



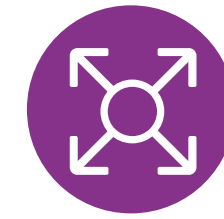


LEGEND

-  Hub Area
-  Light Rail Network
-  Future Light Rail Network
-  Streetcar and Monorail
-  Ferry and Water Taxi
-  Convenient Bus and Neighborhood Connections



GREAT HUBS, ACTIVE SPACES

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

In 2035, transit hubs are welcoming communal places, equal in experience for people of all ages, abilities, income levels, and ethnicities.

- Transit hubs offer people-centered amenities and services for local neighbors, visitors and transit users.
- Hubs have direct, intuitive connections among all modes of travel.
- Hubs enable on-demand access to a broad range of shared and sustainable mobility options.
- Hubs incorporate and support the needs of adjacent communities and neighborhoods.
- Hubs foster connections to important tourist, cultural, and recreational destinations.

CONTEXT

Building on Existing Efforts

- By 2040, **70% of King County residents are expected to have access to frequent transit service.**³⁹ ST2 and ST3 will build out the light rail system across the region—light rail is projected to serve about 600,000 riders every day when the buildout is complete.⁴⁰
- **Jackson and Westlake stations are key destinations and transfer points** in Greater Downtown. With ST2 and ST3, the share of commuters arriving in the central business district by transit is expected to **surpass 50%.**⁴¹
- SDOT and other partner agencies are advancing a **mobility hub strategy to create standards for travel experiences and connectivity** throughout Greater Downtown and beyond.
- SDOT is working with King County Metro, Sound Transit and Downtown Seattle Association (DSA) to **improve wayfinding** to provide a high-quality, integrated customer experience.
- Community efforts are underway to **improve hub area connectivity and the walking experience** (Jackson Hub Project, Jackson Street Connections Project, and Pioneer Square East-West Pedestrian Improvements).⁴²
- The **Colman Dock is undergoing major construction** through 2023.⁴³

Addressing Key Challenges

- With more people calling downtown home, **hubs now serve more neighborhood residents**, not just commuters.
- Tourists and occasional users of a city’s transit system can **experience challenges navigating the system.**
- The Chinatown-International District has the **highest proportion of people over 65 living downtown.**⁴⁴ The design and layout of all hub areas should consider seniors and people with disabilities.
- **New investments and improved transportation options** can be associated with displacement and a loss of affordability.
- **People are increasingly using ride-hail** to get around: trips with services such as Uber and Lyft increased 46% between 2016 and 2017 in the City of Seattle.⁴⁵
- While new mobility services are growing, the people who take advantage of them **do not reflect the diversity of Seattle’s population.**



ADVANCING EQUITY

In 2035, hubs in every Greater Downtown neighborhood can broaden access to transit and provide reliable connections to living wage jobs. Investments can integrate housing affordability and anti-displacement strategies. Hubs can be places for genuine cultural expression, celebration of unique and collective histories, and gathering places for the community. Hubs can serve people of every age and ability, creating an intuitive and fully accessible experience for all.

How we get there: Focus on creating inclusive places for public life; involve populations representative of the neighborhood’s diversity in planning and design; and treat hub areas as multi-use neighborhoods centers. Hubs can provide for the needs of locals and one-time visitors, and become dependably accessible places for people with disabilities and seniors.

01

Reinforce hub areas as Seattle's town squares

Ensure hub areas support neighborhood community life.

- Celebrate the surrounding neighborhood character, identity and culture with art, dynamic programming, and public space design.
- Create unique and attractive places with diverse uses and activities around the clock.
- Design hub areas for the comfort and safety of people of all ages, abilities, genders, races, and ethnicities.
- Explore public restrooms and other public necessities and amenities.



Berlin's Hauptbahnhof railway station spills into a large plaza that serves as a hub for public life.

Source: Mario Gutti



Intuitive transit connections make the customer experience easy, natural, and fun.

Source: Getty Images

02

Create places of convenient connection

Offer easy, direct transfers between transit and alternative modes of transportation.

- Foster collaboration between transit operators, agencies, and mobility businesses to create a seamless user experience.
- Locate bus stops near light rail stations with proximal off-street bus layover spaces to maintain service efficiency.
- Make transit stops and station entrances easy to identify and access.
- Connect to the bike network and include convenient bicycle parking areas.
- Designate and manage nearby space for ride-hailing, paratransit, carshare, and other shared mobility options.
- Provide travel information and legible wayfinding information to guide travelers to other services and nearby destinations.

03 Integrate plazas and pedestrian connections at the Jackson Hub

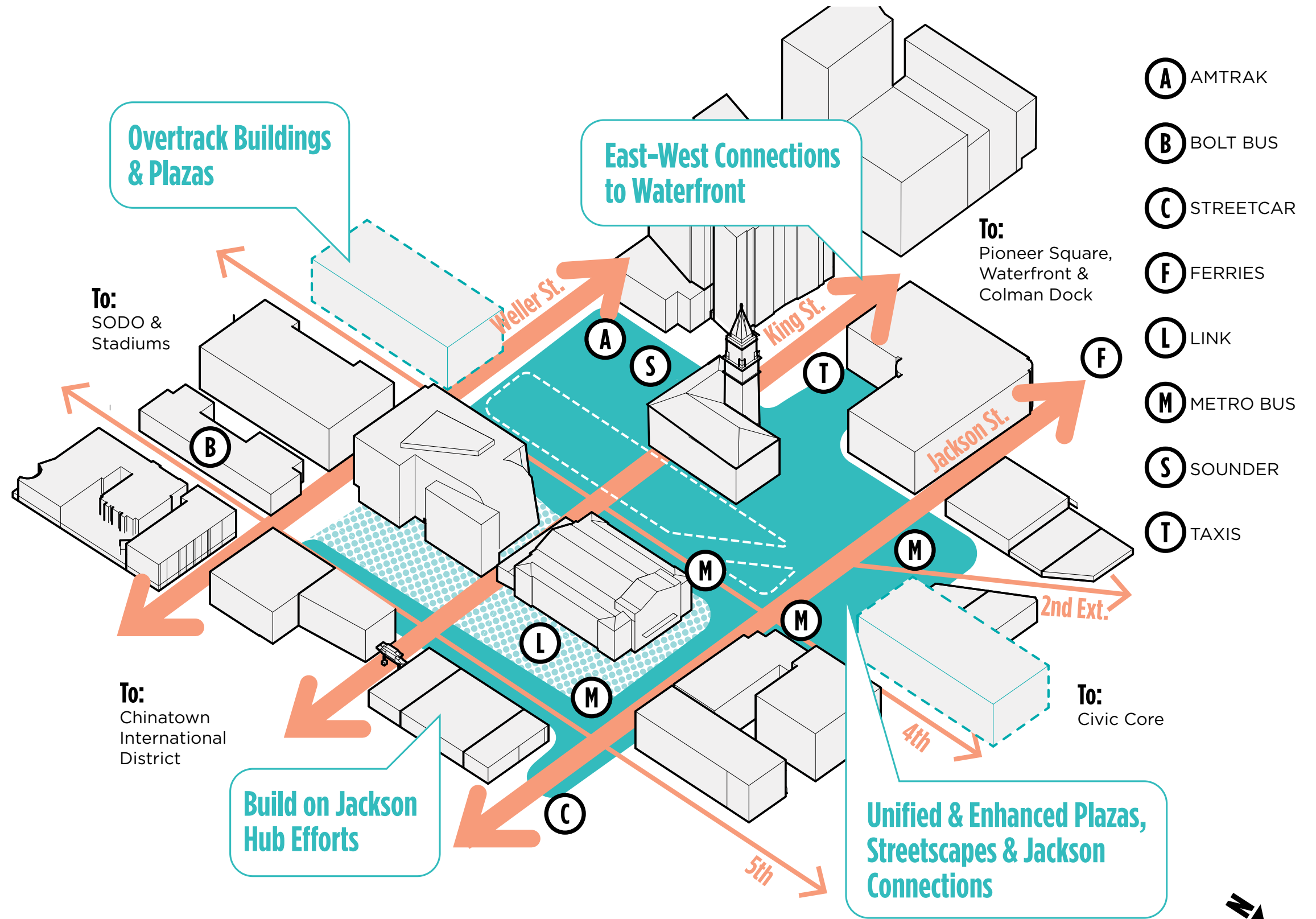
Create a unified, functional and accessible place for people and transit.

- Connect fragmented walkways and plazas with seamless connections, a high quality and legible urban realm, and multilingual wayfinding.
- Prioritize pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access.
- Ensure connections to other travel modes are accommodated.

04 Cover the BNSF tracks

Unite the historic stations.

- Fill the gaps over railroad tracks with buildings, plazas, green space, and pedestrian connections.
- Improve and prioritize transit, walking, and bicycling within the hub area, especially along and across Jackson Street and 4th Avenue.
- Explore opportunities for off-street layover or private development over a portion of the cover.

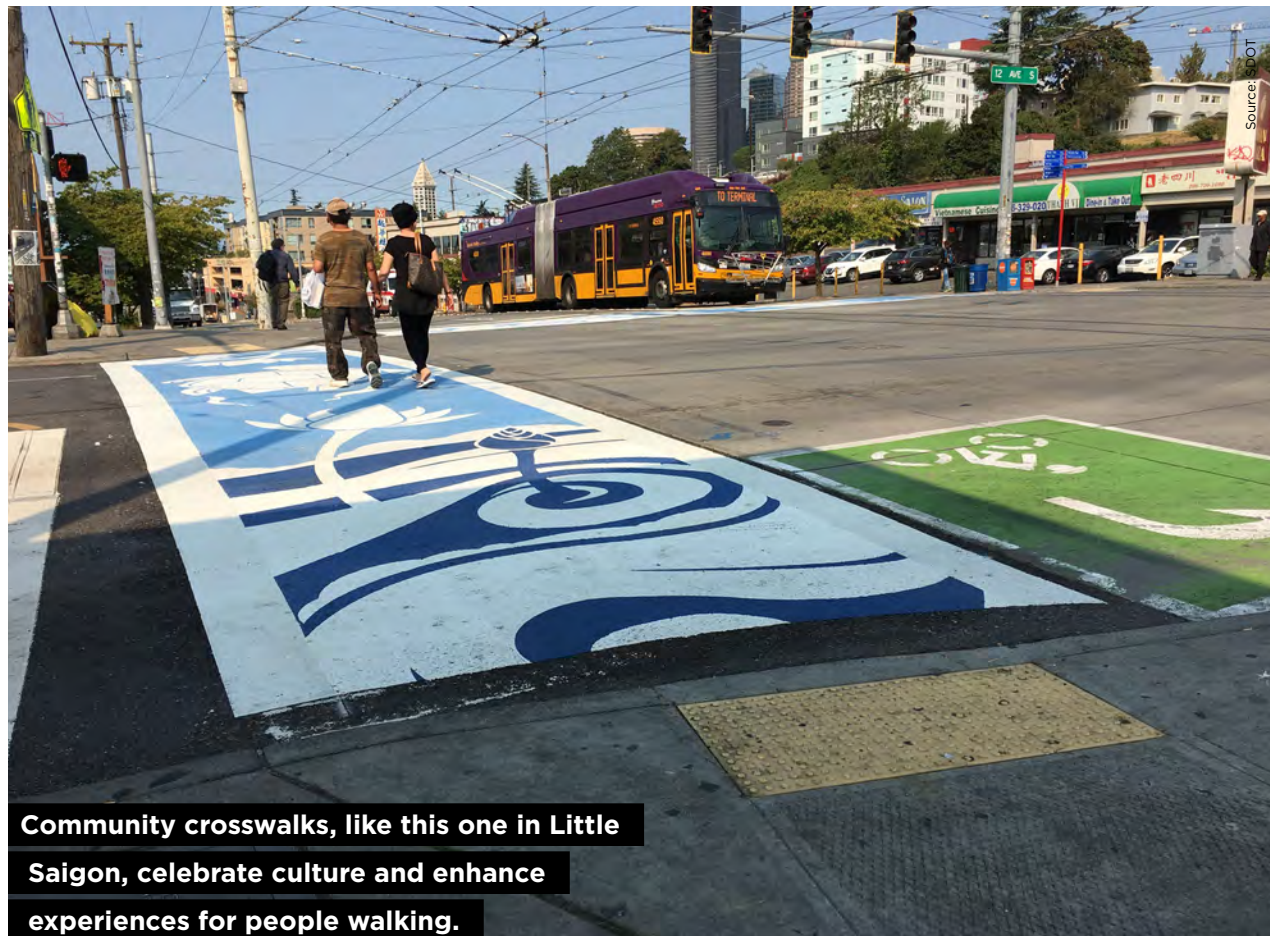


05

Improve physical and cultural connections

Connect our neighborhoods, waterfront, transit and ferry hubs, and cultural riches through a great walking experience.

- Create comfortable, interesting, and accessible walking routes from the Jackson Hub to Piers 46, 48, and the Colman Dock Hub that are easy for people with luggage, strollers, or wheelchairs.
- In collaboration with the community, create great streetscapes with cultural features for each hub context, from Little Saigon and Chinatown-International District to Uptown and Seattle Center.
- Celebrate the cultures and histories in and around Jackson Hub with public realm designs, such as street signs or crosswalks that acknowledge historical landmarks (e.g., Little Crossing-Over Place (see page 3)).



Community crosswalks, like this one in Little Saigon, celebrate culture and enhance experiences for people walking.

If we want more people to utilize public transportation, it should be seamless and affordable for both commuters and tourists.”

-Online survey response

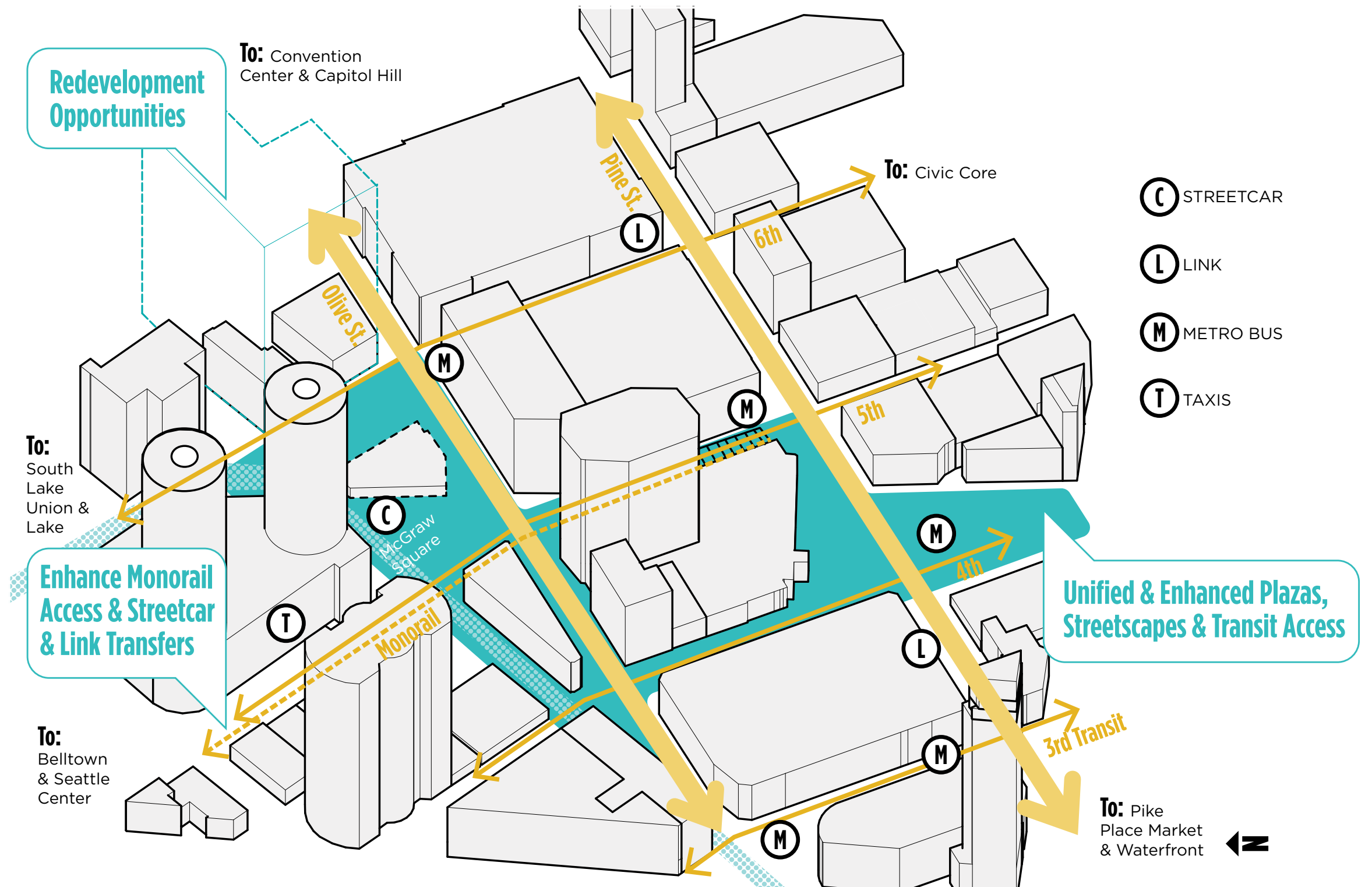


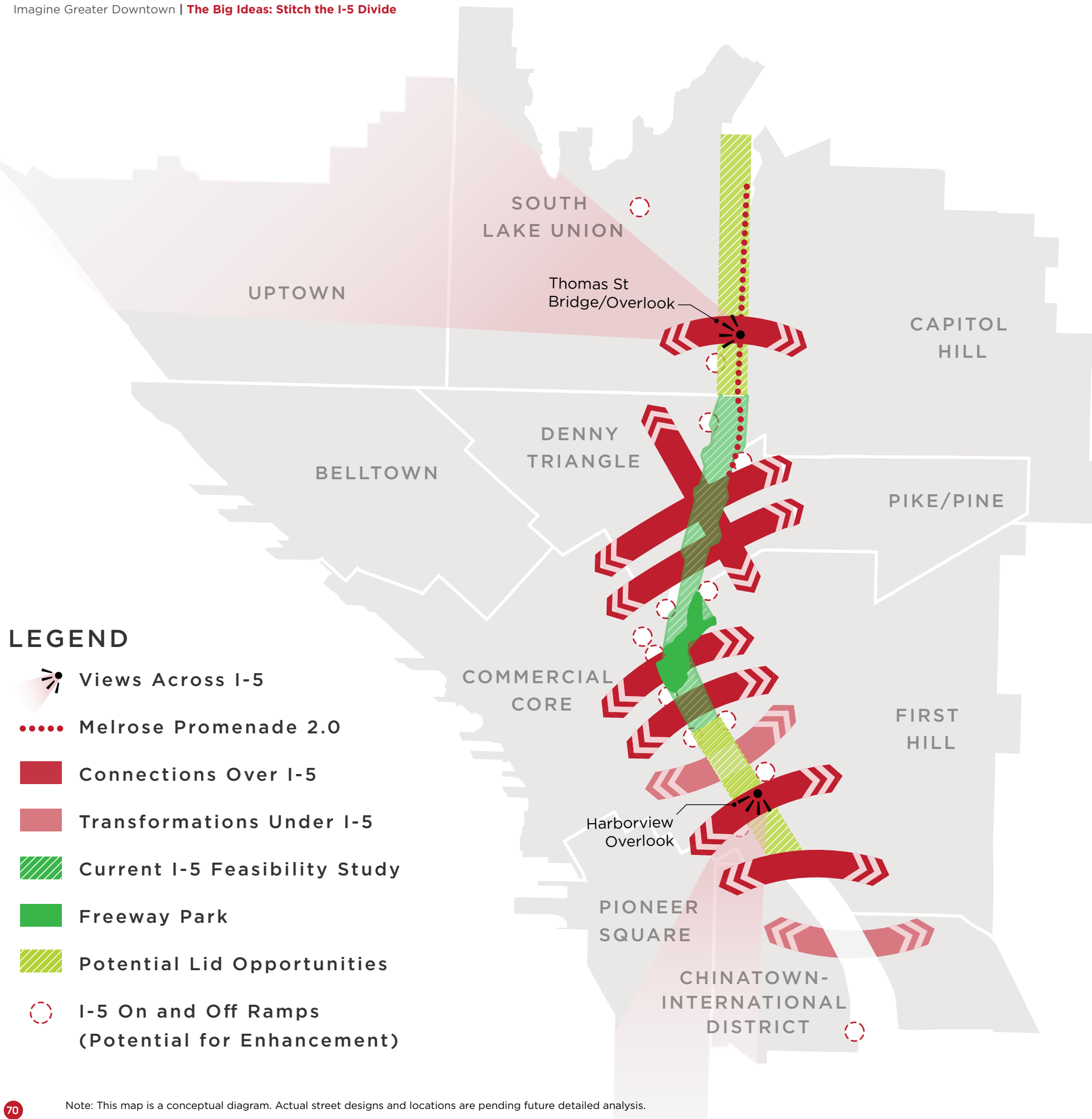
Source: _Rezal_Scharfe

06 Connect plazas to support the growing Westlake Hub

Design transit and the public realm for increasing foot-traffic, transit use, convention visitors, and tourists.

- Make the Westlake Hub feel welcoming for international tourists as they travel between hotels, the convention centers, and Pike Place Market.
- Connect new bus or streetcar stops with intuitive walkways and active plazas that can accommodate large volumes of people.
- Encourage businesses that provide quality food, beverages, local goods, and services for travelers to locate in nearby storefronts.
- Improve accessible connections to the elevated Monorail platform, including to the Westlake Tunnel concourse.
- Expand the plaza at McGraw Square to accommodate higher volumes of people.





LEGEND

-  Views Across I-5
-  Melrose Promenade 2.0
-  Connections Over I-5
-  Transformations Under I-5
-  Current I-5 Feasibility Study
-  Freeway Park
-  Potential Lid Opportunities
-  I-5 On and Off Ramps (Potential for Enhancement)



STITCH THE I-5 DIVIDE

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

In 2035, neighborhoods divided by I-5 are reunited with new and enhanced connections, vital public spaces, and community destinations.

- I-5 no longer presents a barrier to people walking, biking, or rolling. Mobility across, over, and under I-5 is easier and more enjoyable for every traveler.
- I-5 through Greater Downtown includes large green open spaces, creating a continuous high-quality public realm experience, rather than a scar on the landscape.
- Traffic noises and views of the highway are reduced, covered, or camouflaged.
- There are new places for people to exercise, relax, and socialize.
- Inspiring views exist along the I-5 corridor: Harborview offers views of South Downtown and Mount Rainier; Melrose Avenue north of Denny Way boasts views of the Space Needle, skyline, Lake Union, Elliott Bay, and Olympic Mountains.

CONTEXT

Building on Existing Efforts

- Grassroots and agency-led efforts are underway to envision **remedies for the social, health, and environmental impacts of I-5 on the Greater Downtown area.**
- City and State agencies are exploring possibilities for **covering the freeway.** A feasibility study is currently underway focused on the area between Denny Way and Madison Street that will examine proposals for the lid space ranging from parks to affordable housing.⁴⁶
- The community-led Melrose Promenade project will create **key pedestrian and bicycle connections** and an attractive destination on Melrose Avenue, a “front porch” for Capitol Hill.⁴⁷
- The Chinatown-International District and Historic South Downtown are leading **community efforts to envision improved connections** along the Jackson and King Street underpasses.⁴⁸

Addressing Key Challenges

- **I-5 construction displaced many residents,** especially low-income communities and communities of color.
- People who **live or work within one-third mile of a highway have an increased risk of disease and mortality** related to traffic emissions.⁴⁹ Highway lids can reduce exposure to air pollution and noise.⁵⁰
- The physical barriers, east-west divisions, and traffic choke points at freeway entrances and exits span the entire two-and-a-half miles of I-5 in downtown Seattle. Combined with a significant grade change, they make **travel particularly challenging for people with mobility impairments.**
- Greater Downtown has a **disproportionately small amount of park and public open space relative to the rest of Seattle.** This deficiency is amplified given it is anticipated to be home to 25% of the City’s population and 50% of its jobs by 2035. The public right-of-way that I-5 occupies presents a unique opportunity to add parks and open space in Greater Downtown.
- **Surface parking lots occupy much of the space below I-5 overpasses.** They lack activity during the day and are dark, empty, and feel unsafe at night.
- The grade change between neighborhoods on either side of I-5 can be challenging to walk or bike. **Nearly a quarter of downtown streets have a grade of more than 5%.**⁵¹



I love the idea of a safe, activated below-freeway park that reduces the barrier created from I-5.”

-Imagine Greater Downtown Open House

Source: Waterfront, Toronto

ADVANCING EQUITY



Source: Jimmy Anderson

Interstate highways have a history of disproportionate negative impacts on communities of color and people with low incomes—I-5’s footprint through Seattle is no exception. We have the opportunity to acknowledge and remediate the historic and ongoing environmental, health, and socio-economic impacts of I-5 by prioritizing new connections and improvements in the parts of the corridor that are most affected. The existing community plans and visions for connections under I-5 in the Chinatown-International District and Little Saigon provide an opportunity to build on.

How we get there: Create proactive displacement mitigation strategies concurrent with development. Ensure neighboring communities, particularly people who are most at risk, have a strong voice in determining what happens with lids, underpasses, or other types of connections.

The Lid I-5 Campaign has already begun exploring opportunities to create new open space over I-5.



01 Increase open space over I-5

Develop large public open spaces and possibly other uses on any I-5 lids.

- Coordinate with the existing lid I-5 planning efforts on the opportunity to create new spaces and connections at the center of Greater Downtown.
- Evaluate open space opportunities from north of Denny Way to Madison Street and in the Yesler Way vicinity.



02 Implement a Melrose Promenade 2.0

Create a front porch for Capitol Hill.

- Build and enhance the existing Melrose Promenade Vision along I-5—a half-mile promenade designed for people strolling, biking or rolling, separated from vehicle traffic.
- Explore the feasibility of a large lid over I-5 north of Denny Way or a cantilevered trail to maximize space for people and reduce noise pollution.
- Create a new destination—a tree-lined pathway with benches and amenities where people stop to enjoy iconic views over the Lake and Bay—for people of all ages and abilities.
- Enhance connections along I-5 between the Melrose Trail to the north and lid opportunities to the south.
- Incorporate a new walk-bike connection of Thomas St between Capitol Hill and South Lake Union, and across I-5.



03

Bring light and purpose to the spaces under I-5

Improve marginal spaces below I-5.

- Support and enhance existing community-led planning efforts.
- Transform underpasses into canvases for nature, greenery, art, and cultural celebration.
- Consider the potential for enclosed spaces and indoor activities that are not affected by the noisy, oppressive environment.
- Use energy-efficient lighting to brighten dark areas.



04

Connect north neighborhoods with a Thomas St bridge and overlook

Connect Capitol Hill and South Lake Union.

- Build a pedestrian and bicycle link over I-5, connecting to the Thomas St greenway and Melrose Promenade.
- Incorporate an overlook west of I-5, with views to Elliott Bay and Lake Union.

05 Enhance the Harborview overlook

Create a link for walking, biking, or rolling from the Commercial Core to First Hill.

- Design a connection to ease the steep hills with accessible pathways and to become a destination in its own right.
- Explore an east side origin at Harborview Park, landing to the west of I-5 on a rooftop garden or other open space.



06 Rethink freeway entrances and exits downtown

Reduce the impacts of I-5's on- and off-ramps.

- Work with Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to explore opportunities to restructure I-5 vehicle access to benefit pedestrians, public spaces, and overall downtown circulation including bikes, transit, and traffic flow.
- Consider how to mend gaps in the downtown sidewalk network where highway access ramps make walking more difficult and unpleasant.



GREENING GREATER DOWNTOWN

Infuse more parks and nature in the urban landscape

In 2035, Greater Downtown is home to a variety of native and drought tolerant plants, trees, and other greenery that promote beauty, well-being, and environmental health. Nature is integrated into parks, streets, and other public spaces that people use and pass through daily.

- Streets and public spaces are designed to improve ecological function and the environment, restore natural habitat, and support climate resilience.
- Well-maintained and welcoming parks spill over into adjacent streets and integrate with adjoining development, connecting private and public spaces with compatible, reinforcing activities.
- Public and private partnerships are formed to ensure our green spaces and contemplative places are safe, accessible, comfortable, and well-maintained for everyone.
- Native and drought-tolerant plants and restored habitats invite birds, bees, and other pollinators into the downtown landscape.
- Trees line downtown streets, sheltering people from the rain.
- Green spaces and nature promote joy, provide respite, help people connect with the earth, and foster play, curiosity, and healing.
- Green stormwater infrastructure strategies are integrated into streets and public spaces where feasible.

CONTEXT

Building on Existing Efforts

- Both agency and community-led efforts are underway to **add street trees and landscaping** in Greater Downtown Neighborhoods.
- The City of Seattle’s Urban Forestry Management Plan recently outlined the **policies and actions needed to preserve, enhance, and restore Seattle’s urban forest.**⁵²
- The City has established a citywide goal of **30% tree canopy cover by 2037.**⁵³
- The Healthy Environment Action Agenda is a community-led effort to address environmental inequities and **create opportunities for communities of color, refugees, people with low incomes,** and people with limited English proficiency to become leaders in Seattle’s environmental movement.⁵⁴
- Private development supports City goals by **greening their public spaces** and creating roof and sky gardens that capture more rainfall to keep overflows from seeping into our streets.

Addressing Key Challenges

- Seattle is surrounded by natural beauty and many great parks and natural areas are found within the city limits; however, **only 6% of Greater Downtown is open space** compared to 12% of the rest of Seattle.⁵⁵
- Much of Greater Downtown has **far less tree canopy cover than the city as a whole,** with 10% tree cover, while Seattle averages 28%.⁵⁶
- **Habitat restoration is needed** to mitigate the negative impacts of urban development and benefit native plants, animals, and humans alike. Even small plantings improve air quality, absorb run-off from rainstorms, and shelter native species and pollinating insects.
- Greater Downtown is mostly hardscape, or paved areas, which deflects rainwater straight into the sewer, and creates an urban heat island with higher air temperatures that can be **dangerous to the health of vulnerable residents.**
- Public outreach efforts for this project and other recent planning efforts indicated that **people want more opportunities to experience nature in their day-to-day lives.**
- Uncontrolled combined sewer overflow (CSO) is an issue for the City of Seattle and King County.⁵⁷ Appropriate **green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) investments may complement grey infrastructure solutions.**



ADVANCING EQUITY

People of color and people with low incomes tend to live in the parts of Seattle with less tree canopy.⁵⁸ In 2035, there will be no disparity in who has access to greenspace, who benefits from street tree canopy, and who has neighborhood greenspaces for quiet contemplation. An equitable city will protect low-income people and people of color from bearing disproportionate impacts from climate change, including displacement, health effects, and direct impacts from extreme weather.

How we get there: Urban forestry, landscaping, and plants in the right-of-way contribute to Seattle’s environmental justice goals and help reduce atmospheric carbon. We have the opportunity to focus restoration and remediation efforts in areas with the greatest need. For example, we can implement projects to improve air-quality in neighborhoods near industrial areas and highways, and address sewer stress in communities of color or low-income areas. Parks and playgrounds should be accessible, intergenerational spaces that support cultural and community programs year-round.

01

Grow the parks and open space network to meet the needs of the most densely populated neighborhoods

Make creative use of public space to develop new parks and open spaces.

- Invest in parks and open spaces of all sizes. Identify the places with the greatest need and find the park that fits—consider linear parks, green streets, parklets, lids, and piers.
- Provide people more opportunities to experience the renewal and joy of nature in the heart of the city.



02

Connect with nature, the land, and Native culture

Learn from Indigenous Seattle cultural practices to better our stewardship.

- Use art and signage to describe natural history, native vegetation, and Indigenous history, culture, and stewardship principles.
- Create places and opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to practice stewardship of the land, such as rain gardens, community gardens, and habitat restoration projects.



Old growth forests remain important aspects of nature among Indigenous tribes in Seattle today.



New York City's High Line includes pollinator gardens that attract bees, birds, and butterflies.

03 Restore habitat and invite nature into Greater Downtown

Share our urban realm with plants and animals.

- Reclaim space along streets and in public plazas to create pollinator gardens, bird-friendly environments, and butterfly gardens.
- Honor Seattle's connection to and historic reliance on the ocean and sound with public space design features. Keep water clean for marine wildlife by limiting pollutants and sewer overflows.
- Landscape with native and drought-tolerant plants and nature-inspired design in streetscapes, parks, and plazas.

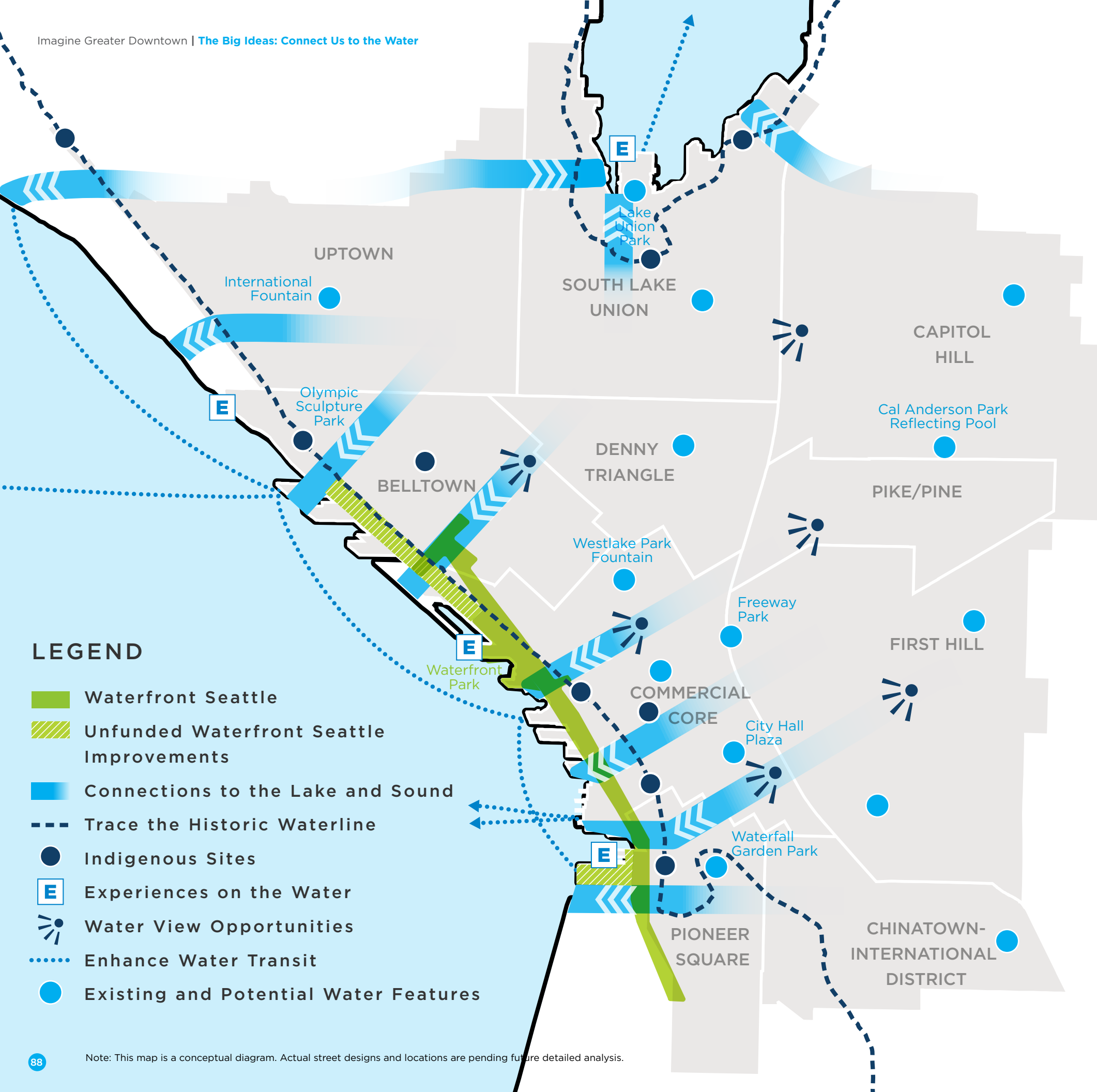
04 Use trees and rooftops to grow the green canopy

Increase the urban tree canopy to cool us down, beautify our surroundings, and create a carbon sink.

- Plant trees that thrive in the urban environment using standards that protect sidewalks from uplift from tree roots.
- Concentrate street trees along people-first streets to reduce the heat island effect and provide shade.
- Encourage more green rooftops and gardens to promote rainwater absorption, retention, and reuse.
- Design public spaces to naturally flood to reduce stormwater overflow.
- Use trees and plants as natural buffers along busy roadways to reduce noise pollution, camouflage concrete walls, and improve air quality.

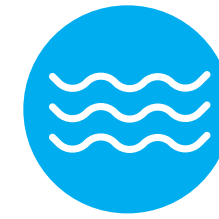


Green rooftops and strategies to retain rainwater help reduce the stress on downtown sewer systems, prevent overflows in streets, and reduce urban heat island effects.



LEGEND

- Waterfront Seattle
- Unfunded Waterfront Seattle Improvements
- Connections to the Lake and Sound
- Trace the Historic Waterline
- Indigenous Sites
- E Experiences on the Water
- Water View Opportunities
- Enhance Water Transit
- Existing and Potential Water Features



CONNECT US TO THE WATER

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

In 2035, Greater Downtown will fully embrace the water that surrounds it and provide more intimate access to experiences on and along Lake Union and Elliott Bay.

- The relationship of Indigenous people to the water and shoreline is integral to the planning and design of waterfront public spaces.
- Seattle is one of the most interesting and beautiful cities to be outside when it rains.
- Everyone—including people with disabilities, children, seniors, and families—can recreate and travel on the water.
- People experience water in their neighborhoods, from viewpoints over the lakes and bay and in public water features such as fountains.
- Access and views from the water to the land are as important as from the land to the water.
- The Colman Dock and Pier 48 are among several beloved and prominent destinations on Elliott Bay.

CONTEXT

Building on Existing Efforts

- Today **people are reconnecting to Elliott Bay, Lake Union, and Lake Washington**, but tremendous opportunity remains to connect, protect, and celebrate our precious waterfronts and aquatic resources.
- Waterfront Seattle is a once-in-a-century program of public space and mobility improvements that will begin to repair **public connections to the Sound** severed during the Industrial Revolution. Unfunded Waterfront Seattle projects provide more improvements for our waterfront assets.
- **Seattle has a growing cruise industry**, serving approximately one million passengers a year.⁵⁹ The Port is expanding cruise terminal facilities onto Terminal 46 North.
- **Lake Union is a front door for people and goods.** It is home to people living in houseboats, a runway for commercial float plane services, an anchor for industrial dry docks, and a popular place for recreational boating.
- The SDOT Shoreline Street Ends Program **improves public access**, protects unique views, enhances habitat, supports maritime industry, and fosters stewardship to create long-lasting community assets.⁶⁰

Addressing Key Challenges

- Partner agencies must remember and learn from Seattle's Indigenous history and recognize the **importance of our waters to contemporary Native Americans.**
- Despite being surrounded by water, **certain neighborhoods in Greater Downtown are relatively land-locked.**
- Residents in Greater Downtown have a **strong desire for more water access, views, and walking paths along the water's edge.**
- Private **auto parking on piers occupies precious space on the water's edge** that could provide public access for more people.
- Seattle is growing and our roads are congested. **Waterborne travel can provide another mobility option**, moving more people between major urban centers and growing neighborhoods.
- Neighborhood pools and **water recreation venues are desirable amenities**, but require consistent maintenance and funding.



ADVANCING EQUITY

In 2035, for the Indigenous Duwamish, Suquamish, and Coast Salish people, the shores of Elliott Bay are places where people come together to celebrate community and the abundance of the region. Much of Greater Downtown's waterfront transitioned to industrial use during the 1800s and early 1900s. Water access, water views, waterborne transportation, and walking paths can be accessible, inviting, safe, and comfortable for people of color, people who don't come with money to spend, and for intergenerational groups and families.

How we get there: Transition the precious space on the water's edge occupied by parking and private uses to walking paths and places for public life. Involve Indigenous communities, people of color, and low-income people in the planning and design of waterfront spaces.

01

Realize the full Waterfront Seattle vision

Continue to make progress on Waterfront Seattle improvements by advancing unfunded physical and visual connections to the Waterfront from uphill neighborhoods in Greater Downtown.

- Extend Waterfront Seattle improvements west between 1st Avenue and Alaskan Way with additional overlooks, ADA accessible harbor steps and public spaces.
- Extend the reconstruction of Alaskan Way and promenade from Virginia Street to Olympic Sculpture Park.
- Create a southern anchor for the Waterfront, including elements like a Native American cultural center or museum, new open space, public boat landing, and water taxi berths.
- Balance active maritime uses with new opportunities for public access and a range of other commercial, retail, and residential uses.

Waterfront Seattle provides new public spaces overlooking Elliott Bay.



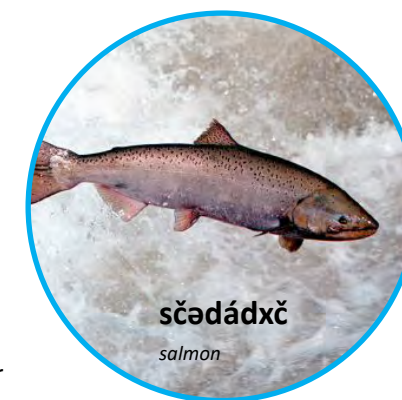
Pacific Northwest Indigenous peoples have a deep relationship to the water.

02

Trace historic water lines and Indigenous history

Design and implement a connected series of art, informational signs, cultural and natural interpretation in public spaces to reflect Indigenous histories.

- Connect people to the region’s Indigenous history, educating them about the importance of our environment and promoting stewardship.
- Install temporary and permanent features to trace historic water lines, and integrate water history, shoreline habitats, and stories into public space Downtown. Illustrate how water has shaped the city.
- Work with Native tribal representatives to identify opportunities for art and other features that honor Native cultures and their deep relationship to the water and shoreline.
- Make approaches to the land from the water feel welcoming and provide safe opportunities for recreational canoeing and kayaking. Create new landings for small boats on Lake Union and Downtown.
- Use interactive and rain- or water-reactive art on sidewalks, streets, or in plazas to make public spaces more interesting, fun, and educational.



Central Coast Salish culture and ways of life have a sacred relationship to this land and place.



03 Get people on the water

Connect people from the land to the water, and from the water to the land.

- Create new opportunities for recreation that takes place on the water, at the water's edge, or with interactive water features.
- Explore moveable destinations similar to those on Lake Washington, such as floating playgrounds or performance spaces, that give people of all ages and abilities opportunities to enjoy the water on the Bay or Lake Union.
- Build on the success of SDOT's Shoreline Street Ends program for improving access to the water's edge.
- Facilitate waterborne transportation to connect Greater Downtown to our growing region. Explore new passenger ferry services on Elliott Bay and between Lake Union and cities surrounding Lake Washington.
- Make it easy for the private sector to create new opportunities to get people safely and sustainably on the water for recreation or travel.
- Provide opportunities for people to experience and learn more about the Port of Seattle's operations and benefits to the region.



“Think of ways to get more people on the water—that’s open space!”

-Imagine Greater Downtown Open House



NEIGHBORHOOD HEARTS FOR COMMUNITY LIFE

Enhance neighborhoods with inviting places and destinations

In 2035, each neighborhood has a variety of inviting public places, interesting streets, art, and cultural destinations that reflect and celebrate distinct communities, neighborhood identities, and cultures.

- There is always a place to go to gather, people-watch, and have a uniquely Seattle experience in Greater Downtown.
- Each Greater Downtown neighborhood has a collective “front porch” where people feel welcome and experience positive interactions, both planned and spontaneous.
- People take pride in the gathering places and shared spaces in their neighborhoods.
- Greater Downtown streets and public spaces are clean and safe with regular maintenance and care.

CONTEXT

Building on Existing Efforts

- The City of Seattle's Public Life Survey **quantifies and measures the performance of public spaces** throughout the city. Its findings to date illuminate opportunities to make people of every age, gender, and race feel welcome.⁶¹
- Efforts are underway to **make downtown feel more like a home** instead of just a commuter destination. Downtown Ambassadors supported by the Downtown Seattle Association (DSA) provide cleaning, safety, concierge, and homeless outreach services in six Greater Downtown neighborhoods.⁶² The DSA also brings games, furniture, music, food, and kids activities to Westlake Park and Occidental Square, creating public spaces that attract residents and visitors alike.
- Several SDOT programs **transform underutilized public spaces into inclusive places** where people gather and play such as Pavement to Parks, People Streets, Play Streets, Streeteries, and Parklets.⁶³
- Seattle Center hosts **ethnic cultural festivals** throughout the year, with 24 planned for 2019.⁶⁴
- The Chinatown-International District is home to vibrant public spaces and events that can provide **inspiration to other neighborhoods**: Jackson Street is home to Chinese New Year festivals and celebrations; Hing Hay Park is a popular plaza for social gatherings, giant chess, and cultural events.

Addressing Key Challenges

- Greater Downtown has grown significantly since 2010, **with 19% more residents**. The number of school age children has almost doubled from 1,767 to 3,356.⁶⁵
- Despite the growth in families in Greater Downtown neighborhoods, there are **few places designed to cater to children, older adults, and families**.
- The **rise in homelessness** makes it challenging to keep the public-right-of-way clean of waste, clear of encampments, and safe for both homeless individuals and others. Roughly 3,500 people experience homelessness within Seattle.⁶⁶
- Residents expressed a **desire for an active, 24/7 downtown experience**, with more reasons to be out at night, a diversity of affordable food options, and places to go dancing, experience group fitness, or engage in other social activities.
- Participants at outreach events frequently expressed a need to preserve and **maintain cultural and historic character**.
- Many outreach participants who identify as **people of color do not feel welcome in Greater Downtown**. Some people feel obligated to spend money to enjoy our public spaces.



“You have to want to be there for it to be vibrant. So it needs to feel safe, interesting and accessible.”

- People with disabilities forum



ADVANCING EQUITY

In 2035, new and enhanced public and community spaces can be planned and developed by people of all ages, races, cultures, incomes, and abilities. The city can be full of cost-free experiences like walking, people-watching, and enjoying vibrant street life, increasing quality-of-life for all. The culture and histories of traditionally under-represented people can be celebrated through design of streets and public spaces and through events and programming.

How we get there: Participatory decision-making will allow each neighborhood to distinguish and celebrate what is historically and culturally significant. Design and budgeting will center on equity and environmental outcomes.

01

Create or enhance a community heart in each neighborhood

Cultivate a cherished plaza, square, commons, or outstanding people-first street in every neighborhood.

- Create 18-hour places where people of all ages socialize and can access services including restrooms, drinking fountains, and Wi-Fi.
- Develop new models to partner with communities, and create public-private partnerships to support design, activation, maintenance and engagement.
- Give people multiple reasons to visit or enjoy a public space. Provide something for everyone: comfortable seating, food carts, vending, seasonal activities, space for spontaneous performances, movie nights, and play.

Olvera Street in Los Angeles is a beloved neighborhood destination.



Source: Nelson Nygaard



“When we reach for a sense of place we create an intimate relationship to a set of stories connected to a particular location...about who we are and with whom and why.”

- William Kittredge, author on the American West

Source: SDOI

02

Make the city a canvas to celebrate local culture, topography, and history

Use community art to connect us.

- Infuse the public realm with art to highlight the things that make Seattle, each neighborhood, and the Pacific Northwest unique.
- Increase space for public and community-generated art and events, both in new developments and through improvements to existing spaces.
- Celebrate historic and socially significant sites, events, or structures in each neighborhood's public spaces.
- Work with cultural groups to create places, physical markers, and artistic expressions that reflect the stories of Seattle's past, present, and its ethnic and cultural histories.



Mount Rainier's forests and meadows were abundant resources for Indigenous peoples in the past, and remain significant among tribes today.



A mural in South Park illustrates the evolution of the Duwamish River and honors its place in the community's past, present, and future.



Amateur musicians and spontaneous performances are welcome and encouraged on city streets and public plazas in New Orleans.

03

Adopt policies to promote active and vibrant street life

Make it easier for communities, businesses, and individuals to enjoy and activate sidewalks, streets, and public places in each neighborhood.

- Encourage spontaneous and small-scale activity in the public right-of-way and privately-owned public spaces, such as vending, street musicians, group fitness, and cultural festivals.
- Support community efforts to activate public spaces by making it easier to get permits, provide resources, and explore partnerships.
- Explore new models for public private partnerships to maintain and program open spaces.

Detroit's Campus Martius Park brings the beach to the city's center for people of all ages to play in the sand and socialize. The park transitions to an ice-rink in winter.



Source: Michigan Municipal League

04 Create spaces to gather and enjoy, by communities and for communities

Empower community members to create valued spaces.

- Collaborate with communities to envision and plan a variety of intergenerational community spaces.
- Support communities with the resources they need to co-create and steward community spaces, especially along or near people-first streets.
- Ensure that each neighborhood has a variety of free or affordable community spaces that support different uses, groups, events, and activities.

05 Bring water to the neighborhoods

Provide connections and experiences with water in every neighborhood.

- Design and prioritize fountains, water features, and water-based recreation in neighborhoods with the least open space.
- Develop opportunities to view Elliott Bay and Lake Washington, including potential viewpoints on Thomas Street, any new I-5 lid, and other locations.



In Portland's Jamison Square, water fountains and splashpads make for family-friendly additions in neighborhood parks.

Source: idomif

03

NEXT STEPS

MEASURING SUCCESS

Imagine Greater Downtown targets ensure the plan is on track to achieve the 2035 vision. They intend to gauge progress toward success. Each of the Big Ideas in this plan helps achieve one or more of these targets; most are already measured by partner agencies using established methodologies and data collection.

Advancing these Big Ideas can only happen by collaborating across agencies and with community partners, and by approaching all projects, programs, and policies with equity as a foundational principle.



Evaluation Metrics, Targets, and Corresponding Values*

Target	People First	Racial, Economic and Social Justice	Access to Opportunity for All	Environmental Stewardship	Cultural Diversity	Collaboration
Public Realm, Parks and Open Spaces						
Increase the number of people in public spaces by 25% ⁶⁷	●	●	●			
Increase the share of women in public spaces to average 50% ⁶⁸	●	●	●		●	
Add 100 acres of parks and public spaces in Greater Downtown ⁶⁹	●		●	●		
Reduce neighborhood disparities by meeting the goal of 24% tree canopy cover of the right-of-way for every neighborhood in Greater Downtown ⁷⁰	●	●	●	●		
Double the amount of space dedicated to street activation uses (cafes, streateries, parklets, vending, etc.) ⁷¹	●				●	●
Mobility and Access						
Increase satisfaction with bus stop waiting areas, particularly at nighttime for women and people of color ⁷²	●	●	●		●	
Reduce drive alone trips downtown during peak periods to 18.3% ⁷³	●		●	●		
Increase the share of Greater Downtown buildings with off-street loading or a nearby commercial load zone to 65% ⁷⁴	●		●	●		●
Increase active travel trips (walking and bicycling) that start and end within Greater Downtown to 65% ⁷⁵	●		●	●		
Achieve zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries ⁷⁶	●	●	●			

* Values are detailed on pages 24-25.

REALIZING OUR VISION FOR GREATER DOWNTOWN

Realizing the vision for Greater Downtown will take hard work, partnership between public and private stakeholders, and commitment to shared values. Five key next steps move the Big Ideas forward, focusing on actions and locations that are most critical to transform the city and address oncoming challenges.

Next steps identify opportunities where coordination, joint leadership, and resources are needed. The Imagine Greater Downtown plan supports agency efforts to dedicate the staff and additional resources necessary to successfully advance the Big Ideas.

These next steps are cross-cutting, near-term actions that build on efforts underway and will advance multiple Big Ideas at once.

Legend of Coordinating Agencies

- COS** - City of Seattle
- DON** - Department of Neighborhoods
- DSA** - Downtown Seattle Association
- KC Metro** - King County Metro
- OAC** - Office of Arts and Culture
- OED** - Office of Economic Development
- OPCD** - Office of Planning and Community Development
- OSE** - Office of Sustainability and Environment
- OWCP** - Office of the Waterfront and Civic Projects
- PORT** - Port of Seattle
- SDCI** - Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections
- SDOT** - Seattle Department of Transportation
- ST** - Sound Transit
- WSDOT** - Washington State Department of Transportation

1. Advance South Waterfront planning and community discussion

Advance work on this critical waterfront space with agencies and community partners

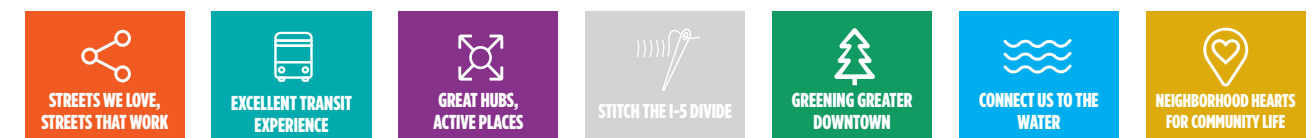
Opportunity

Integrate water and landside planning in the area just south of Colman Dock.

- **There is significant private investment** and buildout of Waterfront Seattle, including the new Alaskan Way.
- **Seattle’s Indigenous communities** have a long history rooted in this area.
- **Growth in transportation alternatives** continues with the opening of the new Colman Dock Multimodal Terminal, Center City Connector, passenger-only ferries, Metro RapidRide H Line with service to Colman Dock by 2021, and plans for a new cruise ship berth are due for completion before 2025.
- **Tourism is growing** with cruise and ferry operations alone projected to bring thousands of visitors into this area.

Work to plan and design this space should be driven by Indigenous individuals and tribes, and center on inclusion and a sustainable future.

Key Actions	Phase			Coordinating Agencies	Related Projects
	1	2	3		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study the future of public space and mobility in the South Waterfront area 	●			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEAD: COS (Office of the Waterfront) • Coordinating: COS (SDOT, OPCD), KC Metro, WSDOT, Port 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterfront Seattle Construction (Pioneer Square East-West Streets Improvements) • Unfunded elements of Waterfront Seattle Vision • Port Terminal 46 North Cruise Ship Berth • Colman Dock Multimodal Terminal • Stadium District Developments • Center City Connector Streetcar • WSDOT-led planning for Pier 48
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on previous work and consider potential future uses of Terminal 46 North, Pier 48, and landside uses 	●				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options to integrate waterborne transportation and passenger ferry services 	●				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and optimize water access and views 		●			



2. Develop a street network study

Optimize streets to support the mobility needs and public life of all people

Opportunity

Bringing the Big Ideas to life will require strategic thinking about the use of public street space in Greater Downtown. This is an opportunity to:

- **Prioritize mobility needs** by identifying infrastructure and operations that support our mode share targets.
- **Knit together** the interests of neighborhood residents, local businesses, tourism, agencies and advocates. Ensure excellent walk, bike, freight and urban goods, and transit access.
- **Optimize the street network and curbspace** to support the efficient movement of people, goods, services, and other non-movement uses.

Key Actions	Phase			Coordinating Agencies	Related Projects
	1	2	3		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct scenario planning and analyze how rights-of-way can be best used to support the mobility needs and public life of all people 	●			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEAD: COS (SDOT) • Coordinating: COS (OPCD), KC Metro, ST, WSDOT, Port 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seattle Congestion Pricing Study • WSDOT I-5 Vision • Metro Connects • Upcoming capital projects in Greater Downtown • Existing modal plans • Lid I-5 Feasibility Study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct technical analysis to inform street use priorities, resolve conflicts where modal priorities overlap, and identify demand management needs 	●				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and plan mid- and long-term street use priorities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Surface street transit-priority pathways and operations » A connected network of people-first streets » A major north-south transit spine operations and design including bus and streetcar operations » I-5 access changes and resulting street operations » Freight and urban goods delivery needs » Enhanced riding and rolling network (bicycles and micromobility) » Curb space management strategies to address competing demands, including future autonomous vehicles 	●				



3. Continue transit station and hub collaboration

Create great places for arrival, connection, and community life at transit station locations in Greater Downtown

Opportunity

The nation's best public transit systems have evolved to invest heavily in public realm and speed and reliability improvements.

- **Build on transit service investments** including light rail, commuter rail, and frequent bus and streetcar services to make Greater Downtown's public realm thrive.
- **Transform arrivals** at transit stops and hubs to emphasize connections and community life.
- **Focus efforts** where traveler volumes and transfers will be highest.

Key Actions	Phase			Coordinating Agencies	Related Projects
	1	2	3		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Station Context Framework Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Plan and design bus stop, layover, and drop-off zones (kiss-n-ride) » Prepare street concepts and identify street modal priorities » Develop and refine streetscape standards as needed » Develop intersection concepts that enhance safety and accessibility » Prepare pedestrian realm, public space, activation, and place-making concepts » Plan for effective access and circulation movements 		●		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CO-LEAD: COS (OPCD) and ST • Coordinating: COS (SDOT, DON), KC Metro, DSA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound Transit West Seattle and Ballard Light Rail Project • SDOT Shared Mobility Hubs Program • Jackson Hub Reconnecting Neighborhoods • KC Metro Hubs and ST Station Integration Programs • City led planning for BNSF lid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a "great stops/rapid response" program that supports transit operations and elevates the transit customer experience, comfort, and enjoyment where public life interfaces with bus passenger facilities 		●			



4. Develop neighborhood public life action plans

Work with neighborhood groups to locate, plan, and activate the civic heart of each neighborhood and other places for public life and community interactions

Opportunity

Effective public spaces are where community comes alive, neighbors connect and bond, and where a sense of belonging is fostered. Great public spaces at a variety of scales will help:

- **Identify people-first street and street closure opportunities** that correspond with mobility network priorities.
- **Seed local economies** and encourage more minority-owned businesses to Greater Downtown’s street side retail and restaurant scene.
- **Drive environmental sustainability** with more native trees and green infrastructure features selected by community residents.

Key Actions	Phase			Coordinating Agencies	Related Projects
	1	2	3		
• Develop a community engagement strategy to reach underserved groups; include local and Indigenous culture, art, and history to develop inclusive public spaces	●			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CO-LEAD: COS (OPCD and SDOT) • Coordinating: COS (Parks and Recreation, DSA, DON, OAC, OED, and OSE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDOT Public Life Program • Neighborhood urban design framework plans • Station Area Planning • Seattle Parks and Open Space Plan • Privately owned public spaces (SDCI Program) • DSA Public Space Activation Program
• Build on Outside Citywide’s research to inventory neighborhood and civic gathering spaces, analyze public space gaps, and assess user group needs; identify early implementation pilot areas for street activation	●				
• Fund public life surveys and action plans for each neighborhood		●			
• Identify locations to expand, improve, repurpose, and connect public and pedestrian places through the street network study and a land use analysis		●			
• Memorialize the design of the selected enhanced pedestrian places in Streets Illustrated		●			
• Secure funding for capital improvements for the identified new and enhanced public places			●		



5. Transform and activate I-5 overpasses and underpasses

Create and enhance spaces and connections over and under I-5

Opportunity

As Seattle grows on both sides of I-5, the barrier created by the freeway is magnified. Reconnected neighborhoods are transformative for mobility, improve access to opportunity for many, and can help humanize areas adjacent to the freeway.

- **Improve the pedestrian experience** and find meaningful uses for marginal spaces in underpasses adjacent to the Central Business District and Chinatown-International District.
- **Leverage current feasibility planning** for the I-5 lid to explore overcrossing enhancements in Greater Downtown along the freeway such as the Melrose Promenade and Harborview overlook.

Key Actions	Phase			Coordinating Agencies	Related Projects
	1	2	3		
• Build on and support other community planning efforts for spaces under I-5	●			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEAD: COS (SDOT) • Coordinating: COS (OAC, DON, Parks and Recreation, and WSDOT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lid I-5 Feasibility Study • Jackson/King Underpass Community Study • Pike Pine Renaissance • Washington State Convention Center Expansion • Freeway Park Improvements • Melrose Promenade Community Plan
• Transform I-5 underpasses into canvases and meaningful spaces for art, community uses, and cultural celebration		●			
• Improve sense of security and safety		●			
• Use lighting and light art to brighten underpasses		●			
• Advance planning and design for the Melrose Promenade		●			
• Explore pedestrian environment improvements to existing overpasses		●			
• Find activating and potentially indoor uses that are resilient to the noisy and dark environment			●		
• Begin planning and design for new Thomas St crossing to connect South Lake Union and Capitol Hill			●		



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75. To be monitored using Commute Seattle Mode Share Survey results. PSRC's commute diary data indicates the current rate of active travel trips is 44%.
76. City of Seattle Department of Transportation. (30 September 2016). City of Seattle Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Analysis. Retrieved from https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SeattleBicycleAdvisoryBoard/presentations/BPSA_Draft_Public_093016.pdf.

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