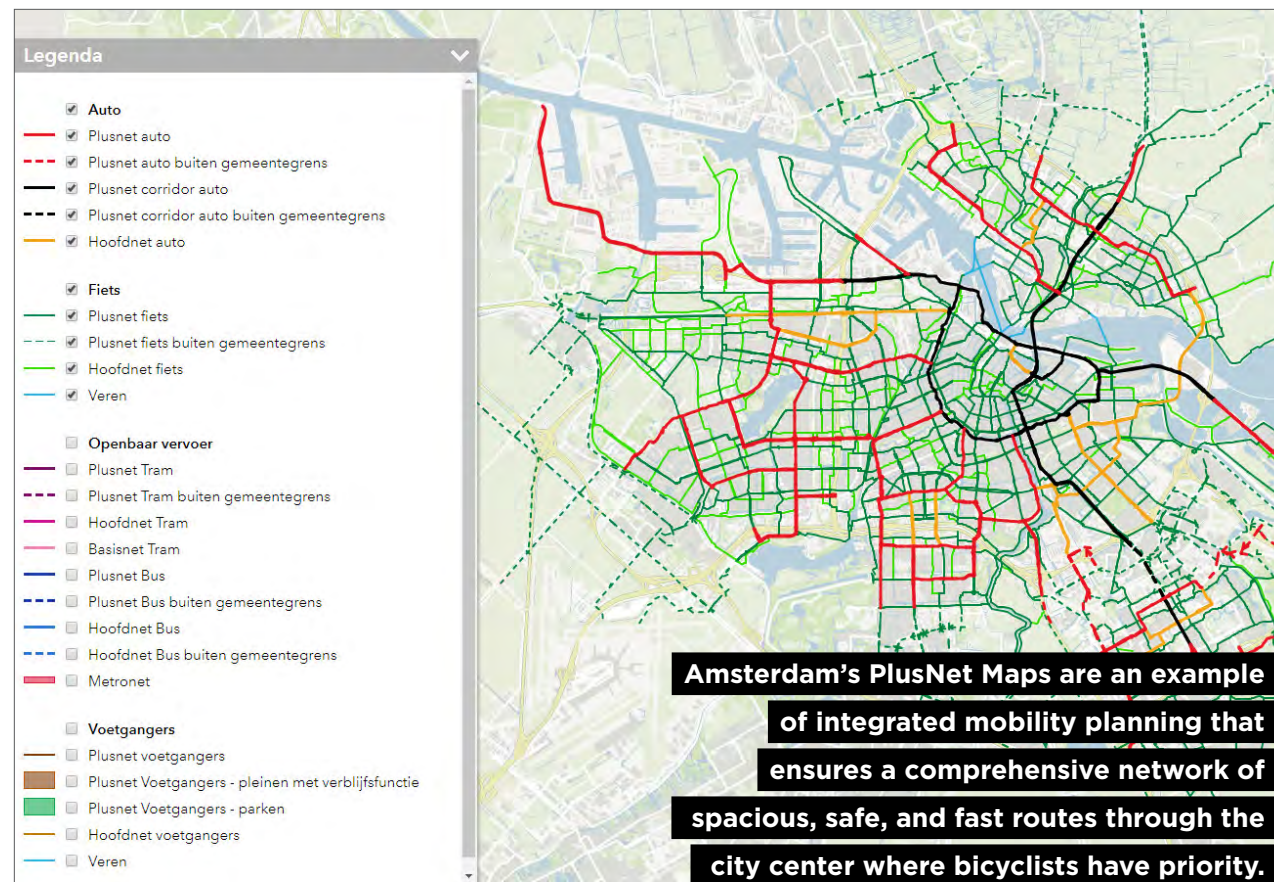
01 Connect neighborhoods with people-first streets

Invest in a network of people-first streets that are great places for walking, biking, and enjoying public life.

- Make great walking experiences ubiquitous by investing in a people-first street improvement at approximately every six blocks.
- Identify streets that should prioritize people first while allowing local access for vehicles and delivery; and streets that should permanently transform into parks and public spaces.
- Host recurring or intermittent open street style events on weekends and evenings to cultivate community and public life.
- Program people-first streets to meet unmet neighborhood needs, such as play areas, vending, and seating.
- Manage street speeds and features to prioritize walking and biking in neighborhoods and residential areas.
- Turn vehicle lanes into community space on weekends and evenings to cultivate street life, active transportation, and commerce.

People-first streets can take many shapes and help provide a great walking experience, neighborhood amenities, and spaces for people.





02 Create premium networks

Designate a clear and attractive network for every mode.

- Invest in a fully-protected and fully-connected bike network to make riding and rolling fun, safe, and dignified for people of all ages, abilities, races, backgrounds, and means.
- Create a flexible, adaptable network for micromobility that can accommodate different speeds and sizes of vehicle.
- Ensure urban goods deliveries can move through Greater Downtown safely and efficiently.
- Coordinate networks across all modes to make streets safer, more comfortable, more accessible, and more efficient for everyone.



source: SPOT

03 Enhance the 3rd Ave transit spine

Welcome people who take transit with a great street that is safe, active, and functional.

- Make 3rd Ave a place of arrival with an excellent walking experience.
- Design 3rd Ave for functional and reliable bus operations, very high-frequency arrivals and easy-to-understand transfers between lines.
- Ensure people of every income level, race, ethnicity, and ability feel safe and welcome on 3rd Ave.
- Improve user experience by reducing bus noise, fumes, and stop time.





04 Promote safe, sustainable, and zero-emission streets

Set policy and prepare infrastructure for a carbon-neutral mobility system.

- Create infrastructure to support electric vehicles, including including a zero-emission fleet.
- Require AVs and ride-hailing vehicles to be electric or zero-emissions.
- Manage the transition to zero-emissions travel in a way that avoids unfair burdens on low-income people, communities of color, and people with limited mobility options.
- Require new transportation technology to support climate and equity goals in order to be permitted on Seattle's streets.
- Reduce and manage off-street and on-street parking to encourage use of transit and other sustainable modes.
- Pilot one or more Green and Healthy Streets that are free from fossil fuels.



Source: Flickr, EUNIST a.v.

05 Ready streets for micromobility and other forms of emerging mobility

Designate priority corridors for people cycling and using micromobility options.

- Design streets and set standards that support riders and rollers of multiple abilities and comfort levels (i.e., protected fast and slow speed lanes).
- Provide comfortable, safe, and attractive options to ride and roll for people who experience disproportionate risks on roadways, including people of color and people with limited mobility or disabilities.
- Ensure new mobility innovations and impacts are consistent with city policies and operations.
- Require mobility vendors to provide options for lower-income people and those with varying abilities.



Ride-hail management at major sports, entertainment, or cultural destinations is one way to streamline traffic and mitigate pedestrian and vehicle conflicts.

Source: Kaii Nine, LLC

06 Manage congestion to address climate change and advance equity

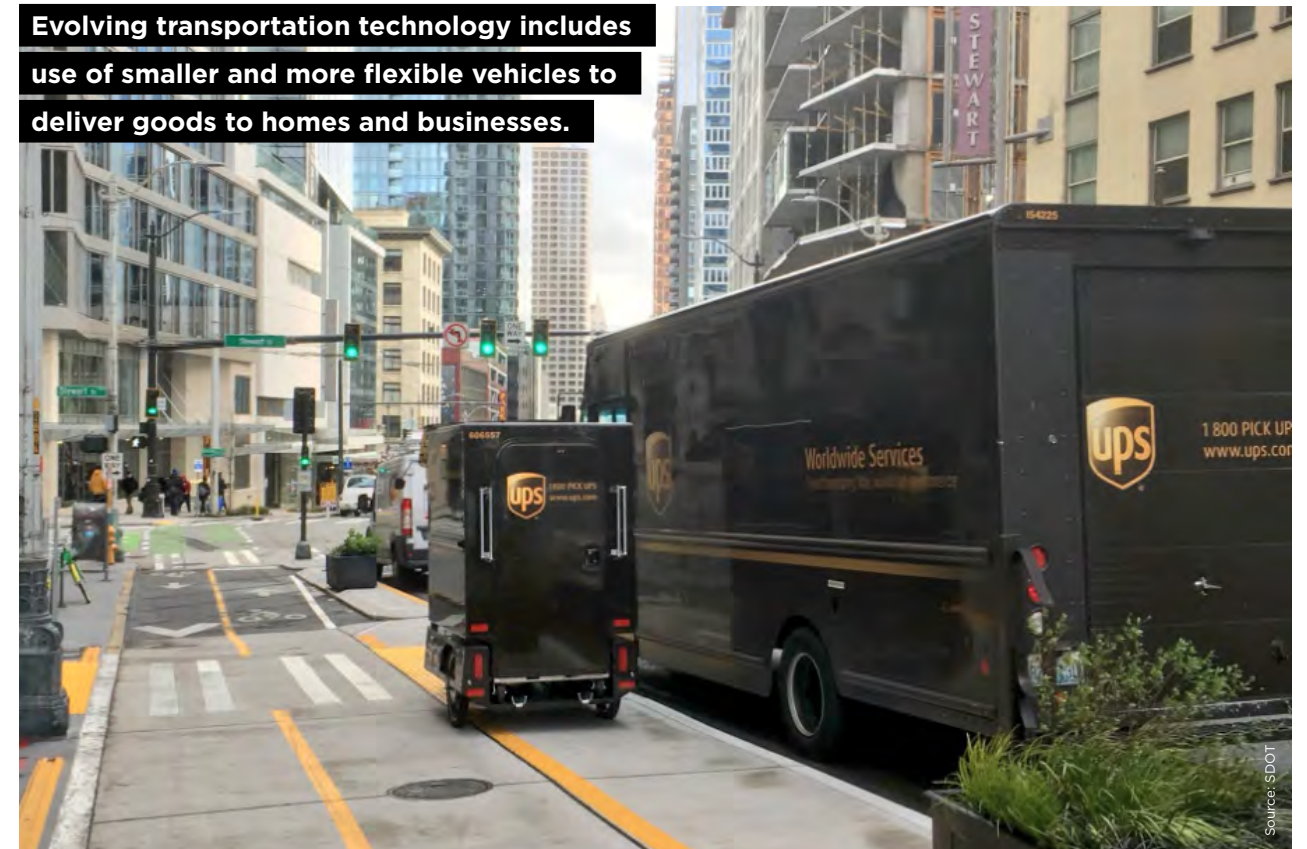
Manage private vehicle access to Greater Downtown in a way that benefits people of color, low-income people, and people whose livelihood would be most impacted.

- Include most impacted communities in the process.
- Manage congestion to improve travel for everyone due to more reliable transit, better walking and cycling opportunities, and less-congested streets for goods movement.
- Manage ride-hail to address climate change and ensure equitable access.
- Reduce the impact of freeway ramp traffic on Greater Downtown streets while maintaining access to support local and regional economic growth.
- Invest in more efficient travel modes like walking, biking, and biking.

07 Facilitate seamless goods delivery

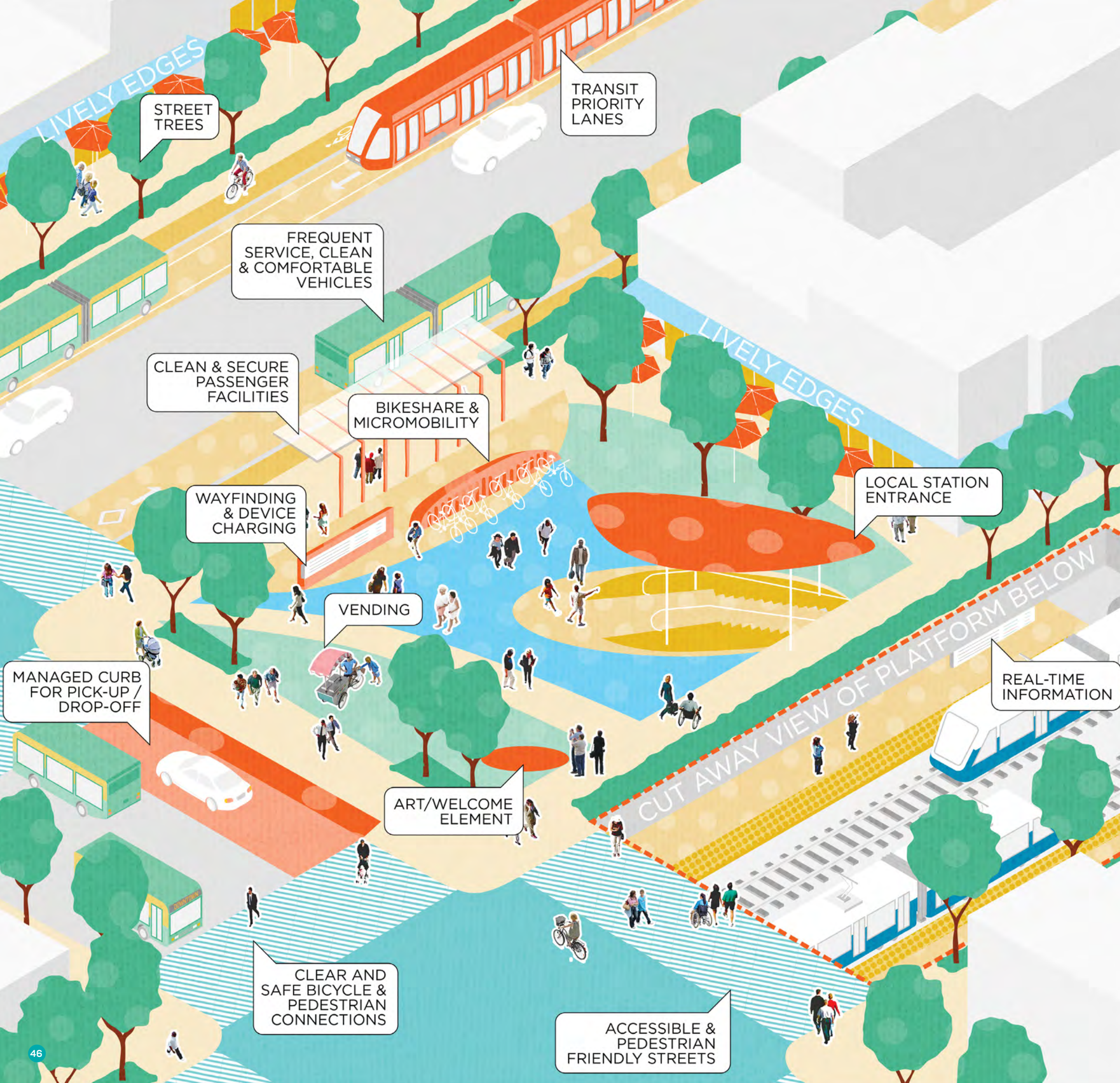
Make it easy for goods and services to safely and reliably reach their final destination.

- Integrate personal and commercial goods delivery and pick-up into transit stations and civic hubs.
- Provide goods-delivery lockers at transit stations and other neighborhood hubs so people can grab-and-go on their commute or easily walk from their home or office to pick up packages.
- Encourage deliveries on private property instead of the public right-of-way in more constrained settings throughout Greater Downtown.
- Manage existing marked and unmarked loading zones in areas with historic structures or without alley access.
- Incorporate design standards into design codes to ensure safe delivery and storage.
- Ensure construction, waste management, and emergency response vehicles can navigate through Greater Downtown safely and on time.



Evolving transportation technology includes use of smaller and more flexible vehicles to deliver goods to homes and businesses.

Source: SDOT



EXCELLENT TRANSIT EXPERIENCE

Transit is the preferred mode to access and travel through Greater Downtown

In 2035, Seattle's transit system is known as the highest quality and most reliable in the United States. Greater Downtown is the hub of the regional system and transit is the first choice for getting around.

- Seattle's transit service is used by everyone—all income levels, all races, all ages, and all abilities.
- Transit is one of the City's greatest social and cultural assets.
- Transit station areas are lively communal spaces, where people meet, congregate, and socialize. They reflect the communities they serve and are models for user-centered design.
- Amenities, arts, culture, and commerce make transit a truly enjoyable travel option.

CONTEXT

Building on Existing Efforts

- Transit ridership is growing. In 2017, **48% of morning commutes (6-9 a.m.) were made on public transit.**³⁴
- Sound Transit will **complete ST2 light rail investments by 2024.** Work on ST3, the recently approved \$54 billion package for regional transit expansions, is underway, targeting completion in 2041.³⁵ **ST3 includes a new light rail tunnel through Greater Downtown,** enabling light rail expansion throughout the city and region.
- Metro Connects, King County's long-range plan for public transportation, calls for **expansion of bus services,** restructuring around new light rail lines, and development of seven new RapidRide bus rapid transit lines by 2027 and 26 RapidRide lines by 2040.³⁶
- Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is **investing in transit service** through funds raised by a Transit Benefit District.³⁷ Funds support capital projects that make transit more reliable, including the Center City Connector Streetcar, and a partnership with Metro to expand the RapidRide network to include four new RapidRide routes as well as upgrades to the existing RapidRide C and D Lines, benefitting all RapidRide routes serving Greater Downtown.

Addressing Key Challenges

- For this region to grow sustainably, it **needs a backbone of high-quality transit, supporting street infrastructure, and technology** to keep people moving and reduce vehicles to provide space for the other needs of a prospering city.
- As more people arrive and depart Greater Downtown on transit, **we need inviting spaces, clear wayfinding, and quality pedestrian connections to transit hubs,** stations, and streets.
- The way people access Greater Downtown will change in the next 20 years. **Light rail expansion will make downtown more accessible by transit.** It will provide opportunities to increase bus service between light rail stations and reduce the number of regional routes that travel downtown.
- Surface transit including buses, Streetcar, and the Monorail carries 30% of peak morning trips to Greater Downtown, yet **just 1% of street space is dedicated exclusively to transit.**³⁸ Priority for surface transit is critical to ensure people have competitive, reliable service.



Source: Lukas Robertson



Source: Getty Images

ADVANCING EQUITY

In 2035, everyone can have access to safe and affordable transit to and within Greater Downtown, especially people of color and low-income individuals. High-quality public transportation with safe walking and bicycling access to transit stops is the foundation of an equitable city. In Greater Downtown, we can design transit facilities to be family-friendly for all ages and abilities, expanding the freedom of mobility to more people.

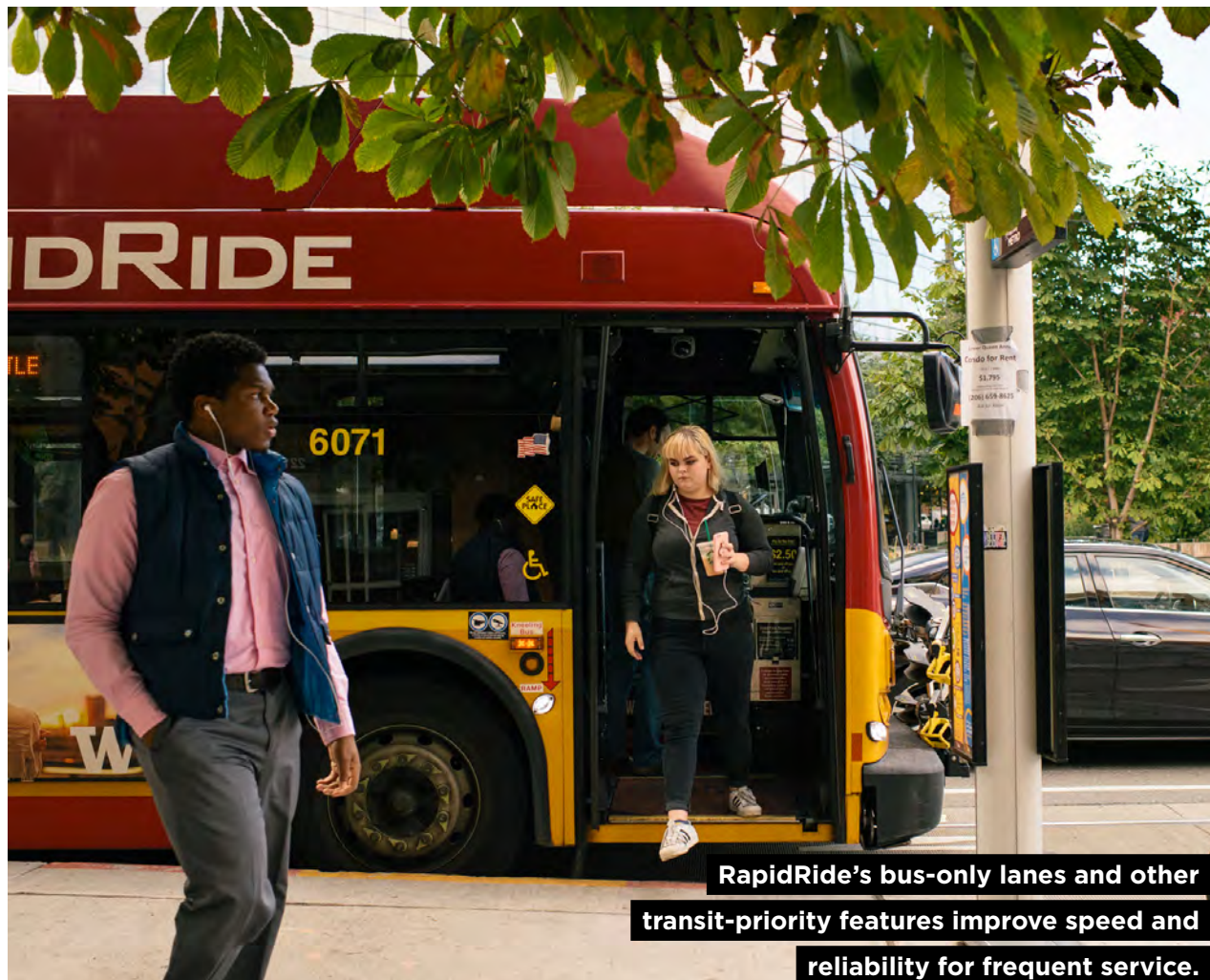
How we get there: Ensure all transit is accessible to people with disabilities, people of various cultures, to people who speak and read languages other than English, and to those who don't have access to banking or a smartphone. Ensure that everyone can afford to use transit and that fare payment is not a barrier to use. Make people of color and low-income community members who use and rely on transit meaningful participants in decision-making.

01

Invest in frequent, reliable transit service corridors

Make frequent service corridors the backbone of our surface transit network (buses, bus rapid transit, and streetcar).

- Invest in high quality accessible bus service and facilities.
- Aim to improve transit speed and reliability by examining opportunities to consolidate transit operations onto fewer streets with transit priority and enhanced passenger facilities while maintaining access to Greater Downtown.
- Provide priority for buses at bottlenecks entering and exiting Greater Downtown.
- Plan streets and service so that transit travel is reliable and not significantly more time consuming than ride-hail or private automobile travel.



RapidRide's bus-only lanes and other transit-priority features improve speed and reliability for frequent service.



The First Hill Streetcar travels along Broadway, connecting Capitol Hill, First Hill, Yesler Terrace, Chinatown-ID, and Pioneer Square.

02

Connect Greater Downtown with a network of hop-on, hop-off spines

Create a more legible network of streets with dedicated transit lanes, pre-payment, and amenities that improve the transfer experience between services.

- Build on the 3rd Ave Transit Spine, Westlake Corridor, and streetcar alignments to create a network of very-frequent transit spines. Include extensions to Belltown, Uptown, 1st Avenue, South Lake Union, Chinatown-International District, and First Hill.
- Support concepts in King County Metro's long-range vision, Metro Connects, to design corridors on the hop-on, hop-off network with the highest level of transit priority and optimized bus service, including transit malls, transit-only lanes, or contraflow bus lanes.
- Ensure clear legibility of transit corridors as distinct places for transit use and urban life, with high-quality passenger amenities, integrated public spaces, place making, and wayfinding.
- Examine ways to organize services to maximize rider throughput and limit turn movements to improve transit speed and reliability on streets with frequent transit service.



03 Create a comfortable and convenient transit experience for everyone

Ensure a high-quality experience for all, no matter where they access transit or which transit mode they use.

- Give passengers quality transit facilities and amenities.
- Provide wayfinding and signage that considers access for all ages and abilities.
- Reduce discrepancies between wayfinding strategies among transit providers to make information universally understood.
- Provide security, maintenance, and operations resources to ensure transit stops and stations feel safe, clean, uncluttered, and inviting with ample weather protection, lighting, and seating.

04 Provide spaces for art, performance, and public life on the move

Give people opportunities to create and experience art and stimulation in their daily trips.

- Design humane spaces and set policies to encourage busking and other passive or interactive art at bus and streetcar stops.
- Commission artists who represent and can depict cultural and social histories in station neighborhoods.



Source: Radburn.ca

05 Expand water transit

Use the water to move a growing city and region.

- Create more affordable and accessible options for travel by water.
- Expand passenger-only ferry and small boat travel options on the Sound and Lake Union.
- Explore the viability of water-based shared mobility options for travel across Lake Union or along the Sound.
- Coordinate with key waterfront development and public space projects to create dock space for public and private waterborne transportation services.



King County's Water Taxis provide reliable transit access across Elliott Bay.

Source: King County Metro



Off-board fare payment on Community Transit's Swift Bus Rapid Transit service simplifies and streamlines the boarding process.

Source: Joe A. Kimpfer

06 Achieve affordable and people-centered transit travel

Provide multiple payment methods, and financial programs that reduce barriers to choosing transit.

- Ensure that fare payment is not an obstacle for anyone who wants to use transit, whether the trip is planned or spur of the moment. Provide systems that allow users to pay fares using a single mode of payment (e.g., e-wallets, ORCA)
- Build bus stops and stations with off-board fare payment.
- Increase ORCA transit pass availability to people who are low-income or people from communities with limited access to services.
- Reward users who make multiple daily trips with fare capping options, day pass options, or both.
- Offer visitor-friendly short-term transit passes (e.g., one-day, three-day, or weeklong).



Denver Union Station offers open and attractive spaces for people to wait or gather.

Source: Flickr

07 Create functional and accessible spaces in the public right-of-way around transit facilities

Make transit connections seamless.

- Ensure transit areas have generous and universal access.
- Simplify transfers and reduce crowding on surface sidewalks.
- Use existing slopes and access points to minimize vertical transitions or the need to use elevators where possible, and while considering access for all ages and abilities.
- Consider pedestrian movements and sidewalk capacity when locating transit stops.

08 Create great transit station environments

Re-imagine bus and streetcar stops as stimulating public streetscapes.

- Design station vicinities and bus and streetcar stops to make them informative, well-lit and interesting places to wait.
- Plant trees and other greenery to provide shade and natural beauty.
- Design transit facilities that reflect the history and cultural identities of the neighborhoods they serve, while maintaining systemwide legibility.
- Provide pedestrian wayfinding to support first- and last-mile transit and walking journeys.
- Install street furniture that encourages public life and communal activity.



Source: Alex Thomson