Rainier Beach
Neighborhood Plan Update

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Introduction & Background

I. How this Update is Organized

This document incorporates various components that together comprise the neighborhood plan update. The following is a description of the different components:

Introduction and Background – describes the purpose, process and major outcomes of the Update. It includes the overall Vision for the future and Priorities for achieving it, and a description of the steps and methods of Community Engagement through which stakeholders provided guidance and invaluable information. It also provides an overview of the Healthy Living Framework, a tool to focus attention to how planning can improve our health.

Goals and Strategies – are the key components of this update. The Goals and Strategies build upon one another to help fulfill the Rainier Beach Vision. They are a distillation of what we heard from the community and will guide the City's work as well as inform future development that occurs in the neighborhood. The Goals are organized into three broad categories: Strong Communities and Organizations; Healthy People and Families; and Great Places that Support Our Community. Within each category are subsections with associated Goal and Strategies and a discussion that distills the community input that shaped the strategies.

Appendices – The appendix of the update, which is available online, has several important resource documents. These include an action plan that guides the initial implementation steps, and the updated Rainier Beach Neighborhood Plan Goals and Policies that will be incorporated into the citywide Comprehensive Plan.
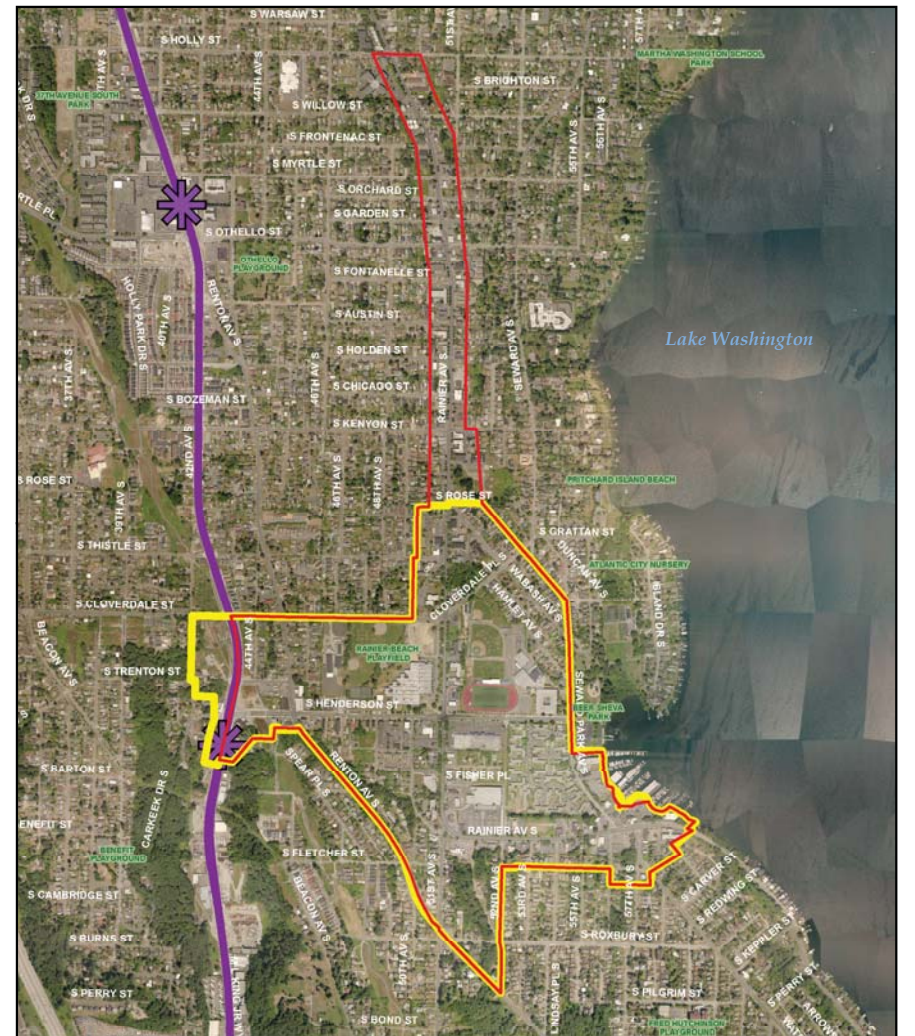
Rainier Beach

Urban Village

Neighborhood Plan Area

Aerial Photo: 2007

LINK Light Rail
* Stations
— At-Grade / Aerial
— Tunnel

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II. Purpose

In the late 1990s, people in Rainier Beach worked together to create *Rainier Beach 2014: A Plan for a Sustainable Future*. Since that time, the Rainier Beach area has experienced change, including: the opening of light rail; reconstruction of the Rainier Beach K-8 school and library addition; Mapes Creek Walkway improvements; and investments in Kubota Garden. Overall, community members have feelings of both pride and concern about Rainier Beach. They pointed out that there have been some positive changes resulting from these investments. People appreciated that there are good neighbors and strong community activism. Many also want to decrease crime on S Henderson St. and around the light rail station. There was also a desire for more vibrant commercial districts; and a strong desire for better bus connections to the light rail station. Many felt that it was time to assess the strengths of the original plan, affirm goals that are still relevant, and identify new goals to address changed conditions.

In 2010, the community and City began working together to update the Rainier Beach neighborhood plan. This plan update is a guide for the community and City. It articulates the key priorities as well as a full spectrum of strategies so that the community, City, and developers can all work together to seek funding and realize transformative change that will bring Rainier Beach toward our shared neighborhood vision.

Seattle's Comprehensive Plan and the Urban Village Strategy - Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, *Toward a Sustainable Seattle*, articulates a vision of how Seattle will grow in ways that sustain its citizens' values. The urban village strategy is a central piece of the City's approach to planning for a sustainable future. It enables the City to:
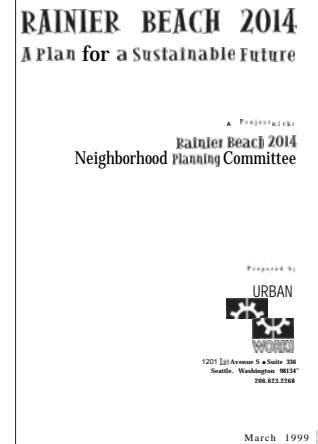* deliver services more equitably;
* pursue a development pattern that is environmentally and economically sound; and
* manage growth and change in collaboration with the community.

Neighborhood Plans - In the 1990s, people from 38 neighborhoods across the city created a 20-year vision for how each of the City's urban centers and villages would grow. The resulting neighborhood plans included strategies to ensure that the expected growth was informed by both City expertise and local knowledge and priority-setting. The Rainier Beach plan addresses the Rainier Beach Urban Village, a Residential Urban Village. Residential urban villages provide a focus of goods and services for residents and surrounding communities but may not provide a concentration of employment

Neighborhood Plan Updates - In the decade that followed there have been significant changes in Seattle's neighborhoods, including growth in housing, and major investments in infrastructure and amenities. The population of the city also greatly diversified. In 2008, the Mayor and City Council recognized the need to consider updating the plans through broad and inclusive discussions with the community, including new strategies for engagement.

1999 Rainier Beach Neighborhood Plan Key Strategies 1999
* Henderson Street: Building a Better Boulevard: Revitalize the street by connecting the community's commercial and civic core at South Henderson Street & Rainier Avenue South to the light rail station at South Henderson Street & MLK Jr. Way South.
* Beach Square: Commercial Core Revitalization: Rejuvenate the commercial shopping center of Rainier Beach by completing transportation, economic development, land use, and streetscape improvements.
* Community Education: The Building Block of the Future: Promote education as a means of improving the present and future for Rainier Beach's youth, adults, and seniors.

RAINIER BEACH 2014
A Plan for a Sustainable Future

A Project of the
Rainier Beach 2014
Neighborhood Planning Committee

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March 1999

III. Community Engagement

During the update, a broad cross section of community members came together with the City to do the work using both innovative and time-tested tools. In 2011, community members expressed their views at neighborhood and City-sponsored meetings and events. Long-time veterans of neighborhood planning and a new generation of neighborhood planners came together to build a broader base of civic engagement.

An important goal was to include people with a wide range of backgrounds to fully involve those who have been historically underrepresented in planning. Bicultural and/or bilingual Planning Outreach Liaisons connected with the traditionally underrepresented Oromo (Afan Oromo), African-American, Ethiopian (Amharic), Hispanic/Latino, Laotian, Somali, Filipino (Tagalog), renters, elderly, and youth communities. This intensive effort helps to build relationships with those who were new to the planning discussion, and to provide sufficient background information to help them participate effectively.
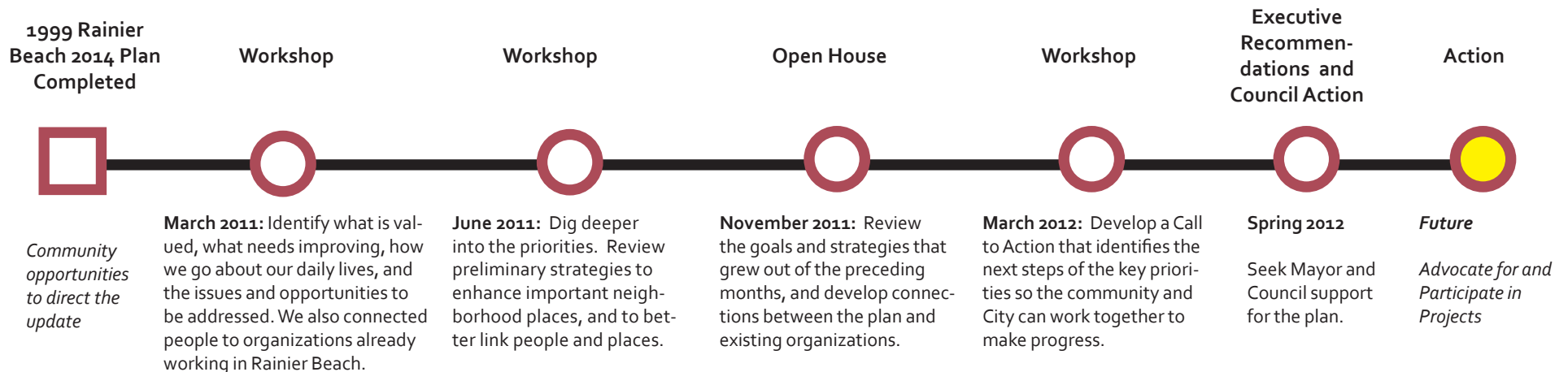
Through four phases this broad cross-section of our community identified the overarching goals and outlined the priorities and strategies for addressing them. From hands-on workshops and smaller-scale interactive meetings, to instant polling and online updates and questionnaires, neighbors and businesses got involved. Active engagement, followed by clear reporting back enabled a transparent process from issue identification though drafting and finalizing recommendations.

Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC)
The NAC is a representative group of community members who are passionate about their community and understand the importance of engaging others in the neighborhood planning process. The city convened the NAC to work with City staff to assess and address those conditions that have changed since the 1999 Plan, to engage the wider community, review their input, and help form recommendations that balance all community interests.

Cheryl dos-Remedios	Margaret Yellowwolf
Christie Coxley	Mohamed Sheikh Hassan
David Sauvion	Peter Masundire
Gregory Davis	Rodolfo Castillo
Guyanthony Parramore	Vallerie Fisher
Harry Hoff man	Robert West "Trey"
Katy Curtis	

Neighborhood Plan Update Timeline

1999 Rainier Beach 2014 Plan Completed	Workshop	Workshop	Open House	Workshop	Executive Recommendations and Council Action	Action
Community opportunities to direct the update	**March 2011:** Identify what is valued, what needs improving, how we go about our daily lives, and the issues and opportunities to be addressed. We also connected people to organizations already working in Rainier Beach.	**June 2011:** Dig deeper into the priorities. Review preliminary strategies to enhance important neighborhood places, and to better link people and places.	**November 2011:** Review the goals and strategies that grew out of the preceding months, and develop connections between the plan and existing organizations.	**March 2012:** Develop a Call to Action that identifies the next steps of the key priorities so the community and City can work together to make progress.	**Spring 2012** Seek Mayor and Council support for the plan.	*Future* *Advocate for and Participate in Projects*

IV. Healthy Living Framework

The Healthy Living Framework brings a focused attention to how planning choices for our neighborhood can improve our health. Research has shown that increasing our access to healthy foods, places to be physically active, spaces for gathering and our sense of place supports a healthy lifestyle. The City received a Public Health Seattle & King County Communities Putting Prevention to Work grant to incorporate health into neighborhood planning through developing and undertaking a Healthy Living Assessment (HLA). The framework and assessment aim to keep people at the forefront of planning efforts by identifying what physical and programmatic improvement can be made to support health. The HLA used information from three sources: health indicators from census and other similar data sources; neighborhood surveys; and discussions with the Rainier Beach community to identify assets to preserve and opportunities to be healthier.

Through the discussions and neighborhood surveys, we heard that a healthy Rainier Beach includes:

- Strong Communities & Organizations: A thriving and interconnected community that contains diverse households, supported by strong social and cultural institutions and services

- Healthy People & Families: A neighborhood that provides access to resources necessary to live a healthful life

- Great Places that Support our Community: A natural and built environment that is healthy and provides for a healthy community

Applying the HLA also helped identify infrastructure improvements, community initiatives, or City incentives to improve the health of the community, and which assets of the community need to be preserved or strengthened.

The HLA included three data gathering tools that were used to identify health assets and health gaps in Rainier Beach. These tools include sixteen health indicators, a neighborhood questionnaire, and a set of community discussion questions. The findings and implications of the assessment area provided in sidebars like this throughout this document.

V. Vision

*Rainier Beach is rich with cultural and physical resources. It has a thriving and interconnected community that contains a rich mix of households including minority and immigrant residents. The community is supported by strong social and cultural institutions and services that provide stability during changing times. The neighborhood provides access to resources necessary for people to live a healthful life. The neighborhood's parks, opens spaces, roads, and other physical assets are in good condition and provide for a healthy community. **

 "The Rainier Beach community wants to become a pleasant and safe neighborhood. Bringing this about is our challenge and responsibility. The attributes of our area, its diversity and natural beauty, need to be sustained. By setting forth a positive resident and business-friendly image, we can create an enjoyable, affordable, and prosperous community."

VI. Priorities

By focusing on the following areas and undertaking these priority strategies the community and City can together realize transformative change that will bring Rainier Beach toward our shared vision. It is important that we look for opportunities to join projects we undertake into broader initiatives that reflect the natural connections linkages between people and places. *Making Rainier Beach Great! – A Call to Action: Rainier Beach Neighborhood Plan Update Action Plan* developed at the March 2012 workshop, outlines the first steps of implementing these recommendations.

"The community envisions a future where Rainier Beach will have an innovative, connected learning system that supports the integration of education into community life at all levels, and for all residents, resulting in the empowerment of the residents and the attainment of sustainable and beneficial changes in the community."

* This paragraph augments the vision contained in *Rainier Beach 2014: A Plan for a Sustainable Future* to reflect the shared value of the community as a place for everyone.

Strong Community (See Page 8)
- Develop an inclusive, effective organization that brings the neighborhood together to implement its plan.
- Create a shared multicultural community center to strengthen the existing culturally and ethnically diverse communities by providing space for services and individual and cross-cultural events.

Healthy People and Families (See Page 14)
- Make the schools a successful and shared community asset.
- Improve public safety, primarily in the Rainier Ave. S / S Henderson St. area, through a focused and comprehensive effort.
- Complete the Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetland project and forge strong links to the entire community.

Great Places (See Page 23)
- Stimulate development in each of the Rainier Beach Pearls (Beach Square, Historic Business District, Station Area, and Rose Street) to provide jobs, affordable family housing and community business.
- Create a streetscape plan for art, wayfinding, touchstones, kiosks etc, so these elements are included in street projects.
- Extend #7 Metro bus to light rail station and relocate bus layover.

GOALS & STRATEGIES

This section of the Update elaborates on the vision and defines specific steps the community and City can take to preserve, enhance and improve the day-to-day life of community members. It describes overarching goals to guide our actions.

I. Strong Communities & Organizations

The number one thing that people want to preserve is Rainier Beach's diversity. While this is one of the community's strengths there is much work to be done to strengthen the community's capacity to accomplish larger projects that support it's diversity such as: creating a multi-cultural center; nurturing a neighborhood identity; providing access to lifelong learning; or harnessing our artistic creativity to express our community. The following subsections provide strategies to support a thriving and interconnected community that contains diverse households, supported by strong social and cultural institutions and services.

A. Community Capacity

Existing neighborhood organizations and spiritual/religious groups have done significant work on behalf of the community in organizing their members, addressing issues and shar-

ing information. They will be instrumental in implementing this plan as well as other community initiated projects. However, there is a need to develop the capacity of the community to manage larger projects and pursue fundraising. Support from the City and elsewhere is often needed to realize community projects. Small and large efforts alike will need to marshal Rainier Beach's community members and groups to coordinated efforts. There is a need for an entity to empower people from all the different cultural groups of Rainier Beach to work together on implementing the neighborhood plan. In this way Rainier Beach can remain the thriving, integrated community it is today.

Goals

- Community-based, broadly-inclusive implementation of update recommendations and other community projects.

- Neighborhood spaces that support Rainier Beach's many cultures.

A diverse, supportive community where all people feel welcome is an important factor in creating a healthy neighborhood. Places to gather, and a strong network of connections provide opportunities for leadership development and neighborhood problem solving. Communities with strong networks have higher capacity for mobilization, civic engagement, and access to political power and economic opportunities. Group membership, political participation, and social networking are significantly associated with a range of physical and mental health outcomes. Collective action and political engagement help secure resources for a community that can improve health.

There is longevity in Rainier Beach - 44% of people who answered our questionnaire have lived in the neighborhood for six or more years. Of those, over 2/3 have lived in the neighborhood for 10 years or more. Strong family and social connections are built in a neighborhood with this type of stability.

In order to further strengthen the networks in the Rainier Beach, the neighborhood can build more relationships between the many active groups, and increase the participation of those who are not currently active in neighborhood groups.

Strategies

- Assess the community capacity and organizational options to create a non-profit entity that can implement large-scale community projects that include fundraising, programs like an art walk or music series, as well as development of capital projects like the envisioned multicultural center. Initial work identified 5 elements of organizational development and tangible steps that can be taken on each element over two roughly-timed periods:

  - Element 1. Governance Structure & Process

  - Element 2. Membership Characteristics

  - Element 3. Communication

  - Element 4. Purpose

  - Element 5. Resources

The phasing is important because the neighborhood is dynamic, creating a sustainable effort is often best built incrementally and each phase provides a foundation for further progress.

Phased Approach to Non-Profit Development for Rainier Beach

Phase 1 (1 – 2 years)	Phase 2 (3 – 5 years)
Element 1. Governance Structure & Process	
Build a short-term structure. • Convene culturally inclusive discussions to explore: how to build on existing organizational assets and add value for them as well as the neighborhood as a whole; roles; leadership; and how to build trust. • Consider either an affiliation or a network that can grow from an existing organization or be a new entity.	Move into a more long-term structure. • Aim for collaboration guided by a common missions and goals • Shared authority & control • Pool resources or jointly secure and manage to enable larger scale accomplishments. • Consider either a coalition or a federation/association.
Element 2. Membership Characteristics	
Build a membership that represents and meaningfully engages all constituencies. • Base on shared values & goals of concern for community, inclusive, community empowerment, self-determination. • Invest in community building. • Structure multiple layers of involvement. • Build skill sets.	• Deepen and broaden membership base to ensure you engage all constituencies. • Monitor representation and quality of engagement over time; make course adjustments as necessary. • Continue skill building as needed as organizations and/or leaders leave or join.
Element 3. Communication	
• Form cross-cultural communication channels. • Informal relationships and communication links are strengthened.	• Culturally-appropriate communications become more established and are integrated more deeply over time. • Informal relationships and links across constituencies expand and strengthen.
Element 4. Purpose	
Develop consensus on criteria to prioritize and select priority projects to focus time/effort and avoid "missed" opportunities such as: • Impact/potential community and/or shared benefits • Likely impact of community involvement • Timing • Resources	Continue to implement projects phased over time as established in phase 1.
Element 5. Resources	
• Ensure organizational "ducks" are in a row (clear plan, systems infrastructure, community representation). • Start small when pursuing initial resources and build over time. • Build capacity to manage and coordinate implementation, including ability to advocate and influence.	• Build on progress, increase scale of grants pursued. • Expand and deepen long-term relationships and partnerships.

- Community groups should actively engage community members and organizations in implementation of the plan update through means such as:
  - Develop and renew a "Call to Action" that defines short-term community actions.
  - Use Public Outreach Liaisons (POLs).
  - Provide early notification of projects and schedules and how to engage.
  - Identify "host" organizations to spearhead community input.
- Support the work of the Rainier Beach Community Empowerment Coalition to connect people to organizations that are currently working on issues.
- Convene regular meetings of the community's religious/spiritual leaders to work together on shared community issues.
- Seek public, foundation (non-profit), and private investment in areas critical to this community such as employment, education and housing.
- Conduct a feasibility analysis for developing a shared multi-cultural community center in Rainier Beach.
  - Work with existing organizations and minority and immigrant communities to assess and build capacity.
  - Develop a preliminary design program for the center, outlining considerations such as: functions, uses/activities, space needs, and design qualities.

- Consider partnering with Seattle Parks & Recreation at the new Rainier Beach Community Center.
- Develop a design concept for a multi-cultural center.
- Encourage City departments to meet with community organizations early in a project or program to increase collaboration and linking with community-driven projects.

B. Lifelong Learning

Rainier Beach is home to a dynamic blend of public and private educational institutions, with the capacity to provide formal and informal education to all residents. Situated in the nation's most diverse zip code, Rainier Beach residents represent an amazing wealth of cultural experiences.

One priority of the 1999 Rainier Beach plan was community education or life-long learning. The community envisioned that Rainier Beach would have "an innovative, connected learning system that supports the integration of education into community life at all levels, and for all residents, resulting in the empowerment of the residents and the attainment of sustainable and beneficial changes in the community."

Educational success is an excellent indicator for the overall well-being of youth and a strong predictor of adult health. Schools also play a critical role in promoting the health and safety of young people and helping them establish lifelong healthy behaviors.

Even as large investments were made in schools, 42% of Rainier Beach High School students are not graduating within 4 years, and under half of these graduates are enrolling in post-secondary education within one year of graduation. Many youth who we spoke to stress the need for more opportunities for them to be involved in the community outside of school time, including jobs, sports, and other positive activities. Parents desired stronger connections between the neighborhood and schools to reflect the fact that learning occurs within the community, and does not end at the school door or upon graduation.

In recent years two new schools were built in Rainier Beach and a public community center is under construction. These new investments provide the architecture for a strong educational system supporting youth both during and out of school time, and can be leveraged to create a strong, supportive environment for lifelong learning. By intentionally welcoming the community into the schools and the classroom into the community, both the schools and the neighborhood can be uplifted.

Goal
Strong schools with excellent programs and strong enrollment, producing exceptional students.

Strategies
- Work with Seattle Public Schools to increase community use of school space throughout the year, such as:
    - Hosting community college or extension classes.
    - Hosting adult education, especially in coordination with teen ESL learning and tutoring.
    - Hosting space for community meetings.
    - Providing a safe environment for teen activities, etc.
- Recruit an institution (community or branch college) to the community to provide college level curriculum as well as reinforce the value and availability of post high school education.

- Reinforce community connections to the youth by encouraging more community members to attend athletic events and games scheduled at Rainier Beach High School and the Rainier Beach Playfield through increasing family friendly activities, providing mobile food carts, etc.

- Involve parents and youth (especially non-English speaking families) in multigenerational programs like ESL, tutoring and citizenship classes to bridge generations and reinforce family strength.

- Support events like the Rainier Beach High School & Community Celebration and the Rainier Beach Community Empowerment Coalition's Back to School Bash that bring together students, parents, teachers and community members to celebrate the achievement of Rainier Beach students.

- Support existing programs like the Rainier Beach Neighborhood Academy that connect neighbors through classes that enhance the quality of life for neighborhood children, teens, adults and seniors.

- Strengthen community participation to support school programs such as tutoring, fundraising, etc.

Photo ©2012 WILLAUSTIN.COM

C. Community Identity

"Diverse" was the most common description and positive aspect community members identified for Rainier Beach. Most wanted it to be what people thought of first about Rainier Beach. Communities are sustained by people and organizations, but also by places. Rainier Beach has several locations that have been either a long-term focus of community or a new focus for a growing community. These locations or "Pearls" are identified in the section "Great Places that Support our Community" on page 24. The following recommendations offer ways to strengthen both individual contributing communities and cultures, as well as increase the collaboration among them.

Goal
A positive identity for Rainier Beach based on its unique assets and strengths.

Strategies
- Continue efforts such as the "Lift Every Voice" campaign to celebrate the dreams and determination of the Rainier Beach neighborhood including activities such as:
  - The Faces of Rainier Beach: Portraying the diversity of those who live, work, study, worship, and play in Rainier Beach through photographs and stories.
  - Rapid Response Team: Actively responding to media misrepresentations and public misperceptions of the neighborhood through letters to the editor, and compiling fact sheets on progress in economic development, education, the environment, public safety, transportation, and family life (including the arts and culture).
  - Living the Dream Map: Mapping out acts of social justice and community building across the neighborhood, drawing upon the Rainier Beach News Wire, local blogs and articles, and "crowd-sourced" reports.
  - Strengthen cross-organizational awareness of major events and activities to encourage coordination and mutual support.

- Support the African American community while embracing immigrant communities.

- Establish a "communications plan" between the City, Seattle Public Schools, community and newspapers in order to promote effective, positive communication.

- Work with other Rainier Valley organizations to rotate hosting the Rainier Valley Heritage Festival so that it includes and occurs in Rainier Beach as well as other places.

- Work with newspapers and online blogs to emphasize the positive activities (school events, arts and cultural celebrations) in Rainier Beach, and the contributions made by the different cultures.

- Support formation of a Rainier Beach African American business group or subcommittee of the Rainier Beach Merchant's Association.

- Feature ethnic and minority-owned businesses in Rainier Beach marketing programs.

- Implement programs and events that bring diverse elements of community together (e.g. cultural festival). Find appropriate ways to welcome different cultures into each others' gatherings and celebrations, using web sites, kiosks, etc.

- Support events such as a Rainier Beach Art walk that celebrate the best from each of the neighborhood's respective cultures.

- Define distinctive community expressions appropriate to each "Pearl" through public art that is relevant to the specific cultures (e.g., a youth and education focus at Beach Square). Look for alignment opportunities with Rainier Beach Merchant Association/ SEED Gateway Project.

D. Arts

There are many opportunities for art to express the different cultures of Rainier Beach. Public art by neighborhood artists and youth should be considered early in the design of projects funded by the City and other agencies. Funding and other support are needed for neighborhood art events that bring community members together. All of the small business clusters (Beach Square, Historic Business District, Station Area, Rose St., present unique opportunities for site specific art that reflects the community's cultures and enhances neighborhood character.

Goal
Arts and public art, in particular, are used to engage and express Rainier Beach's cultural diversity.

Strategies
- Integrate public art into projects wherever possible.
- Involve the area's youth and other community members in creating and integrating art at neighborhood locations.

Thinking sculpture at Rainier Beach Library. Photo © Slightlynorth via Flickr.

II. Healthy People & Families

This section identifies priorities to make Rainier Beach a neighborhood with resources necessary to live a healthful life. It outlines ways to help the neighborhood's youth to have educational and job opportunities they can grow with, ways to increase access to healthy food, and ways to promote safe walking and biking as a healthy way to undertake our daily activities.

A. Youth

Rainier Beach is motivated to find ways to help the neighborhood's youth to have educational and job opportunities they can grow with. By working to ensure that all aspects of the neighborhood reflect the community as a whole, Rainier Beach children can see models of success, and understand the path to realizing their aspirations.

Goal
Institutions and actions that support Rainier Beach youth.

Strategies
- Create partnerships to increase dedicated space and programming for youth and teens at the new Rainier Beach Community Center. Consider how the specific needs of youth in different cultural groups (e.g. African American, East African, Latino, Vietnamese, etc.) are met.

- Build on the work of the Youth and Families Initiative, coordinating with its top priorities (Health, Neighborhood Safety, Race and Social Justice, Strong Neighborhoods, Youth Development, and Education).

- Design and implement a program like the "Harlem Children's Zone Project" to holistically approach building Rainier Beach community so that its children succeed in college and go on to the job market.

- Employ more youth in Rainier Beach by creating mentorships with local businesses that teach leadership and entrepreneurship rather than continuing the "fast food employment" mentality.

- Include youth activities in community meetings, events and programs to increase opportunities to learn about youth concerns and to engage youth in the community.

- Expand tutoring opportunities, such as the Youth Tutoring Program at Lake Washington Apartments, potentially creating a tutoring center.

- Recruit staff, fluent in non-English languages used in the neighborhood, to lead youth programs.

- Work with Parks to guide youth programming at the community center and at parks, such as Youth Leaders on the Field that will help Somali youth learn leadership skills through soccer.

> A supportive network for youth is an essential component of a healthy community. This network includes schools that challenge students to achieve, activities that engage youth outside of the school day, and a culture that supports and values the positive contributions that youth make to the community.

B. Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands Preservation Project and Healthy Food Access

Access to healthy food is important to the community. Many Rainier Beach residents would like to see more and healthier food available at markets and restaurants. It is natural that healthy food should also be an expression of our heritages that is easily shared and appreciated. Unfortunately, Rainier Beach has a high density of fast food restaurants that are neither healthy nor reflective of our culture. As Rainier Beach grows and businesses develop, we should emphasize attracting full service, rather than fast food restaurants.

The Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands Project is a community led and community bred effort to establish an Urban Farm at the former Seattle Parks' Atlantic City Nursery site located at 5513 South Cloverdale Street in Rainier Beach. The closing and relocation of the Park's operations, has created an opportunity for the neighborhood to shape the future use of this park property.

The Friends of Atlantic City Nursery formed out of community interest to create a local source for fresh produce, community gardening, economic development and training opportunities for area residents and youth. The Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands Project will serve as an innovative effort to build community pride and preservation of the area wetlands and the environment.

Through a requests for proposal process parks entered into an agreement with Friends of Atlantic City Nursery n partnership with Seattle Tilth to operate and manage the site and programs. The Parks & Green Spaces Levy Opportunities Grant provided $500,000 for the project, taking this project a step closer to reality.

Rainier Beach has a unique opportunity to combine its Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetland Project and proposed flexible commercial zone in the station area to become a hub of food and agricultural production.

Goal
Ready access to healthy food.

Strategies
- Support the work of Friends of Atlantic City Nursery and Seattle Tilth to implement the Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands Preservation project. Create a link between each physical project or program and the larger community. Elements include:

Organic Food Production and Distribution
- Connect the Urban Farm to restaurants.
- Build urban farming practices such as:
  - A Micro Farm Incubator that helps individuals and families become financially independent, apply their experience to farming and other related businesses, and increase farmland and access to healthy local food.

Consuming the recommended level of fruits and vegetables is associated with lower rates of many chronic conditions. People who have access to healthy, culturally appropriate foods at an affordable price are more likely to consume them at higher levels.

All resident in the urban village are within ½ mile of a supermarket that accepts SNAP (food stamp) benefits and provides healthy food. There are also smaller ethnic markets that provide culturally appropriate food. The weekly Columbia City farmers market is a short 2.5 mile bus or bike ride away. Efforts are underway to develop a P-Patch in the Rainier Beach, and a new urban farm and additional community garden are under development.

While community gardens rarely provide all of the produce a family needs for the year, they benefit gardeners through increased physical activity and fruit and vegetable consumption. They also bring neighbors together, reduce social isolation, and build community cohesion and empowerment.

People who live near many fast-food restaurants and convenience stores have a higher prevalence of obesity and diabetes compared to people who live near grocery stores and fresh produce vendors. Students with fast food restaurants within ½ mile of their schools have been found to eat fewer fruits and vegetables, consume more soda, and have higher rates of being overweight compared to students who do not have fast-food restaurants within ½ mile of their schools.

- Supportive relationships with organizations like SHA and Solid Ground

Nutrition Education

- Connect the Urban Farm and Wetland Preservation project to programs at the schools.

  - Extend the Seattle Public Schools initiative to enhance its relationships with local farmers and source local fruits and vegetables. Consider lessons from Jamie Oliver's "Feed Me Better" campaign to get decent food into Britain's schools.

  - Create ties to the Southshore K-8 Learning Garden

- Connect the Urban Farm and Wetland Preservation project to the Rainier Beach Community Center.

  - Coordinate with Parks Summer Teen Program (STEP)

- Composting and Wetlands management

  - Develop a community-based wetland preservation program

  - Provide on-site Master Composter/Soil Builder training

- Link the Rainier Beach Urban Farm and flexible commercial zone in the station area (see page 35) to create a hub of food and agricultural production. The station area, as a "Gateway" to the city and Rainier Valley as a whole, is an ideal location for a new sustainable production model where both local goods and labor are combined, and marketed locally.

- Partner with local schools and training initiatives to help create valued and rewarding jobs.

- Consider working with neighborhood and well-known chefs to celebrate the community's diversity and market its neighborhood to the rest of the city.

- Local plant-based materials with a range of attributes (bamboo/structural, beans/filler, flowers/dye) could also be grown and crafted into products.

- Build collaboration among groups working to improve access to, and provide education about, healthy food, such as Rainier Beach Urban Farm, Tilth, Seattle Community Farm, Rainier Beach Learning Garden, and Rainier Valley Eats.

- Use programs such as "Healthy Foods Here" to increase availability of healthy foods in stores and restaurants throughout the neighborhood.

- Create a farmers' market or an alternative locally grown food outlet to serve Rainier Beach.

- Increase other community opportunities to grow food such as P-Patches.

- Support a community kitchen for community gathering, food processing & production, and small business development.

Atlantic City Nursery Concept Plan

FARM

SHARED VEHICLE AND PEOPLE ACCESS

WETLAND

WALKING PATH

C. Linkages

Walking and bicycling improve health and strengthen the community fabric. This section addresses the ways to make it easier to walk and bike and thereby improve the health of individuals families and the entire community. While much of Rainier Beach has streets and sidewalks, there are large blocks of land occupied by schools, Safeway and Lake Washington Apartments. Additionally, S Henderson St. and Rainier Ave. S between the Safeway and S 57th St. need improvements to be safe and attractive.

Goal
Integrated transportation improvements that serve the community.

Strategies
- When prioritizing projects, consider the concepts illustrated in the Linkages and Pearl diagrams on page 19 that would enhance safety and improve the physical and emotional linkages to the Pearls (i.e., sense of ownership or identification with connections between the places where the community gathers and shops).

- Overall Considerations for Southeast Transportation Study (SETS) projects: Integrate into the proposed coordinated public realm plan:
  - Distinctive crosswalk paving;
  - Specialized lighting that creates the sense of being in a special place, reinforces that slower speeds are expected, and that the Urban Village is a safe place for pedestrians and bicyclists.

- Use additional area created by intersection re-alignments as locations for public art.

- Incorporate "Touchstones" into SETS projects (see page 18).

- Complete the improvements defined in the Rainier Beach Merchant's Association plan *Gateway to Rainier Valley at Rainier Beach: Creating a pedestrian-friendly and vibrant business district in south Rainier Valley* (see page 20).

- Integrate the Gateway concepts into the proposed public realm plan. Seek additional funding to implement the full streetscape concept.

- Improve the S Henderson St. corridor to function as a safe and attractive boulevard linking the Rainier Beach light rail station, Beach Square and Lake Washington (see page 21).

Photo © James Callan via Flickr

Walking and bicycling are easily accessible methods of physical activity that have been shown to improve overall physical and mental health. Walking around a neighborhood has the increased benefit of building relationships and strengthening the community fabric. Increased pedestrian activity improves the safety and friendliness of a neighborhood as more people claim public space for positive uses. Compared to driving, walking and bicycling, either alone or in combination with transit use, decrease a neighborhood's impact on the environment, reducing greenhouse gas emissions as well as other forms of air, water, and noise pollution.

Rainier Beach has good basic pedestrian infrastructure, with sidewalks on over 80% of its roadway. Residents make use of this infrastructure, with 30% of residents we polled indicating they walked around the neighborhood to travel to shops, restaurants, parks, community centers, or friends' houses, 22% walked for exercise or recreation, and an additional 20% walked to transit or directly to work.

Residents suggested that improvements in the pedestrian environment would increase the number of people who choose to walk in the neighborhood and the frequency with which they do. Sixty-five percent of residents who responded to our questionnaire said that safer streets would encourage them to walk more, and 21% said their walking would be increased by having more local places to go.

- Coordinate planned or funded transportation improvements, economic development and/or public safety initiatives with other related activities to maximize the impact of each effort at improving the area.
- Seek dedicated funds to enable SDOT to coordinate with and respond to adjacent development projects, thereby increasing the contribution of ROW improvement projects to "place-making." An example of this would be leveraging planned signal and channelization work on SETS project 41 and 42 to seek funding for related elements of the Gateway project as well as economic development activities.
- Support Feet First's work with the National Parks Service to create a Rainier Beach walking map.
  - Use the map and Neighborhood Walking Ambassadors to increase awareness and advocacy for improvements needed to make Rainier Beach a walkable neighborhood. Ambassadors are trained individuals who lead walks through the neighborhood. The walks are themed, interpretive events bringing neighbors together to share the interest of walking.
  - Develop the Touchstones digital walking tour that will reveal the people, history, and heritage of 12 locations in Rainier Beach. Touchscreen devices will be used to access online content through QR codes and Wi-Fi access points at each location. Online content will tell the history of each location, explain the heritage of the community, and highlight the contributions of residents. Walking tour participants can contribute their own stories, sparking discussion of the past and present, with the goal of engaging residents in actively shaping the future. These walks will be opportunities to explore the area, discuss the history and future of the neighborhood, learn about secret places, discuss various roles and values, and create relationships that can empower the community.

- Increase access through South Shore K-8, Rainier Beach Playfield, Rainier Beach High School and between Beer Sheva and Pritchard Beach sites in the center of the community.
- Improve safe driving habits that respect pedestrians, transit and bicyclists. Activities could include neighborhood "speed watch," as well as presentations and literature made available at teen activities, Rainier Beach events, churches, ESL classes, etc.
- Implement the Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP) Tier 1 & 2 sidewalk and crossing projects within the Urban Village.
  - Ensure the sidewalk network within the triangle created by Renton Ave. S, S Henderson St., and Rainier Ave. S is completed as parcels develop within that area.
  - Further prioritize PMP projects that support the linkages illustrated in the Linkages Diagram
- When implementing the Bicycle Master Plan, make Rainier Beach bike friendly by taking extra effort to increase safety, since this community does not yet have a strong "bike culture."
- Implement the Transit Master Plan recommendation to reduce the number of, or eliminate the need for, transfers to get to the light rail train station or downtown Seattle.
- Seek ways to reduce the costs to residents of the Restricted Parking Zone (RPZ) such as making increasing awareness of reduced rate for low-income households or using monitoring of parking to determine if amending an RPZ is possible.

Research has shown that people who live closer to a transit stop are more likely to use transit for their commutes. Many people who use transit to get to work also get daily physical activity from the walk to and from transit. For the elderly and the disabled, access to public transit decreases barriers to participation in community and civic life and can decrease feelings of depression and alienation. Transit provides access to jobs, stores, cultural centers, and services in other parts of the city.

Using "Walk Score" as a relative indicator of walkability, improvements are needed so that Rainier Beach's score would increase from its current level of 46 – 69 to 80 – 85 that's typical of neighborhoods such as Wallingford or Fremont.

Linkages and Pearls

The physical and social ways people and places are connected that make Rainier Beach a community.
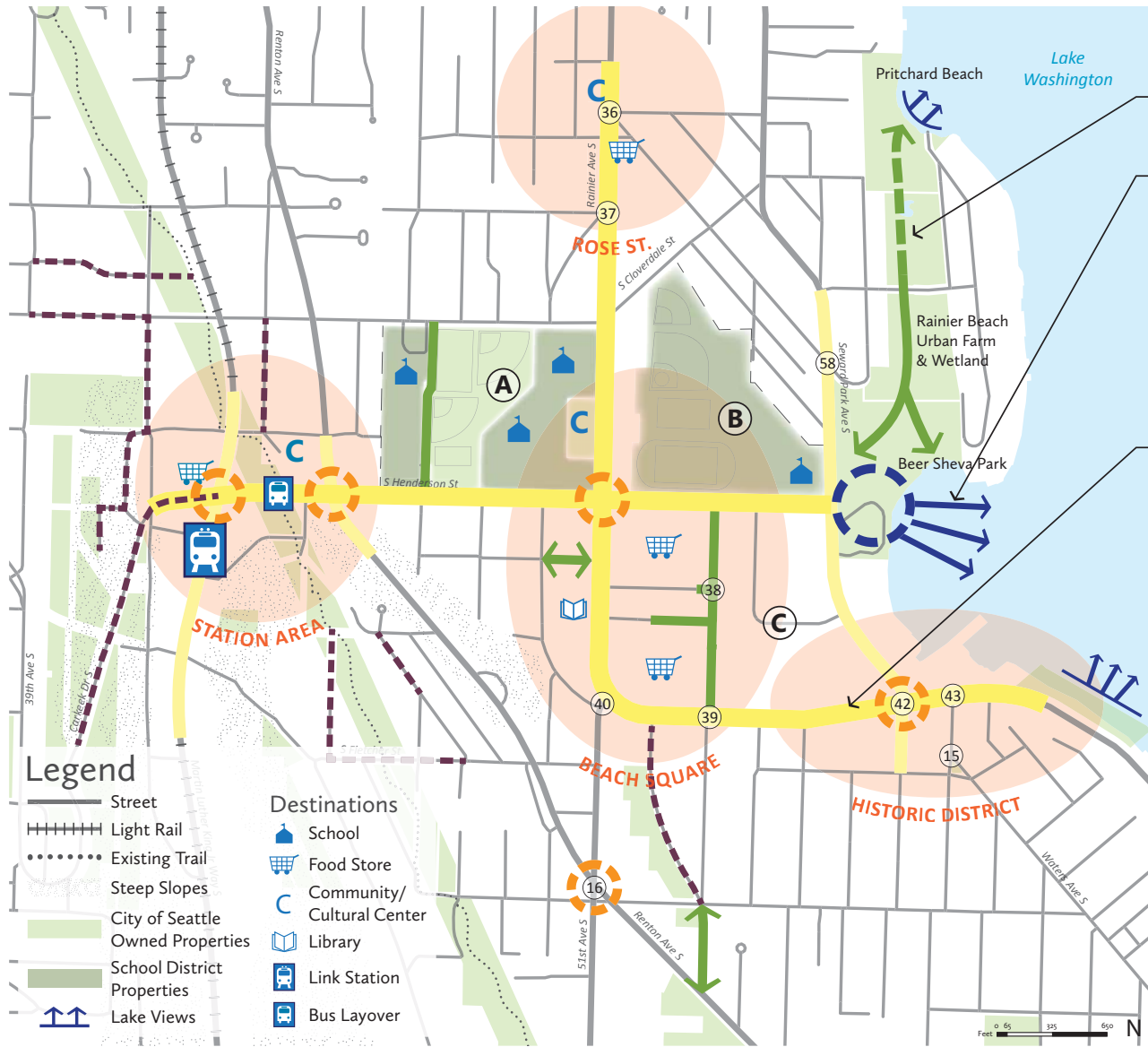
Recommendations

Parks and Recreation
- Create trail linking Pritchard Beach and Beer Sheva Park as proposed in the Atlantic City Nursery Urban Farm Plan.
- Open Henderson vista with views to the lake and access to Beer Sheva Park
- Increase visual and physical lake access

Superblocks Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ
←- -→ Develop system of gateway and connectors through superblocks
- Activate isolated areas with land uses, design, safety techniques and more people
- Increase access to playfields and public use
- Complete the walking grid with frequent connections

Streets
- Implement planned projects (SETS, PMP, Bike Plan, SPU projects)
- Create great safe, active walking streets (Rainier Ave S, S Henderson St, Seward Park Ave S, and 51st Ave S)

▪▪▪▪ Pedestrian Master Plan Priority SW Improvement

━━ Main Street Corridor Improvements

⑮ Southeast Transportation Strategy Project and Improve Safety

⭕ Improve key intersections for safety and create signature paving

Pearls
Historic District, Beach Square, Rose St., and Station Area

Community Linkages (not mapped)
- Build community capacity to organize, and undertake coordinated efforts
- Retain and build on assets: Places of Worship, Urban Impact, Ethiopian Community Center, East African Businesses
- Support and build on Atlantic City Nursery Urban Farm and wetland project by connecting people through healthy food and environment
- Create a multicultural center
- Celebrate as a community
- Use public art and design to create emotional connections to places and identities
- Build relationships with all schools to foster strong educational system
- Increase community use of parks and school playfields

Legend

Street
Light Rail
Existing Trail
Steep Slopes
City of Seattle Owned Properties
School District Properties
↑↑ **Lake Views**

Destinations
School
Food Store
C **Community/ Cultural Center**
Library
Link Station
Bus Layover

Gateway to Rainier Valley at Rainier Beach

Creating a pedestrian friendly and vibrant business district in South Rainier Valley.
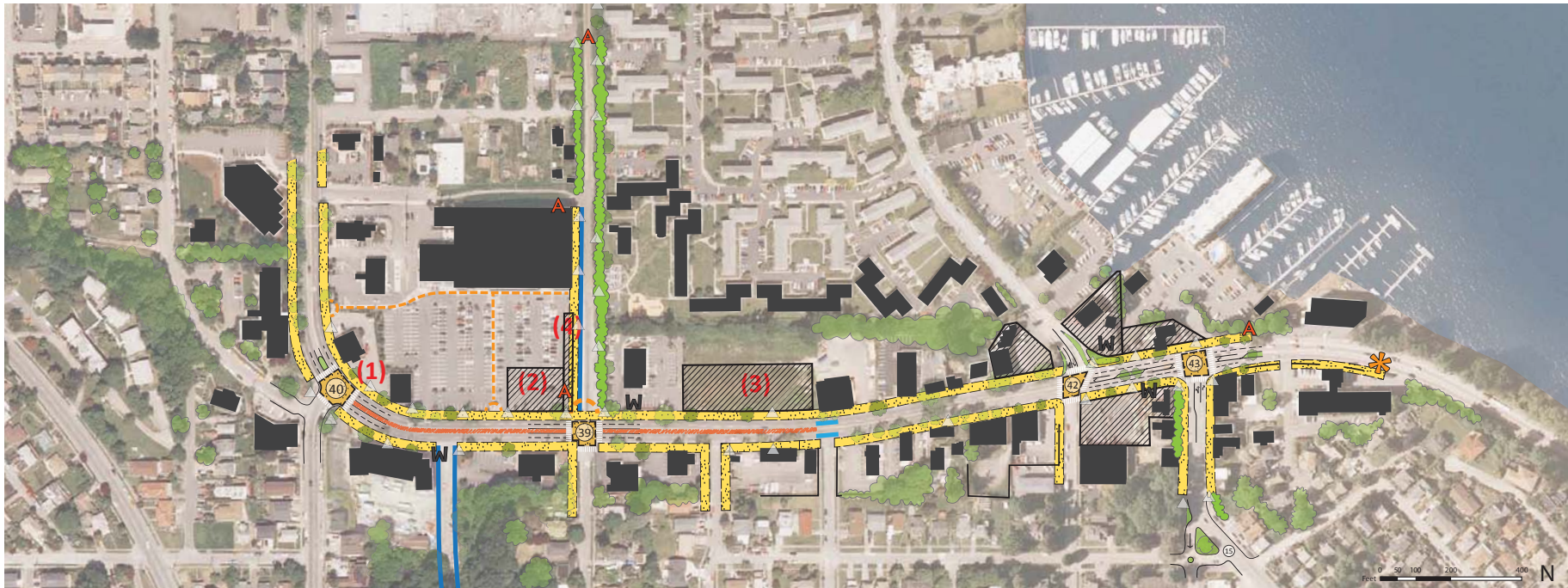

Existing Intersection of Rainier Ave S. and 52nd Ave S

Recommended Signal and Intersection Improvements

Extend Mapes Creek Wayfinding to Rainier Avenue

Work with property owners at key sites:

1. Encourage distinctive design with parking to rear and retain locally owned business/gathering space.

2. Encourage development of "pad" shop fronting on street and Mapes pathway.

3. Encourage development of retail with residences above fronting on street.

4. Encourage consolidation of this parcel with adjacent ones to reduce redevelopment and access issues.

Legend

▨ Key Site	■ Existing Building	🌳 New Tree (Representative)
▨ Evaluate/Add/Replace Sidewalks, Lights, and Trees	▨ Key Intersection	🌳 Existing Tree
── New Center Median (Representative)	── New Sidewalk	🌳 Remove Brush for Visibility
	═ New Crosswalk	

Southeast Transportation Study Project

A Art
W Wayfinding
△ Lighting Installation Area
✳ Gateway

March 08, 2012

Henderson Corridor

Create a safe, distinctive walking corridor.

Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetland
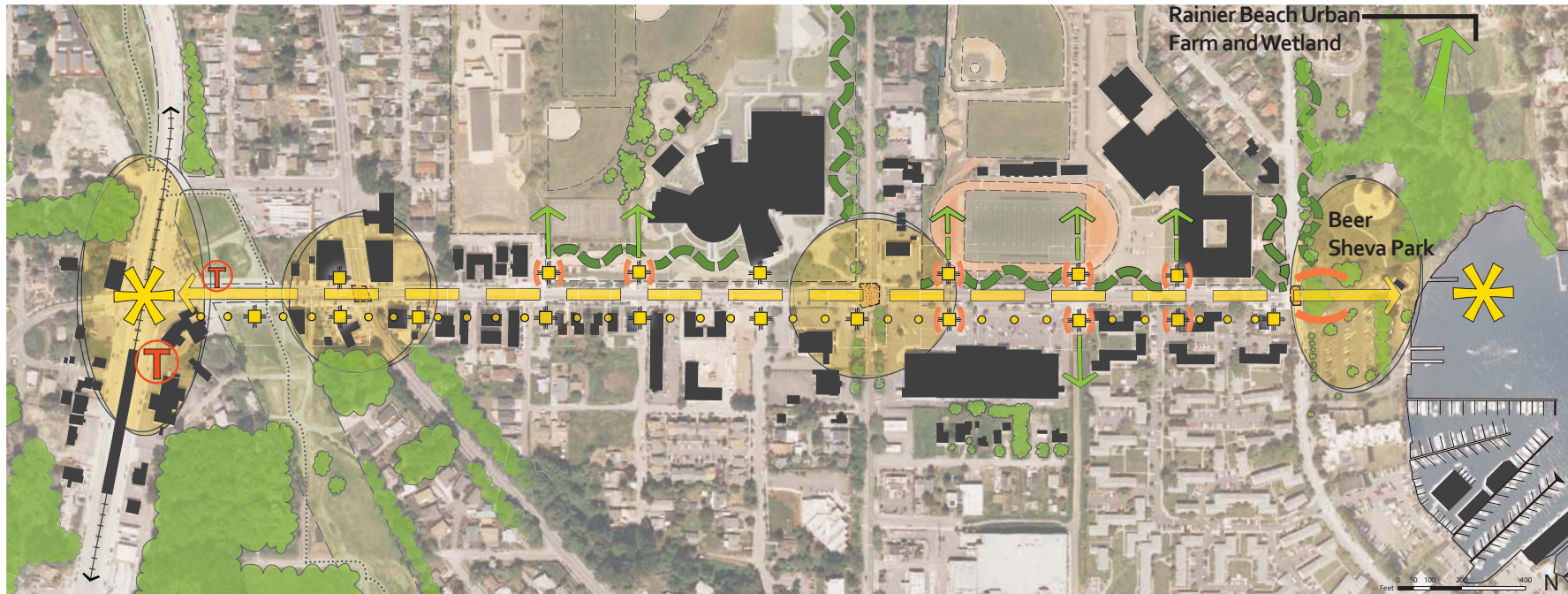
Beer Sheva Park

- Develop signature lighting for safety, identity, to link the Lake and Station & key destinations.
- Include major features (visible day and night) at MLK and at Beer Sheva Park that are visible from opposite ends, and create a sense of destination.
- Locate intensified lighting along the south side of the street, and include:
  - Distinctive elements at key crossings, destinations and walkways.
  - Frequent lighting to create a continuous soft glow while managing glare.
- Superblocks
  - Create E/W, N/S safe walkways through superblocks (creating blocks similar to elsewhere in Rainier Beach).
- Create signature gateways with consistent design.

- Beer Sheva Park
  - Open entrance of Beer Sheva Park to create Lake views.
  - Consider revisions to parking and landscaping to open up views to park and lake, while protecting habitat.
  - Improve access to swimming.
  - Construct safe walking path to Rainier Beach Urban Farm.
- Activity Areas
  - Create activity and visual interest at key intersections and linkages .
  - Encourage retail/shops/restaurants in isolated areas between activity areas.

Legend

- ┼┼┼┼┼┼ Light Rail
- ▬▬▬ Light Rail Station
- ········ Existing Trail
- City of Seattle Owned Properties
- Superblocks
- → Existing Pedestrian Linkages
- ⇢ Future Pedestrian Linkages

- ✛/◯◯ Signature Mini Light Tower
- ✳ Major Light Feature
- ▮ Existing Building
- 🌳 Existing Tree
- ▨ Key Intersection
- ( ) Physical Gateways to Key Future Pedestrian Gateways
- T Transit
- ∿∿∿ Soften and Open Edge of School Property

D. Public Safety

Public safety is a major concern, especially for youth and teens. Because feelings of safety derive from a neighborhoods' overall wellbeing, they should be addressed from a holistic perspective that includes improvements to all areas of the neighborhood. While having increased police presence and responsiveness are important, a holistic approach would provide full and equal access to opportunities that enable us to reach our full potential. In other words, there should be visible and viable paths to success, and the overall health of the community should be one that creates a safe environment for all.

The specific strategies are broad, including: economic development; access to jobs; improvements in the shopping and walking environments; more activities at parks, community centers and schools; a sense of opportunity, and a strengthening of the community fabric.

Goal
A safe Rainier Beach.

Strategies
- Join residents and existing organizations to enhance, expand, and/or develop programs and activities that ensure a safe and secure community.

- Expand community – police interaction:
  - Enlist community members, including representatives from the various cultural and ethnic groups and youth, to participate in the Community Police Academy Program to educate the public on Police Department operations and to provide the Department with valuable feedback from the community.
  - Fund Crime Prevention and Community Policing programs to improve communication between SPD and community members.
  - Conduct a series of SPD-sponsored Living Room Conversations with each of the diverse cultures present in Rainier Beach. Use translators as needed.
  - Secure Rainier Beach representation on each of the Police Department's Demographic Advisory Councils, and support these representatives to have regular meetings so they may share information and safety concerns.

- Improve police presence and responsiveness to create a safe community potentially including:
  - Working with SPD to consider a "hot spots" approach to crime prevention (at Rainier/Henderson).
  - Increasing police presence around transit facilities until the time that the level of development provides sufficient activity to reduce the need for police presence.

- Provide a safe environment for youth to grow and learn, and to have a good future through means such as:
  - Creating positive bridges Between SPD and Rainier Beach youth by engaging them in the programs and activities arising from the Youth Violence Prevention Initiative, the Youth Police Academy, and the Explorers Program.
  - Using School Emphasis Officers to focus on violence prevention and intervention in collaboration with all schools to address gang resistance, violence prevention education and training, truancy and suspension reduction.

- Increase the mix of businesses (open into the evening hours) and residences around the light rail transit station and along S Henderson St. to increase the number of people using public spaces and sidewalks, thereby increasing "eyes on the street."

- Implement beautification projects, as illustrated in Pearls diagrams, add better lighting, and remove overgrowth and other sidewalk obstructions.

III. Great Places that Support Our Community

A. Land Use and Urban Design

This section addresses how good planning can support positive business and residential development in several clusters (Pearls) throughout the neighborhood that is reflective of the historic, economic and cultural influences that define Rainier Beach.

Goal
A diverse and vibrant neighborhood composed of pedestrian-friendly, transit-connected business districts, and affordable and attractive residential areas.

Strategies
- Create neighborhood design guidelines and use design review to assure that new redevelopment contributes to the desired future design character of Rainier Beach. Address particular design intents for each Pearl as part of the neighborhood design guidelines.

- Review zoning in the Pearls and elsewhere to identify opportunities or hindrances to small businesses (such as in-home business requirements) and immigrant-owned businesses.

- Develop coordinated public realm plan that improves the physical connections (streets, sidewalks) between the smaller centers of activity (schools, library, community center, grocery stores, ethnic markets & Pearls). Addresses:
  - Wayfinding, Touchstones and public art.
  - Community kiosks, located within each of the Pearls and neighborhood destinations where community members can post events and information
  - Business and cultural identity.
  - Streetscape elements including: crosswalk markings, lighting fixture style and quality, and bus shelter design, and landscaping.

- Fund full implementation of the *Touchstones: A Walking Tour of Rainier Beach* project that will highlight existing places and reveals neighborhood history, culture and stories through QR codes and Wi-Fi.

- Use the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and budget process to identify projects that can act as catalysts for coordinating and implementing several related recommendations at one time.

- Look beyond the 6-year CIP horizon for opportunities to leverage planned, but unfunded, projects.

- Work with departments to identify and coordinate underfunded efforts with planned capital projects in order to leverage City investments and create transformative place-making changes.

Photo © Oran Viriyincy via Flickr

Rainier Beach residents take pride in the diversity of small mom & pop stores that cater to different cultures and needs. In an assessment of retail completeness, Rainier Beach scores well with 11 out of 13 common retail services. Rainier Beach is also home to two supermarkets which provide convenient access to healthy foods. Residents would like to see an increase in the diversity of shops and restaurants, as well as an improvement in the pedestrian shopping experience – a goal that would improve feelings of safety and also strengthen existing businesses. Additionally, increasing youth employment in local businesses would help provide out of school time opportunities for the neighborhood's youth.
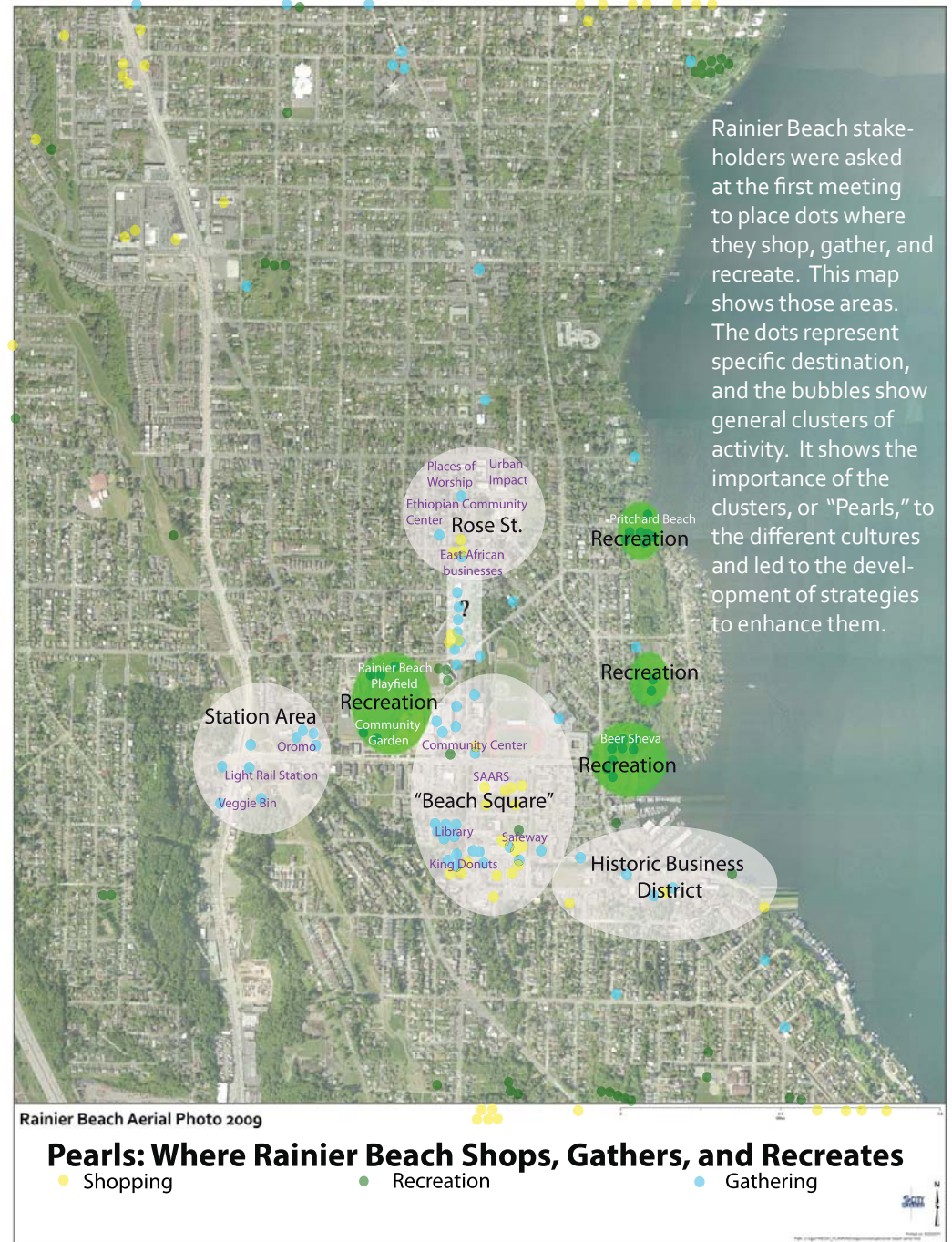
B. Pearls

During the first meeting community members were asked, "Where do you go to shop, socialize or attend religious or cultural gatherings?" Responses pointed to the reality that "Rainier Beach" was a collection of places. It is the sum of these places that people felt was the center of Rainier Beach. These "Pearls," shown on the map to the right, include:

• Beach Square

• Historic Business District

• Station Area

• Rose Street

This section defines the broad roles and objectives for each place and identifies strategies for strengthening them as distinct but linked parts of one neighborhood. Although the strategies focus on the physical aspects, they should not be separated from the human aspects. The importance of these places derives from meaning they have for people and community.

It will be necessary to coordinate individual strategies with others to maximize positive impacts. This requires that managers of larger projects consult with the community and coordinate with other departments early on to understand the larger context and create a holistic scope of work that includes related projects. The community can then identify their relevant objectives, and departments can seek funding for related work.

Rainier Beach stakeholders were asked at the first meeting to place dots where they shop, gather, and recreate. This map shows those areas. The dots represent specific destination, and the bubbles show general clusters of activity. It shows the importance of the clusters, or "Pearls," to the different cultures and led to the development of strategies to enhance them.

Rainier Beach Aerial Photo 2009

Pearls: Where Rainier Beach Shops, Gathers, and Recreates

Shopping   Recreation   Gathering

Goal

For Rainier Beach the "town center" is an inter-connected and vibrant set of places where the community comes together. These places reflect the diverse cultures, histories and traditions that collectively give Rainier Beach its identity.

1. Beach Square

Beach Square is the primary commercial center and civic core of Rainier Beach. It is the location of businesses, schools, a community center and a library that support and bring together our community. As with the 1999 plan, these recommendations address economic development, transportation, streetscape, pedestrian connections, housing, and land use issues. The main objectives are to increase neighborhood vitality, address safety, and enhance connections.

Strategies

- Guide development of opportunity sites (see map on page 26):

    1. Promote new development with buildings brought out to the corners; retain locally-owned, small business.

    2. Encourage development with buildings along the street front and café/plaza facing Mapes Creek walkway.

    3. Work with Bank of America to redevelop their site into a mixed-use building with residences above the bank and other active street-level businesses.

    4. Work with Saars, RiteAid and Payless Shoes to add complementary "pop-up" or food carts in their parking lots in order to add activity at the street corners.

- Knit together the businesses, schools, community center and library by:

    - Bring community center activities out to plaza, prioritizing youth and other performances and activities that will draw families.

    - Improve engagement between the community and schools to create strong institutions that are well-integrated into the community.

    - Reducing the amount of paving and adding more active uses/activities along the sidewalks.

Beach Square

The focus of business, institutions, and residents, the primary "center" of Rainier Beach.

Popup Retail in Shipping Container Adds Vibrancy and Retail Choices at Low Cost

Local Food and Retail on Market Day

Art on Trolley Wires to Create Identity

"intersection Repair" Created by community provides Usable Public Space

Local Art on Utility Boxes Strengthens Community Identity

Legend
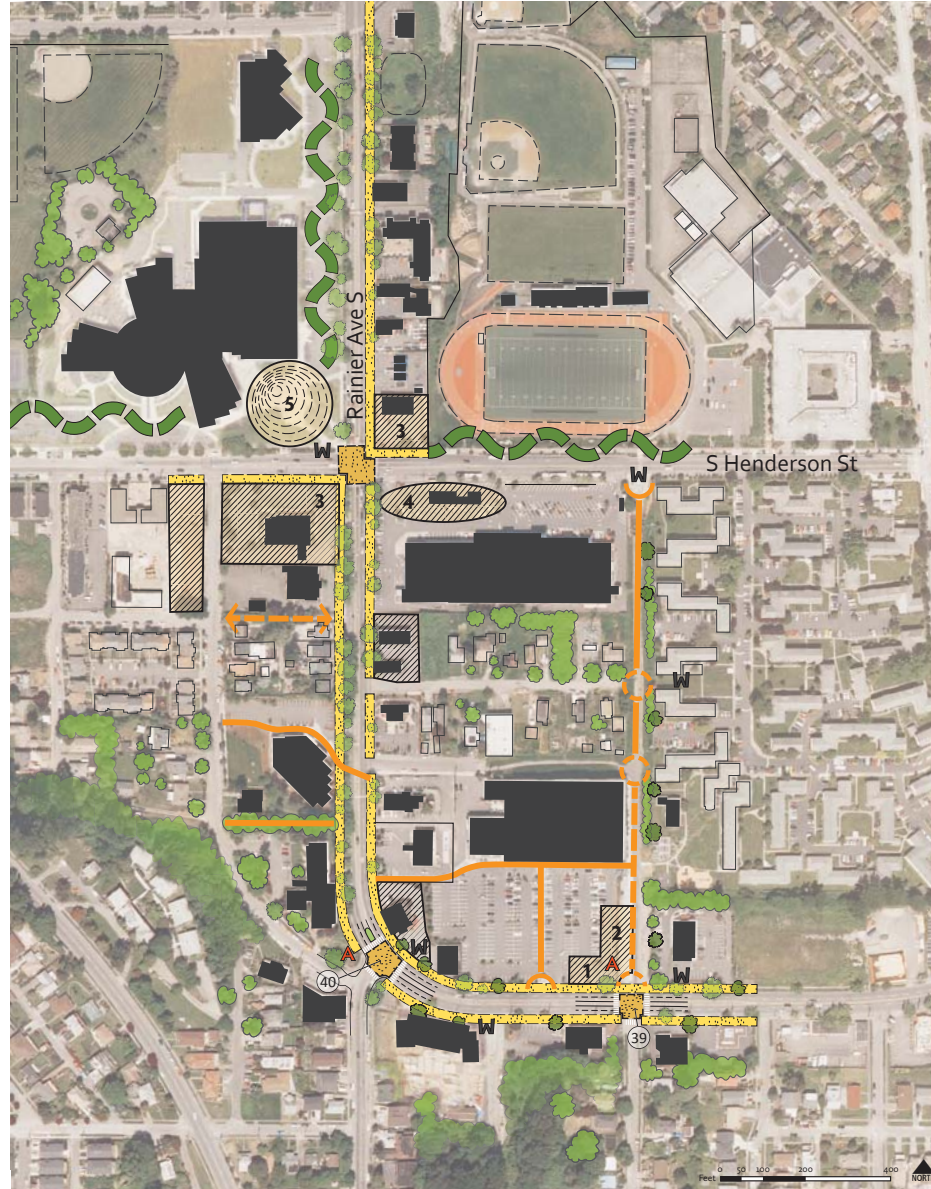
(hatched)	Key Site
(yellow dotted)	Intensify Activity and Development
—/ — —	Pedestrian Walkway (Existing/Potential)
■ / ▢	Existing Building
(orange square)	Key Intersection
(15)	Southeast Transportation Study Project and Improve Safety

A Art **W** Wayfinding

(dark green) New Tree (Representative)

(light green) Existing Tree

(green wavy) Soften and Open Edge of School Property

The numbers 1 - 5 in this graphic are described on page 25.

Rainier Ave S

S Henderson St

- Add walking links to the surrounding neighborhoods
  - Work with Seattle Public Schools to provide direct and safe walking and biking routes through sites, linking to adjacent streets.
  - Implement Mapes Walkway Master Plan recommendations, including the following:
    - Connect Mapes Walkway to Director St., providing a neighborhood connection.
    - Continue connection south to Rainier, with pedestrian scale lighting, landscaping and clear delineation of path along the Safeway parking lot and across the driveway.
    - Install a pedestrian signal at 52nd and Rainier to provide a preferred crossing for people connecting from Mapes Walkway to the south side of Rainier.
    - Consolidate bus zones from Sturtevant and 54th Ave. S. to the preferred pedestrian crossing at 52nd Ave. S.
  - Strengthen through-block connections.

- Tailor economic development approaches to build on the strengths of existing businesses (Saars, RiteAid, Safeway/Payless Shoes, Bank of America) that are examples of anchor tenants in traditional neighborhood business centers.

- Extend the #7 trolley to the light rail transit station and relocate associated bus layover from in front of Saars to the station area (see Station Area recommendations.

- Promote positive activities on S Henderson St. – e.g., the fire fighters' fundraising campaign for Jerry's Kids – to make the streets friendly and safe, and to create a fun energy everyone wants to experience.

- Implement the Transit Master Plan recommendation to install Transit Signal Priority at the intersection of S Henderson St. and Rainier Ave. S.

Bus layover on S Henderson St.

Area in front of South Shore School and Rainier Beach Community Center that could be programmed with activities.

- Consider the following additional ideas when implementing the SETS recommendations 39 and 40:
  - SETS # 39: Make walking safer by constructing planned intersection and crosswalk improvements at S. 52nd St. Coordinate this work with SPU's Henderson CSO project.
  - SETS# 40: Integrate art and other features described in the "Gateway Plan" in areas created by curb bulbs.
- When implementing the Bicycle Master Plan, add a specific route connecting Seward Park Ave. S to Pritchard Beach. This could be markings indicating that bicycles are sharing the road with cars (sharrows) along S Cloverdale St., or as part of the planned path through the former Atlantic Street Nursery site.
- Improve access to the waterfront by connecting Beer Sheva to the Atlantic City Nursery site and Pritchard Beach (existing swimming beach) as envisioned in the Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetland Project.

39 RAINIER AVE. S. & 52nd AVE. S./ MAPES WALKWAY

Extend and improve pedestrian connection in urban village.

www.seattle.gov/transportation/ppmp_sets.htm
Numbers are explained in the SETs document.

40 RAINIER AVE. S. & 51st AVE. S. / STURTEVANT AVE. S.

Improve safety at High Collision Location.
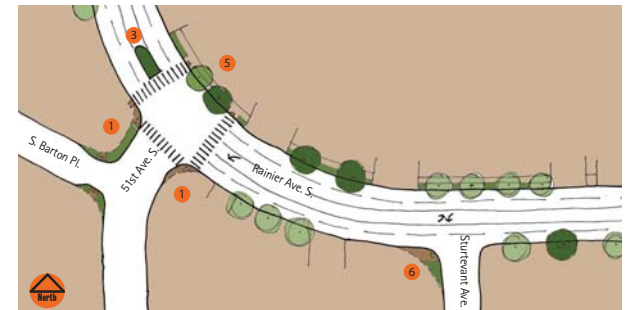
www.seattle.gov/transportation/ppmp_sets.htm
Numbers are explained in the SETs document.

2. Historic Business District

The area where Rainier Ave. S intersects with S 57th St. and Seward Park Ave. S is Rainier Beach's historic business district. The small buildings close to the street, and the restaurants and businesses here convey a "downtown" feeling. Additionally the proximity to the Lake and views to Mount Rainier truly give you the sense that you are in Rainier Beach.

These recommendations seek to enhance the area by encouraging new moderately-scaled development that includes restaurants and small stores, and to support local entrepreneurship so that the community benefits from the new development.

Strategies

- Implement the streetscape improvements recommended by the Rainier Beach Merchant's Association in the *Gateway to Rainier Valley at Rainier Beach* plan to reinforce historic "main street."

- As part of the recommended public realm plan (sidewalks, art, wayfinding, lighting, landscaping), include a marker or a "gateway feature" along Rainier Ave. S, and identify streetscape elements that enhance the sense of place, expressing the African-American community and growing immigrant communities.

- Guide development of opportunity sites (see map on page 30):

  1. "Iconic" building at corner.

  2. Outdoor café & restaurant with water views.

  3. Short-term retain as business and shared parking. Long-term encourage a new substantial "anchor" development.

- Improve ability to see and get to the shoreline by enhancing access to city owned shoreline, and encouraging water view restaurant/development.

- Tailor economic development approaches to target the Rainier Ave./56 & 57th area for mixed-use development and the premier location for development of small, minority-owned businesses like restaurants and cafes that have active day and evening use to create a vibrant atmosphere.

- Amend zoning to include P-Designations for portions of Rainier Ave. S and S. 57th St.

- In implementing the Bicycle Master Plan, add bike lanes to Seward Ave. S as it approaches Rainier Ave. S since cars tend to squeeze out the bicycles in this intersection.

- Improve access to the waterfront by improving public access to the Parks shoreline parcels located southeast of the Water's Edge Apartments.

Photo © Rainier Valley Historical Society

Photo © Rainier Valley Historical Society

Historic Business District

The Traditional Business District for this Community.

Wayfinding

Main street development

Painting a community gateway

Support the district with new business and vibrant signage and streetscape improvements

Development example for Key Site 2

Encourage public art that reflects Rainier Beach's culture and history.

Legend

Key Sites		Existing Building
Reinforce "Historic Main Street"	A Art W Wayfinding	
Improve Shoreline Access to Park	New Tree (Representative)	
Park	Existing Tree	
	Gateway	

- Consider the following additional ideas when implementing the Southeast Transportation Study (SETS).

  - SETs # 41 and 42: Place emphasis on creating safer bike lanes; reducing the "pinch" that is felt by bicyclists as they move through the intersection of Seward Park Ave. S and Rainier Ave. S. (The existing proposal to narrow Seward Park Ave. S may decrease auto speed, but could increase the tendency of motorists to squeeze bicyclists.)

  - SETS # 43: Retain on-street parking.

  - SETS # 15: Explore enhancing the landscaping at this memorial site.

41 RAINIER AVE. S: 52nd AVE. S. to ITHACA PL. S.

Improve safety and accessibility in urban village corridor.

43 RAINIER AVE. S. & 57th AVE. S.

Improve safety at intersection.
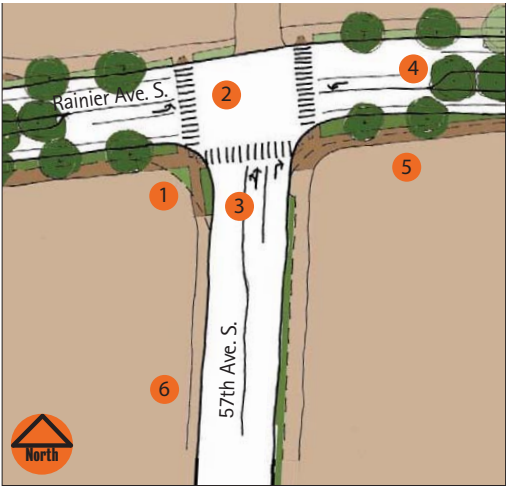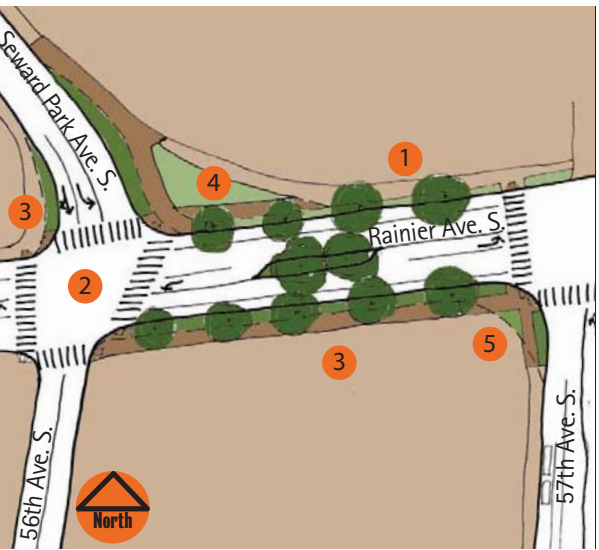
15 57th AVE. S. & S. FLETCHER ST.

Improve safety and calm traffic at intersection.

Existing

Proposed
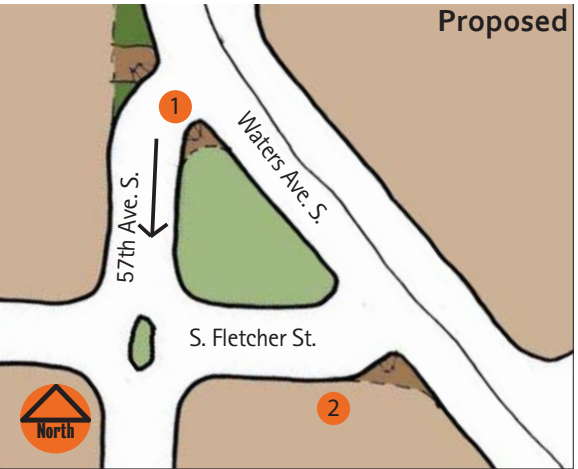
www.seattle.gov/transportation/ppmp_sets.htm, numbers are explained in the SETs document.

3. Station Area

The Rainier Beach light rail station area is a major gateway to this neighborhood. It also has strong potential to leverage the transportation investment to support growth in job-creating businesses. Unfortunately there has been no development since the plan was adopted in 1999 and zoning was changed to encourage mixed-use development.

The overall objective of the following strategies is to foster development that provides opportunities for Rainier Beach community. A measure of success should be that the youth of Rainier Beach can envision themselves as living and/or working in an area around the station that provides: a safe and attractive environment; affordable housing; and opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship.

Strategies
- Work with SPD to ensure that S Henderson St. is safe.
- As part of the public realm plan include guidance on:
  - Implementing the Henderson St. design as shown in the Henderson Corridor diagram.
  - Creating a strong "Welcome to Rainier Beach" feature and direction toward the neighborhood.
- Tailor economic development approaches to focus on attracting business that pro-

vide jobs accessible to areas residents, and recruiting a range of small, locally-owned businesses appropriate to the station area.

- Work with the Oromo community to support their center and contribution to creating a vital S Henderson St.
- In implementing the Bicycle Master Plan, assure that bike facilities near the light rail station area offer the most protection feasible – ideally continuing the bike lanes or a separated bikeway.
- Explore partnerships with private property owners to use existing off-street parking lots to meet parking needs, including light rail users.

Station Area Planning – In 1999, City staff convened Station Area Advisory Committees to involve citizens in station area planning, and to engage in Sound Transit's design process. Seattle City Council adopted Framework Goals and Objectives for Station Area Planning, setting the expectation that the planning would guide transit-oriented development, consisting of integrated, active station areas where community services, housing, retail, and commercial activities are co-located. In 2000, Council adopted 10 Station Area Concept-Level Recommendations including one for the Rainier Beach station. The concept packages were based on neighborhood plan visions for each station area and included future actions to achieve the visions. Council's Goals and Objectives continue to provide direction for station areas during the neighborhood plan updates.

Dragonfly's Tail sculpture at the Rainier Beach light rail station. Photo © Oran Viriyincy via Flickr.

Station Area

Major destination needing to be safe, more vibrant and better connected.

Light Tower

OROMO Community Center

Food Cart

Legend

┼┼┼┼┼ Light Rail	– – – – 1/4 Mile From Station	City of Seattle Owned Properties	Existing Tree	Bus Layover
Light Rail Station	⋯⋯⋯ Existing Trail	Key Intersection	Gateway	T Transit
	◼/◻ Existing Building	Special Pedestrian Lighting		

- Implement Transit Master Plan recommendations to:

    - Extend the #7 trolley from Rainier Ave. S to the light rail station. It is a City priority that Metro should provide frequent service along S Henderson St.

    - Configure a turn-around for trolley at the light rail station area.

    - Install Transit Signal Priority at the intersection of S Henderson St. and Rainier Ave. S.

    - Create a layover for four buses to accommodate the extended #7 service adjacent to the light rail station.

    - Implement station access and wayfinding program to improve visibility of station, improve intermodal connections, and increase legibility of pedestrian and bicycle approaches to stations.
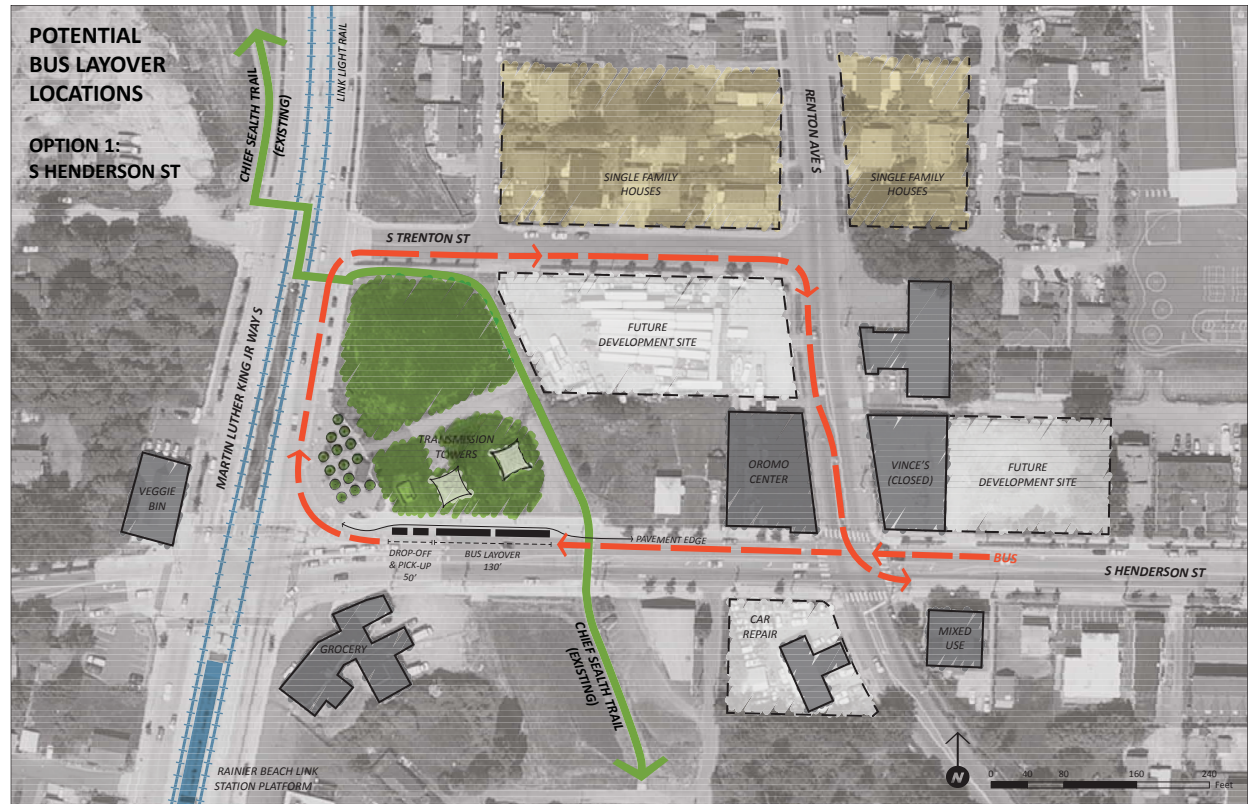
Illustration of how the #7 trolley could be routed to connect to the rail station. Additional bus layover space could be provided on S Henderson St. next to the City Light right-of-way.

- Amend development regulations to enable higher density residential and mixed-use development within ¼ to ½ mile of the light rail station. The objectives are to: encourage development that is beneficial for the community by creating employment opportunities; offering housing affordable across a range of incomes; and creating a destination "entry" to Rainier Beach. Ideas of desired development include: apartments; community college; incubator businesses potentially linked to the Urban Farm; and live/work spaces.

The following zoning changes should be explored (see map on page 36):

1. Multifamily

   Purpose
   - To encourage more infill development near station and Beach Square, and to increase consistency of zoning.
   - Encourage development to achieve the envisioned high-quality, dense residential building. Consider regulatory changes that would support live/work and home occupation to add vitality and economic opportunity.

   Uses
   - Multifamily residences, home business.

   Relationship to Street
   - Landscaped front yard, no parking in front of building.

   Potential Zoning and Heights
   - Changing future land use map and zoning to MF (e.g. L-3, or L-3 RC. Include appropriate areas in Station Area overlay. Heights of 3 – 4 (if affordable housing provided) stories.

2. Mixed-Use Residential Commercial

   Purpose
   - Create more vibrancy along Henderson at station and Renton Ave. S.
   - Opportunity for more residents to live close (and affordably) to the station area.
   - Increase activity, including support for businesses.

   Uses
   - Multifamily residences, "active" storefront businesses. restaurants, retail, etc.

   Relationship to Street
   - P designation requiring active street-level business, no parking in front of building.

   Potential Zoning and Heights
   - Continue Neighborhood Commercial with P Designation. Increase height limits to 85'.

3. Residential and Live/Work

   Purpose
   - Promote more residences & live work close to the station, where retail may be difficult.

   Uses
   - Residences; office; retail; medical services; restaurants without bars; business support services; and food processing and craft work.

   Relationship to Street
   - Discourage parking in front of buildings. Commercial uses at ground level generally facing the street.

   Potential Zoning and Heights
   - Increase height limit to 85'.

4. Multifamily

   Purpose
   - Consider allowing higher residential densities on areas not affected by steep slopes.

   Uses
   - Multifamily residential.

   Relationship to Street
   - Varies.

   Potential Zoning and Heights
   - Low Rise L-3.

5. Flexible Employment-Focused Development

   Purpose
   - Prioritize employment and housing development when these sites are made surplus.

- Promote development of "incubator" spaces for small start-up businesses, such as a food production facility that could coordinate with the Rainier Beach Urban Farm.
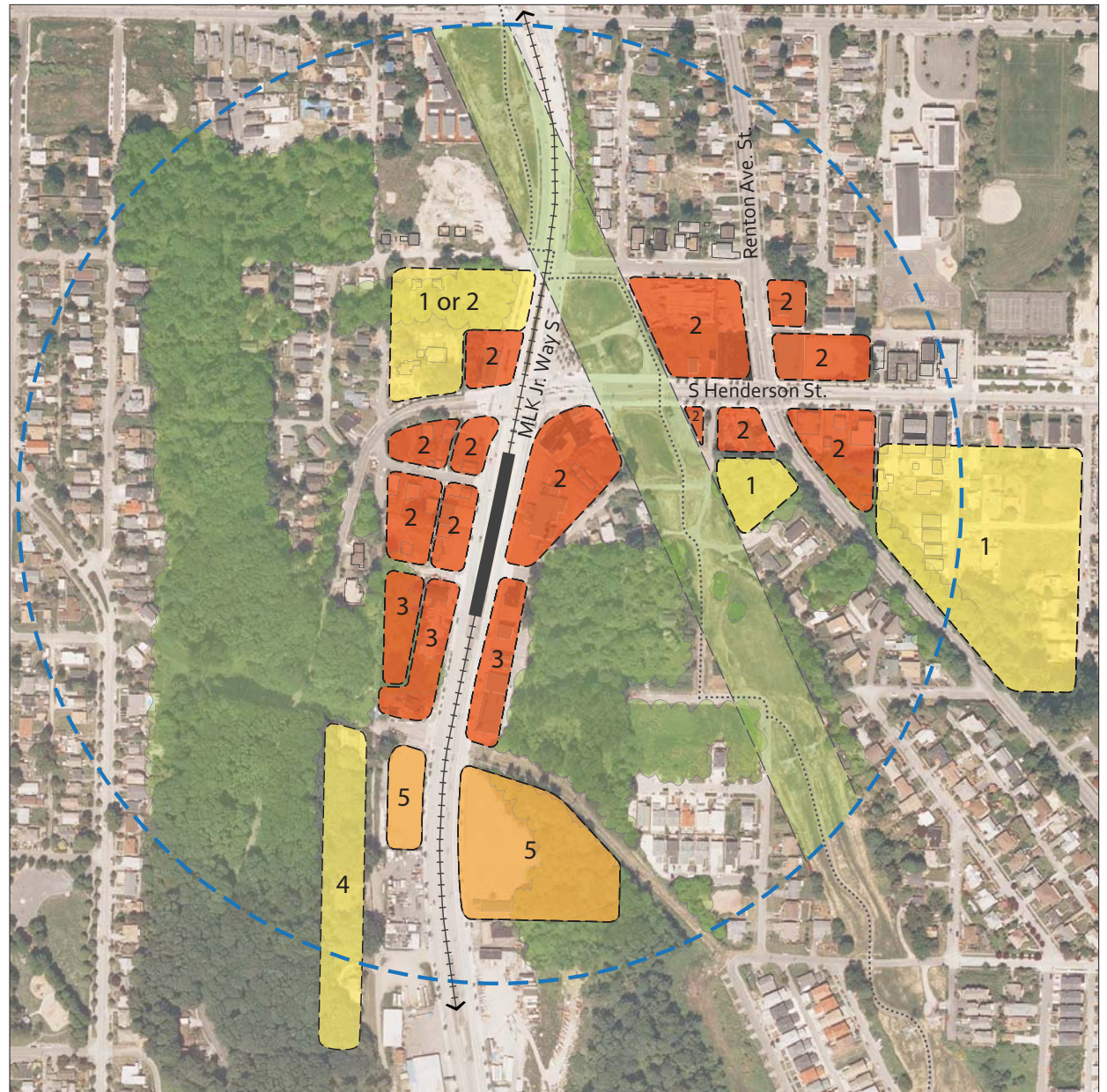
Uses
- Wide range of uses including potential for limited manufacturing, food processing, institutional (education).

Relationship to Street
- Varies.

Potential Zoning and Heights
- Commercial zoning with 85'.

Location of proposed zoning changes. Yellow is Multifamily, red is Mixed-Use, and orange is Commercial.

4. Rose Street

This area has the potential to stand out as a community node along Rainier Ave. S. The S. Rose St. area is a growing concentration of diverse cultures, businesses and organizations. The Housing Resource Group development, the Ethiopian Community Center and the Buddha Jewel monastery are emblematic of the potential social vitality of this area.

The plan strives to build on recent development, the planned SETS project and growing East African businesses to continue momentum toward establishing this area as a defined community node.

Strategies

- Explore how development regulations can support cultural values such as through design guidelines, or allowing more live/work and home business opportunities.

- Tailor economic development approaches to support development of immigrant and minority-owned businesses, and build on this growing destination for East Africans by supporting businesses to expand the range of goods and by adding related businesses.

- As part of the public realm plan include guidance on:

    - Creating a sense of place, an identity expressing the cultural richness.

    - Accentuating this area as a specific destination.

    - Considering how art, landscaping might reflect the cultures and origins of community members using this area.

    - Activating sidewalks and storefronts by creating gathering spaces and outdoor seating, lighting.

- Connect residents to parks and open space:

    - Improve access to the waterfront by improving public access to Pritchard Beach.

    - Seek opportunities, including partnerships, to create a playground.

    - Explore opportunities to encourage businesses and people to participate in the Rainier Beach Urban Farm project and programs.

Rose St.

A concentration of diverse cultures, businesses, and organizations.

Existing business

New investment in housing and business

Existing Buddhist monastery in the Rose area
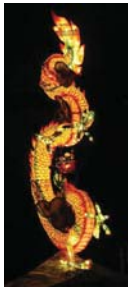
Develop gateways and public art specific to the Rose residents and businesses

Ethiopian Center

Legend

Key Site	
Intensify Activity and Development	
Existing Building	
Key Intersection	

A Art

W Wayfinding

New Tree (Representative)

Existing Tree

Soften and Open Edge of School Property

Rainier Ave. St.

S Rose St.

- Consider the following additional ideas when implementing the Southeast Transportation Study (SETS).
  - SETS # 36: Engage the surrounding business and associated communities to design this space. Consider incorporating art, lighting, benches, etc. to create an environment that knits together the businesses. Evaluate additional curb space created by the SETS project to increase on-street parking for adjacent businesses.
  - SETS Project 37: Consider adding a crosswalk on Rainier Ave. S at S Thistle St.
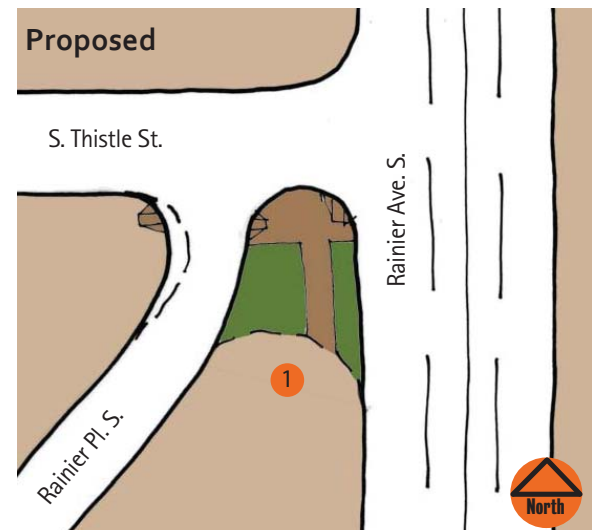- Explore ways to bridge cultures present in this Pearl.

36 RAINIER AVE. S. & S. ROSE ST. / WABASH AVE S.

Improve safety at intersection.
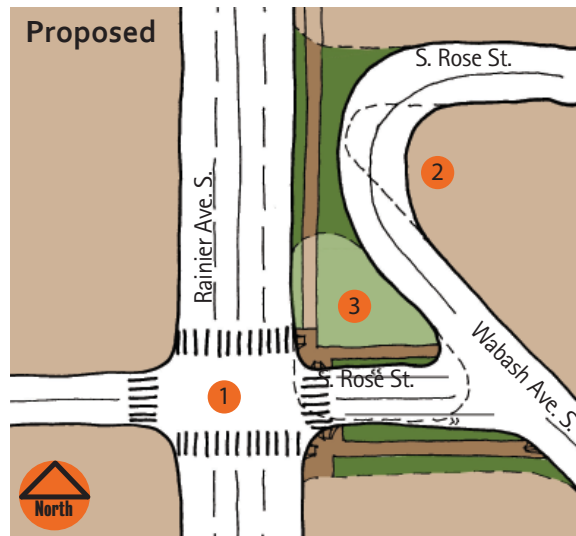
37 RAINIER AVE. S. & S. THISTLE ST. / RAINIER PL. S.

Improve safety at intersection.

www.seattle.gov/transportation/ppmp_sets.htm, numbers are explained in the SETs document.

C. Equitable Economic Development

It is important to support small, local businesses that provide goods and services for Rainier Beach's diverse population, including immigrants, youth, elderly and ethnic groups that reside in or visit the area. Rainier Beach requires innovative approaches to economic development to support immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurs.

Develop a local economy appropriate for neighborhood income levels and also attracts clientele from outside of the area. Improve the business district's physical environment to make it safer and attractive for all customers. There is a need to align jobs with education and mentoring opportunities.

Goals
- A strong local economy for Rainier Beach.
- A revitalized commercial business core that attracts the patronage of local and citywide residents and employees through an attractive, safe, and clean built environment.
- Strong entrepreneurship that creates job and grows the local economy.
- Sustainable wealth creation that provides individuals and families with the tools for: managing their money; making sound financial decisions; and building wealth.

Strategies
- Continue the work of the Office of Economic Development to improve the Rainier Beach Merchant's Association, including new minority and immigrant-owned businesses.

- Increase the range of retail establishments, particularly local shops and restaurants.

- Work with the Office of Economic Development and the Rainier Valley Community Development Fund to better tailor grants to minority, immigrant and family-owned businesses. Identify measures, such as grants and programs, to support small business development and employment opportunities.

- Offer technical assistance and education about financial assistance to businesses adjacent to City projects such as the Community Center and R.O.W. improvements in order to help them build their businesses in parallel with nearby City investments.

- Develop public/private partnerships to support new business development.

- Encourage new and existing models of financing mixed-use development projects that provide long-term affordable commercial space, as well as affordable housing, in City-funded, and other projects on publicly-owned land.

- Assist the Rainier Beach Merchant's Association with their efforts to revitalize the business community, build self-sufficiency, and build on traditional anti-

The presence of everyday retail destinations accessible by walking increases physical activity. Retail development in a mixed-use neighborhood also generates natural public surveillance or "eyes on the street" which reduces crime and improves residents' feelings of safety. A broad range of goods available in the neighborhood allows residents to meet their needs locally, reducing travel, building social cohesion, and keeping money circulating within the neighborhood.

poverty programs by helping low income families achieve greater economic security and stability through asset development programs and services.

- Identify strategies for employing more youth in Rainier Beach.

D. Housing

Housing in close proximity to light rail transit, public open space and commercial areas is increasingly desirable and therefore affordability can be disproportionately impacted in these areas. The strategies below suggest that we be proactive in creating partnerships to retain, and develop key properties near the Rainier Beach light rail station and other locations for housing affordable to all income levels in the neighborhood.

Rainier Beach also needs to maintain and upgrade its stock of existing affordable housing. New housing should be affordable to a range of incomes and family sizes. Housing should be built with the demographics of Rainier Beach residents in mind – including units with 4 or more bedrooms to accommodate large families, include opportunities for live work space to encourage entrepreneurship, and offer home mortgage products that meet the needs of Rainier Beach's many immigrant families.

Goal
Retain and develop affordable (low and moderate income) housing, especially where such housing is accessible to transit.

Strategies
- Maintain or create housing affordability for all income levels so as to build economic diversity throughout the neighborhood, and in the station area as it develops.

- Develop a TOD property acquisition fund to provide affordable residential, commercial and community spaces using federal grant and local economic development funds in addition to the City's affordable housing funds.

- Assess City and other publicly-owned parcels, especially those adjacent to the Rainier Beach light rail transit station, for their potential to facilitate affordable housing development. Consider, where possible, land sale or swap to facilitate residential development.

- Work with Sound Transit to develop their surplus properties along the Rainier Valley light rail transit line as affordable housing and employment opportunities.

A quality neighborhood provides safe, healthy housing affordable to households in a full range of incomes. High housing costs can result in spending a high proportion of income on housing, sharing housing in overcrowded conditions, living in substandard housing, or displacement out of the community. Spending a high proportion of income on housing means fewer resources for food, heating, transportation, health care, and child care.

Rainier Beach has a good range of housing types and affordability levels, and residents feel strongly about maintaining housing affordability in the neighborhood. Even so, 60% of renters and 30% of home owners are paying more than 30% of their income on housing costs, a level that is considered unaffordable. Ten percent of households live in overcrowded conditions – a percentage 5 times higher than in the city of Seattle overall.

- Maintain access to affordable housing by improving access to programs supporting home ownership.
  - Use programs such as revolving loan funds and land trusts to keep owner-occupied housing affordable.
  - Use assistance programs to support homeowners who are low-income, senior or disabled.
- Partner with the Parks Department to provide Office of Housing funding to developers who wish to create affordable housing adjacent to newly acquired open space amenities.

E. Parks & Open Spaces

Rainier Beach has a wealth of parks and open spaces, and people of all ages use Seattle Parks' community center, public parks and shorelines on a regular basis. Therefore, many would like to improve park programs for all users, especially for youth and teens. Community members would also like to have improvements made to Beer Sheva Park. Connectivity between public parks is also an important consideration.

Goals
- Connected Parks and opens space that serve the community.
- A community with a variety of parks and open spaces, civic facilities, waterfront access, and a trail system that promotes

the existing open space sites, and the enjoyment of new public spaces.

Strategies
- Explore partnerships to increase park programming for all ages.
- Improve access to programs and activities for youth and teens, striving to fund a Teen Center similar to the Garfield Teen Life Center.
- Improve Beer Sheva to serve the needs of Rainier Beach residents. Seek funds and partnerships to:
  - Improve park furnishings in Beer Sheva, such as tables, benches and barbeques.
  - Reduce boat trailer parking in Beer Sheva by using the High School's parking lot in the summer, discouraging overnight parking.
  - Improve pedestrian entrance from S Henderson St., with connection to existing walkway, and connect Beer Sheva to the former Atlantic City Nursery site and Pritchard Beach as envisioned in the Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetland Preservation plan.
  - Add a swimming float off of Beer Sheva and/or create "boat free" days where residents can park and swim off the boat launch piers.