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   C - LIGHT RAIL STUDY
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<tr>
<td>AE</td>
<td>FEMA Flood Zone AE</td>
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<td>Medium Industrial zone</td>
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1. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea Plan provides a vision and strategies to guide future growth and achieve a holistic, people-oriented neighborhood around Sound Transit’s planned bus rapid transit (BRT) line and transit center at the intersection of Rainier Ave S and S Grady Way. The strategies in this plan aim to facilitate mixed-use development, maximize multimodal transportation options, improve pedestrian connectivity, and integrate the subarea with adjacent areas by establishing a neighborhood that is distinct from Downtown yet aligned with the goals of the City Center Community Plan. The plan recommends development regulations and public investments that can catalyze the private investment needed to fully implement the vision.

This concept plan is the first step toward realizing a vibrant new district and development hub around the transit center. Future amendments to Renton Municipal Code, studies, or technical analyses and ongoing coordination with the community will be needed to clarify environmental and transportation needs, assess impacts, and move the plan from vision to implementation. Next steps include:

1. Continue to coordinate with Sound Transit, WSDOT, and King County Metro to ensure future improvements in the area align with plan goals.
2. Consider conducting a planned action Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), or a similar approach, to do full environmental and transportation analysis.
3. Advance rezones, land use regulations, and infrastructure improvements to reflect the subarea vision.
4. Update this plan as final decisions on light rail alignments are made.

Core Goals for the Plan

- Create a vision for a livable, distinct, mixed-income neighborhood that is different from yet aligns with the City Center Subarea and Downtown.
- Develop conceptual strategies to transform the area into a pedestrian-oriented district with a multimodal center and strong pedestrian connections that gracefully integrates with neighboring areas.
- Leverage the recent and planned public investment in the area for private investment to follow.
- Identify public investments, improvements and development regulations to help area evolve into a more cohesive district.

See Chapter “4. Concept” on page 33 for more details on how the goals and objectives guide the vision for the subarea.
Figure 1: Sidewalk along S Grady Way

Figure 2: Existing buildings south of S Grady Way

Figure 3: Fred Meyer is one of several grocery and big-box stores located within the subarea

Figure 4: High-voltage power line utility corridor transversing the area

Figure 5: Intersection along S Grady Way

Figure 6: Diverse mix of businesses in commercial and light industrial area west of Rainier Ave S

Figure 7: Office building along SW 7th St

Figure 8: Lind Ave S corridor south of I-405.
The Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea is located just southwest of Downtown, centered on the intersection of Rainier Ave S and S Grady Way. Most of the subarea is north of I-405, but a portion of the area that is west of SR 167 extends south of the interstate.

A diverse mix of commercial and employment land uses currently comprise the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea. Retail uses predominate along Rainier Ave S in the center of the subarea, with a mix of big-box stores and auto dealerships, and some smaller infill commercial buildings on the periphery of those big-box stores. Commercial office developments range from two- to three-story mid-century buildings along 7th Ave S to seven-story 1980s-era office towers north and south of I-405. Light industrial uses in large warehouse-style buildings are located primarily in the western portion of the subarea.

A particularly diverse mix of land uses and buildings exist in the area northwest of the I-405 interchange, with auto dealerships, auto-repair, and construction businesses surrounding a few single-family homes and a church.

Map 1. Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea
southwest area there are several hotels and office towers, as well as land used for outdoor material storage. Although portions of the southwest area are outside of the one-half mile walkshed of the future transit center, the area was included because it is a major employment center that is currently disconnected from other areas of the city.

The subarea is immediately southwest of Downtown, a historic and growing commercial center for the city. Although only a few of residences can be found within the subarea, neighborhoods generally surround the subarea except to the west.

The existing character of the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea is generally suburban and auto-oriented. Many streets lack a sense of enclosure and “eyes on the street,” which results in an isolated and uncomfortable pedestrian environment. High-volume arterial streets carry significant traffic, including freight routes. The area lacks bicycle infrastructure, though there are current plans to improve bike connections on S 7th St and Shattuck Ave S, as well as a long-term vision to strengthen multimodal connections throughout the area. In addition to roadway infrastructure, several high-voltage power line corridors intersect in the subarea. The easements around these corridors reduce the buildable area, particularly in the core.

Figure 9: Aerial view of Renton looking northwest. The general boundary of the subarea is shown in orange.

Figure 10: Subarea includes a number of retail auto dealerships and other businesses that support auto sales and repair.

Figure 11: Utility corridor along S Grady Way at the intersection of Rainier Ave S.
SOUTH RENTON TRANSIT CENTER

Sound Transit (ST) plans to build a new transit center at Rainier Ave S and S Grady Way to serve future ST bus rapid transit (BRT) service along I-405 and some King County Metro (Metro) bus routes, including a new Rapid Ride Line I. Sound Transit plans to provide opportunity for transit-oriented development (TOD) on site; additional private redevelopment within the subarea is anticipated as well. The future transit center will be built on the site of two former auto dealerships. WSDOT operates a Park-and-Ride facility immediately east of the planned transit center.

Sound Transit’s investment is the impetus behind this subarea plan and offers a rationale for evolving the area into a more holistic, multifaceted district. With better transit connections to local and regional destinations, the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea can offer greater access to opportunities for people living and working in the area.

Figure 12: Conceptual site plan for transit center. Image source: Sound Transit

Figure 13: Future site of the transit center, looking north from S Grady Way.
PREVIOUS PLANS

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The City of Renton Comprehensive Plan (Comprehensive Plan) provides policy guidance on the city’s growth and development based on a community-wide vision. The Comprehensive Plan is in compliance with the Growth Management Act (GMA), which requires the Comprehensive Plan include policy direction for land use, housing, capital facilities, and transportation. Renton’s Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2015 and includes the following vision statements that guide the city’s growth and economic development:

- A sustainable city that promotes economic vitality, environmental quality, social equity, and resiliency.
- A community that is healthy and safe, that has cohesive, well-established neighborhoods and a growing variety of housing to match the diversity of the population with its various needs and wants.
- A working town with a full spectrum of employment opportunities for all economic segments, regardless of education, age, gender, or ethnic origin.
- A regional center for active and passive recreation that features access for all to a healthy river, a clean lake, abundant trees, and clear mountain views to enhance the experience.
- A well-connected place that builds cohesive networks, in the form of: partnerships that enhance community resources; transportation and recreation facilities that connect through trails, sidewalks, and streets; and local business, volunteer, and neighborhood organizations that bring people together.

Several Comprehensive Plan policies support the evolution of the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea into a district with new housing options, attractive commercial spaces, enhanced multimodal access, and pedestrian-oriented streets. Refer to Appendix A - Existing Conditions Report for a full list of policies.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS

In addition to the Comprehensive Plan, other recent community and economic development plans provide important context for this subarea plan.

CITY CENTER PLAN

This 2011 plan established an overall vision for Renton’s City Center Community Planning Area, which includes Downtown, areas around Park Ave and north of The Landing, and portions of the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD.
Subarea north of I-405. The plan is guided by a series of overarching goals:

- **Goal 1:** Create a distinct identity for the City Center and improve the visibility and perception of the area.
- **Goal 2:** Continue to support Renton’s diverse economic sectors.
- **Goal 3:** Improve access to and visibility of the concentration of civic activities including Liberty Park, the library, the Renton History Museum, and Cedar River to create a dynamic civic node in Downtown.
- **Goal 4:** Protect and enhance the residential neighborhoods in the City Center.
- **Goal 5:** Provide better regional connections for the full range of transportation modes to improve access to and from the City Center.
- **Goal 6:** Provide better connections between areas within the City Center.
- **Goal 7:** Promote and improve access to regional trails in the City Center and build on these key connections as an economic development strategy.
- **Goal 8:** Protect, enhance, and improve access to the natural features and open space in the City Center, including Lake Washington, the Cedar River, and its many parks and open spaces throughout the City Center.

Although the City Center plan preceded the siting of the new BRT transit center at the intersection of Rainier Ave S and SW/ S Grady Way, the goals and overall vision are an important guide for this plan. See the Concept chapter for more details on how the City Center plan shapes the vision for this subarea.

**RENTON BUSINESS PLAN**

This plan’s citywide economic development focus provides an important foundation for the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea, which serves as a key commercial center for the city. This plan’s main goals are:

- Provide a safe, healthy, vibrant community
- Promote economic vitality and strategically position Renton for the future
- Support planned growth and influence decisions to foster environmental sustainability
- Build an inclusive informed city with equitable outcomes for all in support of social, economical, and racial justice
- Meet service demands and provide high quality customer service

**RENTON DOWNTOWN CIVIC CORE VISION AND ACTION PLAN**

This plan, completed in August 2018, is focused on the Downtown area and the transition of the existing transit center to a more lively and robust public space. The plan focuses on:

- Reinventing and investing in public spaces.
- Building upon the emerging restaurant and retail clusters.
- Becoming a cultural center that celebrates racial diversity.

Although the plan does not include the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea, its focus on key locations that are adjacent to the subarea were important considerations for this subarea plan, most notably, the vision of Burnett Ave and Burnett Linear Park as a multimodal art greenway.

Figure 15: Concept diagram from the Renton Downtown Civic Core Vision and Action Plan (2018). Colors relate to the key actions of the plan, with red indicating sustaining and supporting what is currently there, yellow indicating areas needing activation, and blue indicating areas for public investment, including streetscapes and placemaking.
TRANSPORTATION AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Given the focus on transit-oriented development and the need to improve multimodal access throughout the subarea, there are a number of transportation plans that have guided the content and recommendations of this plan. Brief summaries of the key plans are provided below. More information is included in the Transportation Section as well as Appendix A - Existing Conditions.

TRAILS AND BICYCLE MASTER PLAN

The Trails and Bicycle Master Plan proposes trail and bicycle infrastructure improvements to increase the comfort and safety of people walking and bicycling. The plan identifies several key destinations for pedestrians and bicyclists within the subarea, as well as intersections and corridors that currently feel unsafe to people walking and biking.

RENTON ACCESS TO TRANSIT

This citywide study of current transit access included several transportation improvements around the Rainier Ave S and S Grady Way intersection, which is at the center of the subarea. This plan reviews existing transit access connections, considers future investments such as the future BRT park-and-ride facility, and recommends projects/improvements to help improve access.

Figure 16: Maps from the Trails and Bike Master Plan community engagement, illustrating issues and destinations for people walking and biking. At top, walking problem spots (yellow) and destinations (blue). At bottom, problem areas (red) and key destinations (green) for bikers.

TRANSPORTATION AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLANS

The 2021-2026 TIP includes a number of projects in or near the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea, including arterial widening, bike routes, one-way to two-way street conversions, BRT optimization improvements, and streetscape improvements. The most relevant improvements within the subarea are highlighted below. More details are provided in the Transportation chapter.

S 7th Street Corridor Improvements.

S/SW 7th St as a key east-west bicycle route into the Downtown. This project will install a multi-use path on S 7th St, between Shattuck and Burnett Ave S, and install intersection improvements at multiple intersections along the corridor from Shattuck Ave S to Oakesdale Ave SW. This project will also upgrade an existing marked crosswalk with flashing beacons with higher visibility technology.

South Grady Way Multimodal Improvements.

This project will perform a comprehensive analysis of multimodal transportation improvements, including review of potential transit improvements along Grady Way. The project will also potentially remove pedestrian islands at Shattuck Ave and Lake Ave crossings, add capacity, and rechannelize traffic on Grady Way.

Renton Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Improvements.

This project consists of access to transit roadway improvements from I-405 exit 3 (Talbot Rd) to the South Renton Transit Center that include extending S Renton Village Place to S Grady Way and intersection reconfiguration at S Grady Way and Lake Ave S.

Lind Ave SW/SW 16th St to SW 43rd St.

Widens existing roadway to five lanes where required. Includes new roadway, curbs, sidewalks, drainage, signals, lighting, signing and channelization. Additionally, improvements may result from future WSDOT I-405 plans.
2. EXISTING CONDITIONS

This chapter reviews current conditions in Renton and the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea, excerpted from the Existing Conditions Report, which was developed as the initial phase of the project in early 2020. The full report can be found as an appendix to this plan. Findings from this process informed the development of plan alternatives and recommendations.

The current conditions of the subarea differ markedly from the vision of a more pedestrian- and transit-oriented, mixed-use area laid out in this plan’s vision offering both opportunities and challenges for future growth of the area. While the area also has many opportunities, it is important to understand the physical challenges of the site and how both public and private investments will be needed to improve these conditions.

KEY CHALLENGES

- The auto-oriented built environment will require significant improvements to make the area safe for non-motorized transportation.
- Pedestrian and bicycle connections are missing or feel unsafe and uncomfortable.
- Several overhead power line corridors cross the area, limiting development and uses on several parcels.
- The subarea has almost no parks or formalized community gathering places; connections to natural systems are weak.
- Heavy traffic volumes may impact future residents of the area.
- The existing Auto Mall Overlay promotes vehicles sales, complicating the opportunities for a neighborhood-like built environment.
- The dominance of infrastructure (highway, arterials, power line corridors) results in a current environment that lacks human scale elements and a sense of place.
**KEY OPPORTUNITIES**

Despite the physical challenges of the environment, there are also a number of opportunities for the subarea.

- Leverage the planned transit center and park-and-ride and enhanced bus rapid transit (BRT) service (expected in 2024).
- Prepare for anticipated levels of activity in the area surrounding the planned transit center.
- Consider future development opportunities and large parcels under single ownership.
- Coordinate with the city’s concurrent housing action plan efforts and encourage affordable workforce housing development.
- Establish and support a thriving business district with a mix of small businesses, which includes black, indigenous, and people of color-owned (BIPOC) owned businesses, regional shopping destinations, and other employers.
- Allow for seamless transit transfers and multiple ways to get to/from the transit center (e.g., kiss-and-rides, transportation network company’s drop-off/pick-up, etc.).
- Enhance ecological value and improve surface water quality through redevelopment under modern stormwater regulations.
- Explore creation of a multimodal, mixed-use corridors streets with relatively low traffic volumes, adjacent land use mix, and connectivity.
- Strengthen and protect the area’s role as a regional jobs center, with a mix of retail, industrial, and office jobs with a range of income levels.

**VISUAL STRUCTURE**

Map 3 summarizes the existing conditions and provides a foundation for shaping future development in the subarea. The major arterials that cross through the site are shown in the bold black arrows. These roadways are important to the region, carrying large volumes of traffic and moving freight through South King County, but also act as barriers to people traveling on foot, wheel, or bicycle.

Future development will need to address multimodal access and safety while maintaining traffic flows on these key highways and arterials. The shaded areas of the map below illustrate portions of the subarea that share physical characteristics, which may be valuable and/or present opportunities for redevelopment. Edge treatments on these areas indicate where there may be opportunities to make connections to adjacent neighborhoods. Existing corridors with key transit access are shown in blue and the planned transit center with Sound Transit’s conceptual parking and TOD layout is shown at the center.
Thoughtful transitions within the subarea boundaries may offer opportunity to connect to adjacent neighborhoods.

Planned South Rainier Transit Center and potential TOD sites

Constrained edge: Highway or arterial and existing topography limits opportunities for adjacent neighborhood connections.

Commercial mixed area with big-box stores on large lots, car dealerships, and smaller businesses along corridor.

Mixed commercial area with some large lots, vacant buildings and redevelopment opportunities

Key bus service corridors

Mid-century office buildings along moderate traffic corridor with mature trees.

Warehouse buildings on large lots, with light industrial uses

Auto dealerships mixed with auto-oriented businesses and small lots.

North of I-405 car dealerships, their service centers and other auto related uses. Area also has a Hispanic community church. Moderate industrial uses south of I-405.

Office buildings on large lots surrounded by large parking lots.

Map 3. Existing Conditions
Located on the southern shores of Lake Washington and close to the southern intersection of the I-5 and I-405 freeways, Renton plays an important role in the economic success, transportation function, and cultural diversity of the Puget Sound Region.

The Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea is the main gateway into Renton, providing access to a significant commercial area and to Downtown Renton (Downtown). The area is a destination for vehicle purchases, hotel accommodations, general shopping, and places of employment both within the subarea itself as well as Downtown. The area can be accessed by highway and several corridors that provide regional connections.

**REGIONAL TRANSIT CENTER**

Transit currently serves an important but relatively minor role in the subarea. The existing King County Metro park-and-ride is served by several bus routes that connect to Seattle, Bellevue, Kent, Burien, and Downtown. RapidRide F connects to the Sounder Commuter Rail line and Link Light Rail, providing connections to SeaTac Airport, and Tacoma.

Creation of the new transit center adjacent to the existing park-and-ride will leverage several new bus routes and increase connections to other high-capacity services:

- Sound Transit’s Stride BRT will provide rapid, frequent connections to Burien, Tukwila, Bellevue, Kirkland, Bothell, and Lynnwood.
- Metro’s RapidRide I line will improve connections to Kent and Auburn
- Improved connections to other lines that serve Renton
- Frequent service to Downtown and Tukwila Sounder Station

These investments will improve access to jobs in Renton and provide commuters with alternatives to driving.
**REGIONAL COMMERCE**

The area is home to auto dealerships and service centers, making it a hub for car sales and service. A mix of other businesses—big-box retail, minority-owned groceries and small businesses, small retail and food shops, professional offices, and light industrial sites, some of which relate to or complement the auto dealerships—predominate the area.

**JOBS**

The area supports many jobs in a range of industries and income levels (see Map 5 and Map 6). Retail businesses clustered along Rainier Ave S and S Grady Way include restaurants, supermarkets, big-box stores, ethnically diverse groceries, and auto retail. East of Rainier Ave S and SR 167 employers tend to be offices, warehouses, and industrial businesses. The southwest and western parts of the subarea support professional, scientific, and technical service sectors.

The area has a strong concentration of automobile-related businesses, with many auto dealerships, repair shops, and auto parts stores. Wholesale trade and construction businesses are concentrated in the western and southern parts of the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea, mostly outside the ¼ mile walkshed. Several office buildings are located south of I-405.
RACE AND ETHNICITY

Although few residents currently live within the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea, residential neighborhoods are located to the north, south, east, and west. The surrounding neighborhoods include the Seattle metropolitan area’s most racially and ethnically diverse residents, as shown in Map 7. The arterials, highways, and transit systems that serve these communities intersect in the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea, making it an important destination for shopping and a meeting ground for people from many backgrounds.
HOUSING

Like most cities throughout the Puget Sound region, housing affordability is a major concern for Renton. The city has a relatively high share of renters, at roughly 50% of all households.

Over the past several decades, supply constraints have led to rapidly rising housing prices. Renters are highly exposed to rising rents, often leading to cost-burden (households paying more than 30% of income for housing) or displacement. Rising prices for ownership units (houses or condos) limit options for young families seeking to build wealth and lock older homeowners in place due to the cost of relocating.

Overall, housing prices in Renton are lower than in Seattle or King County’s Eastside cities. Lower home prices, combined with public investment in regional transit, may attract young professionals and cost-conscious families to Renton. The Renton Housing Action Plan provides recommendations for increasing the availability of affordable and market rate housing in Renton.

Figure 17: Examples of housing near the subarea.
LAND USES

The Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea has an auto-oriented suburban form with a diverse mix of commercial and employment land uses. The subarea is immediately southwest of Downtown Renton, a historic and growing commercial center for the city.

- Retail uses predominate along Rainier Ave S in the center of the subarea, with a mix of big-box stores and auto dealerships and smaller retail and other commercial buildings.
- Office buildings are found throughout the corridor, especially along 7th Ave S, near I-405 in the southeast part of the subarea (i.e., the core), and south of I-405 around Lind Ave.
- Light industrial uses in large warehouse-style buildings are located primarily in the western portion of the subarea.
- Residential uses are relatively rare in the subarea, with a few exceptions. Medium-density residential neighborhoods border the subarea to the northeast, northwest, and southeast.

HIGH-VOLTAGE POWER LINES

Several high-voltage power line corridors intersect in the subarea, most of which originate from the Maple Valley Substation to the east. The overhead power lines and large poles are a dominating visual presence, and easements along the corridors prevent construction underneath or directly adjacent to the power lines. These easements significantly reduce buildable area in the core of the transit center walkshed.

ZONING AND OVERLAYS

Three zones cover the majority of the subarea: Commercial Arterial (CA), Commercial Office (CO), and Industrial – Medium (IM). Two lots in the easternmost section of the area are zoned Center Downtown (CD) (see Map 8).

- Commercial Arterial (CA) is a flexible commercial and mixed-use zone. Most commercial uses are allowed. Standalone residential uses are not allowed. Maximum allowed height is 70 feet for mixed-used buildings.
- Commercial Office (CO) is an office-oriented commercial zone that allows high-density residential near transit. Maximum allowed height is 250 feet.
- Medium Industrial (IM) is a flexible industrial and commercial-oriented zone that allows a range of employment uses with minimal restrictions on building size. Residential uses are not allowed.

Several zoning overlays are also present within the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea. Two Automall Overlays (AMOs) are in place to implement Renton Automall Improvement Plan. Urban Design District D applies design standards for CA and CO zoned properties.

No parking reductions for frequent transit service are in place; however, off-street parking requirements for new development are lower than in some other cities. Some flexibility for minimum parking requirements is available through the site plan review process or through the preparation of a Transportation Management Plan.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Most buildings in the subarea are three stories or less in height, were built in the mid-to-late 20th Century, and are located on an auto-oriented site with isolated buildings surrounded by parking lots. Along I-405 in the core area and south of I-405 several office buildings and hotels rise up to seven stories. One six-story mixed-use senior housing complex was built in 2015 in the north part of the subarea.

A few scattered houses are found throughout the southwest part of the subarea, a legacy of pre-war development patterns. The South Renton neighborhood immediately adjacent to the northeast part of the subarea has a fine-grained, pedestrian oriented street grid and development pattern.
Map 8. Current Land Uses

Current Land Use
- Commercial
- Car Dealership
- Industrial
- Multifamily
- Office
- Public Facilities, Services, & Utilities
- Parks & Open Space
- Undeveloped Public Land
- Undeveloped Private Land
- Single Family
- Transit Center Site
- Wetlands
- TOD Boundary
TRANSPORTATION

ROAD NETWORK OVERVIEW

Several major roads and highways cross the subarea, carrying high traffic volumes, including freight, buses, and private vehicles (See Map 9). These roads strongly influence the auto-oriented character of much of the subarea and impact walkability and developability in many areas. Major roads include:

- Rainier Avenue runs north-south through the heart of the subarea with 6-7 lanes. It becomes SR 167 south of the intersection with I-405. Rainier connects to Rainier Valley in Seattle, unincorporated King County and Downtown Renton to the north, and Kent and Auburn to the south.
- Grady Way runs roughly east-west through the subarea with 5-6 lanes, connecting west to Tukwila to and northeast to Downtown.
- I-405 runs roughly east-west through the southern part of the subarea. It has a cloverleaf interchange with Rainier Ave/SR 167 in the subarea as well as limited on- and off-ramps near Talbot Rd. With few crossings, I-405 forms a significant barrier to movement, especially for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 7th Street is a minor arterial that runs east-west through the subarea. With street trees, sidewalks, and relatively low traffic levels, it offers the strongest east-west pedestrian and bike connection in the area. Further pedestrian/bicycle improvements are planned.
- Talbot Road connects the subarea south to the Talbot Hill and Benson Hill neighborhoods. It offers a key connection for all road users.
- Lind Avenue S is a minor arterial that runs north-south through the west part of the subarea, connecting S 7th St, SW Grady Way, and SW 16th St. It provides the only connection in the subarea between the area south of I-405.

PEDESTRIAN

The area’s superblocks, heavily trafficked arterials, patchy sidewalk network, and long distances between pedestrian crossings are significant barriers for people walking, biking, and rolling. Sidewalks are present on most major streets, though sidewalk quality varies throughout the area. Some minor streets lack sidewalks. The Transit Access Study calls out the north side of 7th St east of the transit center site for its missing sidewalk.

BICYCLE

Dedicated bicycle infrastructure does not currently exist in most of the subarea. The Transit Access Study identified every major street around the future transit center as a barrier (see Map 10).

The Trails and Bicycle Master Plan identifies several routes for shared use paths. An expanded trail connection along SW/S 7th St will greatly improve east-west connectivity across the subarea and link to Downtown. SW 7th St could be an opportunity for enhanced multimodal east-west circulation, as the corridor has relatively low traffic volumes, large mature street trees, and adjacent land uses that could attract more multimodal users.

TRANSIT

The Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea is served by King County Metro and Sound Transit Express bus routes. Sound Transit’s Sounder commuter rail service has a station about 1.5 miles from the future transit center site.

The new transit center and park-and-ride facility construction will support Sound Transit’s planned I-405 BRT service to this area (expected 2024). By 2042, Sound Transit predicts the line will have up to 3,000 daily boardings at the planned transit center.

In September 2020, Metro implemented a major restructure of bus routes in South King County that removed or modified several routes that serve the subarea. Additionally, Metro is planning a new Rapid Ride I line (expected in 2023), which will serve the transit center and provide streamlined connections south to Kent and Auburn.
ENVIRONMENT

THE DUWAMISH RIVER SYSTEM

Located on the historic floodplains of the Cedar and Black Rivers, the land within the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea is largely flat and is flanked by steeper slopes, such as Talbot Hill to the southeast. Prior to 1916, the area was defined by three interconnected rivers: the Cedar River, the Black River, and the Green River. These rivers were a valuable fishing and boating resource for the Duwamish people and the area had been home to Coast Salish people’s settlements for centuries. The portion of Hardie Ave SE that runs through the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea is built on the historic alignment of the Black River.

Following significant flooding in 1911, the Cedar River was channelized in 1912 to prevent flooding thereby creating a new outlet for the river directly into Lake Washington and severing the connection to the Black River. A few years later the construction of the Montlake Cut dropped the level of Lake Washington and drained marsh land in the area for development, but the work also cut off the Black River thereby rendering a waterless riverbed. This loss was critical to the Duwamish people, for whom the Black River had been a source of food, a key navigation route, and a gathering place.

STREAMS AND WETLANDS

Rolling Hills Creek, a non-fish-bearing stream, runs through the southern portion of the core area just north of I-405. It flows through a pipe from Talbot Rd S west along S Renton Village Pl and then turns south to I-405 where it passes under the highway via culvert. A small wetland is associated with the Rolling Hills Creek tributary just southwest of the former Sam’s Club site, east of Talbot Rd S and just north of I-405. A larger wetland area associated with this stream is just east of SR 167 south of the subarea.

Rolling Hills Creek drains into Springbrook Creek, which runs just outside the subarea to the west and drains into the former Black River basin before joining the Green/ Duwamish River. Springbrook Creek is a moderate priority area for restoration under King County’s RE-GREEN THE GREEN restoration plan for the Green/Duwamish River.

LIQUEFACTION

The history of these hydrological changes is echoed in today’s landscape. Like Downtown Renton and The Landing/Southport area south of Lake Washington, soils in the subarea are mapped as a liquefaction seismic hazard. Geotechnical studies and seismic building foundation designs may increase costs for redevelopment projects.

FLOOD ZONES

Impervious surfaces predominate the subarea and a portion of the site just northeast of the I-405 and SR 167 intersection is mapped as a type AH floodplain hazard area, subject to 1'-3' flooding depths with a 100-year flood event. The area southwest of the I-405 and SR 167 intersection is also mapped as a flood hazard (AE) in a 100-year flood event, though ponding depths may be slightly less of a concern than in the area northeast of the freeways. For both areas, mandatory flood insurance is required, and floodplain management standards apply, unless a Letter of Map Amendment is approved by FEMA.
COMMUNITY & AMENITIES

GROCERY STORES AND COMMUNITY GATHERING PLACES

The Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea is regionally accessible and well-suited for the range of retail businesses that serve diverse South King County consumers. The variety of grocery stores range from “big-box” to small, independent stores that serve diverse communities. Several retail nodes support small, independent businesses, such as restaurants, salons, professional offices, and specialized shops.

Only one place of worship is located within the subarea; several other churches are immediately adjacent to the area. The St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School is located just northeast, but no schools are within the subarea. Renton High School is located ¼ mile north of the subarea.

OPEN SPACES AND TREE CANOPY

No parks are located fully within the subarea. The Burnett Linear Park starts at the northeast corner of the area and could offer a pleasant pedestrian link between the transit center and Downtown.

The subarea’s significant number of street trees improves the pedestrian experience on many streets. The quality and condition of the urban canopy varies depending on the corridor; however, most trees are relatively small.

The 7th Ave S corridor includes a handful of landmark trees. Renton’s Landmark Tree regulation protects these trees from removal, though there is a mitigation option if trees are a significant barrier to redevelopment. Though limited in number, mature conifers may bring a particularly high ecological value to the area.

LAND VALUE & DEVELOPABILITY

DEVELOPABLE LAND CONSTRAINTS

The Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea is about 510.6 acres in size; however, high-voltage power line corridors, the I-405/SR 167 interchange, and other rights-of-way occupy approximately 40% of the area. The area contained within a ¼ mile radius of the bus platform is about 126 acres, of which about 35% is occupied by right-of-way or power utility corridors.

LAND VALUES

The average assessed land value for the subarea is $17.02 per square foot (sf), with land values generally rising with proximity to Downtown to the northwest of the subarea (see Map 14). Assessed land values are also higher along Rainier Ave S and S Grady Way (25-30 $/sf) and generally lower south of I-405 (5-20 $/sf).

DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The City of Renton has performed a preliminary analysis of redevelopment potential in the subarea (see Map 13 and Map 14). Opportunities for redevelopment include:

- The block where the planned transit center will be located.
- The large block between S Grady Way and I-405, east of Rainier Ave S.
- Some retail-oriented properties with large parking lots and relatively simple building construction may be redevelopable, depending on the profitability of existing businesses.
- Several redevelopable and vacant sites south of I-405 offer the potential to revitalize this somewhat isolated area, although transit-oriented development potential is limited due to highway infrastructure and poor non-motorized connections to the planned transit center.
- Redevelopment of any of the large retail stores in the area would provide a significant TOD opportunity, but could impact retail options for consumers and sales tax revenues.
- Infill redevelopment on parcels with surplus parking may be feasible.
Thoughtful transitions within the subarea boundaries may offer opportunity to connect to adjacent opportunities. Office buildings on large lots surrounded by large parking lots.

- I-405
- I-405
- I-405

Map 13. Vacant and Redevelopable Parcels

Map 12. Community Assets
3. PROCESS

OVERVIEW

The process for this plan engaged property owners, community members, transit agency representatives, city staff, and both local and regional developers to create a future vision for the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea. The project team used feedback from staff and stakeholders to identify goals and objectives, draft three alternatives for the subarea, develop a preferred concept from those alternatives, and then refine the concept to identify strategies needed for successful implementation. Along the way, city staff provided updates to the Planning Commission and City Council, to ensure the development of the plan was supported by City of Renton leaders.

The planning process began in the fall of 2019, and was impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic, requiring all stakeholder meetings to be conducted over Zoom. The key steps of this plan are listed at right and covered in more detail in this chapter. The final result of this process is a vision for the subarea that has been guided and refined with input from stakeholders and city staff. More work and future planning will be needed to move from vision to implementation. See the Concept chapter for full details of the plan’s vision. Specific recommendations are provided in the Land Use, Multimodal Access, and Open Space and Urban Design chapters.

PLANNING STEPS

The key steps to create this plan included:

1. Reviewing the existing conditions of the subarea.
2. Forming a Stakeholder Work Group comprised of transit agency representatives and local stakeholders that helped guide the development of the vision for the subarea. (See Engagement for more information.)
3. Developing draft alternatives that respond to the early stakeholder feedback and project goals.
4. Engaging local and regional developers to better understand economic development opportunities within the subarea.
5. Refining the alternatives into a preferred vision and plan elements that highlight the key steps and investments needed to achieve the vision.
6. Meetings with stakeholders and city staff from different departments to address concerns and build broad support.
7. City Council adopts the plan (expected 2021).
EARLY ANALYSIS & VISIONING

STUDY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

The project team kicked-off the project by meeting and attending a tour of the subarea. They then conducted a detailed analysis of existing conditions. This report identified key challenges and opportunities and provided a strong foundation of understanding for all subsequent phases of the project.

EARLY ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The project team met with an interdepartmental team (IDT) of staff from the city’s Community and Economic Development, Community Services, Public Works, Communications, and Police departments who helped guide the development of the plan and provided feedback at key steps in the process. The city also formed a Stakeholder Work Group to provide input on the vision. Participants included property and business owners in the subarea, and representatives from Sound Transit, WSDOT, King County Metro, Renton School District, and the South Renton neighborhood.

The project team interviewed stakeholders individually to gather a range of perspectives on future needs for the area. Following those initial interviews, the Stakeholder Work Group met for a series of four workshop meetings, held virtually over Zoom.

At the first stakeholder meeting, held on June 22, 2020, the project team shared feedback from the initial interviews, and used live-polling (Figure 18) and a digital whiteboard to gather input on issues, opportunities, and potential goals for the subarea. Figure 19 provides a summary of feedback from the meeting.

Early Interview Feedback

- Mixed-use redevelopment around the future transit center to increase residential and/or commercial uses
- Explore redevelopment options on publicly-owned properties adjacent to the future transit center, though implementation may take time and coordination
- General support for adding more residential uses to the area
- Improve the quality of the built environment in the subarea
- Activate the area around the future transit center
- Think about needs of people of all ages
- Public spaces will be important to redevelopment
- Improve multimodal access and safety
- Improve security throughout the area

Encourage residents of all ages

Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

Improve security throughout the subarea

Explore mixed-use development around the planned transit center

Activate the area around the planned transit center

Figure 18: Charts illustrating results from live polling during an early stakeholder meeting. Polling results and discussion feedback helped shape the goals and objectives of the vision.
Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea Plan

Break down street grid

Potential E-W multimodal connection. Consider volumes needed to support existing jobs

Transition between higher-density and lower density is important

Connection to Burnett Linear Park is an important opportunity

Lake to Sound Trail (planned)

Safe pedestrian crossings are essential

Consider highest and best uses for development around the transit center

Lind Ave SW is an important connection. Improve safety and quality of transit service and facilities.

Consider development nodes at SW 16th Ave and S Grady Way to encourage more amenities for surrounding employers

Figure 19: Summary of feedback from the first Stakeholder Work Group meeting.
DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVES

Using the feedback from the early Stakeholder Work Group meetings, along with input from city staff, the team developed three alternatives for the subarea. This suite of scenarios allowed the project team to study a range of potential development options and assess opportunities and constraints of each before developing a preferred alternative for the area. Summaries for each of the alternatives are below.

ALTERNATIVE ONE - TRANSIT CENTER FOCUS

Alternative one uses the ¼ mile walkshed around the transit center to create a core node of redevelopment that includes a mix of residential, commercial, and local services. Development leverages BRT service, supports ridership and promotes near-term, transformational change of the subarea. Public investments focus on multimodal safety and access while public realm improvements utilize the utility corridor for a central plaza that links adjacent neighborhoods.

ALTERNATIVE TWO - CONNECTED NODES

This option envisions a constellation of nodes that connect to the transit center through improved pedestrian/bike routes, frequent bus service, and last-mile transportation strategies. Alternative two links existing employment clusters and provides diverse locations for residential development. Change in the subarea may be slower under this option, but would reach a larger area. A network of improved streets and trails provide safe, comfortable connections, space for pedestrian life, and could incorporate green infrastructure wherever feasible.

ALTERNATIVE THREE - SOUTHEAST FOCUS

This option encourages a hub of mixed-use development southeast of the transit center to take advantage of vacant and developable land and avoid conflicts with the high-traffic intersection of Rainier Ave S and S Grady Way. It allows private redevelopment to begin to shape the district in the near-term, while retaining flexibility for transit-oriented development on publicly-owned sites adjacent to the transit center, and plans for potential future light rail service, to evolve over a longer timeframe. Restoration of Rolling Hills Creek could improve ecological health and provide an amenity for redevelopment.
EVALUATING THE ALTERNATIVES

The project team gathered feedback from city staff on the draft alternatives and began to evaluate the opportunities and constraints of each. They also hosted a meeting for city to meet with staff from WSDOT and Sound Transit to discuss how to plan for future transit-oriented development without precluding opportunities for future light rail service, which the city is advocating. Following this meeting, the city initiated a separate study to analyze options for future light rail service and identify potential options. That study concluded in summer 2021, and the findings are included in Chapter 4 of this plan.

After further evaluation of the alternatives, the project team presented the concepts at a second Stakeholder Work Group meeting on December 14, 2020. They also shared the results from the evaluation, and discussed each of the alternatives in-depth.

Alternative three received the most support from both city staff and stakeholders because it is more aligned with near-term development options, and shifts the core focus of development away from the high-volume traffic on Rainier Ave S. Some elements from other concepts were also of interest to staff and stakeholders. Several noted opportunities for additional nodes along Lind Ave SW and others supported the idea of green street connections via streetscape and natural drainage strategies. In discussing the options, crossing the S Grady Way corridor was identified as a critical need for alternative three to be successful.

Figure 25: Excerpt from presentation illustrating the evaluation of the alternatives, using the plans goals and objectives, as well as feedback from stakeholders and city staff.

Figure 26: Whiteboard tool from second stakeholder meeting, where the project team gathered feedback on the draft alternatives. This feedback was crucial in developing a preferred alternative for the area.
DEVELOPER’S FORUM

Following the second stakeholder meeting, the city hosted a series of meetings with local and regional developers to gain a stronger understanding of market opportunities and barriers to redevelopment. The meetings were held in January 2021 over Zoom. City staff and the project team shared a brief presentation highlighting development opportunities in Renton and the subarea planning work to date. The project team then facilitated a discussion, soliciting feedback on topics ranging from affordable housing, incentives for development, parking requirements, height and density allowances, and other development requirements. See Appendix B for a full summary of this meeting.

Key Feedback

• Allow for flexibility and creativity when possible.
• Mixed-use development is critical to creating a vibrant “18-hour” neighborhood.
• Need to attract employment opportunities outside of retail (e.g., office and light industrial).
• City needs to take the lead to catalyze private investment (e.g., recreational spaces, pedestrian/connectivity improvements, sewer, underground utilities, eco energy district, public parking).
• Consider needs and opportunities of all ages/generations.
• Encourage design that allows for transitional uses over time, i.e., ground floor parking or surface parking today, with intent to evolve to retail in the future.
• Put all incentives on the table – MFTE, density bonuses, reduced parking requirements, etc.
• Continuing to foster strong relationships between the city, local organizations, and developers is important, particularly for affordable housing projects.
• Business displacement – need to be proactive to prevent and mitigate business loss, which require a strategy and community engagement.
• Ongoing engagement with the community will be important.

“COMMERCIAL SPACE IS INTEGRAL TO THE URBAN FABRIC. ALTHOUGH THE CURRENT COMMERCIAL MARKET IS CHALLENGING AND SOME SPACES MAY BE DIFFICULT TO FILL IN THE NEAR-TERM, EVENTUALLY THEY WILL NOT ONLY BE DESIRABLE, BUT NECESSARY FOR THE AREA’S SUCCESS.”

- DEVELOPER’S FORUM PARTICIPANT
REFINING THE PREFERRED CONCEPT

After the second stakeholder meeting and developer’s forum, the project team refined the alternatives into a preferred concept for the area. Alternative three provided the foundation, but other elements were incorporated, such as the nodes along Lind Ave SW, and identifying opportunities to link the areas via street and streetscape improvements.

Throughout this phase, the project team worked with staff to refine the concept, determine potential land uses, and identify the urban design strategies that would support the evolution of a new neighborhood around the transit center. A core redevelopment area became the primary focus, along with potential nodes along Lind Ave SW. Connections to the core redevelopment area were supported by location specific recommendations and corridor improvement opportunities to improve connections and multimodal circulation.

GATHERING FEEDBACK ON THE VISION

The project team hosted a meeting with the IDT to gather feedback on proposed strategies for the subarea. They also followed-up with select staff for added clarity to ensure support for proposed approaches.

Following this coordination, the city hosted a third meeting with the Stakeholder Work Group on April 30, 2021. The project team shared feedback from the developer’s forum event, and the evolution of the preferred concept and the potential land use, transportation and urban design strategies of the plan. City staff also provided a process update on the light rail study, including three separate alignment options under consideration.

The bulk of the meeting was spent discussing the potential actions of the plan, and feedback from the group was mixed. While there was general support for the proposed land uses around the station, there was concern about the conceptual road network, and how the city would create safe multimodal access through the area. Below is a summary of key feedback from this meeting.

• Concern that underlying property ownership was not considered during the design of the street network.
• Orientation of the east-west street didn’t seem right.
• The street network needs more internal connectivity for pedestrians and bikes.
• Need to take a more detailed look at pedestrian and bike connections at the transit center.
• Some concerns about the proposed bike trail along S Grady Way - need to consider bus circulation.
• Crossing of S Grady Way is a significant barrier, and without safe access the plan for the core area doesn’t work.
• Several noted the opportunity to highlight the connection to Downtown.

![Figure 27: Excerpt from a Stakeholder Work Group meetings, with an earlier version of the preferred concept's land use map.](image-url)
FINALIZING THE PLAN

Following the third stakeholder meeting the project team reviewed meeting notes and continued to refine the plan concept and strategies. The team adjusted the conceptual road network and developed a sub-network of internal connections to supplement pedestrian and bike circulation. More focused attention was given to bike connections at the transit center, and clarifications on planned facilities on adjacent streets. The final draft also focuses on potential improvements connections at key intersections, particularly those along S Grady Way. At the fourth and final meeting with the Stakeholder Work Group city staff summarized the plan concept and its key elements, discussed a preliminary proposal for a new Multi-family Tax Exemption area, and summarized received stakeholder feedback.

ONGOING COORDINATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The final concept and strategies of this plan provide a vision for creating a new neighborhood around the station and identifies potential strategies, as well as locations and areas where further study is needed in subsequent phases. The following chapters describe the concept in full detail and illustrate proposed strategies to realizing the vision. The plan also identifies potential next steps, recognizing that much work is left to be done before full implementation of the vision can begin. Ongoing coordination and collaboration with property owners, employers and local business owners, community stakeholders, and staff from Sound Transit, WSDOT, and King County Metro will be needed to ensure that the technical next steps of the plan continue to lay the groundwork for a vital new neighborhood around the transit center. The city looks forward to working with all stakeholders implementing the plan.
4. CONCEPT

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following project goals and objectives grew out of early discussions with the stakeholder work group and city staff, and were refined through ongoing feedback and discussions during project engagement events. The goals provide a clear, concise foundation for the concept vision, and the objectives provide more specific direction on how the plan should achieve the overall goals.

1. ALIGN WITH OVERALL VISION FOR RENTON

Align with overall vision for Renton’s City Center area and support the unique role of the subarea in ways that are complementary to Downtown, the larger City Center area, and Renton as a whole.

OBJECTIVES:

• Continue to foster a mix of commercial uses within the area while also adding new residential areas.

• Incentivize future development to act as a southern gateway to Renton’s City Center.

• Improve multimodal connections throughout the subarea.

2. TRANSITION TO A MULTIMODAL CENTER

Transition the area into a pedestrian-oriented district with a multi-modal center and strong pedestrian connections.

OBJECTIVES:

• Prepare for anticipated levels of people walking, biking, rolling, riding transit, and driving vehicles, especially near the planned transit center.

• Allow for seamless transit transfers and multiple ways to get to/from the transit center, e.g., kiss-and-rides, transportation network company’s drop-off/pick-up, etc.

• Use pedestrian-oriented design to improve walkability and connectivity.

• Prioritize improvements that improve safety and comfort for people walking and biking.

• Explore creation of a multimodal district, mixed use corridors, streets with relatively low traffic volumes, adjacent land use mix, and connectivity.
3. CREATE A LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOOD

Create a livable, distinct neighborhood that is active 18 hours a day, complements Downtown, and gracefully integrates with neighboring areas.

OBJECTIVES:

- Coordinate with the city’s concurrent housing action plan efforts and encourage mixed-income and affordable housing.
- Establish and support a thriving business district, with a mix of small businesses, which includes and black, indigenous, and people of color-owned (BIPOC) owned businesses, regional shopping destinations, and other employers.
- Maintain and encourage commercial uses that provide services and amenities to residents and workers in the subarea.
- Use design standards to require high-quality site planning, architectural design, and building materials.
- Enhance ecological value and future resilience of the area by adding green open spaces, trees, and enhancing natural systems.

4. CATALYZE DESIRED CHANGES

Leverage the recent and planned public investment in the area for the private investment to follow.

OBJECTIVES:

- Attract compact transit-supportive development that provides urban living opportunities for a diverse population and increases the number of people who live and work in the area.
- Allow for and incentivize desired development.
- Consider future opportunities for light rail service to the area.

CONCEPT VISION

INTRODUCTION

This plan lays out a vision that will transform the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea from an auto-centered, suburban office environment to a mixed-use community over the next 20+ years. Figure 1 and the following narrative provides an overview of how the vision will address the plan’s goals and objectives. Subsequent chapters focusing on land uses, transportation and accessibility, open space and urban design, and future considerations for light rail address specific needs and opportunities, and make recommendations on next steps and potential improvements.

The city developed the following vision based on a study of the needs and opportunities of the area and used input from the stakeholders to refine the approach. Future engagement with the broader community, along with technical studies to refine the concepts and strategies proposed here, will add further detail and specificity to the actions identified in this plan.

Figure 29: Images illustrating mixed-use development within the core (top) and Main St in Bellevue offers a lively mix of commercial uses at ground floor (bottom).
Map 15. Overall concept vision for the Rainier Grady Junction Subarea Plan

North
Encourage infill residential as opportunities arise. Transition development and build connections to S Renton Neighborhood.

Ensure multimodal street improvements on SW 7th St provide safe access for people walking and biking.

Retain industrial zones, but encourage higher intensity employment uses (R&D, etc.)

Lind Ave Nodes
Promote small nodes of redevelopment at key intersections along Lind Ave S. In the long-term, explore multimodal improvements to provide safer bike access.

Improve transit facilities to support transit riders’ safety and comfort. Explore opportunity to encourage environmentally sensitive infill development that expands amenities for workers while addressing critical area and flood hazard issues.

Core
Leverage new transit center to create a development hub that includes a mix of commercial and residential uses and amenities.

Public Spaces: Organize redevelopment south of S Grady Way around an east-west Main St that offers service-oriented retail options and promotes vibrant public life.

Multimodal Connections: Provide safe crossings over S Grady Way and Rainier Ave S, and create a new network of multimodal complete streets with redevelopment.

Parks & Natural Areas: Utilize portions of the overhead utility corridor to provide a central park gathering space. Expand the buffer for Rolling Hills Creek to improve ecological functions and expand the buffer between redevelopment and I-405.

Activity centers and uses
- Town center focus (mix of commercial and residential)
- Office and commercial focus
- Mixed-use development node
- Important street connections
- Commercial shared street
- Key bike/ped connections
- Park (or transit center landscape area)
- Natural open space
- Central plaza open space

Subarea boundary
Planned transit center

Existing Zones
(Plan retains existing zoning as shown (with slight revisions to allowed uses, etc.)
- Commercial Office (CO)
- Industrial Medium (IM)
- Commercial Arterial (CA)
- Proposed zone change from IM to CA
CORE AREA ELEMENTS

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR A NEW NEIGHBORHOOD

Create a core area of new development around the transit center. The concept leverages recent public investment in transit by locating a core area of mixed-use and residential development around the transit center, north and south of S Grady Way. Creating a dense community in this location will increase access to transit for future residents and help activate the area around the station. A mix of housing types will support the needs of a diverse population. Mixed-use developments with commercial spaces on the ground-floor will activate key streets and focal areas. New residents to the area, along with those who come to the area from adjacent neighborhoods can support and help the area retain some large, regional commercial uses.

Figure 30: Core area redevelopment should include a mix of commercial, residential and mixed-use building types and incorporate pedestrian-oriented design in key areas to activate ground floors and streetscapes. Source: Jelson25 (top), Makers (bottom)

Figure 31: At top, the Kingsgate project in Kirkland, a pilot study of transit-oriented development planned for a WSDOT-owned park and ride site, is a useful precedent for this area. At bottom, new multifamily development in Newcastle.

Figure 32: Diagram of proposed land typologies within the core area.
DEVELOP STRONG MULTIMODAL CONNECTIONS

Within the core area, a new network of streets will provide multimodal access between the transit center, commercial, mixed-use and residential areas. Redevelopment south of S Grady Way should be organized around a commercial Main Street – a vibrant corridor with ample pedestrian space, activated by ground floor commercial uses in adjacent buildings. Because the core redevelopment area is currently divided by S Grady Way, providing safe crossings at several locations will be essential to ensuring strong connectivity to the transit center and throughout the redevelopment area.
INTEGRATE OPEN SPACE TO SUPPORT A LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOOD

Redevelopment of the core area should result in a resilient built environment that fosters human health and improves connections to natural systems. A network of open spaces will promote activity and social connections and should include large spaces for gathering and recreation, smaller plazas and open spaces to support resident’s needs, natural areas that enhance ecological connections, and streets that integrate space for trees, landscape, and green infrastructure elements. The central Main St, along with an adjacent town square, will be a focal point of the neighborhood, and promote social activity and public life.

AREAWIDE ELEMENTS

COMMERCIAL HUB

Continue to grow and diversify commercial uses. The Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea has been a commercial center for Renton and the South King County region for decades, offering a mix of retail and office uses. To ensure that the area remains an attractive and successful commercial hub, the vision continues to support a wide range of services that will complement, rather than compete with, other areas of the city. Across the subarea this includes large and small scale retail, office uses, hospitality, and light-industrial uses. Bringing more residential uses to the subarea will enhance the viability of service-based commercial uses and create attractive new

Figure 36: Diagram of the conceptual open space network.

Figure 37: Maintaining existing commercial uses and bringing new commercial opportunities is important to the overall vision.

Figure 38: Images illustrating a larger public gathering or town square type of open space, as well as smaller open spaces that provide outdoor access for local residents.
destinations for residents, workers, and commuters.

**STRONG CONNECTIONS TO THE TRANSIT CENTER**

Multimodal improvements outside of the core redevelopment area will enhance access to the transit center. Multimodal improvements along S 7th St, already a significant bike route in the area, will further enhance connections for bikers as well as pedestrians. Utilizing a portion of the utility corridor along the north side of S Grady Way for a shared-use path could further strengthen east-west connections to the transit center. Improvements to transit facilities in the SW could enhance the comfort and safety of transit riders at bus stops and increase use of frequent bus service. In the long-term, multimodal improvements along Lind Ave SW could better connect the southwest portion of the subarea and provide a strong north-south connection west of Rainier Ave S and link the smaller nodes of development along that corridor.

**AREAS OUTSIDE THE CORE**

**LIND AVE SW NODES**

Smaller nodes of mixed-use development at key intersections along Lind Ave SW will provide new residential opportunities and local amenities for sections of the subarea west of Rainier Ave S. Multimodal improvements on Lind Ave SW would support and connect the nodes. Over the long-term, a potential extension of the shared use path proposed along the north side of SW/S Grady Way could connect to Lind Ave SW to provide a second east-west connection to the transit center and the core redevelopment area.

West of the properties along Lind Ave SW the area would retain the existing Medium Industrial zoning, but the vision recommends increasing the intensity of existing employment uses, such as encouraging more research and development, or light manufacturing to support small technology companies and start-ups.

**NORTH**

Once redevelopment of the core area begins to occur, infill development in areas north of S 7th St could increase residential options close to the station and provide a stronger urban connection between the transit station and Downtown. This area is also the city’s preferred location for a potential future light rail station, an investment that would further catalyze redevelopment not only within the subarea, but also in areas to the north and west. Extending multimodal improvements and complete streets established in the core area to the north would build strong connections between the two stations and facilitate circulation throughout the area.
SOUTHWEST

In addition to a new node of development around Lind Ave S and S 16TH St, there is an opportunity to intensify existing uses through the southwest portion of the subarea and encourage technical and office campus-oriented developments with added transit facilities, centrally located employee services and amenities (i.e. cafes, athletic club, trails, etc.). Design guidelines could encourage sustainable approaches to site planning and building design that provide critical area protections and mitigate flood hazards while also connecting the new development to the adjacent natural systems and elements.

SOUTHERN GATEWAY FOR RENTON’S CITY CENTER

The intersection of Rainier Ave S and S Grady Way is the primary southern gateway into Renton’s City Center. Buildings located at this corner should be located so that the height-to-width ratio establishes an urban environment. Art elements can also be incorporated to further highlight the unique entry location and artistic elements to highlight the gateway nature of the location. Pedestrian and bike improvements at the Rainier Ave S and S Grady Way intersection should increase the safety and comfort of people walking and biking as they cross the street.
ELEMENTS OF THE VISION

The following chapters highlight different elements of the concept, providing more detail on specific land use, transportation, open space and urban design actions that are needed to implement the plan. Each element begins with a set of principles that will guide subsequent planning actions and implementation steps. These principles support the overall goals and objectives by providing more specific direction on the moves needed to ensure future development of the area will meet the concept vision.

Figure 45: Conceptual sketch of the core redevelopment area illustrating one example of how redevelopment around the planned transit center could reshape the area. Final streets locations, building heights, types and uses, and open spaces have not been determined, and will be refined in further phases of this plan.
Figure 46: Conceptual rendering of the proposed Main Street which would provide a central hub of commercial uses and use pedestrian-oriented design to draw people to the neighborhood.
5. LAND USE AND LIVABILITY

KEY PRINCIPLES

The concept vision lays out a number of land use changes for the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea. The following principles will guide the evolution of the subarea and future investments and changes to align with the concept vision’s goals and objectives.

1. Create a mixed-use neighborhood at the center of the core redevelopment area and bring new mixed-income households to the subarea.

2. Create smaller nodes of mixed-use development at key intersections along Lind Ave S.

3. Encourage a wide variety of commercial uses across the subarea:
   • Within the core area, focus on pedestrian-oriented retail around the transit center and within the heart of the mixed-use neighborhood at the center of the core area. Regional retail can be located at the east and west ends of the core area.
   • Intensify existing employment opportunities in industrial area west of Lind Ave S and in the southwest portion of the subarea.

4. Once the core area begins to redevelop, encourage infill development north of S 7th St to provide a stronger urban connection between the transit center and Downtown Renton.

Figure 46: Diagram illustrating how the key land use principles should shape development within the core redevelopment area.
LAND USE STRATEGY

CORE REDEVELOPMENT AREA

The core of the area could redevelop with a mix of commercial, mixed-use, and residential development. The new neighborhood would be centered around a new east-west Main Street south of S Grady Way. The Main Street would be a pedestrian-oriented, low volume street with a mix of food, services, and retail on the ground floor to draw in visitors throughout the day and evening.

The Main Street would anchor a new street network of primary and secondary streets that would provide access to surrounding businesses and destinations. Paths between developments would provide additional human-scaled circulation for pedestrians and bikes.

New buildings in this area would range in height from 6-10 stories, with taller buildings north of the Main Street and upper-story setbacks along the Main Street, to improve solar access onto the street. As the neighborhood develops, allowing for variation and a mix of building types would promote a more organic structure for the neighborhood and provide greater flexibility for development.

On the north edge of the core, the transition to the South Renton neighborhood will be important. Possible strategies include incorporating increased building setbacks along S 7th St, reducing allowed building height, or allowing ground-related residential dwellings.

COMMERCIAL MIXED USE AREAS AND OVERLAYS

Ground floor commercial uses play a valuable role attracting visitors and “activating” streets to create a safer, more comfortable, and more exciting environment. To promote long-term viability, ground-floor commercial is critical to specific areas and corridors. As the area redevelops, the existing role that businesses play serving local and regional commercial demand should be incorporated into new development.

At the transit center, ground-floor commercial uses within TOD developments would help sustain activity generated by the transit center and provide services and amenities for people living and/or working near the station, as well as for transit users.

On other large sites with a commercial focus, residential buildings could be incorporated where feasible and as opportunities arise. Because surface parking will need to be retained in some areas to support commercial uses, strong pedestrian and bike connections should be provided via new streets and improvements to existing street connections.

Figure 47: Townhouse units and upper story setbacks incorporated into a contemporary mixed-use development. Source: MAKERS

Figure 48: Visible activity on the street attracts people and improves safety.
Proposed Land Uses

- **Rainier/Grady Center Mixed Use** - Mix of residential and commercial uses, with a focus on ground-floor service/retail and/or in stand-alone buildings.
- **Commercial/Mixed Use** - Both standalone commercial and mixed-use buildings encouraged.
- **Transit Center Mixed Use** - Active ground-floor commercial or service use with residential above.
- **Residential Focus** - Encourage high-density residential and consider allowing reductions to mixed-use commercial space requirements.
- **Commercial uses on S Grady Way**
- **Natural area buffer**
- **City’s preferred location for potential light rail station**

Existing Zones

(Outside of core redevelopment area)
- **Commercial Office**
- **Medium Industrial**
- **Commercial Arterial**
- **Automall Overlay - Area A**
- **Automall Overlay - Area B**
- **Proposed zone change**
- **Subarea boundary**
- **Transit center**
- **Power line utility corridor**

**Change Zoning to Commercial Arterial**

Rezone properties currently zoned for industrial uses along Lind Ave S to Commercial Arterial, to allow residential and promote nodes providing sales and services along the corridor.

**Promote Sustainable Design**

Provide development guidelines to promote sustainable design and planned campus infill development.

**Amend zoning** to align with the overall vision for subarea. Engage community members and stakeholders to gather input prior to final zoning decisions.

**Provide Transition to S Renton Neighborhood**

Consider measures to provide a transition between the redevelopment area and S Renton neighborhood (just north of subarea boundary.)

**Review use of Automall Overlays** in the subarea, especially the core area.

**City’s preferred location for potential light rail station**

**Transit center**
RECOMMENDATIONS

LU-1 Update zoning within the core area and along Lind Ave S to be consistent with this plan’s vision.

- Consider requiring development to be reviewed as a Planned Urban Development (PUD) per RMC in the core area in order to ensure cohesive development that provide public benefits. (Note: Currently, a PUD is required for any residential development upon all land zoned CO within a quarter mile of transit.)

- Require streets constructed with new development to be public right-of-way (ROW), built to city standards. Case-by-case consideration may allow streets to be constructed to city standards through public access and utility easements with maintenance agreements.

- Review existing requirements for ground-floor commercial spaces.

LU-2 Revise approach to the existing automall overlays in the area, including:

- Remove Automall Overlay B from properties in the core area once vehicle sales leave a site.

- Review all automall overlays in the subarea to better align to the overall subarea vision.

LU-3 Create new design standards for the core area that address the following:

- Streetscape and street frontage enhancements
- Frequent entries to accommodate a variety of commercial spaces and activate the street
- Pedestrian circulation and amenities
- Inter-site connectivity
- Parking area location and site design
- Building scale, design elements, and materials
- Safety and security
- Site and building design to protect from flood hazards
- Site and building design to mitigate air quality and encourage air flow

OUTSIDE THE CORE

LIND AVE SW NODES

Lind Ave SW is the primary north-south street in the western part of the subarea and the only street that connects SW 7th St, SW Grady Way, and SW 16th St. Zoning changes around these key intersections would become nodes of activity, allowing residential uses and providing small-scale food and retail services.

Zoning changes along the Lind Ave SW corridor to allow residential uses could enable infill development in nodes. Intersections along Lind Ave SW at SW 7th St, SW Grady Way, and SW 16th St are key opportunities.

PROMOTING CAMPUS INFILL DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTHWEST

Infill redevelopment of existing office buildings in the southwest portion of the subarea could encourage more campus-like developments that provide better amenities for employees in the area. Sustainable site planning and design approaches can improve and increase connections to natural systems in the area.

RECOMMENDATION

LU-4 Apply development guidelines to the southwest area to promote sustainable design and planned campus infill development.
LOCAL AND REGIONAL BUSINESS CENTER

Every day thousands of people shop at businesses in Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea, a regionally important shopping center for auto sales and service, durable goods, bulk groceries and many small specialty shops. As noted in the Existing Conditions chapter, the subarea’s position as a crossroads for major arterials and highways links diverse economic and demographic groups to the area from all directions. The broad array of businesses and sectors represented is an asset that should be maintained, even as residential uses are expanded in the subarea.

Although retail of many different types are well represented, new investment catalyzed by the transit center provides the opportunity to expand the type of businesses and amenities offered in the area. New and evolving commercial products like co-working spaces and leisure-oriented shopping centers could complement the subarea’s strong retail, hospitality, and office components. Service commercial uses, such as day cares, are especially valuable when located in close proximity to transit resources.

New development also offers the opportunity to create modern spaces for established businesses within new mixed-use buildings. The community connections and customer base of long-time local businesses can help developer avoid the risk and stigma of a vacant ground floor storefront and help integrate new, transit-oriented development into the established social and economic patterns of the area. At the same time, the business benefits from a new space and avoids the risk of displacement. This win-win outcome will require an active role by the city and strong coordination well in advance of and continuing throughout construction.

As the area transitions toward new kinds of land uses and businesses, it will be important for the city to support existing businesses through dialogue, thorough consideration of regulatory changes, and coordination well in advance of redevelopment to avoid business displacement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

LU-5 Establish strong communication with existing businesses in the area and establish programs to provide support prior to and during redevelopment.

- Early communication with existing businesses to share vision, invite participation and discuss future needs and opportunities.
- Consider the needs of small and disadvantaged businesses who may be particularly vulnerable to changes in the area.
- Consider impacts of prolonged construction on local and regional businesses.

Figure 51: Existing businesses in Rainier/Grady Junction.

Figure 52: DK Market, a business currently located in the subarea, offers a wide variety of foods and groceries and serves a diverse community of customers.
**HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS**

One of the goals of this plan is to create a livable, distinct neighborhood. New housing near high-quality transit service would facilitate use of transit for day-to-day activities, leveraging regional transit investments with benefits for traffic congestion and carbon emissions. However, in order for this housing to provide a high-quality living environment, major changes would need to take place to spur the creation of a true neighborhood – a human-scaled environment with safe, low-stress routes for short-distance travel, desirable amenities, a sense of place-based identity.

Of course, housing itself is a necessity for the formation of a new neighborhood. The vision of this plan recommends focusing new housing in the core area, especially around the transit center, with some commercial-residential mixed-use nodes along Lind Ave and longer-term opportunities for infill development north of the transit center. A separate Housing Action Plan, concurrent to this plan, is exploring how best to increase housing options and production in the city. That plan is exploring how to remove barriers, increase opportunities for affordable housing, and potential extensions of existing programs, such as the multi-family tax exemption program (MFTE). This plan recommends an MFTE area be created within the subarea; however, further technical analysis is needed to determine the most suitable area and the standards. Directly related to the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea Plan, the Housing Action Plan recommends a TOD Land Banking Strategy to identify opportunities for banking properties for affordable housing development around transit stations. It also supports future reviews and potential reductions of parking requirements in the areas with expected frequent transit.

**GRACEFUL TRANSITIONS AND COMPATIBILITY BETWEEN NEIGHBORHOODS**

Residential development should scale down – in both height and building footprint – as it approaches the South Renton neighborhood to better match development allowed there and create a smooth transition between the two areas.

Parking regulations are an integral component of zoning controls and should be addressed with the goals of reducing unnecessary construction cost for development, enabling customer access to businesses, and reducing street parking availability impacts for the South Renton neighborhood. Future transportation analysis could include an assessment of current and future parking needs throughout the area. Strategies such as a zoned parking program north of S Grady Way could also help relieve pressure for parking in the South Renton neighborhood. This approach may require a careful balance of expensive off-street parking standards and controls to limit off-street parking in South Renton, with regular monitoring and adjustments to calibrate these programs.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

LU-6 Create an MFTE area in the subarea.

LU-7 Develop parking strategies for the core redevelopment area, particularly in mixed-use areas.

LU-8 Consider implementing a zoned parking program for the South Renton Neighborhood to limit impacts of parking in the neighborhood following redevelopment.
LU-9 Provide a graceful transition to the South Renton Neighborhood at the north of the core area using both physical and programmatic options.

LU-10 Follow the recommendations of the Housing Action Plan to increase opportunities for greater densities of mixed-income and affordable housing around the transit center.

**HEALTHY AND RESILIENT ENVIRONMENT**

With the planned increase in the number of people, both residents and workers, that would spend a substantial amount of time in the subarea, it is important to consider the health risks and environmental hazards to which this population would be potentially exposed.

**AIR QUALITY**

Several major roads and highways pass through or along the edges of the subarea with significant freight traffic. Motor vehicle traffic, especially diesel-burning trucks and buses, is a major source of local air pollution, with well documented negative health effects for people that spend large amounts of time nearby, especially for children and adults with respiratory illness. Soot and other harmful particulates from motor vehicles dissipate within a relatively short distance from roads (~350 feet). In addition, site and building design features, such as centralized air filtration systems, air intake vents located away from polluted areas, and continuous sound walls with vegetation along highways, can help mitigate the effects of road-related air pollution for buildings very close to pollution sources.

For more detailed strategies to mitigate air pollution impacts, see California Air Resources Board, Strategies...
to Reduce Air Pollution Exposure Near High-Volume Roadways, April 2017, pp 20-39, and additional resources cited at the end of this chapter.

The vision’s proposed natural area buffer along I-405 provides some physical separation between residential uses and air pollution sources coming from I-405. Future updates to design guidelines could explore requirements for alternate approaches at the site and building scale, where physical buffers cannot be met.

**FLOOD HAZARDS AND RESILIENCE**

As noted in the Existing Conditions chapter, two parts of the subarea are within FEMA 100-year flood zones. For both areas, mandatory flood insurance is required and floodplain management standards apply unless a Letter of Map Amendment is approved by FEMA. In addition, flood risks are increasing in many parts of the region due to climate change.

Mitigation measures may be available to reduce flood risk. Future analysis should more fully assess future flood risks for the area and investigate how a proposed natural area along I-405, which could expand a buffer for Rolling Hills Creek, could also provide future flood storage. Additional measures to enhance flood resilience in both areas should be studied.

**GREEN STREETS AND OPEN SPACES**

Landscaped areas along streets can also provide green infrastructure functions by catching, slowing, and cleaning stormwater runoff. See the Transportation and Open Space and Urban Design chapters for more details.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

LU-11 Subsequent environmental (SEPA) analysis associated with this project should include study of flood hazard mitigation and stormwater management for the core redevelopment area and opportunities to increase future resilience of the area.

LU-12 LU-11 Consider risks of air pollution from adjacent highways and high-traffic arterials, and identify ways to potentially mitigate the impacts through site planning and building design.
REDEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

By leveraging use of already-built infrastructure, replacing aging and inefficient buildings with new ones, and increasing density in areas well-served by transit, urban infill and redevelopment has many benefits for cities and is one of the key strategies of “smart growth.” However, it often entails challenges that can add to project costs and/or reduce feasibility, such as demolition, mitigation of contaminated soils, challenging construction logistics, and site design constraints. To counteract these headwinds and realize the benefits of infill development, the city should explore ways to increase the feasibility of redevelopment in the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea.

INCENTIVES AND PROGRAMS

There are several established tools that cities in Washington often use to stimulate development in desired areas. The Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE) program is a popular way for cities to incentivize development of housing, including affordable housing. Another important tool for stimulating development is the Planned Action Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Planned Action EIS allows cities to conduct an upfront analysis of environmental impacts and mitigations of development and projects in a specific area and then exempt specific projects from completing a SEPA analysis. This allows the city to reduce the “soft costs” of new construction while maintaining strong environmental standards and identifying appropriate mitigation efforts.

Other development incentives can be written into code. Some cities provide a “density bonus” for projects that provide certain benefits, permitting more dwelling units per acre than normally allowed. However, these programs often have limited usefulness because of overlapping code limitations on building height, bulk, lot coverage, and parking, making it difficult for developers to make use of the benefit. Unlike unit density standards, parking requirements directly relate to project costs, because parking is costly to build and can consume otherwise valuable building area. Incentives that reduce parking requirements in exchange for public amenities or building in targeted areas can be an effective tool to stimulate development.

Figure 57: MFTE has been widely used by Washington cities to spur multi-family development.

Figure 58: Downtown Park in Redmond is activated by adjacent development and provides an important outdoor amenity for residents, including hardscape plaza spaces, a stage for performances and events, flexible seating, and open green space. Image source: Makers

Figure 59: Implementation of shared-use paths and intersection improvements would ensure the foundation-block for safe pedestrian and bicycle circulation are in place as redevelopment occurs.
CATALYST INVESTMENTS

Often the key to launching private investment in a subarea is not a complex financial incentive, but the message of long-term commitment a city sends when it chooses to prioritize an area for investment. The new transit center is one such investment in the subarea that will have an important impact; however, additional investments in public open space, transportation improvements, and potential utility infrastructure upgrades by the city will help establish the new Rainier/Grady neighborhood as a key part of Renton’s future and catalyze private development. Additional public facilities, such as civic and community centers, could be considered to provide amenities and serve as catalysts for future development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

LU-13 Assess feasibility and implement public investments to catalyze future development. Future phases of this plan should consider the following potential actions:

- Providing a central green space below the utility corridor which could bring open space and recreation amenities and make new housing more attractive to future residents.
- Providing a natural area buffer from I-405 to improve natural systems and potentially provide storage for flood events.
- Intersection improvements, particularly along S Grady Way, would show commitment to improving multimodal connections across the corridor.
- Implementing key shared-use paths in the core area would ensure multimodal connections are in place ahead of redevelopment.

LU-14 Pursue Planned Action EIS to conduct technical analysis of environmental impacts and mitigation strategies.

SOURCES

- California Air Resources Board, Strategies to Reduce Air Pollution Exposure Near High-Volume Roadways, April 2017
- CAFEH, Improving Health in Communities Near Highways, January 2015
6. MULTIMODAL ACCESS & TRANSPORTATION

KEY PRINCIPLES

A balanced set of transportation solutions will be needed to transform the area around the transit center from a primarily auto-oriented environment to a multimodal neighborhood that supports a vibrant mix of residential and commercial uses. Safe multimodal access is essential to the vision and the success of the transit center. The improvements and recommendations identified in this chapter are conceptual, indicating the locations and the types of multimodal improvements needed to support the plan’s vision. A future transportation analysis will likely be necessary to assess the impacts of redevelopment. The technical information gained from that study could be used to refine the proposed concepts included in this plan into specific design solutions that improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation and safety, while maintaining access for vehicles, transit, and freight.

Figure 62: Existing image of the S Grady Way corridor. Planned transit center will be located on a site at the left side in this photo.
The following principles should guide future planning and implementation steps. Figure 63 and Figure 64 illustrate how these principles apply to the core redevelopment area around the transit center.

- Develop a new street network that provides strong multimodal connectivity and human-scale block sizes.
- Provide safe crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists across S Grady Way, between Rainier Ave S and Talbot Rd S, and streetscape improvements along the corridor, such as landscape buffers and wide sidewalks.
- Implement facilities identified in the city’s Trails and Bicycle Master Plan (TBMP) that are within the subarea to provide strong connections between the core area, the transit center, and Downtown Renton.
- Improve intersections at key locations to provide safe connections to the transit center and Downtown Renton.
- Pursue near-term and long-term opportunities to connect the southwest section of the subarea to the transit center.
- Retain opportunities for a potential future light rail alignment and station with strong connections to the transit center.

**NEW MULTIMODAL STREET GRID**

A new network of complete streets would break-down existing large parking lots in the core redevelopment area and provide a connected circulation network for people walking, biking, accessing transit and driving. New streets north and south of S Grady Way, along with pedestrian and bike improvements on existing streets, could reshape the core area. Street improvements on select existing corridors could improve connections to other portions of the subarea. Map 17 illustrates a proposed network of new streets and streetscape improvement needs. New primary and secondary complete streets would be supported by a network of through-block connections for people walking and biking. Exact locations for the new streets and through-block connections have not been determined, and the locations shown on maps throughout this plan are conceptual. Map 17 also highlights recommendations for corridor improvements on existing streets within the subarea. Additional recommendations for bike and streetscape improvements on these corridors is shown on Map 19 and Map 21 and discussed in greater detail in subsequent sections of this chapter.

**New Streets - Proposed Concepts**
(Conceptual locations only)
- Primary street
- Secondary street
- Main street
- Internal through-block connections (ped/bike)

**Potential Future Light Rail Connections**
- City's preferred location for potential light rail station
- Important connections to potential future light rail station

**Existing Streets - Multimodal Improvements**
- Generally retain existing roadway configuration, but explore options to add or expand bike and pedestrian facilities and improve multimodal safety at key intersections. (May require additional ROW.)
- Add and/or expand bike and pedestrian facilities into existing streets through changes in roadway configuration, lane reductions, etc. (May require additional ROW.)

**Connections to Light Rail**
Once final station location is determined, assess feasibility of new street connections.

**Shattuck Ave S - North of Grady**
Provide buffered sidewalks on both sides of street and extend planned 2-way cycle track to S Grady Way.

**Lake Ave S**
Due to complex traffic patterns and bus circulation around the transit center, bicycle facilities may not be feasible the southern portion of Lake Ave S. Provide sidewalks along corridor to increase pedestrian access.

**Lind Ave SW**
Study feasibility of reducing corridor to 3 lanes, particularly north of SW Grady Way, to add bike lanes and increase space for pedestrians.

**Softening along S Grady Way**
Expand landscape buffers and add a new shared use path to help soften S Grady Way.
PRIMARY STREET

Primary access streets will be the principal access routes through the core redevelopment area and will provide safe and comfortable facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, as well as vehicular circulation and on-street parking. Figure 65 provides a conceptual illustration of how the street could accommodate various travel modes and support either residential or commercial adjacent uses. Travel and parking lanes are scaled to meet vehicular circulation needs while encouraging slower travel speeds. On-street parking buffers, bike lanes and a wide landscape and street furnishings area provides a robust separation of pedestrians from car and bike traffic. The landscape area is substantially wide to support street trees and understory plantings, however, frequent breaks will be needed to allow access between the sidewalk and on-street parking. A minimum 8' clear walk area is recommended, but overall widths of the sidewalk may vary depending on the adjacent uses along the corridor, with wider sidewalk areas needed where there are adjacent commercial uses.

Figure 65: Conceptual sections of primary access streets. Top section shows typical street. Bottom section shows potential for 2-way cycle track to extend south of S Grady Way and serve the core development area.

Figure 66: Example from Portland, OR of street parking serving as a buffer for a protected bike lane. Source: BikePortland.org
SECONDARY STREET

Secondary access streets are slightly narrower streets that provide balanced pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle circulation, particularly in areas where on-street parking to support adjacent commercial spaces is not a high-priority. Figure 67 provides a conceptual illustration of how the street accommodates a mix of travel modes. Like the primary access streets, lane widths on the secondary access streets are scaled to meet vehicular circulation needs while encouraging slower travel speeds. Bike lanes are buffered from vehicle traffic, and a wide landscape buffer separates pedestrians from the street. Although on-street parking is a lower-priority for these streets (and not included in the section below), reducing or eliminating the landscape buffer in small sections would allow opportunities for street parking, as needed. Otherwise, the wide and continuous landscape buffers would allow these streets to support large street trees, significant understory plantings, and green infrastructure elements, such as rain gardens, where soil and drainage conditions are feasible. A minimum 8' clear walk area for pedestrians is recommended, but overall widths may vary, depending on adjacent uses along the corridor.

Figure 68: Wide landscape buffer in Seattle’s Beacon Hill neighborhood provides ample buffer for pedestrian space and supports natural drainage elements. Source: Makers

Figure 67: Conceptual section of secondary access streets
**MAIN STREET**

The heart of the core redevelopment area is a pedestrian-oriented Main Street located south of S Grady Way that creates a hub of commercial activity and public life for the area. Figure 69 shows a conceptual section of the street. Raised intersections and mid-block crossings encourage safe pedestrian circulation. The street supports two-way vehicle travel at low speeds so bikes can safely mix with vehicle traffic. Wide sidewalks provide ample space for people to walk, gather in small groups, and bring vibrant public life to the streetscape. Commercial uses, such as sidewalk cafes and seating areas, are encouraged to spill over into the street, further activating the area.

On-street parking supports adjacent commercial uses, and curb extensions at intersections and mid-block crossings support street trees and landscape plantings. Movable bollards could allow the street to accommodate street parking while also offering opportunities to expand the sidewalk for markets and special events. See Open Space and Urban Design for more details on how this street can support public life activities in the core redevelopment area.

![Figure 70: Example of a commercial street that serves as a spine for new development. Source: Makers.](image)

![Figure 71: Example of a raised intersection. Source: Cara Seiderman/ NYC Street Design Manual](image)

![Figure 69: Conceptual section of secondary Main Street](image)
THROUGH-BLOCK CONNECTIONS

Publicly accessible through-block connections, constructed with new development, will provide important supplementary connections for people walking, rolling, and biking throughout the core redevelopment area. These pathways would break down the large block structures and enhance connectivity for people walking and biking. Pathways should have pedestrian lighting for security and comfort and be clearly marked for easy access and wayfinding.

Figure 72: Examples of through-block connections. Source: Makers.

Map 18. Network of new streets (dashed) and through-block connections (conceptual locations only).
IMPROVEMENTS ON EXISTING STREETS

As Map 17 illustrates, improvements are also needed on existing streets within the corridor to ensure the area has strong, safe connections for people walking and biking. Existing streets with improvement recommendations are listed below and covered in greater detail in the following sections of this chapter:

- SW/S 7th St
- Talbot Rd S
- Hardie Ave SW
- SW/S Grady Way
- Shattuck Ave S
- Lake Ave S
- S Grady Way
- Rainier Ave S
- Lind Ave SW

LONG-TERM POTENTIAL FOR LIGHT RAIL

The city is advocating for a future light rail service to Renton and has identified a preferred location along existing at-grade BNSF rail north of S 7th St and the transit center. Improving streets and multimodal connections between the transit center, the core area, and a potential future light rail station will need to be studied in greater detail once Sound Transit conducts a further study on feasibility. Map 17 highlights the potential station location and identifies future street and through-block connections that would support multimodal circulation and redevelopment around the station. These connections are conceptual and should be updated as plans for the station evolve.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MT-1 Conduct a traffic analysis to assess impacts of proposed development on traffic patterns and identify opportunities for safe crossings, particularly at key intersections along the S Grady Way and Rainier Ave S corridors.

MT-2 Coordinating with local property owners and developers, update and apply design and connectivity standards to establish a new grid of complete streets (primary and secondary streets), a Main Street that is a central focus of redevelopment, and through-block connections to increase circulation for people walking and biking. The following should be considered for implementation:

- New streets to become city right-of-way and be built to city standards. Case-by-case consideration may allow streets to be constructed to city standards through public access and utility easements with maintenance agreements.
- Through-block connections to be publicly accessible and safe and inviting for pedestrians/bikes.

PLANNED PEDESTRIAN/BIKE CONNECTIONS TO THE TRANSIT CENTER

Although the subarea currently lacks bike infrastructure and has significant pedestrian access challenges, Renton’s Trails and Bicycle Master Plan (TBMP) identifies improvements to increase pedestrian and bike access to the transit center and throughout the subarea. This plan incorporates a number of those projects into the vision and recommends near-term implementation to ensure people have access to multimodal connections as redevelopment begins to occur.

CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT MULTIMODAL PROJECTS ALONG S 7TH ST

The SW/S 7th St corridor, already an important bike route in Renton, will become even more crucial once the transit center opens. The city is currently working to implement a shared-use path along the north side of S 7th St, between Rainier Ave S and Talbot Road S. This facility will be the primary east-west connection for people walking, rolling, and biking from areas north and west of the transit center. Allocating a final missing portion of right-of-way just east of Rainier Ave S would facilitate near-term implementation of this pedestrian and bike trail.

Extending the shared-use path west of Rainier Ave S, as the TBMP envisions, will provide a safe and robust bike and pedestrian connection along this key east-west corridor. Future planning for this facility should explore how to implement the trail around the mature trees along the corridor, which shade the street, increase biodiversity, and help to create a scale that slows vehicle traffic. In addition, future corridor projects along SW 7th St should continue to prioritize multimodal circulation and access needs by enhancing streetscapes, expanding sidewalks and adding landscape buffers along the south side of the corridor, and making pedestrian and bike safety improvements at intersections.

SHARED-USE PATH ALONG TALBOT RD S

The TBMP also recommends a shared-use path along Talbot Rd S, which would connect eastern areas of core redevelopment area to the transit center and Downtown Renton. A path along the west side of Talbot Rd S would provide the best access for the core area and align with pedestrian facilities at the I-405 underpass to the south. However, existing topography and property boundaries may complicate a western alignment. Future alignment decisions should follow transportation analysis of the S
Map 19. Proposed bike and shared-use path improvements.

Implement S 7th St Shared-use Path
Allocate remaining ROW needed to implement shared-use path along north side of S 7th St, between Rainier Ave S and Talbot Rd S.

SW/S 7th St Multimodal Corridor
Extend the shared-use path connection west of Rainier and ensure future investments along this key bike route provide enhancements for bike and pedestrian safety and comfort.

Lake Ave S
Ensure the planned cycle track has a safe, direct connection to the transit center. Bus circulation along Lake Ave S limits safe bicycle facilities on southern end of the corridor.

Lind Ave SW Improvements
Enhance multimodal circulation north of I-405 by reducing lanes to add bike facilities, and expand sidewalks. Explore long-term opportunities to extend bike and pedestrian facilities further south in coordination with WSDOT’s future plans for I-405 interchange improvements.

Utility Corridor Shared-use Path
Use utility corridor to provide new shared-use path along the north side of S Grady Way.

Shattuck Ave S - North of Grady
Extend planned 2-way cycle track to S Grady Way and into core area.

Safe crossings of arterial streets
Improve intersections along arterials, particularly along S Grady Way, to increase safety for people walking and biking.

Talbot Rd S Path
Provide shared-use path along the west side of the corridor.

Recommended Bike Improvements
- Planned shared-use path - TBMP
- Shared-use path (near term)
- Shared-use path (long term)
- Planned 2-way cycle track
- Buffered bike lane
- Shared lane (low speed street)
- Add/extend bike connection - future study to determine facility type
- Through-block connections (ped/bike)
- Planned on-street facility (TBMP)
- Existing bike lane
- Transit Corridors by 2025 (Includes BRT, Frequent and Commuter Routes. Plan for 2040 removes buses from Shattuck Ave S.)
- Transit center
- City’s preferred location for potential light rail station
- Subarea boundary
Grady Way corridor and a more detailed study of feasible intersection improvements to enhance bicycle and pedestrian safety.

In the long-term, extending the shared-use path through the I-405 underpass could provide a safer bike connection between commercial destinations in the subarea and residential neighborhoods to the south, which are currently connected primarily for cars and transit. See Gateways and Placemaking in Chapter 7 for more information.

**HARDIE AVE SW BIKE CONNECTION**

The TBMP includes bike lanes and a shared-use path along Hardie Ave SW that intersects Rainer Ave S across from the transit center. Bike facilities on this street would provide direct access to transit, but the intersection will also see heavy bus traffic. Aligning the shared-use facility on the west side of Hardie Ave S would allow people bicycling to cross Rainer Ave S and access sidewalk connections to the garage without having to cross buses at the transit center.

Future planning and design studies for the Hardie Ave SW bike facilities will need to fully assess the feasibility of safe bike connections at this complex intersection. Sound Transit will be making near-term improvements at Rainier Ave S / Hardie Ave SW in association with the construction of the transit center, including new pedestrian crosswalks that connect to the transit center. Ongoing coordination between the city and Sound Transit will be needed to ensure bike routes and wayfinding through the station area are safe and clear.

**BIKE AND STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS ALONG SHATTUCK AVE S**

The city is designing a 2-way cycle track along Shattuck Ave S and Lake Ave S, south of S 7th St. The cycle track offers a strong bike connection to the transit center, but further coordination is needed to ensure the facility aligns to safe and clear bike routes through the site. In addition, extending bike facilities south to S Grady Way would provide a connection to the proposed shared-use path that runs along the north side of the corridor. Continuing the cycle track across S Grady Way and through the core redevelopment area could provide a strong north-south connection for people biking. Although further study is needed to fully assess feasibility, the continuous cycle track with a high-visibility bike crossing at S Grady Way would likely benefit bike circulation.

Pedestrian improvements along Shattuck Ave S are also needed, as the current corridor only has sidewalks on the west side of the street. Future plans should explore opportunities to provide sidewalks with landscape buffers along both sides of the street. Integrating both the cycle track and pedestrian improvements would likely require additional right-of-way. Potential impacts to an existing stormwater feature on the northeast side should also be studied in future analysis.

**SAFE CONNECTIONS AND CURB MANAGEMENT AT THE TRANSIT CENTER**

Graceful transitions between city bike facilities and pedestrian/bike routes through the transit center are essential to the vision of this plan. Secure bike parking will be located in the parking garage, so bicyclists will need clear access to the garage. Minimizing potential conflicts between buses and people walking and biking is critical to safety and transit operations. Map 20 highlights how planned bike and pedestrian facilities connect to the transit center. Wide sidewalks that can accommodate both pedestrians and bikes could improve access and safety across the site.

The primary entrance to the transit center will be at Rainier Ave S, where several routes will be consolidated. Sound Transit’s current plans for the station also show a smaller entrance/exit at Lake Ave S. Although the King County Metro 2040 vision plan indicated all bus routes that currently use Lake Ave S and Shattuck Ave S consolidating at the Rainier Ave S entrance, some buses may still travel along Lake Ave S after the transit center opens. The current configuration of the planned cycle track would require people biking to cross in front of buses at this eastern entrance at Lake Ave S to access secure bike parking facilities in the garage. Final design of both the transit center and the cycle track should include ongoing coordination with Sound Transit to ensure a safe and clear pedestrian and bike circulation. Including additional secure bike parking along the northeastern edge of the site could reduce the potential for bike-bus conflicts at the eastern entrance at Lake Ave S.

Future planning could explore alternate route options for bikes along this short segment if bus traffic is anticipated to be low. Further south, future improvements at the Lake Ave S / S Grady Way intersection should consider bike signals and other controls to reduce the potential for conflicts between people walking and biking along the proposed shared-use path and bus and vehicle traffic.

Vehicle circulation through the transit center will be routed through the parking garage with pick-up and drop-off areas located on the first floor. Ride-share use has grown substantially in recent years, and many station areas encounter challenges managing circulation and curb space on streets adjacent to transit centers. In the near term, the existing park and ride lot east of the transit center could provide additional space for ride share pick-up and drop-off, as needed. As redevelopment of the area occurs, a curb management program on streets north of the transit center could also provide access for ride-share pick-up and drop-off.
RECOMMENDATIONS

MT-3 Implement planned pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure identified in the City of Renton’s Trails and Bicycle Master Plan and current city projects. Near-term actions may include:

- SW/S 7th St
- Obtain missing ROW needed along S 7th St to complete the shared-use path connection east of Rainier Ave S.
- Final planning/design and implementation of shared-use path along SW 7th St.
- Include streetscape improvements along the south side of SW/S 7th St and bike/pedestrian improvements at intersections with future corridor improvement projects.
- Assess feasibility of the Hardie Ave S bicycle facilities to provide a safe connection for bikes to the transit center. (See also MT-4)
- Construct 2-way cycle track along Shattuck Ave S and Lake Ave S, with a safe, direct connection to the transit center. Explore opportunities for extending the facility south across S Grady Way and through the core area.
- Implement a shared-use path along Talbot as redevelopment occurs within the core area.

**Map 20. Bike and pedestrian connections at the transit center.**

**Transit Center Circulation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sound Transit Plans</th>
<th>City Ped/Bike Facilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian access</td>
<td>Planned or proposed shared-use path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crosswalk</td>
<td>Planned cycle track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian bridge</td>
<td>New streets with ped/bike facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape area</td>
<td>Existing streets with ped/bike improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus circulation</td>
<td>Further study and/or additional facilities needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle access</td>
<td>(to reduce potential bike/bus conflicts)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Western alignment of shared use path along Hardie Ave S would facilitate access to bike parking in garage. Ensure safe crossing for bikes to minimize conflicts with bus access. Wide sidewalks between intersection and garage can provide safe circulation for bikes and pedestrians.

Intersection improvements, such as signal timing, should consider bike access along shared use path and potential for conflicts with bus circulation.

Minimize potential for bike and bus circulation conflicts.
MT-4 Coordinate with Sound Transit to ensure safe and clear connections between city facilities and key destinations within the transit center, especially secure bike parking areas.

MT-5 Add buffered sidewalks along both sides of Lake Ave S and Shattuck Ave S.

MT-6 Develop a curb management strategy around the transit center to ensure circulation and space for pick-up/drop-off and ride-sharing.

**S GRADY WAY CROSSING AND CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS**

The SW/S Grady Way commercial corridor is important both to Renton and the South King County region. The arterial carries significant volumes of vehicle traffic, freight, and transit routes, though traffic counts are slightly lower than the average daily traffic totals for Rainier Ave S. South Grady Way also bisects the core redevelopment area envisioned by this plan. Safe, comfortable pedestrian and bike crossings of this arterial are essential to connecting redevelopment south of the corridor to the transit center.

This plan identifies the key crossing locations that are needed to support the vision and highlights challenges and potential opportunities for future studies to assess. Further analysis of how redevelopment may reshape traffic patterns in the area, along with a S Grady Way assessment, will likely be needed before specific improvement recommendations can be made. Although many of the area’s existing transit routes will be consolidated around the transit center’s main entrance on Rainier Ave S, special attention will still be needed at intersections where buses mix with vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic. This plan focuses attention on four existing signalized crossings: Rainier Ave S/S Grady Way, S Grady Way/Lake Ave S, S Grady Way/Shattuck Ave S, and S Grady Way/Talbot Rd S.

**THE GATEWAY - RAINIER AVE S / S GRADY WAY**

This defining intersection is a primary gateway into Renton’s City Center. It is also the meeting of two regionally important arterial corridors that carry significant volumes of traffic. Recent improvements along Rainier Ave S have improved the pedestrian environment, establishing landscape buffers and installing new pedestrian lighting and art features to highlight the corner of the intersection. The potential for development around the transit center will provide a greater sense of enclosure for the streetscape, and the orientation of new buildings to the streetscape may also cue drivers that they are entering a new urban area.

Given the width of the corridors and the high volume of traffic, this intersection will likely retain the existing auto-orientation even after redevelopment occurs. However, there are opportunities to improve the safety and comfort of pedestrians and bicyclists through this intersection with future improvements to signal timing, longer cycles during off-peak traffic times, and similar measures to provide more options for multimodal crossings through this area.

Potential Future Improvements at LR Station
If the city’s preferred alignment and station location are confirmed, future studies and intersection improvements will be needed around the station.

Improve ped/bike connections
Ped/bike improvements at S 7th St intersections east of Rainier Ave S to improve safety and connections between the subarea and S Renton and Downtown.

Support planned bike connections
Ensure future intersection improvements at S 7th St and Hardie Ave S support safe bicycle connections to the transit center.

Lind Ave S Intersections
Pedestrian and bike improvements at key intersections along Lind Ave S to improve ped/bike connections and support development nodes along the corridor.

Rainier/Grady Gateway
Study opportunities to improve ped/bike circulation through improvements to signal timing, longer crossing periods and other

S Grady Way/Lake Ave S
Further study needed to identify safe crossing options for peds/bikes while also balancing transit and vehicle circulation.

Lake Ave S at Transit Center
Coordinate with planned improvements around the transit center to ensure there is a safe bicycle connection between planned cycle track and the transit center east entrance.

Talbot Rd S - Near-term and Long-term Opportunities
Intersections along Talbot Rd S south of S Grady Way should focus on connecting redevelopment areas and neighborhoods. Long-term improvements to the I-405 underpass could create a stronger connection between the subarea and neighborhoods to the south.

Potential Future Improvements at LR Station
If the city’s preferred alignment and station location are confirmed, future studies and intersection improvements will be needed around the station.

Recommended Intersection Improvements

- High-priority intersection improvements of heavy-traffic corridors.
- Intersection improvement to improve bike/ped safety and connections
- Longer-term ped/bike intersection improvements

Through-block connections (ped/bike)
Transit corridors by 2025 (includes BRT, frequent and commuter routes. Plan for 2040 removes buses from Shattuck.)
City’s preferred location for potential light rail station
Subarea boundary
Transit center

Shared use path network
(near-term and long-term)
Complete street network
(near-term and long-term)
The recent Renton Transit Access Study (RTAS) by King County Metro identified a number of potential improvements for this intersection:

- Reconfigure intersection geometry and curb radius and add curb extensions/bulb-outs.
- Add high visibility crosswalk, advance stop bars and warning signs on south side.
- Remove all slip lanes.

Future traffic studies should study these recommendations in further detail and identify feasible improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists crossing at this intersection.

**CROSSING S GRADY WAY**

For the intersections along S Grady Way that are east of Rainier Ave S there are additional opportunities to improve multimodal circulation and safety. The city’s current Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) identifies several potential improvements for intersections in this area, including the removal of existing pedestrian islands at the intersections of Lake Ave S and Shattuck Ave S. While these islands shorten the crossing distance, they also trap people between a turning lane and the corridor traffic, and increase safety concerns. The project proposes removing the islands to add more through-lanes on S Grady Way.

The RTAS also identified improvements for the S Grady Way corridor and the intersection at Lake Ave S where pedestrians bicyclists are forced cross S Grady Way in the middle of the street. Potential improvements identified in the RTAS are listed below.

- Remove the east lanes of Lake Ave S fork to better align intersection north/south
- Provide a high-visibility crosswalk
- Add advance stop bars and warning signs on west side
- Remove slip lanes on south leg of intersection
- Improved curb radius and intersection geometry and curb extensions/bulb-outs
- Add tactile cues at all curb ramps

Future traffic studies should also study these recommendations in further detail, and identify feasible crossing improvements for this intersection which may carry a complex mix of cars, buses, trucks, pedestrians, and bicyclists at S Grady Way at Lake Ave S.

On Shattuck Ave S, extending the 2-way cycle track south across S Grady Way could further promote safety by concentrating bicycle traffic and increasing visibility and awareness of people walking and biking. Similarly, at Talbot Rd S, the proposed shared-use path would concentrate bikes and some pedestrians along one side of the corridor, potentially increasing visibility and awareness at this intersection as well.

A more detailed study of multimodal improvement opportunities along S Grady Way is included in the city’s current TIP project. Close coordination between this future TIP study and the transportation analysis that follows this study would benefit the next steps of this plan. These future studies should assess proposed improvements identified in earlier plans and other intersections along S Grady Way and identify feasible opportunities to regulate traffic along S Grady Way and increase the safety and comfort of pedestrians and bicyclists crossing the corridor.
CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

Streetscape improvements along S Grady Way will also improve multimodal circulation throughout the area and enhance access to the transit center. The utility corridor that runs along the north side of S Grady Way limits development in that area and may provide an opportunity for a new shared-use path bike connection. Figure 79 below illustrates how a new shared-use path could be integrated into the streetscape while maintaining the existing number of lanes along S Grady Way. A wide landscape area would provide a significant buffer from traffic along this busy corridor.

Key considerations for future study of this facility include:

- How the facility will navigate around existing utility poles long the corridor
- Assessing topographic conditions along the utility corridor
- How to safely channel the shared-use path to crosswalks at Lake Ave S and Shattuck Ave S
- Reducing potential conflicts with buses at Lake Ave S
- Appropriate width of the buffer and shared-use path once it exits the utility corridor (east of Shattuck Ave S)

Streetscape improvements along the south side of S Grady Way could incorporate a sidewalk on the back side of the existing landscape buffer in this area. This would provide a significant buffer from vehicle traffic and allow for the retention and enhancement of existing trees and landscape plantings in an area that lacks green space. Expansion beyond the corridor’s existing right-of-way would be needed to accommodate these improvements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MT-7 Coordinate with planned multimodal analysis of S Grady Way to assess feasibility of crossing improvements that improve the safety and comfort of people crossing S Grady Way while accommodating vehicles. Key elements to study may include:

- Pedestrian and bike improvements at the Rainier Ave S / S Grady Way intersection
- Crossing improvements at Lake Ave S, Shattuck Ave S, and Talbot Rd S
- Feasibility of extending 2-way cycle track on Shattuck Ave S to cross S Grady Way and connection to the core
- Utilizing a portion of the power line utility corridor for a shared-use path along the north side of S Grady Way that is buffered from traffic
- Providing a landscape buffer and wider sidewalks along the south side of S Grady Way
- Removing or consolidating existing access drives, particularly along the south side of S Grady Way.

Figure 80: The recent multiway boulevard improvements in Bothell on SR22 allowed for significant pedestrian improvements adjacent to redevelopment and ground floor commercial spaces, as well local street access and parking, while maintaining significant through traffic.
ADDITIONAL INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

In addition to the highest priority intersections along S Grady Way, additional intersection improvements are needed to provide safe multimodal access around the transit center.

RAINIER AVE S AND SW/S 7TH ST

Recent investments by the city have improved the pedestrian environment along Rainier Ave S. However, crossing this busy arterial continues to be a significant barrier for bicyclists and pedestrians, and additional improvements are needed. Earlier sections of this chapter have addressed the needs and opportunities at S Grady Way and Hardie Ave SW. The intersection of Rainer Ave S and S 7th St is also a key connection for current bicyclists in the area which will become more important once the transit center opens. Future studies should explore opportunities to improve pedestrian and bike crossings in this area, such as signal timing, longer crossing times, and marked bicycle intersection crossings.

S 7TH ST INTERSECTIONS AND DOWNTOWN CONNECTION

Compared to the challenges of the high-traffic arterials, intersection improvements along S 7th St will likely require less investment. Tightening curb radii and adding crosswalks can help slow turning traffic and raise visibility of pedestrians in the area. Adding marked bicycle intersection crossings will also facilitate safe crossings for bicyclists accessing the shared-use path along the north side of S 7th St. Improvements at Shattuck Ave S could provide foundation for future connections to the area north of the core, and a potential future light rail station.

At Talbot Rd S, the shared-use path along the west side of the street would meet the end of the S 7th St shared-use path. High visibility treatments at this intersection will facilitate bikes crossing and transitioning onto the low-volume roadway to continue north to Downtown via Burnett Linear Park. Tightening curb radii to slow traffic turning south onto Talbot Rd S would prioritize pedestrian and bike travel through this area. Gateway treatments with redevelopment would also help slow traffic and highlight the connections between the subarea and Downtown.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MT-8 Improve intersection at key locations along Rainier Ave S to ensure strong multimodal connectivity to the transit center and for redevelopment. (See also MT-3)

MT-9 Improve intersections for pedestrians and bikes along S 7th St to increase safety and promote stronger connections to the transit center and downtown.
CONNECTING TO THE SOUTHWEST

Though much of the focus of this chapter is on pedestrian and bicycle improvement needs to provide safe access to and circulation around the planned transit center, it is important to also consider access needs for the portions of the subarea that are located further from this core area. The southwest portion of the subarea is divided from the transit center by I-405, Rainer Ave S and SW Grady Way, all significant barriers to easy pedestrian and bike access. In the near-term, access between the transit center and these areas will be primarily a bus connection, and improvements will focus on making transit access safe and comfortable. Long-term there are also opportunities to improve multimodal connections through street and streetscape improvements, as well as large-scale infrastructure changes.

NEAR-TERM TRANSIT FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

The southwest portion of the subarea has frequent bus service connections, including the Rapid Ride F line. However, stakeholders reported that employees in the area are hesitant to rely on transit, as the bus stops don’t feel safe, comfortable, or inviting. Many existing bus stops in the area lack overhead protection, places to sit, or pedestrian lighting. Improvements to bus stops, such as shelters, increased visibility, real-time signage, and pedestrian lighting, could improve the safety and comfort of bus riders and enhance connections to the transit center.

LIND AVE SW CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

Adding bike facilities along Lind Ave SW is a longer-term opportunity to provide a stronger north-south connection between SW 7th St, SW Grady Way, and S 16th St. The typical right-of-way along Lind Ave SW north of SW Grady Way is about 80-85’ in width, though it is significantly wider south of SW Grady Way as it approaches the bridge. Figure 84 illustrates how replacing two of the travel lanes with a center turning lane allows for the addition of bike lanes while generally leaving the existing curbs in the current location. Some modification of the curbs would be needed at bus stops, where curb extensions could allow pedestrian access and provide a traffic buffer for the bike lane. Widening the existing approximately 6’ sidewalk by decreasing the landscape area on either side allows for an up to 8’ sidewalk within the existing right-of-way. Streetscape improvements at redevelopment nodes could
Figure 86: Lind Ave SW Corridor north of I-405

Figure 87: Lind Ave SW Corridor south of I-405
require wider sidewalks, additional landscape treatments, and other amenities to improve pedestrian access. Although the landscape buffer was decreased over the existing conditions, an 8’ landscape area is still adequate to support street trees and green infrastructure elements, as soil and drainage conditions allow.

This street improvement concept would be most feasible for portions of Lind Ave SW that are north of SW Grady Way, where traffic volumes are low and proposed zone changes could bring more residential uses. In the near-term the poor quality of existing sidewalks and lack of bike lanes along the bridge will continue to limit easy pedestrian and bike connections south of SW Grady Way.

Looking long-term, future plans for I-405 could bring significant changes to traffic patterns and volumes, as well as some potential opportunities for new multimodal connections. WSDOT’s I-405 master plan identifies Lind Ave SW as the location of a future interchange project, though the project is not currently funded. In anticipation of this change, the city’s current TIP includes a project to widen Lind Ave S between SW 16th St and SW 34th St to 5 lanes, and provide streetscape improvements, such as new sidewalks and lighting.

Future projects along Lind Ave SW south of I-405 should consider the need to increase multimodal connections and circulation, and the future potential for a small node of residential development around 16th Ave SW. Widening sidewalks, providing landscape buffers, and exploring opportunities for integrating off-street bicycle facilities are opportunities as future public and private investments are made in the area.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

MT-10 Improve transit facilities at bus stops to improve safety and comfort for people riding transit.

MT-11 Include multimodal improvements with near-term and long-term roadway and highway projects

- Widen sidewalks, add pedestrian lighting, and increase landscape buffer where feasible along Lind Ave S between 16th Ave S and SW 19th St.
- Study feasibility and opportunities to implement a shared-use path or other off-street bicycle facility between 16th Ave S and SW 19th St, to improve connections for existing employees and potential future infill development.
- Explore opportunities to implement pedestrian and bike facility improvements across the bridge in association with WSDOT’s long-term interchange project.

**CONSIDERING LONG-TERM OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIGHT RAIL SERVICE**

Future light rail system expansion requires early coordination and analysis to identify possible light rail alignment and station location(s). As an extension of the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea planning process, the city contracted a consultant to study conceptual light rail alignment and station locations in Renton and how it would fit in relation to the overall redevelopment of the subarea. The study considered existing conditions, potential land use changes, and infrastructure improvements that would be needed to facilitate light right expansion to Renton, as well as the importance of station locations for future expansion elsewhere in Sound Transit’s system.

A series of workshops were held with city staff from Renton and Tukwila, and transit agency partners to consider the following evaluation criteria:

- **Walkshed**: Does the station location provide opportunities within a ¼ to ½ walkshed radius for development that would support or benefit from the station location?
- **BRT/LRT Connections**: Sound Transit (ST) is redeveloping the South Renton Park-and-Ride into a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station to support BRT on the I-405 corridor. Does the LRT station location provide good opportunities for connection to BRT and parking?
- **TOD Opportunities**: Are there vacant/easily repurposed properties within ¼ mile of potential station locations that could be targets for Transit Oriented Development (TOD), or is there TOD already nearby?
- **Environmental Impacts**: What is the level of potential environmental impacts (e.g., intrusion into wetland buffers) for the station and alignment leading to the station?
- **Land use impacts**: Would existing development or infrastructure be impacted that would make right-of-way acquisition prohibitively expensive or impossible? Are there other concerns (e.g., the overhead transmission lines along Grady Way)?

The three conceptual options were presented to an Advisory Committee comprised of Renton City Council’s Planning and Development Committee members, and leadership from the Downtown Renton Partnership, Puget Sound Regional Council, King County Metro, Sound Transit, WSDOT and Renton city staff. The Advisory Committee voted on each alignment/station option using the evaluation criteria to award a score from 1 to 5 with 5 being the most favorable score.

The three studied locations for South Renton are within the TOD study area and located near the BRT transit center. Overall, the three options scored relatively similarly, (option 1; 23 points, option 2; 24 points, and option 3; 22 points)
but the discussion that followed revealed strong support for option 3 due to the at-grade construction opportunities due to the existing BNSF ROW, which would provide significant cost savings.

Although the findings of the study are not definitive, it lays out the necessary steps for the next phase of analysis. Based on the work performed, option 3 is the preferred conceptual option but its findings are preliminary, and all options should be evaluated in follow-up studies.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

MT-12 Identify funding and initiate a follow-up study to refine the scope of work and refine the comparison of options 1, 2, and 3.

MT-13 Expand the scope of work for the follow-up study to consider origin density, employment density, and proximity to key destinations like a downtown core.

MT-14 Future studies should consider including cost-benefit analysis and racial equity as evaluation criteria.

MT-15 Continue to coordinate with Sound Transit to ensure LR alignment and station area location with consideration of the following:

- Achieves seamless transfers (need better understanding of what transfers are needed)
- Provides opportunities for more people to live close to the station
- Consider impacts to existing businesses and residents
- Provides safe pedestrian/bike access to station
- Provide a station location and design that aligns with the city’s future plans, integrates into the fabric of the neighborhood and meets the mobility and transit access needs of the local community.
- Ensure that new development provides for a grid of multimodal streets and pedestrian and bicycle routes.
7. OPEN SPACE AND URBAN DESIGN

KEY PRINCIPLES

A new network of open spaces, natural areas, and green elements would increase livability, create opportunities for recreation and social gathering, and increase the ecological health of the subarea. The core redevelopment area should include a mix of open space types that offer people living and working in the area connections to nature and opportunities to relax, gather, and play. Green streets could add trees and incorporate green infrastructure features, such as rain gardens, where feasible. Green open spaces could improve ecological health and resilience by adding trees and habitat, restoring stream buffers, incorporating natural drainage strategies, and potentially serving as storage areas during flood events. Private redevelopment could also contribute to improving water quality, as current stormwater regulations promote sustainable strategies.

The following principles should guide future planning and implementation steps. Figure 91 illustrates how these principles apply to the core redevelopment area around the transit center.

- Create a central "main street" with pedestrian oriented retail and higher density residential with ample streetscape amenities.
- Design and build streets with excellent pedestrian conditions and landscaping.

Figure 91: Diagram showing types of open spaces within the core redevelopment area.
• Establish parks and public open spaces under at least a portion of the power line corridors, where they can be activated by redevelopment and/or programmatic uses (sports, food trucks, etc.)

• Provide a central plaza or other open space for public gatherings surrounded by active uses.

• Enhance the stream buffer along the north edge of I-405.

• Require residential open space as part of new residential development and small pedestrian oriented open spaces as part of commercial development.

• Consider future park amenities for the area in the next Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas Plan update.

PARKS AND PLAZAS

UTILITY CORRIDOR PARKS

The open space vision, as highlighted in Map 22, proposes a mix of large, green parks, a central urban plaza and smaller pocket parks and plazas to promote livability and support recreational needs of residents and workers in the area. A linear park below the north-south power line utility corridor could provide a large green open space close to the transit center, but programming the space would be essential for its success. North of S Grady Way the park would be activated by residential and mixed use development in the area and is separated from the heaviest traffic arterials, allowing opportunities for active recreation, playgrounds, spray parks, community gardens and other activities for all-ages. South of S Grady Way the park space could accommodate spillover activity from the Main Street commercial hub and be used for picnics and light recreation. Site activation through site programming and scheduled uses, such as weekday food trucks, will be an important consideration in this area.

TOWN SQUARE GATHERING SPACE

A central town square at the heart of core area could help catalyze development and establish a vibrant new neighborhood. This publicly accessible space would provide a central focal point for redevelopment and be used for gatherings and events, (such as move-nights, festivals, etc.) and accommodate spillover activities from the adjacent Main Street. Creating a sense of enclosure on three sides will increase feelings of safety and comfort for people using the space. Elements such as public art and fountains can create a focal-point and create a sense of place.
Open Space Types

- **Main Street**: Streets with wide, continuous landscape buffers can accommodate significant street landscape and/or GSI elements, such as rain gardens.
- **Utility Corridor Parks**: Linear park underneath the utility corridor will be activated by adjacent transit center and residential and mixed use development.
- **Expanded Buffer**: Providing a natural area along the northern side of I-405 can help reduce impacts from noise and air pollution, as well as provide expanded buffer for Rolling Hills Creek and potentially aid with flood storage.
- **Connect to Natural Systems**: Infill development can use sustainable approaches to site planning to improve environmentally sensitive areas, address flood concerns, and incorporate natural areas and buffers into redevelopment.
- **Pocket Plazas**: Smaller pocket plazas can provide additional space for seating, small groups and spill-over activities from adjacent commercial spaces.
- **Internal Green Open Spaces**: Internal green open spaces within developments provide access for residents in apartments who lack private outdoor space.
- **Green Street**: Streets with wide, continuous landscape buffers can accommodate signficant street landscape and/or GSI elements, such as rain gardens.
- **Central Town Square**: Provides central public gathering space and a focal point for redevelopment.
- **Main Street**: Active spine of commercial activity with wide sidewalks to support vibrant public life.

**Map 22. Diagram of open space types proposed for the subarea**

- **Subarea boundary**
- **Planned transit center**

**Open Space Types**

- Main Street
- Town square central gathering
- Pocket parks/plazas
- Park open space
- Natural open space
- Green street
- Shared-use path (buffers can include landscape)
POCKET PLAZAS AND INTERNAL OPEN SPACE

A network of smaller pocket plazas and internal open spaces that are integrated with redevelopment will provide secondary open spaces for individuals or small groups seeking fresh air, quiet conversation and protected play opportunities. Publicly accessible pocket plazas can provide helpful spillover space for adjacent ground floor commercial activities, such as auxiliary outdoor seating for cafes and restaurants. Protected green open spaces with areas of lawn and landscaping are also an important amenity for residents of apartment buildings who often do not have access to private open space.

RECOMMENDATIONS

UD-1 Create a central park under the utility corridor to provide safe gathering, and recreation.

• Explore opportunities to extend the park north and south of S Grady Way
• Use redevelopment and/or programs (food trucks, events, etc.) to activate the park area and ensure safety.

UD-2 Create a central town square plaza adjacent and connected to the E-W main street to provide a central space for community gathering and celebration.

PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED STREETS

MAIN ST

Proposed street improvements throughout the core redevelopment area, and in select locations elsewhere in the subarea, will serve as part of the open space by expanding pedestrian space and promoting social activity that will help activate the area. The east-west Main Street at the heart of the core redevelopment area is as critical to the area’s open space network as it is to circulation. (See Figure 95 and Figure 96 in this section, and the Multimodal Access and Transportation chapter.) Thoughtful attention to the streetscape will support the viability of local businesses by allowing seating, dining areas and other commercial activity along the sidewalk. Flexible approaches to on-street parking can offer opportunities to expand the street for markets and special event uses, which further activate the redevelopment area and help it to establish a character within the larger context of Renton’s City Center area.

The street can also support street trees and landscape areas at key locations along the corridor, particularly at curb bulbs and at mid-block crossings. These landscape areas can add shade, color and beauty to soften the streetscape.

Figure 95: Conceptual street-view rendering of Main Street.
Mid-block crossings and through-block connections break down superblocks to enhance pedestrian circulation through the area.

Intermittent curb bulbs and on-street parking offer opportunities for street tree, landscape plantings, seating areas, or parklets.

The pedestrian-oriented Main Street creates a hub of commercial activity and public life for the area.

Flexible bollards move to provide pedestrians more space.

Raised intersection to slow vehicular traffic and encourage pedestrian circulation.

A central Town Square plaza provides a space for seating, gathering, events, and other public realm activities.
STREETSCAPES AND GREEN STREETS

Beyond the core area’s Main Street, new streets will provide buffers from adjacent traffic and ample space to support people walking and gathering in small groups. Improvements along existing corridors, including S Grady Way, Talbot Rd S, Shattuck Ave S, SW/S 7th St and Lind Ave S, will also bring needed improvements to pedestrian space and promote greater foot traffic and activity along these corridors. Landscape plantings can be integrated into commercial streets, though these plantings will need frequent gaps to accommodate circulation between on-street parking and commercial businesses. To encourage opportunities for healthy street trees, planting areas can be connected below the grade of the sidewalk, with permeable paving above to support circulation needs, but also allow water to filter down to the tree’s roots and encourage healthy growth.

Streets that don’t have on-street parking can incorporate more linear landscape plantings, providing greater opportunities for robust street trees and understory plantings that increase the beauty of the street, provide shade and help regulate the street’s micro-climate. The 8’ landscape area proposed along these streets will also create opportunities for green stormwater infrastructure, such as rain gardens, where feasible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

UD-3 Construct a central E-W Main Street that supports active commercial uses and creates a lively center for the core redevelopment area.

UD-4 Ensure streets support public life by incorporating ample space, strong buffers, shade and weather protection.

- See also Transportation recommendations

NATURAL AREAS

In addition to creating green open spaces that support the needs of residents and workers in the area, there is also an opportunity to improve the natural environment of the subarea and develop stronger connections to local ecological systems. Through thoughtful site planning, natural elements can be incorporated into redevelopment projects to allow restoration areas to become an amenity for future residents in the area.

ROLLING HILLS CREEK BUFFER EXPANSION

Rolling Hills Creek runs through a culvert below much of the core redevelopment area, emerging to the surface just...
before if crosses below I-405 to connect to wetland areas south of the subarea. Expanding the existing buffer for the creek would provide more open space and improve water quality along the existing open channel of the stream. It would also buffer future residential and mixed use development areas from the noise and pollution from I-405. Such a buffer could support overlooks and short trail connections, to promote activity and invite exploration of the area. Future studies should also explore the feasibility of this buffer for providing flood storage for the core redevelopment area.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE DESIGN IN THE SOUTHWEST AREA

As noted in the Land Use chapter, infill redevelopment of existing office buildings in the southwest portion of the subarea could promote environmentally sustainable commercial development. This area is also mapped as a flood hazard zone and is close to existing stream corridors and wetlands. Design guidelines that encourage sustainable site planning and design approaches could promote greater connections to natural systems, providing employees, customers and visitors to these buildings calming views, connections to nature, and outdoor recreation opportunities. Such design approaches could, in-turn, support the long-term viability of these developments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

UD-5 Expand the existing buffer of Rolling Hills Creek and provide a more continuous natural area buffer between the core redevelopment area and I-405.

• Explore feasibility for the buffer to enhance ecological connections (creek restoration, daylighting) and provide green infrastructure (flood storage, etc.)

UD-6 Explore opportunities for sustainable design and improved ecological connections through infill development in the southwest.

• See also Land Use recommendations.
GATEWAYS AND SENSE OF PLACE

The subarea serves as an important gateway into Renton and the City Center area. The intersection of Rainer Ave S / S Grady Way, as noted in the Transportation chapter, is a key point of arrival in the city. Architectural approaches, such as building massing and articulation, material and color palettes, streetscape elements and public art, are some of the tools that can highlight key gateways, nodes and focal-points throughout the area. Map 23 identifies a number of gateway opportunities in the area, some of which are briefly described in more detail below.

GATEWAY LOCATIONS

Rainier Ave S/S Grady Way

This defining intersection is the main point of arrival into Renton and the City Center area. It provides an opportunity to transition from the suburban and highway infrastructure context into the more detailed urban fabric of the new neighborhood.

Downtown Connection - Talbot Rd S/S 7th St

This intersection is a key point of entry from the north and offers a strong pedestrian a bike connection to Downtown. This intersection is also a point of connection between the planned S 7th St shared-use path and a proposed shared-use path along Talbot Road S. Multimodal access facilities could provide the framework for a celebrated intersection, where pedestrians and bikes in this area are given ample space and priority. Adjacent development could further highlight the intersection by incorporating art and other gateway treatments.

Talbot Rd S at I-405

This location offers a long-term opportunity to increase access for people walking and biking, and provide a new gateway into the core area. Figure 103 shows how a retaining wall (at right) could be added to an underpass similar to the configuration at Talbot Rd S to provide a shared-use trail connection.

Figure 103: Conceptual pedestrian and bike improvements to an underpass, similar to Talbot Road S at I-405. Source: Makers

Gateway treatments can range from architectural elements that define entrances, public art installations, and/or building design and material choices at gateway locations. Successful gateways contribute to the sense of place by celebrating diversity of local communities, connections to nature, historic and current industries, and other themes that are important to Renton. Top image: Public art by Augusta Asberry near Sound Transit’s Othello Station in Seattle. Bottom Image: Gateway feature at Hing Hay Park in Seattle’s Chinatown-International District. Source: Makers
Map 23. Potential gateway types and locations throughout the subarea.

- **Bicycle Corridor Gateway**: Central intersection within the subarea is a key gateway into Renton and the City Center area and will serve as a key transition into a more fine-grained urban area.

- **Downtown Connection**: Intersection of S 7th St and Talbot Rd S is a key pedestrian and bike connection to Burnett Linear Park and Downtown.

- **Southwest Gateway**: Gateway treatment at Lind Ave S and SW 16th St could highlight connection to the subarea, but also highlight the office commercial focus in this area.

- **Core Area Gateways**: Gateway treatments at Shattuck Ave S and Talbot Ave S could highlight entrances into the core redevelopment area, north and south of S Grady Way.

- **Rainier/Grady Junction**: Gateway central intersection within the subarea is a key gateway into Renton and the City Center area and will serve as a key transition into a more fine-grained urban area.

**Gateways**

- Major Gateway
- Neighborhood Gateway
- Planned transit center
- Subarea boundary
- Shared-use path (buffers can include landscape)
PROMOTING A SENSE OF PLACE

As it exists today, the Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea lacks a sense of place. The term ‘sense of place’ describes our relationship or connection to place, as it may relate to its ecological, social, economic, cultural, historical, or other aspects. Establishing a sense of place is the act of placemaking, which facilitates creative expressions with particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution. Strengthening the relationship between people and place has the potential to draw people in, creating the vibrant mixed-use community that is integral to this plan’s vision. Further, placemaking can be utilized as an important economic driver that turns ordinary places into destinations. An effective placemaking process results in the creation of quality public spaces that contribute to people’s health, happiness, and well-being.

UD-7 Create major and neighborhood gateways that help create a sense of place and relate to community and ecological themes.

CONCEPTUAL URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

The city has design guidelines that apply to the Commercial Arterial and Commercial Office zones in the core area. Updates to the city’s design guidelines may be needed to address the larger scale issues necessary to build an integrated and cohesive community around the transit center, and address gaps in existing regulations. Potential changes or updates to consider include requiring new streets to break down existing super blocks, clarifying where pedestrian-oriented ground floor uses are required, and site planning and architectural design requirements to improve resilience to flood events and improve air quality for people living in residential buildings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

UD-8 Apply the existing urban design guidelines to any new zones, or updated existing zones, within the core redevelopment area.

UD-09 Ensure that new development either goes through master plan or PUD review process.

UD-10 Consider granting relief of ground floor commercial requirements in exchange for public amenities.

UD-11 When considering flood risk and design consider ADA access and meaningful pedestrian connections between sidewalk, relationships between street and building elevations and, equity impacts of businesses that could potentially be impacted by floods.

UD-12 Require new residential buildings to use design strategies that promote healthy indoor air quality.

Figure 105: Plaza Roberto Maestas, an affordable housing development in Seattle’s Beacon Hill neighborhood, integrates art that honors a local community leader and celebrates the cultural diversity of the neighborhood. Source: Seattle Magazine
8. IMPLEMENTATION

OVERVIEW

The Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea has the potential to transform from an auto-centric, suburban office environment to a vibrant mixed-use community. As noted in the introduction, this concept plan is the first step but there is much work to come including ongoing coordination between the city and transportation agencies, businesses, property owners, and community members.

Implementation of the plan will likely happen over a period of 20 years, though some areas may take longer to fully redevelop. The plan envisions that investments within the core area will happen first, due to the proximity to the planned transit center. Redevelopment of other portions of the subarea may follow the core, or be implemented as new opportunities arise, such as future light rail service.

The implementation table shown on the following pages provides a condensed list of the plan’s recommendations for city staff and community members to track over time. While many of the strategies laid out in this plan may take years to implement and require resources that are not currently in place, the plan lays the framework to transform the area into a vibrant new neighborhood.

Key city near-term actions by the City include:

1. Continue to coordinate with Sound Transit, WSDOT, and King County Metro to ensure future improvements in the area align with plan goals.

2. Consider conducting a planned action Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), or a similar approach, to do full environmental and transportation analysis.

3. Advance rezones, land use regulations, and infrastructure improvements to reflect the subarea vision.

4. Update subarea plan as final decisions on light rail alignments are made.

These near-term steps should be prioritized in the City’s funding strategies. Following these technical analysis, the city may consider projects that would help catalyze private investment, and spur implementation in the area. Potential catalyst projects that the city may consider include:

- Implement intersection and corridor improvements identified in this plan.
- Establish a new central open space below the utility corridor north of S Grady Way.
- Provide an expanded natural area to enhance Rolling Hills Creek and provide a stronger buffer between I-405 and future development.

Other recommendations included in this plan may be refined by the technical analysis and ongoing coordination with key stakeholders and community members. The goals of this plan, along with the key principles included in each of the element chapters, will help ensure future development in the subarea aligns with the vision.
## IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

The following table lists the recommendations of each of the chapters of this plan and assigns each a timeframe, preliminary assessment of cost, and identifies responsible parties and partners. The estimated cost of each recommendation is denoted with one, two, or three "$" to indicate a relatively low, medium, or high cost, respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
<th>$</th>
<th>Key Stakeholders</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Land Use</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-1 Update zoning within the core area and along Lind Ave S to be consistent with this plan’s vision.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Property owners</td>
<td>Near-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-2 Revise approach to the existing automall overlays in the area.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Car dealership owners</td>
<td>Near-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-3 Create new design standards for the core area.</td>
<td>Planning, Transportation</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Near-term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-4 Apply development guidelines to the southwest area to promote sustainable design and planned campus infill development.</td>
<td>Planning, Transportation</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Mid-term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-5 Establish strong communication with existing businesses in the area and establish programs to provide support prior to and during redevelopment.</td>
<td>Economic Development, Planning</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Area businesses</td>
<td>Near-term - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-6 Create an MFTE area in the subarea.</td>
<td>Planning, Economic Development</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Property owners</td>
<td>Near-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-7 Develop parking strategies for the core redevelopment area, particularly in mixed-use areas.</td>
<td>Planning, Transportation</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Property owners</td>
<td>Mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-8 Consider implementing a zoned parking program for the South Renton Neighborhood to limit impacts of parking in the neighborhood following redevelopment.</td>
<td>Planning, Transportation</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>South Renton Neighborhood</td>
<td>Mid-term/Long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-9 Provide a graceful transition to the South Renton Neighborhood at the north of the core area using both physical and programmatic options.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>South Renton Neighborhood</td>
<td>Mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-10 Follow the recommendations of the Housing Action Plan to increase opportunities for greater densities of mixed-income and affordable housing around the transit center.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-11 Subsequent environmental (SEPA) analysis associated with this project should include study of flood hazard mitigation and stormwater management for the core redevelopment area and opportunities to increase future resilience of the area.</td>
<td>Planning, Transportation, Utility Systems</td>
<td>$$$</td>
<td>Department of Ecology, FEMA</td>
<td>Mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-12 Consider risks of air pollution from adjacent highways and high-traffic arterials and identify ways to potentially mitigate the impacts through site planning and building design.</td>
<td>Planning, Economic Development</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Near-term - Mid-term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>Responsible Parties</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Key Stakeholders</td>
<td>Timeframe</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Multimodal Access and Transportation</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT-1 Conduct a traffic analysis to assess impacts of proposed development on traffic patterns and identify opportunities for safe crossings, particularly at key intersections along the S Grady Way and Rainier Ave S corridors.</td>
<td>Planning, Transportation</td>
<td>$$</td>
<td>Property owners</td>
<td>Near-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT-2 Coordinate with local property owners and developers, update and apply design and connectivity standards to establish a new grid of complete streets (primary and secondary streets), a Main Street that is a central focus of redevelopment, and through-block connections to increase circulation for people walking and biking.</td>
<td>Planning, Transportation</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Property owners</td>
<td>Near-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT-3 Implement planned pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure identified in the Trails and Bicycle Master Plan and current city projects.</td>
<td>Transportation, Planning</td>
<td>$$$</td>
<td>Transit agencies</td>
<td>Near-term - mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT-4 Coordinate with Sound Transit to ensure safe and clear connections between city facilities and key destinations within the transit center, especially secure bicycle parking areas.</td>
<td>Transportation, Planning, Sound Transit</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Sound Transit</td>
<td>Near-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT-5 Add buffered sidewalks along both sides of Lake Ave S and Shattuck Ave S.</td>
<td>Transportation, Planning</td>
<td>$$$</td>
<td></td>
<td>Near-term - mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT-6 Develop a curb management strategy around the transit center to ensure circulation and space for pick-up/ drop-off and ride-sharing.</td>
<td>Transportation, WSDOT</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Transit agencies</td>
<td>Mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT-7 Coordinate with planned multimodal analysis of S Grady Way to assess feasibility of crossing improvements that improve the safety and comfort of people crossing S Grady Way while accommodating vehicles.</td>
<td>Transportation, Planning</td>
<td>$$</td>
<td>Transit agencies</td>
<td>Near-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT-8 Improve intersection at key locations along Rainier Ave S to ensure strong multimodal connectivity to the transit center and for redevelopment. (See also MT-3)</td>
<td>Transportation, Planning</td>
<td>$$$</td>
<td>Transit agencies</td>
<td>Near-term - mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT-9 Improve intersections for pedestrians and bikes along S 7th St to increase safety and promote stronger connections to the transit center and downtown.</td>
<td>Transportation, Planning</td>
<td>$$$</td>
<td></td>
<td>Near-term - mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT-10 Improve transit facilities at bus stops to improve safety and comfort for people riding transit.</td>
<td>Transportation, Planning, KC Metro</td>
<td>$$$</td>
<td>Transit agencies</td>
<td>Near-term - mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT-11 Include multimodal improvements with near-term and long-term roadway and highway projects</td>
<td>Transportation, Planning, WSDOT</td>
<td>$$$</td>
<td></td>
<td>Long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT-12 Identify funding and initiate a follow-up study to refine the scope of work and refine the comparison of options 1, 2, and 3.</td>
<td>Transportation, Planning</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Sound Transit</td>
<td>Mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>Responsible Parties</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Key Stakeholders</td>
<td>Timeframe</td>
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<td><strong>Multimodal Access and Transportation (continued)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MT-13 Expand the scope of work for the follow-up study to consider origin density, employment density, and proximity to key destinations like a downtown core.</td>
<td>Transportation, Planning</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT-14 Future studies should consider including cost-benefit analysis and racial equity as evaluation criteria.</td>
<td>Transportation, Planning</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT-15 Continue to coordinate with Sound Transit to ensure LR alignment and station area location.</td>
<td>Transportation, Planning, Sound Transit</td>
<td>$$</td>
<td>Sound Transit</td>
<td>Mid-term / Long-term</td>
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<td><strong>Urban Design and Open Space</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>UD-1 Create a central park under the utility corridor to provide safe gathering, and recreation.</td>
<td>Planning, Parks</td>
<td>$$$</td>
<td>Overhead power utility</td>
<td>Mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UD-2 Create a central town square plaza adjacent and connected to the E-W main street to provide a central space for community gathering and celebration.</td>
<td>Planning, Parks</td>
<td>$$$</td>
<td>Property owners</td>
<td>Mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UD-3 Construct a central E-W Main Street that supports active commercial uses and creates a lively center for the core redevelopment area.</td>
<td>Planning, Transportation</td>
<td>$$$</td>
<td>Property owners</td>
<td>Mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UD-4 Ensure streets support public life by incorporating ample space, strong buffers, shade and weather protection.</td>
<td>Planning, Transportation</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UD-5 Expand the existing buffer of Rolling Hills Creek and provide a more continuous natural area buffer between the core redevelopment area and I-405.</td>
<td>Planning, Parks</td>
<td>$$$</td>
<td>Department of Ecology</td>
<td>Mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UD-6 Explore opportunities for sustainable design and improved ecological connections through infill development in the southwest.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Property owners</td>
<td>Mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UD-7 Create major neighborhood gateways that help create a sense of place and relate to community and ecological themes.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>$$</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UD-8 Apply the existing urban design guidelines to any new zones, or updated existing zones, within the core redevelopment area.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
<td>Near-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UD-09 Ensure that new development either goes through master plan or PUD review process.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
<td>Near-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UD-10 Consider granting relief of ground floor commercial requirements in exchange for public amenities.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
<td>Near-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UD-11 When considering flood risk and design consider ADA access and meaningful pedestrian connections between sidewalk, relationships between street and building elevations and, equity impacts of businesses that could potentially be impacted by floods.</td>
<td>Planning, Transportation, Utilities</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
<td>Near-term - mid-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UD-12 Require new residential buildings to use design strategies that promote healthy indoor air quality.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
<td>Near-term</td>
</tr>
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</table>
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PLAN PURPOSE
The Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea Plan will offer a vision and strategies to achieve a holistic, people-oriented district around the planned transit center. The strategies will facilitate mixed-use development, maximize multimodal transportation options, improve pedestrian connectivity, and integrate with adjacent areas by establishing a district that is distinct from Downtown yet aligned with the goals of the City Center Community Plan. The plan will recommend development regulations, zoning, and overlay updates, prioritize infrastructure investments necessary to achieve the vision, and highlight opportunities for private investment to leverage and build on public investment.

KEY CHALLENGES
- The auto-oriented built environment will require significant improvements to make the area safe for non-motorized transportation.
- Pedestrian and bicycle connections are missing or feel unsafe and uncomfortable.
- Several overhead power line corridors cross the area, limiting development and uses on several parcels.
- The subarea has almost no parks or formalized community gathering places; connections to natural systems are weak.
- Heavy traffic volumes may pose air quality and health impacts on residences near highways.
- The existing Auto Mall Overlays promote vehicles sales, complicating the opportunities for a neighborhood-like built environment.
- The dominance of infrastructure (highway, arterials, power line corridors) results in a current environment that lacks human scale elements and a sense of place.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES
- Leverage the planned transit center and park-and-ride and enhanced bus rapid transit (BRT) service (expected in 2024).
- Prepare for anticipated levels of activity in the area surrounding the planned transit center.
- Consider future development opportunities and large parcels under single ownership.
- Coordinate with the City’s concurrent housing action plan efforts and encourage affordable workforce housing development.
- Establish and support a thriving business district, which includes a mix of small and black, indigenous, and people of color-owned (BIPOC) businesses, regional shopping destinations, and other employers.
- Allow for seamless transit transfers and multiple ways to get to/from the transit center, e.g., kiss-and-rides, transportation network company’s drop-off/pick-up, etc.
- Enhance ecological value and improve surface water quality through redevelopment under modern stormwater regulations.
- Explore creation of a multimodal, mixed use corridors streets with relatively low traffic volumes, adjacent land use mix, and connectivity.
- Strengthen and protect the area’s role as a regional jobs center, with a mix of retail, industrial, and office jobs of a range of income levels.

KEY FINDINGS
The map below summarizes the existing conditions and provides a foundation for shaping future development in the subarea. The major arterials that cross through the site are shown in the bold black arrows. These roadways are important to the region, carrying large volumes of traffic and moving freight through south King County, but also act as barriers to people travelling on foot, wheel, or bicycle. Future development alternatives will need to address multimodal access and safety while maintaining traffic flows on these key highways and arterials. The shaded areas of the map
below illustrate portions of the subarea that share physical characteristics, which may be valuable and/or present opportunities for redevelopment. Edge treatments on these areas indicate where there may be opportunities to make connections to adjacent neighborhoods. Existing corridors with key transit access are shown in blue and the planned transit center with South Transit’s conceptual parking and TOD layout is shown at the center.

Map 1. Visual Structure Map
RAINIER/GRADY JUNCTION SUBAREA LOCATION

The Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea is located just southwest of Downtown Renton (Downtown), centered on Rainier Ave S and generally north of I-405.

Map 2. Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea
OVERARCHING RENTON DIRECTION ON TOD AND RAINIER/GRADY JUNCTION SUBAREA

Several policies in the City’s comprehensive plan support the evolution of the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea into a district with new housing options, attractive commercial spaces, enhanced multimodal access, and pedestrian-oriented streets. Goals and policies of additional city plans, such as the Renton Downtown Civic Core Vision and Action Plan, the Renton Business Plan and the City Center Community Plan, further support redevelopment and investment in this area. Policies and goals with specific relevance to the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea are highlighted in the following pages.
Comprehensive Plan Policies
The following policies from the City of Renton’s Comprehensive Plan support the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea Plan and investment in the area.¹

**TOD/Land Use**
- Policy ED-11: Encourage growth that balances employment and housing opportunities within designated urban centers by promoting investment in mixed-use centers with compact urban development, specifically advocating for redevelopment and quality infill design that maximizes allowable density.
- Policy L-1: Support uses that sustain minimum employment levels of 50 employees per gross acre and residential levels of 15 households per gross acre within Renton’s Growth Center. Accommodate approximately 2,000 households and 3,500 jobs from the City’s Growth 2035 Targets within the Growth Center.
- Policy L-2: Support compact urban development to improve health outcomes, support transit use, maximize land use efficiency, and maximize public investment in infrastructure and services.
- Policy T-49: Encourage development that can be supported by transit and other non-single occupant vehicle modes.
- Policy L-11: Encourage non-conforming uses to transition into conforming uses or relocate to areas with compatible designations.
- Policy T-16: Encourage shared and structured parking in Downtown Renton to achieve land use and economic development goals as expressed in the City Center Community Plan and to coordinate parking for the benefit of the district businesses and residents.
- Policy T-41: Plan for land use densities and mixed-use development patterns that encourage walking, biking, and transit use in designated areas.

**TOD/Meeting Demands of Growth**
- Policy T-11: Through investments in non-motorized facility connections, collaboration with transit providers, and commute trip reduction programs with employers, encourage a reduction in drive alone work trip shares to below 75% by 2035 within the Regional Growth Center.
- Policy T-14: Educate employers about their commute trip reduction obligations under the City of Renton’s Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Ordinance and CTR Plan.
- Policy U-5: Approval of development should be conditioned on the availability of adequate utility service and should not result in decreases in local levels of service for existing development. All new development should be required to pay their fair share of construction costs for necessary utility system improvements.

**TOD/Increase Housing Options**

- Policy HHS-13: Promote housing development in proximity to the City’s Employment Centers and other areas of the City that have jobs and work opportunities, or the potential for future job growth.
- Policy HHS-6: Implement inclusionary zoning provisions and other techniques that result in a range of housing types, at different densities, and prices in new developments that address the housing needs of all people at all stages of life, including vulnerable populations.

**TOD/Multimodal**

- Policy T-39: Provide multimodal transportation improvements that support land use plans and are compatible with surrounding land uses.
- Policy T-32: Coordinate transit, bike, and pedestrian planning efforts and evaluate opportunities to leverage investments for the benefit of more users.
- Policy T-36: Invest in connection of non-motorized facilities across Renton. Provide improvements at intersections to improve safety and comfort of pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Policy T-43: Prioritize multimodal transportation investments in Renton’s Growth Urban Center.

**TOD/Safety**

- Policy T-56: Support railroad crossing improvements that minimize maintenance and protect the street surface. Where warranted, provide protective devices, such as barriers and warning signals, on at-grade crossings.
- Policy T-40: Plan, design, and operate streets to enable safe and convenient access and travel for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and people of all ages and abilities, as well as, freight and motor vehicle drivers, and to foster a sense of place in the public realm with attractive design amenities.

**TOD/Partnerships**

- Policy T-28: Work with other jurisdictions and transit authorities to plan and provide frequent, coordinated and comprehensive transit service and facilities in residential and employment areas.
- Policy HHS-3: Work with other jurisdictions and organizations, including the Renton Housing Authority and non-profit housing developers, to address the need for housing to be affordable to very low-income households. This housing should focus on accessibility, mobility, and proximity to social services.
- Policy CP-1: Develop Plans in conjunction with the people of the Community; this includes coordinating with recognized neighborhood associations, business associations, and other community groups, as well as business owners and community residents.
- Policy ED-3: Foster communications with, and support for key local and regional economic foundations. Support partnerships between businesses, government, schools, and research institutions to implement economic development policies and promote workforce development programs.
**TOD/Design**

- Policy L-13: Enhance the safety and attractiveness of the Automall with landscaping, signage, and development standards that create the feeling of a cohesive business district.
- Policy L-51: Include human-scale features such as pedestrian pathways, quality landscaping, and public spaces that have discernible edges, entries, and borders to create a distinctive sense of place in neighborhoods, commercial areas, and centers.
- Policy L-52: Orient buildings in developments toward the street or a common area, rather than toward parking lots.
- Policy L-58: Encourage signage that guides and promotes business without creating visual clutter. Implement sign regulations that balance adequate visibility for businesses while protecting Renton’s visual character.
- Policy T-42: Continue to implement the following design guidelines in Renton’s Regional Growth Center:
  - Encourage a mix of complementary land uses.
  - Encourage compact growth by addressing density.
  - Link neighborhoods and connect streets, sidewalks, and trails.
  - Complete missing links and connections in the pedestrian and bicycle systems.
  - Integrate activity areas with surrounding neighborhoods.
  - Locate public and semipublic uses near Renton’s transit center(s).
  - Design for pedestrians and bicyclists.
  - Provide usable open spaces such as the Renton Piazza, Burnett Linear Park, Cedar River Trail, and others. Manage the supply of parking.
  - Promote the benefits of on-street parking.
  - Reduce and mitigate the effects of parking.

**TOD/Economic Development / Support a Range of Businesses**

- Policy ED-1: Develop incentives for businesses to locate, stay, and expand within the City; provide incentives for economic development within the City’s Growth Center, neighborhood business districts, and commercial corridors.
**TOD/Environmental Sustainability**

- Policy T-13: Incorporate TDM measures such as priority parking places for HOVs and convenient, direct pedestrian access from transit stops/stations in site design and layout for all types of development.
- Policy L-23: Promote urban forests through tree planting programs, tree maintenance programs that favor the use of large healthy trees along streets and in parks, residential, commercial, and industrial areas, programs that increase education and awareness, and through the protection and restoration of forest ecosystems.
- Policy L-29: Protect the integrity of natural drainage systems and existing landforms and maintain wildlife habitat values by preserving and enhancing existing vegetation and tree canopy coverage to the maximum extent possible and by restoring hydrological flows and improving the condition of shorelines.
- Policy U-51: Establish regulatory standards for sustainably developed public and private projects, to include standards for site design and layout, construction, and on-going maintenance and operation.

**TOD/Comprehensive Policies**

- Policy L-44: Recognize that a sustainable community requires and supports economic development, human health, and social benefit, and makes decisions using the “triple bottom line” approach to sustainability (environment, economy, and social equity).
- HHS-I: Improve mobility and transportation options for Renton residents to increase access to jobs and services, reduce household costs, and maintain a sustainable lifestyle.

**TOD/Funding Opportunities**

- Policy T-45: Ensure that new development contributes its fair share of the cost of transportation facilities, programs and services needed to mitigate growth related transportation impacts.
- Policy T-68: Use business license fees and impact fees charged to new development to fund growth related traffic improvements.
- Policy T-67: Pursue federal, state, and local sources of funding (e.g., loans, matching funds) for transportation improvements in an efficient and equitable manner.
- Policy CF-6: Support private/public partnerships to plan and finance infrastructure development, public uses, structured parking, and community amenities to stimulate additional private investment and produce a more urban environment.

**TOD/Utilities**

- Policy U-1: All utility services and systems should be consistent with the growth projections and development concepts established in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Policy U-3: Promote co-location of new utility infrastructure within rights-of-way and utility corridors, and coordinate construction and replacement of utility systems with other public infrastructure projects to minimize construction related costs and disruptions.
OTHER EXISTING PLANS AND FRAMEWORKS
The following plans may also influence future development of the subarea, particularly the new vision and action plan for Downtown Renton.

Renton Downtown Civic Core Vision and Action Plan (August 2018)²
This plan is focused on the Downtown Area, and the transition of the existing transit center to a more lively and robust public space. The plan also identifies several other nodes within the Downtown area and along the Cedar River waterfront. The Plan focuses on:

- Reinventing and investing in public spaces
- Building upon the emerging restaurant and retail clusters
- Becoming a cultural center that celebrates racial diversity

While the plan’s focus is outside of the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea, several of the recommendations for those locations may relate to or influence future development within the subarea. The Renton Connector along Burnett Ave/Park proposes a new multimodal "art" greenway and signature element that ties many of the plan’s elements together as it connects the Cedar River to City Hall. Burnett Park South would be the strongest connection to the park-and-ride. Northeast of the study area, the proposed "Junction" envisions new relationships between Tonkin Park, the Renton Connector and the Chamber of Commerce property through a commercial district with restaurants, bars, and art. Expansion of the Lake to Sound trail is also an important connection in the Civic Core Vision plan, an investment that would improve multimodal connections for the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea as well.

GOAL #1: Provide a safe, healthy, vibrant community
- Facilitate successful neighborhoods through community involvement
- Promote safety, health, and security through effective communication and service delivery
- Encourage and partner in the development of quality housing choices for people of all ages and income levels
- Promote a walkable, pedestrian and bicycle friendly city with complete streets, trails, and connections between neighborhoods and community focal points
- Provide opportunities for communities to be better prepared for emergencies

GOAL #2: Promote economic vitality and strategically position Renton for the Future
- Promote Renton as the progressive, opportunity rich city in the Puget Sound region
- Capitalize on opportunities through bold and creative economic development strategies
- Recruit and retain businesses to ensure a dynamic, diversified employment base
- Nurture entrepreneurship and foster successful partnerships with businesses and community leaders
- Leverage public/private resources to focus development on economic centers

GOAL #3: Support planned growth and influence decisions that impact the city
- Foster development of vibrant, sustainable, attractive, mixed-use neighborhoods in urban centers
- Uphold a high standard of design and property maintenance
- Advocate Renton’s interests through state and federal lobbying efforts, regional partnerships, and other organizations
- Pursue transportation and other improvements and services that improve quality of life
- Balance development with environmental protection

GOAL #4: Building an inclusive informed city with opportunities for all
- Improve access to city services, programs, and employment, and make residents and businesses aware of opportunities to be involved with their community
- Build connections with ALL communities that reflect the breadth and richness of the diversity in our city
- Promote understanding and appreciation of our diversity through celebrations and festivals
- Provide critical and relevant information on a timely basis and facilitate two-way dialogue between city government and the community

GOAL #5: Meet service demands and provide high quality customer service
- Plan, develop, and maintain quality services, infrastructure, and amenities
- Prioritize services at levels that can be sustained by revenue
- Retain a skilled workforce by making Renton the municipal employer of choice
- Develop and maintain collaborative partnerships and investment strategies that improve services

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**Renton City Center Community Plan (Adopted June 2011, amended June 2017)**

**Goal 1: Create a distinct identity for the City Center, as well as improve the visibility and perception of the City Center.**

1.1 Improve the overall visual character of the City Center.
1.2 Preserve and maintain important historic features in the City Center to enhance the identity of the City Center.
1.3 Improve overall safety in the City Center.

**Goal 2: Continue to support Renton’s diverse economic sectors.**

2.1 Continue to support opportunities to create a more vibrant City Center where people live, work, learn, and play.
2.2 Continue to support opportunities to create a more vibrant Downtown.
2.3 Enhance and provide space for small-scale, mixed-use, local retail on Park Avenue North connecting The Landing to Downtown.
2.4 Pursue opportunities to locate a new City Hall in a central location in the City Center.

**Goal 3: Provide better transportation connections for the full range of transportation modes to improve access to and from the City Center.**

*Sub-Goal: Focus through traffic on arterials and improve freeway interchange connections.*

3.1 Support Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) efforts to encourage all regional through-traffic to I-405 by improving and reconfiguring interchanges and adding capacity.
3.2 Consider designating Logan Avenue as a state route for sub-regional through-traffic within the City Center.
3.3 Investigate the potential for re-routing through truck traffic from Park Avenue North.
   *Sub-Goal: Explore transit options and prepare for opportunities as they arise.*
3.4 Work with appropriate agencies and departments to identify a preferred route for a future Rapid Ride bus rapid transit and/or light rail transit (LRT) line that would best serve the City Center.
3.5 Continue to pursue opportunities for a future water taxi to connect Renton to other Lake Washington cities, such as Bellevue, Kirkland, Mercer Island, and/or Seattle.
3.6 Encourage Sound Transit and/or Metro to build and operate a public parking garage in The Landing/Coulon Park vicinity.

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Sound Transit (ST) plans to build a new transit center at Rainier Ave S and S Grady Way to serve future ST bus rapid transit (BRT) service along I-405 and some King County Metro (Metro) bus routes. Sound Transit also plans to include some transit-oriented development (TOD); private redevelopment projects within the subarea are anticipated as well. The future transit center site currently houses a WSDOT park-and-ride facility comprised of two adjacent surface parking lots. Though plans are still at a conceptual stage, the site plan shown below illustrates how WSDOT could consolidate the existing lots into a single parking structure to provide more space for transit-oriented development.

Sound Transit’s investment is the impetus behind this subarea plan and offers a rationale for evolving the area into a more holistic, multifaceted district. With better transit connections to local and regional destinations, the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea can offer greater access to opportunities for people living and working in the area.

Figure 2. Transit Center Conceptual Site Plan

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5 Sound Transit, accessed 1/15/2020, https://i405brt.participate.online/
REGIONAL CONTEXT

Located on the southern shores of Lake Washington and close to the southern intersection of the I-5 and I-405 freeways, Renton plays an important role in the economic success, transportation function, and cultural diversity of the Puget Sound Region.

RENTON’S ECONOMIC ROLE IN A GROWING REGION

The Puget Sound Regional Council has recognized the important role Renton plays in the region’s growth, designating it as one of the area’s 29 Regional Growth Centers (RGC)—areas that can accommodate a certain density of jobs and residents. Renton’s RGC currently includes Downtown, the Boeing Corporation’s offices and manufacturing plant, as well as The Landing and Southport at the City’s border with the southernmost portion of Lake Washington. The Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea is adjacent to the southern boundary of the current RGC, and the City may explore whether to revise the RGC boundaries to incorporate the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea.

Renton is a notable employment center that offers diverse job options for the region. The City is a net importer of workers, with 62,596 jobs and an employed population of about 50,000. Renton residents who commute for work tend to travel to north, especially to downtown Seattle and Bellevue. By contrast, people who work in Renton live throughout the Puget Sound region, with a large contingent commuting daily from the south (see Map 1 on page 15). Only 10% of the jobs in the city are held by Renton residents.6

6 American Community Survey 2017

Figure 3. Renton Regional Growth Center Source: PSRC
Map 3. Daily Commutes to and from Renton

Figure 4. Job Density in Renton

Source: OnTheMap, American Community Survey 2017, U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies

Figure 5. Commute trip direction to/from Renton

Source: OnTheMap, American Community Survey 2017, U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies
REGIONAL ROLE OF THE RAINIER/GRADY JUNCTION SUBAREA

REGIONAL GATEWAY TO RENTON
The Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea is the main gateway into Renton, providing access to a significant commercial area as well as Downtown. The area is a destination for vehicle purchasing, hotel accommodations, general shopping, and places of employment both within the subarea itself as well as Downtown. The area can be accessed by highway and several corridors that provide regional connections.

REGIONAL TRANSIT SERVICE
Transit currently serves an important but relatively minor role in the subarea. The existing King County Metro park-and-ride is served by several bus routes that connect to Seattle, Bellevue, Kent, Burien, and Downtown Renton. RapidRide F connects to the Sounder Commuter Rail line and Link Light Rail, providing connections to SeaTac Airport, and Tacoma.

Creation of the new transit center at the existing park-and-ride site will leverage several new bus routes and increase connections to other high-capacity services:

- Sound Transit’s Stride BRT will provide rapid, frequent connections to Burien, Newcastle, Bellevue, Kirkland, Bothell, and Lynnwood.
- Metro’s RapidRide I line will improve connections to Kent and Auburn
- Improved connections to other lines that serve Renton
- Frequent service to Downtown Renton

These improvements will improve access to jobs in Renton and provide commuters with alternatives to driving.

For more see Transit on page 44.
REGIONAL COMMERCIAL AREA
The area is home to auto dealerships and service centers, making it a hub for car sales and service. A mix of other businesses—big-box retail, minority-owned groceries and small businesses, small retail and food shops, professional offices, and light industrial sites, some of which relate to or complement the auto dealerships—predominate the area.
DEMOGRAPHICS

SNAPSHOT
The City of Renton, with about 104,000 residents, is Washington’s eighth largest city. It is home to a diverse community; nearly 36% of residents speak a language other than English at home, 16% higher than Washington state as a whole. As compared to the overall Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue region, Renton has a lower median income and a higher non-white population.

INCOME
Renton has a lower median income than the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue region. Within Renton incomes are generally higher in the east and lower in the west.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue</th>
<th>Renton</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median household</td>
<td>$82,189</td>
<td>$74,756</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income(^9)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^7\) Washington Office of Financial Management, 2019

\(^9\) Ibid

HOUSING
Like most cities throughout the Puget Sound region, housing affordability is a major concern for Renton. The city has a relatively high share of renters, at roughly 50% of all households.\footnote{City of Renton Housing Data – Provided to consultant 12/2019} 51% of all renter households in Renton are cost-burdened—measured as those who pay more than 30% of their income on housing—and 39% of all households are cost...
burdened. For the Seattle–Tacoma–Bellevue region as a whole, the percentage of cost burdened households is 33%. In January 2020 median home price in Seattle was $729,381, while Renton’s was $485,662 and predicted to rise at a faster pace than Seattle. The median sales price for a condo in Renton was $516,800, compared with $705,600 in Seattle. Lower home prices, combined with public investment in regional transit, may attract young professionals and cost-burdened households to Renton.

**JOBS WITHIN THE RAINIER/GRADY JUNCTION SUBAREA**

The analysis below makes some general assumptions about jobs and wage levels within the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea using the City’s business license data, which records business type using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes. In general businesses in subarea, particularly those within the ¼ mile walkshed of the planned transit center, tend to be sectors with a preponderance of low and some middle-wage jobs (such as Retail Trade, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Accommodation and Food Services). Retail businesses clustered along Rainier Ave S and S Grady Way include restaurants, supermarkets, big box stores, ethnic groceries, and auto retail. East of Rainier Ave S and SR 167 employers tend to be offices, warehouses, and industrial businesses.

Outside the transit center walkshed, the subarea includes professional, scientific, and technical service sectors, which would likely offer a mix of low, medium, and high-wage jobs. The area has a strong concentration of automobile-related businesses, with 17 auto dealerships, 11 auto repair shops, and 6 auto parts stores, business types that have a moderate number of middle-wage jobs. Wholesale trade and construction businesses are concentrated in the western and southern parts of the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea, mostly outside the ¼ mile walkshed. Until Several office buildings are located south of I-405, including The Landmark office complete, where Wizards of the Coast central offices are located. Other office buildings in this area formerly housed Boeing and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) offices but are currently vacant.

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12 Ibid.
13 Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, Station of the Nation’s Housing, Cost Burden Map, 2017 accessed on 01/29/20 https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/son-2019-cost-burdens-map
## Business Category (NAICS 4-digit)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Category (NAICS 4-digit)</th>
<th>In Subarea</th>
<th>In ¼ mile radius</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0(^{17})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services (except Public Administration)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Insurance</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Renton

\(^{17}\) Note: this includes code 7115 “Artists, Writers, and Performers”, of which there are 44 registered in Renton. Most of these licenses are registered at Club SinRock, an adult entertainment business. Adult entertainers must be individually licensed with municipal governments in Washington state.
Map 6. Licensed Businesses Maps

- **Retail Trade + Accommodation & Food Services**
- **Arts/Entertainment + Health Care Services + Professional Services**
- **Construction + Wholesale Trade**
- **Educational Services + Finance & Insurance + Other Services**

**Legend:**
- TOD Area
- Transit Center Site
- Half Mile Radius
- Quarter Mile Radius
- Building Footprints

**Licensed Business:**
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
- Construction
- Educational Services
- Finance and Insurance
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Other Services (except Public Administration)
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Retail Trade
- Wholesale Trade
- Other
**RACE AND ETHNICITY**

Although few residents currently live within the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea, residential neighborhoods are located to the north, south, east, and west. The surrounding neighborhoods include the Seattle metropolitan area’s most racially and ethnically diverse residents, as shown in Map 7. The arterials, highways, and transit systems that serve these communities intersect in the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea, making it an important destination for shopping and a meeting ground for people from many backgrounds.

To the northwest, West Hill and Skyway is a diverse area with large non-immigrant Black and Asian communities. Sunset Boulevard connects these areas to the Rainier Valley, the most ethnically diverse area in Seattle. Residential areas in Burien, Des Moines, Kent, and Auburn to the west and south area are also diverse, with significant Hispanic populations. Many Hispanic people also live in the Sunset neighborhood in Renton’s highlands. A large community of immigrants and refugees, especially people from East Africa, live in the SeaTac–Tukwila area, southwest of Renton. White and Asian populations are spread throughout Renton and surrounding cities, in lower-density residential areas to the north, east, and southeast. These neighborhoods represent a higher than average number of White and Asian residents as compared to King County’s overall population.

The arterials, highways, and transit systems that serve these communities intersect in the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea, making it an important destination for shopping and a meeting ground for people from diverse backgrounds.

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*Census 2010. [Link to Census data]*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>King County Race &amp; Ethnicity(^\text{18})</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>64.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

\(^\text{18}\) Census 2010. [Link to Census data]
Map 7. South King County Race/Ethnicity Patterns Map
Source: 2010 Census
LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN

EXISTING LAND USES
A diverse mix of commercial and employment land uses comprise the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea, and the built environment is generally characterized as auto-oriented suburban form. Retail uses predominate along Rainier Ave S in the center of the subarea, with a mix of big-box stores and auto dealerships, and some smaller infill commercial buildings on the periphery of those big-box stores. Single story structures approximately 20-30’ in height are common in this area.

Commercial office developments range from 2-3 story midcentury buildings along 7th Ave S to 1980’s era office towers north and south of I-405. Light industrial uses in large warehouse-style buildings are located primarily in the western portion of the subarea.

A particularly diverse mix of land uses and buildings exists in the area northwest of the I-405 interchange, with auto dealerships, auto-repair, and construction businesses surrounding two small clusters of single-family homes and a church that serves the local Hispanic community. Moderate industrial land uses, including areas with outdoor material storage, are also found here and immediately south of I-405.

The subarea is immediately southwest of Downtown Renton, an important commercial and cultural center for the City. Although only a handful of residences can be found within the subarea, neighborhoods generally surround the subarea except to the west.
High-voltage powerlines
Several high-voltage powerline corridors intersect in the subarea, most of which originate from the Maple Valley Substation to the east. The overhead powerlines and large poles are a dominating visual presence, and easements along the corridors prevent construction underneath or directly adjacent to the powerlines. These easements significantly reduce buildable area in the core of the transit center walkshed, where unbuildable areas cover about 11% of the subarea.

The largest power corridor in the area consists of 230 kV (kilovolt) power lines owned by Seattle City Light and Bonneville Power Administration that supply electricity to Seattle. These lines cross the subarea from the southeast to the northwest. Other large 230 kV lines owned by Puget Sound Energy cross the site east-west along Grady Way, connecting to the Green River valley. Several 115 kV lines, identifiable by their wooden poles, are owned by Puget Sound Energy and cross the subarea east-west. Easements for these lines are less restrictive for buildings and vegetation height and placement.
SUBURBAN, AUTO-ORIENTED CHARACTER

Most Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea streets lack a sense of enclosure, encumbered by the suburban building patterns of parking lots adjacent to the street and wide office building setbacks. This results in a lack of “eyes on the street” and contributes to a general sense of pedestrian isolation. Large arterials cross the area and carry heavy vehicle traffic including, by necessity, trucks, and freight. Arterials such as Rainier Ave S are somewhat more inviting to pedestrians, with newer sidewalks and a few pedestrian-oriented storefronts, but overall, the area feels dominated by vehicles.

The portion of the subarea that is south of I-405 is separated from the rest of the subarea by I-405; Lind Ave SW provides the only north-south connection between these areas via an overpass. Lind Ave is a four-lane minor arterial with sidewalks that carries about 16,000 vehicles daily. Although sidewalks and crosswalks provide safety for pedestrians, the long, loud, exposed experience of walking the freeway overpass is a significant deterrent to pedestrian activity. With a lack of active ground floors or “eyes on the street,” the safety and security of people walking and biking, particularly at night, may also be a concern.

Two bus routes currently use Lind Ave to reach the park-and-ride lot, RapidRide D, and Routes 153. These bus routes, especially RapidRide D with 10-minute headways throughout the day, are likely to provide a better connection to the

---

https://hifld-geoplatform.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/electric-power-transmission-lines?geometry=-122.314%2C47.448%2C-121.987%2C47.489
future transit center than walking. Bike lanes, currently absent on Lind Ave, would also help make cycling to the transit center a viable alternative.

Map 10. Urban Design Street Quality Assessment Map

Grocery Stores and Community Gathering Places
The Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea is regionally accessible and well-suited for the range of retail businesses that serve diverse South King County consumers. The variety of grocery stores range from “big box” to small, independent stores that serve ethnic communities. Several retail nodes support small, independent businesses, such as restaurants, salons, professional offices, and specialized shops.

The one church located within the subarea boundary serves a local Hispanic community, and several other churches are immediately adjacent to the area. The St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School is located just northeast, but no schools are within the subarea. Renton High School is located ¼ mile north of the subarea.
Map 11. Services and Amenities Map

Data Sources: City of Renton, Google Maps
OPEN SPACES AND TREE CANOPY

No parks are located fully within the subarea. The Burnett Linear Park starts at the northeast corner of the area and could offer a pleasant pedestrian link between the transit center and Downtown Renton.

The subarea’s significant number of street trees improves the pedestrian experience on many streets. The quality and condition of the urban canopy varies depending on the corridor, however, and most trees are relatively small.

The 7th Ave S corridor includes a handful of landmark trees. Renton’s Landmark Tree regulation protects these trees from removal, though there is a mitigation option if trees are a significant barrier to redevelopment. Though limited in number, mature conifers may bring a particularly high ecological value to the area. The plan could explore options to protect those trees where they are present.

Map 12. Street Tree Map

Data Source: City of Renton
### ZONING AND OVERLAYS

Three zones cover the majority of the subarea: Commercial Arterial (CA), Commercial Office (CO), and Industrial – Medium (IM). Two lots in the eastern section of the area are zoned Center Downtown (CD).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commercial Arterial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intent: Facilitate the transition of the area away from a linear, “strip commercial” business district towards more compact development and pedestrian-oriented land uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample of Allowed Uses: Retail, on-site services, mixed-use residential, offices, conference centers, medical offices, veterinarian offices/clinics, hotels, food service/restaurants, taverns, indoor entertainment, indoor recreation, fueling stations, laboratories for light manufacturing or research, and breweries/distilleries/wineries with tasting rooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Standards: Maximum coverage: 65% (75% with parking garage) Minimum residential density: 20 dwelling units (du)/acre Maximum residential density: 60 du/acre Maximum Height: 50 ft, 70 ft residential mixed-use Parking min: 2.5 per 1,000 sf retail, 2 per 1,000 sf office, 1 per du</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Vertical mixed use required along street frontages for buildings over two stories (RMC 4-4-15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commercial Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intent: Provide areas with high-quality office work environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample of Allowed Uses: Office, conference centers, limited retail, services, hotels, and medical offices and institutions, veterinarian offices/clinics, residential mixed-use near transit, and shared-use park-and-rides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Standards: Maximum coverage: 65% (75% with parking garage) Minimum residential density: 75 du/acre Maximum residential density: 150 du/acre (up to 250 with CUP) Maximum Height: 250 ft Parking min: 2.5 per 1,000 sf retail, 2 per 1,000 sf office, 1 per du</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industrial - Medium</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intent: Provide areas for medium-intensity industrial activities involving manufacturing, processing, assembly, and warehousing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample of Allowed Uses: Wholesale retail, office, medical offices, entertainment, restaurants, large and small vehicle sales, small and large vehicle and equipment rental, off-site and on-site services, fueling stations, large and small vehicle repair, industrial engine or transmission repair, indoor or outdoor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea Plan Existing Conditions
| Development Standards: | No residential allowed  
No max height  
No max lot coverage  
Parking min: 1 per 1,500 sf warehouse, 2.5 per 1,000 sf retail, 2 per 1,000 sf office |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RMC 4-2-130A</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Other: | a. Gambling facilities, vehicle and equipment rental, and communication broadcast and relay towers are prohibited within the area south of I-405 and north of SW 16th Street.  
b. Outdoor storage (existing and new), vehicle storage, and large vehicle sales are only allowed in the area south of I-405 and west of Rainier Avenue South/SR-167. Outdoor storage is allowed as an accessory use in all industrial zones. |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Adjacent to the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea are **Center Downtown (CD), Residential-14 (R-14), and Residential Multifamily (RMF)** zones. The CD zone encourages an urban commercial hub that includes retail, services, recreation, entertainment, and residential uses. The R-14 zone allows both single-family and multifamily residential uses at a density of 14 du/acre. The RMF zone allows multifamily residential uses up to 20 du/acre with the opportunity for a 30% increase in exchange for affordable units and conditionally allows restaurants, retail, and on-site services on the ground-floor level as part of a residential project on properties fronting on South 7th Street, which borders the eastern portion of the subarea. Residential buffers, with increased setbacks, are required on commercial and industrial zoned parcels adjacent to residential zones.
Parking
Off-street parking requirements for new development are lower than in some other cities, however no parking reductions for frequent transit service are in place. Some flexibility for minimum parking requirements is available through the site plan review process or through the preparation of a Transportation Management Plan.

Automall District Overlay
Overlays also influence land uses within the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea. Automall Overlays (AMOs) cover several portions of the subarea and establish development standards to implement the Renton Automall Improvement Plan. The Subarea includes areas with both District A and District B overlays. District A is exclusively for auto sales and related uses (see RMC 4-3-040). District B allows auto sales as well as what is allowed by the underlying zoning.

With the vision of the area surrounding the intersection of Rainier Ave S and S Grady Way being redeveloped to include transit-oriented mixed-use development, and the 2017 addition of AMO district “C” in the valley along East Valley Road, staff are proposing to remove the AMO district “B” from properties not currently used for auto sales to ensure the vision for this area is realized.
Urban Design District Overlay
Except for CA zoned lots under the AMO, all lots Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea zoned CA or CO are covered by Urban Design District D, which applies to all development. District D standards provide design standards on elements including site design and building location, parking and vehicular access, pedestrian environment, recreation areas and common open space, building architectural design, signage, and lighting.

MFTE-eligible Areas
Renton has designated two Multifamily Tax Exemption areas, one in Downtown Renton, which includes two parcels in the subarea, and one in the Sunset Area. Some property owners have expressed the need for MFTE eligibility expansion in the subarea to catalyze residential development.

Map 14. Zoning Overlays and MFTE Map
HOUSING
Like most cities throughout the Puget Sound region, housing affordability is a major concern for Renton. The city has a relatively high share of renters, at roughly 50% of all households.

Over the past several decades, supply constraints have led to rapidly rising housing prices. Renters are highly exposed to rising rents, often leading to cost-burden (households paying more than 30% of income for housing) or displacement. Rising prices for ownership units (houses or condos) limit options for young families seeking to build wealth and lock older homeowners in place due to the cost of relocating.

Overall, housing prices in Renton are lower than in Seattle or east King County. Lower home prices, combined with public investment in regional transit, may attract young professionals and cost-conscious families to Renton. The Renton Housing Action Plan, in concurrent development with this plan, will provide recommendations for increasing the availability of affordable and market rate housing in Renton.

Figure 6. Examples of housing near the subarea.

ENVIRONMENT
THE DUWAMISH RIVER
Located on the historic flood plains of the Cedar and Black Rivers, the land within the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea is largely flat, and is flanked by steeper slopes, such as Talbot Hill to the southeast. Prior to 1916, the area was defined by three interconnected rivers: the Cedar River, the Black River, and the Green River.20 Historically, the Cedar River joined

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the Black River, which flowed south from Lake Washington. The Black River met the Green River in what is today Tukwila and formed the Duwamish River. The rivers were a valuable fishing and boating resource for the Duwamish people and the area had been home to Coast Salish people’s settlements for centuries. The portion of Hardie Ave SE that runs through the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea is built on the historic alignment of the Black River.

In 1912 the Cedar River was channelized to protect the City of Renton from flooding, creating a new outlet for the river directly into Lake Washington and severing the connection to the Black River. A few years later the construction of the Montlake Cut dropped the level of Lake Washington and drained marsh land in the area for development, but the work also cut off the Black River thereby rendering a waterless riverbed. This loss was critical to the Duwamish people, for whom the Black River had been a source of food, a key navigation route, and a gathering place.

STREAMS AND WETLANDS
Rolling Hills Creek, a non-fish-bearing stream runs through the southern portion of the site, north of I-405. It flows through a pipe from Talbot Rd S west along S Renton Village Pl and then turns south to I-405 where it passes under the highway via culvert. A small wetland is associated with the Rolling Hills Creek Tributary just southwest of the former Sam’s Club site, east of Talbot Rd S and just north of I-405. A larger wetland area associated with this stream is just east of SR 167 south of the subarea.


Despite the proximity to the Cedar River just to the north, the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea is located within the Black River basin of the Duwamish–Green River Watershed (WRIA 9), and covers three subbasins: Springbrook Creek, Black River, and Rolling Hills Creek. King County is overseeing an effort to improve riparian conditions along the Duwamish–Green River, and Springbrook Creek is listed as a level 4, a moderate priority, within this plan.²⁴

LIQUEFACTION

The history of these hydrological changes is echoed in today’s landscape. Like Downtown Renton and The Landing/Southport area south of Lake Washington, soils in the subarea are mapped as a liquefication seismic hazard. Geotechnical studies and seismic building foundation designs may increase costs for redevelopment projects.

FLOOD ZONES

Impervious surfaces predominate the Subarea and a portion of the site just northeast of the I-405 and SR 167 intersection is mapped as a type AH floodplain hazard area, subject to 1’-3’ flooding depths with a 100-year flood event. The area southwest of the I-405 and SR 167 intersection is also mapped as a flood hazard (AE) in a 100-year flood event, though ponding depths may be slightly less of a concern than in the area northeast of the freeways. For both areas,

²⁴ RE-GREEN THE GREEN: October 14, 2016 Riparian Revegetation Strategy for the Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound Watershed (WRIA 9)
mandatory flood insurance is required, and floodplain management standards apply, unless a Letter of Map Amendment is approved by FEMA.

Map 16. Natural Hazards

Data Source: City of Renton
TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION PLANS [SIDEBAR]
The following transportation plans propose projects within or improve connections to the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea.

Renton Transit Access Study – KC Metro (September 2019)
This citywide study of current transit access included several transportation improvements around the Rainier Ave S and S Grady Way intersection, which is at the center of the subarea. This plan reviews existing transit access connections, considers future investments such as the future BRT park-and-ride facility, and recommends projects/improvements to help improve access.

Metro Transit changes and Rapid Ride I-Line Planning – KC Metro (Planning 2019-20)
Planning of the Rapid Ride I-line is in final stages and the service is currently scheduled to launch in 2023. Metro is also planning a major restructure of southeast King County bus service, with changes implemented in 2020.

Renton Trails and Bicycle Master Plan (January 2019)
The Trails and Bicycle Master Plan proposes trail and bicycle infrastructure improvements to increase the comfort and safety of people walking and biking. The plan identifies several key destinations for pedestrians and bicyclists within the subarea, as well as intersections and corridors that currently feel unsafe to people walking and biking.

I-405 Master Plan
WSDOT’s masterplan for I-405 includes a number of projects for the corridor that would bring changes to streets and intersections in the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea. WSDOT is currently implementing some improvement associated with tolling and upcoming BRT service. Other projects, such as changes at Lind Ave SW are not yet funded:

- New direct access ramps to i-405 from Talbot Rd S and Rainier Ave S, as well as direct connector ramps between i-405 and SR 167. Some ramp improvements have been constructed.
- A new interchange at Lind Ave SW and extension of S Renton Village Pl to provide a connection to S Grady Way.
TRANSPORTATION PLANS [SIDEBAR CONTINUED]

Transportation Improvements Plan 2020-2025 (August 2019)
The 2020-2025 TIP includes 11 projects in or near the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea, including arterial widening, bike routes, one-way to two-way street conversions, BRT optimization improvements, and other streetscape improvements. Major improvements are highlighted below.

• **7th Street Corridor Improvements.** Widening the existing roadway to 3 lanes (2 lanes EB and 1 lane WB) and a separated multi-use trail. Includes new curb, gutter, wider sidewalks, street lighting, landscaping, channelization, and upgrades to traffic signals.

• **South Grady Way Multi-Modal Improvements.** This project will perform a comprehensive analysis of multi-modal transportation improvements, including review of potential transit improvements along Grady Way. The project will also potentially remove pedestrian islands at Shattuck Ave and Lake Ave crossings, add capacity, and re-channel traffic on Grady Way.

• **Grady/Talbot BRT Improvements.** Optimizes the new I-405 BRT route to make it an attractive option for commuters as compared to existing bus service. Includes reconfiguration of Grady Way, Lake Ave S and S Renton Village Place to accommodate transit.

• **Williams Ave/Wells Ave 2-Way Conversion.** This conversion from one-way to two-way streets’ is expected by 2020.

• **Rainier Ave N Corridor Improvements (Phase 5):** Extension of improvements from NW 3rd Pl to north City limits. Project elements include widening of sidewalks with streetscaping, adding pedestrian-scale illumination and planted buffer strips. The street may be narrowed from 5 to 3 lanes where feasible. On the east side of Rainier Ave, the new multi-use trail will be installed (Lake Washington Loop Trail).

• **Lind Ave SW - SW 16th St to SW 43rd St.** Widen existing roadway to five lanes where required. Includes new roadway, curbs, sidewalks, drainage, signals, lighting, signing and channelization. Additionally, improvements may result from future WSDOT I-405 plans.
ROAD NETWORK OVERVIEW
The intersection of Rainier Ave S and S Grady Way is the largest non-highway intersection in the subarea, and the future location of Sound Transit’s planned transit center and parking facility. The walkshed of this central transit facility largely defines the subarea. Both Rainier Ave S and S Grady Way offer important connections to surrounding destinations, such as Skyway, the Rainier Valley and South Seattle neighborhoods to the north (via Rainier Ave S) and Tukwila and the Southcenter commercial area to the west (via S Grady Way). Talbot Road S bisects the eastern portion of the subarea, which then transitions into Benson Drive S (SR 515) providing an important connection to the Talbot and Benson Community Planning Areas and Kent.

Just to the south, the I-405/SR 167 interchange is a critical intersection in South King County’s transportation system. Highways and arterial roadways in the subarea limit connections to adjacent neighborhoods and create a pattern of superblocks throughout the area. These large blocks are only partially broken up by the local street network, which has an inconsistent grid and lacks through connections, particularly across I-405. There is only one bicycle, three pedestrian, and four vehicular crossing points along the I-405 corridor in this area. This pattern of superblocks and irregular streets make navigation through the area somewhat challenging and increases dependence on the major arterials for access.
PEDESTRIAN
The area’s superblocks, heavily trafficked arterials, patchy sidewalk network, and long distances between pedestrian crossings are significant barriers for people walking, biking, and rolling. Sidewalks are present on most major streets, though sidewalk quality (e.g., width, buffer from traffic, street trees) is relatively low throughout the area. Some minor streets lack sidewalks. The Transit Access Study calls out the north side of 7th St east of the transit center site for its missing sidewalk.

Map 18. Barriers to Pedestrian and Bicycle Access to Transit

Source: Renton Transit Access Study – King County Metro, 2019

BICYCLE
Dedicated bicycle infrastructure does not currently exist in the subarea (except for bike lanes on Benson Rd S/108 Ave in the southeast corner of the subarea). The Transit Access Study identified every major street around the future transit center as a barrier (see Figure 18).

The Trails and Bicycle Master Plan identifies several routes for shared use paths. An expanded trail connection along SW/S 7th St (identified in the TIP, see Figure 18) will greatly improve east-west connectivity across the subarea and link to Downtown. SW 7th St could be an opportunity for enhanced multimodal east-west circulation, as the corridor has
relatively low traffic volumes, large mature street trees, and adjacent land uses that could attract more multimodal users.

**Map 19. Trails and Bicycle Master Plan Map**

![Map 19. Trails and Bicycle Master Plan Map](image)

Source: MAKERS, 2020; City of Renton, 2019

**TRANSIT**

The Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea is served by King County Metro and Sound Transit Express bus routes. Sound Transit’s Sounder commuter rail service has a station about 1.5 miles from the future transit center site. In 2017 there were approximately 2,000 daily boardings and alightings in the subarea (includes Metro and ST).\(^{25}\)

\(^{25}\) Renton Transit Access Study – King County Metro, 2019

Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea Plan Existing Conditions
Map 20. Existing Transit Service Map

Data Sources:

Routes currently serving the subarea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Connections</th>
<th>Total Ridership Q3 2017 (full route)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metro RapidRide F</td>
<td>Burien, Tukwila</td>
<td>5,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Route 101</td>
<td>Seattle via SODO</td>
<td>4,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
King County Metro’s service in the area includes frequent and local fixed-route bus service. The RapidRide F line connects Renton to Tukwila and Burien and will serve the future transit center. Three frequent service routes provide all-day, frequent service: 101, 106, and 169. These routes and RapidRide F form the core of the transit network in Renton. Routes 105, 107, 153, and 240 provide coverage service with relatively low frequencies. Dial-A-Ride-Transit (DART) lines 906 and 907 provide flexible service in low-density residential areas to the east of the subarea.

Sound Transit also provides bus and rail service in the area. The ST Express routes 560 and 566 currently serve the South Renton Park & Ride, providing all day connections to other suburban cities. Sounder Commuter Rail’s Tukwila station is located near the subarea but is not easily accessible by foot or bicycle. RapidRide F provides a frequent bus connection to the station.

### Upcoming Changes to Transit Service

Metro is planning a major restructure of southeast King County bus service, with several routes potentially removed from service because they have low ridership or duplicate rail service. These changes are anticipated in 2020. Additionally, Metro is planning a new Rapid Ride I line (expected in 2023), which will serve the area.

The new transit center and park-and-ride facility construction (expected 2025) will support Sound Transit’s planned I-405 BRT service to this area (expected 2024). By 2040, Sound Transit predicts the line will have 3,000 daily boardings at the planned transit center.26

Potential long-term changes include light rail extension through the subarea and Sounder service hours expansion. The ST3 ballot measure passed in 2016 included expanded Sounder service hours and a study to assess feasibility of future light rail service to Renton.

---

**Table: Existing Transit Service**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route Type</th>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Boardings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metro Route 106</td>
<td>Seattle via Skyway and SODO</td>
<td>5,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Route 169</td>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>3,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound Transit Express 560</td>
<td>Bellevue, West Seattle</td>
<td>1,938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound Transit Express 566</td>
<td>Bellevue, Redmond, Kent, Auburn</td>
<td>~1,000 (reported as 2,075 combined with route 567)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounder Commuter Rail</td>
<td>Seattle, Tacoma</td>
<td>16,375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Map 21. Future BRT Service Map
TRAFFIC VOLUMES
Traffic volumes are high on several roads that cross through the area. While the I-405 and SR 167 freeways are buffered in many places from adjacent properties by a mix of sound walls, elevation, setbacks, and vegetation, Rainier Ave S and S Grady Way are both urban arterials that service a variety of commercial destinations while also carrying significant volumes of traffic, including truck routes. High traffic volumes impact opportunities, including BRT reliability, feasibility of pedestrian-oriented retail, and available right-of-way for active transportation improvements. Heavy through traffic on highways has local health impacts that should be considered in the siting/designing of new development.

Traffic volumes are much lower in the southwest portion of the subarea. Few if any streets carry more than 10,000 vehicles daily, resulting in a slightly more comfortable walking and biking environment, but also significantly fewer eyes on the street. Traffic volumes are also relatively low along SW/S 7th St, a corridor that includes suburban-style office developments, significant numbers of mature street trees and the planned location of an east-west bike path.

Road Classification and Average Daily Traffic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Road</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Lanes</th>
<th>Average Daily Traffic (ADT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-405</td>
<td>Freeway</td>
<td>~6+2 HOV</td>
<td>150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 167 (south of I-405)</td>
<td>Freeway</td>
<td>6+2 HOV</td>
<td>130,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainier Ave S</td>
<td>Highway</td>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>40,000-55,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Grady Way (west of Talbot)</td>
<td>Major Arterial</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>25,000-40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talbot Rd</td>
<td>Highway</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>15,000-45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lind Ave SW</td>
<td>Minor Arterial</td>
<td>4-7</td>
<td>15,000-30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Grady Way (east of Talbot)</td>
<td>Highway</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>&lt;20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 7th St</td>
<td>Minor Arterial</td>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>10,000-17,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 16th St</td>
<td>Minor Arterial</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Renton, 2012.

Note: ADT figures are from 2012, while the local economy was still recovering from the recession. Typically, traffic increases as economic activity improves. For comparison, statewide, between 2012 and 2018, daily vehicle miles travelled rose 10.9%.
FREIGHT
Private trucks over 26,000 pounds gross vehicle weight are restricted to operating on designated truck routes when traveling within the city. Current truck routes in the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea are Rainier Ave S and S Grady Way. (See Map 22 on page 49.)
LAND VALUE AND DEVELOPABILITY

The Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea is about 510.6 acres in size, however, high voltage power line corridors, the I-405/SR 167 interchange, and other rights-of-way occupy approximately 40% of the area. The area contained within a ¼ mile radius of the bus platform is about 126 acres, of which about 35% is occupied by right-of-way or power utility corridors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea</th>
<th>Transit Center ¼ Mile Radius</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>510.6 acres</td>
<td>125.7 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights of Way</td>
<td>154.4 acres (33%)</td>
<td>24.26 acres (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right of Way plus Power Line Easements (approximate)</td>
<td>192 acres (40%)</td>
<td>38 acres (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Value per sf</td>
<td>$17.02</td>
<td>$19.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraised Value per sf</td>
<td>$39.32</td>
<td>$38.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvements to Total Value Ratio</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28 For purposes of this study, a 15’ buffer was applied to all the powerline corridors and removed from the estimated developable land total area. Specific easements and setbacks for each of the power utility corridors will have to be assessed in more detail in future studies.  
29 King County Assessor, 2019
The average assessed land value for the subarea is $17.02 per sf, with land values generally rising with proximity to Downtown Renton to the northwest of the subarea. Land values are generally higher along Rainier Ave S and S Grady Way (25-30$/sf) and generally lower south of I-405 (5-20$/sf). One rough measure of the redevelopment potential of a property is the ratio of the total appraised value to the value of the buildings and site infrastructure on that property to the value of the land itself. When the value of these “improvements” is less than half the total appraised value of the property, it can be considered “redevelopable.” However, this measure fails to capture high-value businesses with minimal needs for buildings like auto-retailers and should be used with caution. The lower the proportion of the improvements value to the total value, the property is more likely to redevelop. In the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea improvements represent about 57% of the total appraised value for all parcels in the subarea. Within ¼ mile radius of the future transit center the ratio falls to 49%, indicating greater redevelopment potential.

Data Sources: King County Tax Assessor, City of Renton
The City of Renton has performed preliminary analysis to refine property value-based measures of redevelopment potential in the subarea. These redevelopable and vacant parcels are spread throughout the subarea, with a few clear patterns.

- “Vacant” parcels are scattered throughout the subarea; however, many are used for parking lots or are otherwise undevelopable.
- Several relatively small parcels located to the northwest of the I-405 interchange are vacant and/or redevelopable.
- All of the block where the future transit center will be located, and all of the large block to the south are considered redevelopable.
- Some retail-oriented properties with large parking lots and relatively simple building construction are considered redevelopable depending on the profitability of existing businesses.
• South of I-405, the 1980’s two office buildings where Wizards of the Coast and several other firms are located are considered redevelopable. A large adjacent lot is vacant, presenting a development opportunity, however the distance to the transit center limits TOD potential.
• Infill redevelopment on parcels with surplus parking may be another opportunity.
• Redevelopment of any of the large retail stores in the area would provide a significant TOD opportunity but could impact retail options for consumers and sales tax revenues.

WATER, WASTEWATER, AND SURFACE WATER UTILITY INVESTMENTS

There are no planned Water Utility capital improvements for the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea. The Wastewater Utility has a sewer line improvement planned on Sunset Blvd between S 3rd Street and Hardie Ave SW (on the border of the subarea), as part of the Downtown Utility Improvement Project. No other wastewater capital improvement projects are currently planned within the TOD subarea.

The Surface Water Utility has the following capital improvement projects planned:

• The Downtown Utility Improvement Project includes the installation of a storm system in Shattuck Ave S between S 3rd Street and S 4th PL, which is on the border of the TOD subarea.
• The Rainier Ave Pump Station Upgrade consists of improving the reliability of the existing stormwater pump station at Rainier Ave S and the BNSF railroad tracks on the west side of Rainier Ave S.
• The Hardie Ave SW-SW 7th St Phase 3 project consists of improving an existing storm system from Hardie Ave SW at the BNSF railroad, around existing development and connecting into the storm system on SW 7th Street.

Any changes in land use and/or increases in density that are recommended by the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea Plan may result in the need for improvements to the City’s utility infrastructure to meet code requirements. This may be identified and done as part of the development project, if needed. The primary area of concern would be the increase in fire flow demand, which may require additional water system looping to provide adequate fire protection.

City of Renton Stormwater Collection System Map
Appendix B

TOD Developer Forum Summary
Rainier/Grady Junction TOD Subarea
Developers Forum - Summary Notes

Dates
Developers Forum meetings were held remotely via Zoom on January 25, January 26, and February 3, 2021.

Attendees
City: Mark Santos-Johnson, Hannah Bahnmiller, Paul Hintz, and Katie Buchl-Morales
Consultants (MAKERS Architecture and Urban Design): Katy Saunders and Rachel Miller
Participants:
- Richard Loo, Bellwether Housing
- Jonathan Smith, Bellwether Housing
- David Smith, Paragon Real Estate Advisors
- Chris DeWald, Rush Companies
- Craig Koeppler, RVA Cinema
- Karinda Harris, Vulcan
- Kurt Creager, Bridge Housing
- Suzi Morris, Lowe Redevelopment
- Allen Dauterman, Imagine Housing
- Campbell Mathewson, CMRE Partners
- Robert Cugini, Barbee Mill
- Eric Pravitz, Homestead Community Land Trust
- Joe Thompson, Mercy Housing NW
- Oscar del Moro, Cosmos Development Company
- John Fisher, Inland Group
- Obi Amobi, Mercy Housing NW
- Colin Morgan-Cross, Mercy Housing NW
- Rocale Timmons, SECO Development
- Kathleen Hosfeld, Homestead Community Land Trust

Presentation
- City staff presented background information about Renton and recent development (See presentation slides for details)
- Consultants provided an overview of existing zoning and the MFTE program for Downtown Renton, and the recent work to date from subarea planning process (See presentation slides for details)

Key Takeaways
- Flexibility in regulations is important to making development projects work.
- The City should be responsible for catalyzing development. This will be more fruitful than relying on development alone to implement the plan’s vision.
- Predictability is helpful to development – several participants noted the importance of development agreements in realizing successful projects.
- Good discussion in all meetings about the value and opportunities of commercial and retail use, as well as the challenges. General agreement that a mix of uses is important to a vibrant neighborhood, but mixed perspectives on requirements.
- Ongoing engagement with the community will be important.
- Fostering stronger relationships between the City, local organizations and developers is important, particularly for affordable housing projects.
- New price breaks for taller buildings with CLT

Discussion

Retail/Mix Use Development:
- There was some opposition to commercial area development standards for residential development (ground floor commercial – 50% of gross ground floor area of all buildings on site). Note: Opposition seemed to dissipate when staff clarified that the 50% requirement applied to all buildings on site.
- One participant noted that only 30-40’ deep of retail space is viable.
- Some participants noted that a certain amount of ground-floor commercial is expected and will help achieve a vibrant “18-hour neighborhood.” The early investors/developers may have a harder time with existing requirements, but once residential densities are there, this will help provide a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood.
- $3+ per sq. ft. of commercial is necessary for podium-style development. May depend somewhat on other variables, such as impact fees, etc.
- Commercial space is integral to the urban fabric. Commercial space created in today’s market may or, more likely, may not be filled for some time but it will be eventually not only desirable, but necessary for the area’s success. Early developers will have more challenges to make it pencil. One participant cited an example from a project in Bellevue where the commercial space was not profitable for several years, but it is now very successful.
- Commercial does not pay for itself, and typically zero profit is anticipated in pro-formas; Sometimes a challenge to underwriting.
- Some participants noted that certain types of commercial space, such as service retail, are sometimes used as a marketing tactic to help the project get higher rents from residential units.
- Retail market is constantly evolving; not currently seeing a high demand for retail space. One participant noted that many retail commercial tenants are behind on rent, due to the impact that COVID-19 has had consumer habits and the local economy.
- Encourage options that allow for active ground floor activity. Commercial space can include daycares and building amenities, clinics and other services.
- Encourage design that allows for transitional uses over time, i.e., ground floor parking or surface parking today, with intent to evolve to retail in the future.
- There was support for the idea of mixing smaller commercial spaces with larger mixed use and/or residential buildings (referring to an image from the subarea plan section of the presentation). Suggested looking for opportunities to introduce different zones to get better diversity – otherwise there is a risk that it will all be one building type.

Employment:
• Need to attract employment opportunities outside of retail, i.e., office and light industrial.
• Daytime employees are key to a vibrant area and to provide businesses with patrons.
• People value the opportunity to live where they work and work where they live. Encourage this area to be more than a bedroom community served by TOD, i.e., maintain light industrial, encourage makerspace opportunities, etc.

Development Regulations:
• Provide flexibility and allow for creativity when possible — “Prescriptiveness is the enemy of creativity and flexibility.”
• Flexibility is key to success.
• Height
  o “Cost of land and rental rates in Renton market are not high enough to justify vertical development of significant height.” However, this will likely change over time, so helpful to allow for potential for greater height as market allows.
  o Some disagreement re: height limits vs. stories.
    ▪ Developers prefer to regulate height by the number of stories allowed to provide them with flexibility. Tall ceiling heights help make small, often affordable, units feel more livable. It was also suggested that height limits for the area are unnecessary.
    ▪ Conversely, it was suggested that the City offer bonus height for various reasons, and by doing so we will not contribute to artificial and highly speculative land valuations.
  o Exclude parking structure from height requirements, or when measuring height, measure podium parking separately from the residential floors.
  o Look to Vancouver, BC where tall, standalone residential towers are created with separation from others, but it creates the residential base to serve surrounding commercial uses.
• Parking
  o Consensus that joint parking facilities are favorable.
  o Unit to parking space not to exceed a 1:1 ratio, 1:.75 is more appropriate and consistent with other cities, parking reductions for higher intensity development surrounding TOD.
  o Reduce parking standards for senior housing developments – parking to be prioritized for guest and employee parking use.
  o Consider offering flexibility to project under a certain size.
  o Future parking needs will likely be less. Consider creating City surface parking for shared access to facilitate development with lower parking ratios for long-term needs. (When the surface parking is no longer needed, the City can make available for affordable housing. MSJ)
• Impact Fees
  o Environments that don’t have high impact fees are most attractive for developers.
  o Projects can support some demands to construct municipalities infrastructure, e.g., pedestrian walkway, structured parking. But can’t go after everything.
  o Even smaller fees do start to add up when you consider complex larger project.
  o Fee deferment can help some developers who need to shift costs to later phases, but it is not universally helpful and is only seen as a modest incentive.

Desirable Amenities – Private Investment:
• It may take several years for retail development to become economically viable, but when it does, retail is utilized as a tool/amenity to increase rent and housing costs.
• Schools are particularly important, as well as daycare centers and early learning centers.
• Grocery stores – consider challenges of loading and bay heights when building new in a denser environment. Generally, it is better to retain existing grocers and/or sites that can accommodate infrastructure needed by grocery stores. Also, some funders have criteria checklists, and you gain more points by being close to amenities, such as grocery stores.

Affordable Housing:
• Elements that are helpful to making affordable housing work:
  o prioritization of land designated for affordable housing projects;
  o expedited review and permitting;
  o public/private partnerships (e.g. development agreements) and/or;
  o creative incentives (e.g. deferred payments on improvements).
• Requires alignment with the funding cycles and advocacy by City for County, state, federal funding.
• Affordable housing has a difficult time subsidizing retail and parking costs since they cannot be offset by higher residential rents.
• Streamline permitting and land use process.
• Develop connections between community and developers, particularly the non-profit developers.
  o Connect non-profit developers to the communities and organizations, so they can really understand the types of housing that are needed.
  o Development agreements with local municipalities have been very helpful.
  o One participant cited an example from a project in Tukwila, where flexibility was needed to make the project pencil.
    ▪ The city increased the density allowance and reduced standards for height limitations and parking requirements.
- Worked with the developer to reduce infrastructure costs.
- There is a high water table in the area, which makes underground structures challenging.
- Seattle’s MHA fee-in-lieu is set such that most developers are providing affordable rental units onsite, also making use of MFTE. However, affordable ownership units are not being provided onsite, and instead are paying the fee-in-lieu.

**Homeownership/Condominiums**
- Homeownership will only happen if amenities are created that attract prospective homeowners.
- Market has more to do with it than zoning.
- Some participants have pursued partnerships—adjacent projects and shared construction. Ownership units may need to be phased in on a different timeline than other aspects of a project. Requiring it to all come in at once has not worked.
- There is a demand for larger household size units. Condos are typically a first step into homeownership (young families) or for those downsizing. 3-bedroom units are more typically a townhome, rather than a condo.
- Although some laws have been revised, it is still challenging to make condominium projects worth the risk for developers to construct them. There used to be more condominium projects, but then a whole business associated with condo class action lawsuits emerged and drove the market underground.
- More legal reforms may be needed. The Puget Sound area has the lowest percentage of condos in any city of our size in the country.

**Potential Public Investments and Methods to Incentivize Development:**
- Maintain inventory of developable properties within subarea (and beyond).
- Planned Action EIS/areawide SEPA declaration
- All incentives on the table – MFTE, density bonuses, reduced parking requirements, etc.
- Initiate quality placemaking efforts to spur private investment in the area.
- There are decades of auto-centric building in the area. Placemaking is very important and will be a challenge.
- Developers can contribute to placemaking, but don’t expect them to bear all of the burden; City needs to take initiative on parks, recreational spaces, and connectivity/walkability.
- Existing infrastructure
  - Electrical infrastructure – need to figure out how to work around that. Explore how it could be an asset? (Smart Cities, access to power, etc.)
  - Need to better understand water/sewer needs
- In the absence of private yard space, provide amenities that allow people to get outside.
• Consider needs and opportunities of all ages/generations – don’t just focus on one group. The best places are where different people can come together.

• Desired public investments: sewer, utilities, underground utilities, eco energy district/district thermal systems, public spaces, pedestrian connections, prioritize connectivity to transit center, provide public parking, EV parking, etc.

• Existing easements should be utilized to provide for easier, safer access to light rail and bus transit.

• Land-bank properties and use as surface parking lots to wait for development to catch up. Suggestion to use easements as parking lots while waiting for public investment to create open space.

• City needs to invest in infrastructure in order to motivate and support private sector investment.

MFTE Comments:
• Expand and refine MFTE program.

• Market-rate MFTE often essential in this location; affordable component is more difficult to pencil.

• Look at Redmond’s MFTE program that has a graduated system.

• Non-profit housing developers are tax exempt, so the MFTE program doesn’t benefit them. However, it does benefit other developers and housing producers.

• In Seattle, some developers have found it is easier to provide the affordable units using MFTE than pay fee-in-lieu, and then re-enroll for long-term affordability.

Marketing/To Highlight:
• Location and access to I-5 and 405.

• TOD and transit investments.

• “Central location where you can live in Renton and work in Seattle, while your partner can work in Bellevue.”

Commercial Retention:
• Mitigate business loss with a strategy, i.e., “transitional plans” based on feedback from existing business owners – allow them to identify/share their needs, City to support by providing resources.

• Business displacement – need to be proactive to prevent and mitigate business loss. Requires its own strategy and community engagement, not just code changes.

• Consider maintaining/improving connections (i.e., pedestrian connections) between existing and new development.

• Macro-scale placemaking with a grassroots effort.

Miscellaneous:
• New development should contribute to the community in some ways. Talk with community about what they want. Talk with affected businesses.

• Avoid white bias. Connect with BIPOC and understand value of those communities. The plans and ultimate development will be better, more attractive, and human centric because of that incorporation.

• Developers/property managers should be required to give residents ORCA cards, and this expense should be part of their operating budget.

• Need to create new identity for the area.

• Take action ASAP.

• City needs to create the place and attractions to all types of households. Safety is key!!!

• High-power transmission line easements are problematic but also present opportunities. Encourage/provide some flexibility at the edges of the TOD boundary as well.

Participants’ Key Takeaways
• Flexibility is essential to realizing the vision.

• Build relationships with developers, and identify specific sites to attract development.

• MFTE is very important.

• Illustrate the housing needs (rising rents, etc), the vulnerable populations needing housing (e.g., large families, senior vets, etc), as this helps the developers in conversations with funders.

• TOD asset is very important for this area.

• There is interest in developing in Renton – developers want to work with the City to make it happen.

• The subarea plan is a good step – suburban communities have different economics than downtown Seattle. Incentives are important.

• Specific regulations may be somewhat less important, but it is critical to set the goal posts for developers. The City is good at moving quickly, which is an asset. You don’t want to bog down a project here.

• Have to get the parking regulations and expectations on mixed use right. BRT isn’t the same as rail. (Bus lines can change, but rail is a fixed asset.)

• Plan offers a strong vision for the area, but there is a lot of work to do. City will have to work to attract developers.

• Give the area an identity, a frame. It has to be a place. City is going to have to provide a lot of resources for infrastructure, parks, roads, public realm, art, etc.

• Kudos for intentionality and for engaging people on what to imagine. Encourage and reinforce the idea of inclusion. Think about whose voices are not at table, and make sure their vision is incorporated.
Appendix C
Renton Light Rail Transit Station Siting, Feasibility Study
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Renton hired Perteet Inc. to lead a conceptual evaluation of light rail transit (LRT) opportunities with a focus on potential LRT station locations. The scope of this planning effort included two portions of Renton. The first portion focused on the vicinity of the future transit center, which will be constructed to support the upcoming bus rapid transit (BRT) program on the I-405 corridor. The second portion focused in the North Renton area surrounding The Landing.

Although Sound Transit has not yet started concept development for extension of LRT to Renton, the city initiated this station area planning study to better understand the opportunities for locating future LRT stations that would support transit-oriented development, providing the greatest walksheds to future LRT stations, and connecting to bus transit. This early evaluation of these considerations provides the city the opportunity to consider zoning changes and other strategies to support potential LRT station locations.

As part of the planning effort, the following tasks were completed for each potential station area:

1. Established criteria for the LRT station location and alignment concepts.
2. Generated two preliminary Central Renton station location and alignment exhibits.
3. Collaborated with partner agencies to refine the exhibits, leading to three concepts for each of the three station areas.
4. Generated exhibits illustrating the station location, walksheds, potential connecting alignments, and sensitive environmental areas for each refined station area concept.
5. Evaluated internally and separately with the partner agencies the relative performance of each refined station area concept using the criteria established in Task 1.
6. Confirmed with the partner agencies which concepts should be recommended for future study and the final performance scoring for each concept.

This study included six station area concepts, three in Central Renton and three in North Renton:

Central Option 1 – S Grady Way at Lake Avenue S  
Central Option 2 – Central Renton Park-and-Ride existing parking lots  
Central Option 3 – BNSF railroad overcrossing of Rainier Avenue S  
North Option 1 – Houser Avenue N at N 10th Street  
North Option 2 – N Southport Drive between Park Avenue N and Garden Avenue N  
North Option 3 – Park Avenue N just north of N 8th Street

Evaluators from the City of Renton and agency partners scored each station concept, which led to the average scores shown in Table A. The scores in each category reflect performance ranging from poor (1) to strong (5). Based on these scores, all six options appear viable for future study.
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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The City of Renton hired Perteet Inc. to lead a conceptual evaluation of light rail transit (LRT) opportunities with a focus on potential LRT station locations. The initial scope of this planning effort focused on the vicinity of the future transit center, which will be constructed to support the upcoming bus rapid transit (BRT) program on the I-405 corridor. The City of Renton has been leading a planning effort for the future transit center with an emphasis on creating transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities in the Central Renton area.

As this LRT study progressed, Perteet explored station locations in two additional areas. First, in Southwest Renton, this study assumed an LRT station at or near the Sounder station at the Renton-Tukwila boundary. Perteet incorporated this assumed Southwest Renton station location in all scenarios, to provide a tie-in point for conceptual alignments connected to the Central Renton station location within the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea. Second, this analysis explored a LRT station in North Renton due to the residential and commercial density that exists there today with The Landing. Evaluating all three areas together in this study led to conceptual alignments to connect the three station zones and a stronger understanding of LRT opportunities for the city.

### 1.1 Project Need and Background

Sound Transit is the local agency responsible for LRT construction, operations, and maintenance in King County. Their current work includes LRT and BRT implementation under the program known as Sound Transit 2, which was passed by voters in the Puget Sound region in 2008, as well as planning effort with future construction via the Sound Transit 3 (ST3) program, which was passed in 2016. Neither of these programs will deliver light rail to Renton. However, ST3 includes a high-capacity transit planning study for a West Seattle to Burien route, which includes a connection of Renton to Tukwila, which is already served by LRT.

Sound Transit has not yet initiated the ST3 Renton-Tukwila LRT study. At this point, the timing for that study is unknown and subject to available funding. That study is anticipated to include a detailed evaluation of LRT feasibility, track alignments, station locations, ridership, costs, and schedule.
Although Sound Transit has not yet started concept development for extension of LRT to Renton, the city initiated this station area planning study to better understand the opportunities for locating future LRT stations that would support transit-oriented development, providing the greatest walksheds to future LRT stations, and connecting to bus transit. This early evaluation of these considerations provides the city the opportunity to consider zoning changes and other strategies to support potential LRT station locations.

### 1.1.1 Prior Renton Light Rail Transit Studies

In 2005, Sound Transit performed a high-level study of the Tukwila-Renton LRT connection that included the development of a potential LRT alignment, shown in Figure 1. Note that this alignment was developed based on the current location of the Downtown Renton Transit Center, not the future bus transit center in the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea, which will replace it. This alignment also made assumptions about connections via Tukwila to the main light rail spine along I-5, which may not be current any longer.

Based on these factors, Perteet did not strictly adhere to this 2005 study. However, it was a helpful resource for understanding which segments of alignment that Sound Transit once evaluated, and it served as a starting point for this new analysis.

![Figure 1. Sound Transit 2005 potential LRT alignment.](image)
1.2 Analysis Goals and Process

The primary goal for this study is to perform a high-level evaluation of potential station location options near the future transit center to better coordinate and identify TOD opportunities and successful connections between LRT and pedestrian facilities, bicycle facilities, and transit.

Secondary goals for this study include:

- Evaluating potential LRT alignments within Renton to connect stations and consider system connectivity.
- Evaluating potential LRT station locations in North Renton.
- Coordinating with partner agencies to understand their considerations for this planning effort and build support for future studies.

Perteet completed the following tasks to achieve these goals:

1. Established criteria for the LRT station location and alignment concepts.
2. Generated two preliminary Central Renton station location and alignment exhibits.
3. Collaborated with partner agencies to refine the exhibits, leading to three concepts for each of the three station areas.
4. Generated exhibits illustrating the station location, walksheds, potential connecting alignments, and sensitive environmental areas for each refined station area concept.
5. Evaluated internally and separately with the partner agencies the relative performance of each refined station area concept using the criteria established in Task 1.
6. Confirmed with the partner agencies which concepts should be recommended for future study and the final performance scoring for each concept.

1.2.1 Partner Agencies

While the station areas in this study are in the City of Renton, there are multiple critical stakeholders whose interest and expertise made it advantageous to include in the planning process. This Agency Support Team (AST) was made up of Sound Transit, King County Metro, the City of Renton, the City of Tukwila, and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT).
2.0 PRELIMINARY STATION AREA PLANNING

This chapter documents the planning and analysis steps Perteet completed with the City of Renton and the Agency Support Team. The major milestones of this process were two workshops and one summary meeting with the AST to develop and refine the station area concepts. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these events were all held virtually instead of in person.

2.1 Initial Steps

To begin the study, Perteet established design criteria for the LRT designs based on the requirements included in the Sound Transit Design Criteria Manual (January 2021). Although this study did not include detailed track engineering, the design criteria informed some key discussions around allowable LRT track radii and vertical profile considerations, particularly with respect to an I-405 over- or undercrossing.\(^1\)

Then, Perteet evaluated two initial station locations and alignments near the future transit center in the Rainier/Grady Junction Subarea. These two initial concepts are shown in Figure 2.

\(^1\) At this planning stage, Perteet recommends viewing all conceptual layouts as preliminary approximations. While the designs do conform to portions of the Sound Transit Design Criteria Manual, there are alignment parameters that are beyond the scope of this study. Specifically, there are three elements of horizontal curvature that will require refinement by Sound Transit: spiral curvature, superelevation, and individual track design.
The main distinction between these two initial concepts was the orientation of the station—either north-south or east-west—as that affects the alignments in and out of the station. The station location shown on the south side of Grady Way has an alignment that also follows Grady Way. Whereas the north-south station location requires curvature to the south to connect back into an alignment, which forces that alignment to the south, shown in Figure 2 following SW 12th Street in this preliminary concept. Although the core focus of this planning study is on station locations, it is important to recognize how the alignments of these potential stations factor into that analysis.

Providing strong LRT-BRT (and other transit) connections was the focus for these initial concepts. The purpose of developing that strong connection is to encourage increased ridership with both types of transit systems, because the coordinated infrastructure reduces the travel time (walking or biking) between modes. This would facilitate the I-405 BRT network serving as a feeder system to the LRT station (or vice versa), enhancing mobility. For these initial concepts, Perteet assumed the station locations, shown in Figure 2 as green segments, would be aerial stations that would be connected to the transit center block without requiring users to make an at-grade crossing of Grady Way, which means the biggest potential barrier in terms of travel time, safety, and comfort would be eliminated by the connection path.

Perteet presented the design criteria and initial concepts to City of Renton staff and representatives from the City of Tukwila’s Planning Department and Economic Development Department on February 25, 2021. At that meeting, the group confirmed the design criteria was
appropriate for this study and shared some considerations to build out the station area and alignment concepts. The primary feedback was to shift the north-south station concept to move the station approximately 250 feet east to be above the existing parking areas between Lake Avenue S and Shattuck Avenue S. The reason for this change is the station location then avoids the overhead transmission lines that run north-south, west of Lake Avenue S. (See Chapter 3 for additional considerations on the overhead transmission lines.)

2.2 Workshop 1

The first workshop was held on March 1, 2021, with Perteet and City of Renton staff. The purposes of this first workshop were to share current exhibits for the concepts and identify additional stations to evaluate.

Perteet presented the revised Central Renton station location concepts, which incorporated the feedback from the prior meeting about shifting one station location to avoid transmission lines. This led to a robust discussion that stemmed four new station locations across the Central Renton and North Renton areas. A central element of this discussion was general feasibility for implementing the system in terms of capital cost, right-of-way, and property impacts. The group identified that the most feasible configurations would involve repurposing the existing railroad alignment that connects Central Renton and North Renton. If abandoned by the railroad, this right-of-way would facilitate segments of at-grade LRT track, which is less expensive than aerial track.

The project team then added one new Central Renton station location for further analysis. This conceptual station is located along the railroad alignment in the vicinity of the Rainer Avenue S grade-separated crossing. Though this location is a block from the future bus transit center, the group identified potential impact and cost benefits associated with staying on the existing alignment as opposed to following Grady Way or SW 12th Street.

This workshop is where the study expanded to include North Renton. The group asked Perteet to study The Landing as an additional station zone because of the existing and future density that is anticipated in the vicinity. Together, the City of Renton and Perteet determined three candidate station locations in North Renton that are shown together in Figure 3. The red segments are stations, with surrounding dashed circles representing a one-quarter-mile walkshed.
See Section 2.3 for a more detailed evaluation and mapping of each Central Renton and North Renton station area concept.

2.3 Workshop 2

The second workshop, held on March 18, 2021, brought together representatives from the City of Renton, the City of Tukwila, Sound Transit, King County Metro, and WSDOT. The goal of this workshop was to confirm or modify station locations while considering multiple sources of input from various agencies and team members.

Perteet prepared exhibit maps of each Central Renton station area—including the connecting alignment to the assumed Southwest Renton station near the existing Sounder station—and each North Renton station area. Perteet also developed a criteria matrix for participants to fill in to evaluate each concept using five analysis categories with a ranking of 1 (poor) to 5 (strong) for each category.

The five categories were as follows:

- **Walkshed extents.** How well the walksheds (one-quarter and one-half mile from the center of the LRT station) cover desirable surrounding areas for pedestrian connections to the proposed LRT station.
- **BRT-LRT connections.** How well connected the new LRT station is to the new Central Renton Transit Center.
- **Transit oriented development (TOD) opportunities.** LRT is often accompanied by TOD within a one-quarter- to one-half-mile radius of the station. This category should
consider overlaps with anticipated TOD connected to the Central Renton Transit Center and sub-area planning, and if that overlap is desirable.

- **Environmental impacts.** The extent to which the LRT station and alignment would affect environmentally sensitive areas or critical areas, such as streams, wetlands, and landslide hazard zones.

- **Land use impacts.** The LRT alignment and station will affect some adjacent properties, potentially via full or partial right-of-way acquisition. This may disrupt or remove existing land uses. Consider if these impacts are consistent with subarea planning or similar development concepts or if they are oppositional. This criteria category is related to the TOD opportunities category; however, focus on unavoidable impacts due to construction of the LRT system, as opposed to development opportunities tied to the new transit mode.

During the workshop, Perteet shared each concept exhibit map and facilitated discussions about the station location and alignment design elements and considerations. See Figures 4 and 5 for the six options considered.

![Figure 4. Central Renton Options 1, 2, and 3 (from left to right).](image-url)
Perteet also revealed its scoring of each concept and category, as a starting point for the participants’ scoring exercise. After discussing each option, each participant could score each category for each station alternative during the meeting using an online form. Fourteen attendees scored the Central Renton options, while 13 evaluated the North Renton options. Table 1 shows the average scores generated by the group at Workshop 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Central Option 1</th>
<th>Central Option 2</th>
<th>Central Option 3</th>
<th>North Option 1</th>
<th>North Option 2</th>
<th>North Option 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walkshed extents</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRT-LRT connections</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOD opportunities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitive area impacts</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land use impacts</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The discussion and scores surrounding these six station areas reflected that some locations had advantages over others, but the AST did not eliminate any concepts from further study. Nor did the AST request any modifications to the exhibit maps or revisions to any station locations or alignment designs.

2.4 Advisory Committee Meeting
The Advisory Committee meeting, held on June 9, 2021, brought together 17 individuals from the City of Renton (including three councilmembers), King County Metro, Outcomes by Levy, WSDOT, Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), Sound Transit, and the Renton Downtown Partnership. In addition to expanding the discussion to include new voices, the goals of this meeting were to confirm if the previous scores established as a group at Workshop 2 were still generally correct and to, if desired, narrow down the alternatives list for future studies.

Like at Workshop 2, Perteet shared exhibit maps of each concept along with scores, this time the averages that the group generated at the prior workshop. The advisory committee elected to make one score change for Central Renton Option 3 and added one additional category for evaluation: cost. These scores are shown in Table 2, with orange values illustrating a new or modified element compared to the information in Table 1 above. Note that for costs, a higher score indicates a lower anticipated cost, and vice versa.

Table 2. LRT Decision Matrix (Advisory Committee Scores).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Central Option 1</th>
<th>Central Option 2</th>
<th>Central Option 3</th>
<th>North Option 1</th>
<th>North Option 2</th>
<th>North Option 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walkshed extents</td>
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<td>BRT-LRT connections</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOD opportunities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sensitive area impacts</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land use impacts</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.0 STUDY SUMMARY

This conceptual planning-level study focused on identifying potential future light rail transit stations in the Central Renton and North Renton neighborhoods.

In order to allow Sound Transit to complete a full environmental process, this study does not recommend a preferred alternative for either neighborhood. Perteet and the agency support team developed three station concepts in each vicinity that appear suitable for further study.

3.1 Conclusions

Based on the five primary evaluation criteria of this study, Renton appears to have viable light rail transit station locations in both the Central Renton and North Renton vicinities. Per the scoring in Table 2, all station location concepts score as high performance or strong performance in at least two categories each. If the existing railroad corridor can be converted to serve the LRT system, it would provide a natural location for the bulk of the alignment between Central and North Renton.

In Central Renton, stations near the upcoming bus transit center are anticipated to have stronger performance in terms of BRT-LRT connections and sensitive area impacts as compared to a station option near the railroad overcrossing of Rainier Avenue S. However, the latter option has a lower anticipated cost than the options near the transit center.

The differences in the scoring results for North Renton are less distinct. All but one score—walkshed extents for Option 3—is a 3 or 4 for these three station concepts. Options 1 and 2, which follow the railroad alignment for a longer distance than Option 3, have better anticipated impacts and overall cost.

3.2 Recommended Future Actions

This study should serve as a foundation for future analysis, by Sound Transit, the City of Renton, or others, to shape the expansion of light rail to the city. As future assessments occur, the city should engage in planning for the preferred station area(s) (once known) to assess if city-coordinated land use changes are required to facilitate or smooth the implementation of the LRT system. Some of those assessments may be appropriate at this early stage, but there are likely too many unknowns about LRT timing, locations, and configurations to accurately predict at this time which changes will be necessary. Because of its central role in the LRT alignments the project team developed between stations, the city should begin planning now for the opportunity to utilize the existing railroad right-of-way for a future LRT system.

Perteet recommends continuing the dialog about system expansion with key partner agencies such as Sound Transit and City of Tukwila. A coordinated study between those two agencies and City of Renton would help develop the western end of the LRT system studied here. And,
collaborating earlier with these agencies, particularly Sound Transit, will allow Renton to respond earlier to planning needs for land use and infrastructure while shaping the development of the system within the city.

Perteet also recommends that future stages of this planning effort include community input, economic analyses of redevelopment opportunities near stations, and a more detailed assessment of the connections between BRT, standard bus transit, and LRT.