

STUDY SESSION DES MOINES CITY COUNCIL – October 18, 2012 - 7:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

ROLL CALL

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC: Note: **Comments must be limited to the items of business on the Study Session Agenda per Council Rule 10.** Please sign in prior to the meeting and limit your comments to three minutes.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Sound Transit Planning Update

DISCUSSION LEADER:

Cathal Ridge, Sound Transit

GOAL:

Direction

EST. TIME:

15 min

2. Link Light Rail Policy Discussion

Planning Building Public Works
Director Grant Fredricks

Direction

60 min

NEXT MEETING DATE: Regular Meeting October 25, 2012

ADJOURNMENT

AGENDA ITEM

SUBJECT: Link Light Rail Policy Discussion

AGENDA OF: October 18, 2012

ATTACHMENTS:

DEPT. OF ORIGIN: Planning, Building and Public Works

- 1. Extracts from Envision Midway Planning Project
- 2. Extracts from the Des Moines Comprehensive Plan
- 3. City of Kent - Midway Subarea Land Use and Zoning Maps
- 4. Sound Transit PowerPoint Presentation

DATE SUBMITTED: October 11, 2012

CLEARANCES:

- Legal N/A
- Finance N/A
- Marina N/A
- Parks, Recreation & Senior Services N/A
- Planning, Building & Public Works NA
- Police N/A

APPROVED BY CITY MANAGER

FOR SUBMITTAL: 

Purpose and Recommendation:

The purpose of this item is to review with the City Council the City’s adopted policy positions on the extension of Link Light Rail from South 200th Street to Highline Community College and Federal Way, and for City and Sound Transit staff to support a policy-level conversation by the Council of Link Light Rail. No formal Council action is requested, but staff will help Council reach a consensus on how to work with Sound Transit and other jurisdictions on Sound Transit’s alternatives analysis process over the next 9 months.

Background:

On June 28, 2012, Sound Transit and the City of SeaTac approved a Development Agreement providing for the extension of Link Light Rail from the Sea-Tac Airport Station to South 200th Street by the fall of 2016. Sound Transit estimates that there will be \$1.7 billion in one time construction impacts and over 11,000 construction related statewide jobs created by the development of the vacant and underdeveloped parcels in the half mile area surrounding the S. 200th Street Station (this area extends to S 208th Street) plus \$2 billion and over 12,000 job annually, statewide.

Anticipating the arrival of Link Light Rail by 2023, the cities of Kent and Des Moines, supported by a \$125,000 state grant, completed a collaborative planning project called “Envision Midway” as detailed in Attachment 1. A series of open houses, workshops and stakeholder group meetings were held in 2008 and 2009 to:

- Hear what property owners, businesses and residents in Midway think about their neighborhood,
- Help the cities make informed choices related to future transit station locations and light rail alignment in the Pacific Ridge/Midway areas, and
- Evaluate future growth and development potential for the area.

Des Moines City Council subsequently approved an ordinance amending the Des Moines Comprehensive Plan incorporating the Envision Midway planning work in November 2009 as detailed in Attachment 2.

In December 2011, the City of Kent, after further planning and analysis, adopted a subarea plan, zoning and design guidelines for Midway that sets the table for the extension of Link Light Rail and associated transit oriented development in Midway (Attachment 3).

Discussion:

With respect to tonight's Council discussion, the Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element included the following strategies related to the extension of Link Light Rail to and through Des Moines:

Transportation Element

Strategy 3-05-04 Public Transit

(5) Support regional plans for high capacity transit (HCT) and opportunities that extend the regional transit system (including BRT and light rail) to provide convenient connections to Des Moines. (CTP TR 4.6)

(7) Support Sound Transit light rail (LRT) station(s) in Pacific Ridge, Midway, and Woodmont areas on Pacific Highway South. (CTP TR 4.8)

(9) Work with Sound Transit to establish a light rail transit stop at South 216th Street. (CTP TR 4.10)

(10) Work with Sound Transit on station area planning for Midway and South 272nd Street stations. (CTP TR 4.11)

(11) Coordinate with the City of Kent for the Midway subarea. (CTP TR 4.12)

Pacific Ridge Element

Policy 11-03-11 *Coordinate with Sound Transit and the Cities of Kent, SeaTac and Federal Way on the extension of light rail through Des Moines.*

Strategy 11-04-07 *Support a light rail alignment on or east of the SR 99 center median, or along 30th Avenue South, provided a light rail stop is added in the vicinity of South 216th Street; or designate the west margin of Interstate 5 as the light rail corridor through Pacific Ridge. Work with Sound Transit to establish a light rail stop in the vicinity of S 216th Street.*

In June 2012, Sound Transit entered into a contract with HDR, a planning and engineering firm to begin the "Alternatives Analysis" on the 7.6 mile corridor from South 200th to the Federal Way Transit Center including stations in the vicinity of Highline Community College by 2023 and South 272nd Street. The Alternatives Analysis will be completed by mid-2013 and will be followed by a Draft EIS/Conceptual Engineering, and a Final EIS/Preliminary Engineering. Completion of the environmental approval process, and receipt of a Record of Decision from the Federal Transit Administration is anticipated by 2016.

Sound Transit staff last briefed the Public Safety Committee and the full Council on July 5, 2012. Tonight's briefing is included as Attachment 4.

Four cities are involved in the Federal Way Transit Extension and Sound Transit is working with 13 cities in its regional planning effort. Additional stakeholders include the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), WSDOT, King County Metro, Highline Community College, and many other entities including local businesses and residents.

Sound Transit is formally beginning the Alternatives Analysis by conducting "Early Scoping". Early Scoping is an optional step in the environmental process and is conducted for the purpose of obtaining early public input on the project. The Early Scoping period extends from October 18th through November 19th and will include public open houses on November 8th at Highline Community College and November 13th at Truman High School. An additional "EIS Scoping" period will be conducted towards the end of the Alternatives Analysis process in May/June 2013 prior to starting the Draft EIS.

As part of the Early Scoping period, Sound Transit is seeking input on the purpose and need for the project, the range of potential alternatives, the evaluation framework, and any other concerns that the Council or the public would like Sound Transit to consider during the Alternatives Analysis. The more comprehensive the range of alternatives examined during Alternative Analysis, the better the project and the more complete the environmental record will be. One of the objectives of the Early Scoping period is to generate a range of potential alternatives while reserving judgment about the merits of those alternatives until the analysis has progressed. As such, it would be premature tonight to make conclusions regarding preferred alternatives.

Sound Transit staff will not have any answers to Council questions tonight except for process. Tonight it will, however, be helpful for Sound Transit (ST) staff to hear Council's discussion about questions such as but not limited to:

1. What is the purpose and need for the project? Reliable transit service to regional destinations? Alternatives to congested roadways? Local and regional economic development?
2. What alternatives should ST study? Light rail, bus or some other mode? Along SR 99, I-5, or elsewhere? Elevated or at-grade? Potential station locations?
3. What are the community priorities that should be considered in evaluating the alternatives? Impediments or incentives to economic development? Neighborhood continuity? Environmental/social justice? Regional versus local costs and benefits? Transit system capacity and efficiency? Technical feasibility? Affordability?
4. Any other issues or concerns?

Recommendation/Conclusion:

None

Attachment 1 – Envision Midway Planning Project

Building Partnerships and a Vision - From the onset of the subarea planning effort, the need to cultivate partnerships was clear. The primary partnership was between the City of Kent and the City of Des Moines and was driven by the possibility that light rail would serve Midway. An interlocal agreement between Kent and Des Moines laid out a set of deliverables that were tied to a Growth Management Grant from the State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (now named Department of Commerce). The direction from Kent and Des Moines City Councils was a commitment to build a livable, long lasting community that was economically and environmentally sustainable.

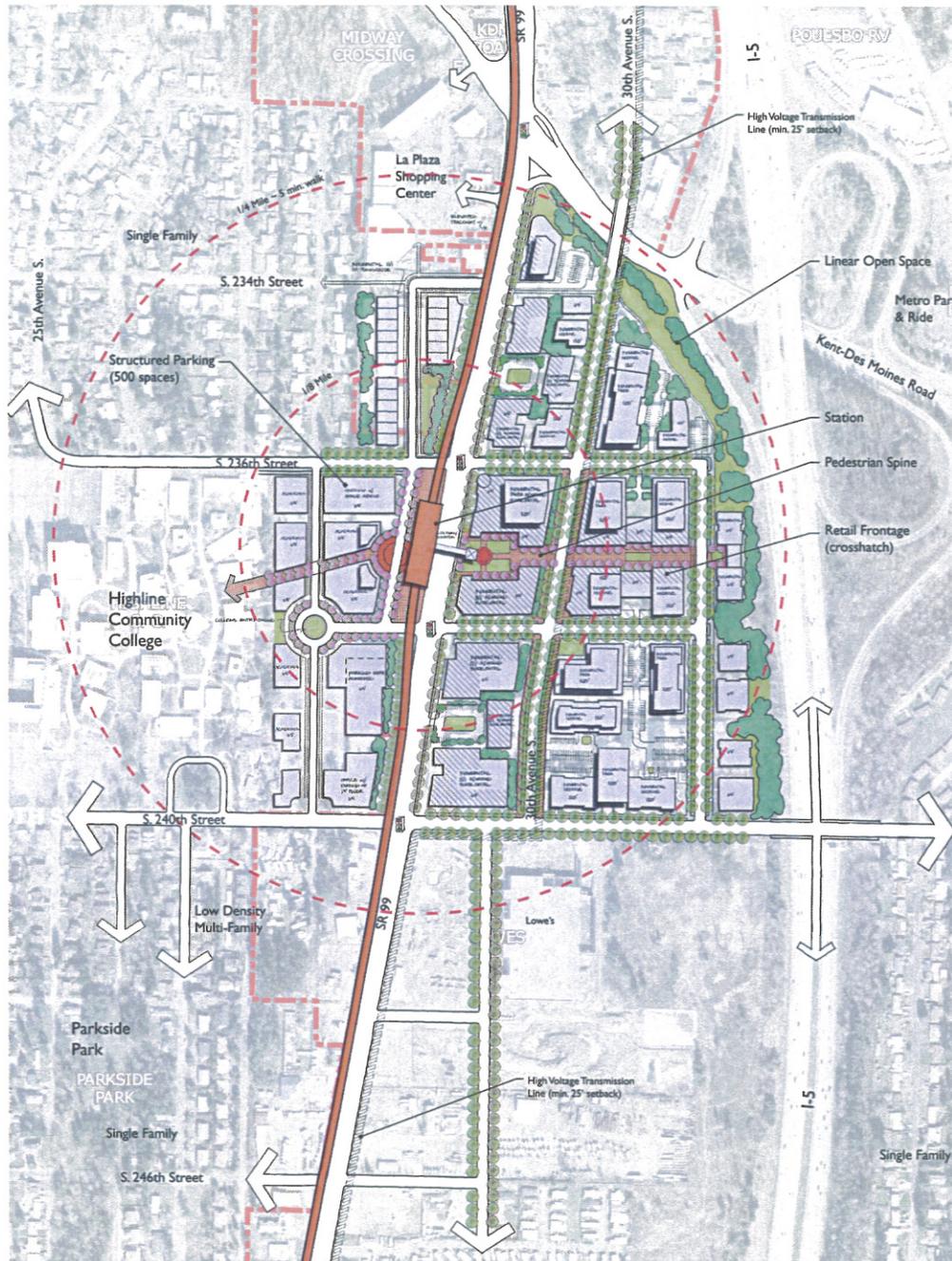


There were other significant *Envision Midway* partners from transportation agencies, large property owners such as Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), Highline Community College and adjacent cities. All were invited to participate in the *Envision Midway* Stakeholders Committee. The development community was also included. Progressive developers with regional and national experience in mixed use and transit oriented development, and local housing experts were invited to a Developers Forum to provide feedback on the initial public visioning and a follow-up Developers Forum confirmed the vision was achievable. All of these partnerships, together with input from residents, property owners, and businesses within the Midway Subarea are the foundation for *Envision Midway* and will be critical in the successful implementation of the Plan.

Visioning Process – The visioning process was iterative and attempted to reach all constituents. The outcomes of each meeting were shared to ensure participants could benefit from the larger discussion, evaluate and revise ideas generated by others, and remain engaged as the project moved forward. The Stakeholders Committee and the public were asked to consider land uses, regulatory and design standards, and were charged with identifying light rail station locations and rail alignment options. In an effort to reach as many community members as possible, a project website was developed where meeting schedules, materials and results were posted. The intent was to ensure project transparency and to solicit comment from the greater community. A unique opinion poll posted on the *Envision Midway* website was based on a computer generated video that reflected the vision for Midway and allowed the viewer to walk through a “virtual reality” of a light rail station near Highline Community College. A total of nine (9) meetings were held in 2008 and 2009 with the public and stakeholders. By early in 2009, six (6) meetings were held with decision makers in an effort to develop a land use scenario that reflects their community’s wisdom and vision for Midway.

The following graphics show the planning area, station locations and alignment options discussed during the *Envision Midway* Planning effort and the land use option that emerged from this work.

Midway Light Rail Station Area Concept: SR 99

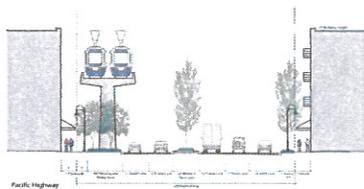


Pros:

- Removes conflict with autos
- Removes conflict with commerce
- Provides fast service
- Fits into existing high capacity transportation corridor
- Convenient E/W METRO link
- Provides E/W pedestrian link across SR-99 (overpass or at-grade)
- Supports major employment center (HCC)
- Enhances HCC campus
- High development potential in 1/4 mile radius
- Allows business at station's ground level
- Pedestrian overpass eases traffic conflicts
- No right-of-way (ROW) purchase for 30th Ave
- Preserves intimate feel of 30th Ave 'Great Street'

Cons:

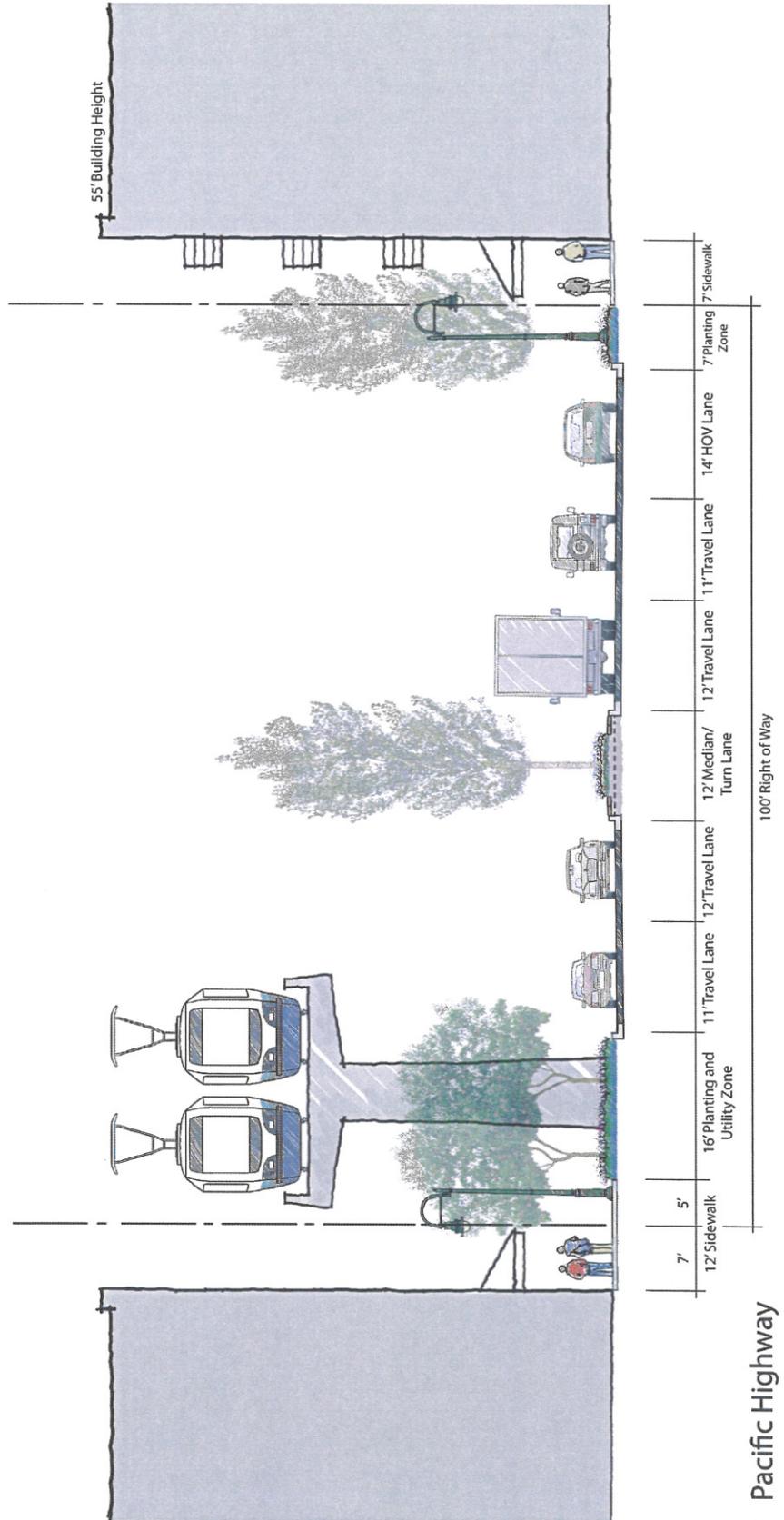
- Need to acquire ROW
- Narrow lots made smaller by ROW purchase
- Need to reconfigure access to properties
- Impact to pedestrian environment
- Long pedestrian crossing at-grade of SR-99 intersection
- Fast rail speed disconnects riders from passing community



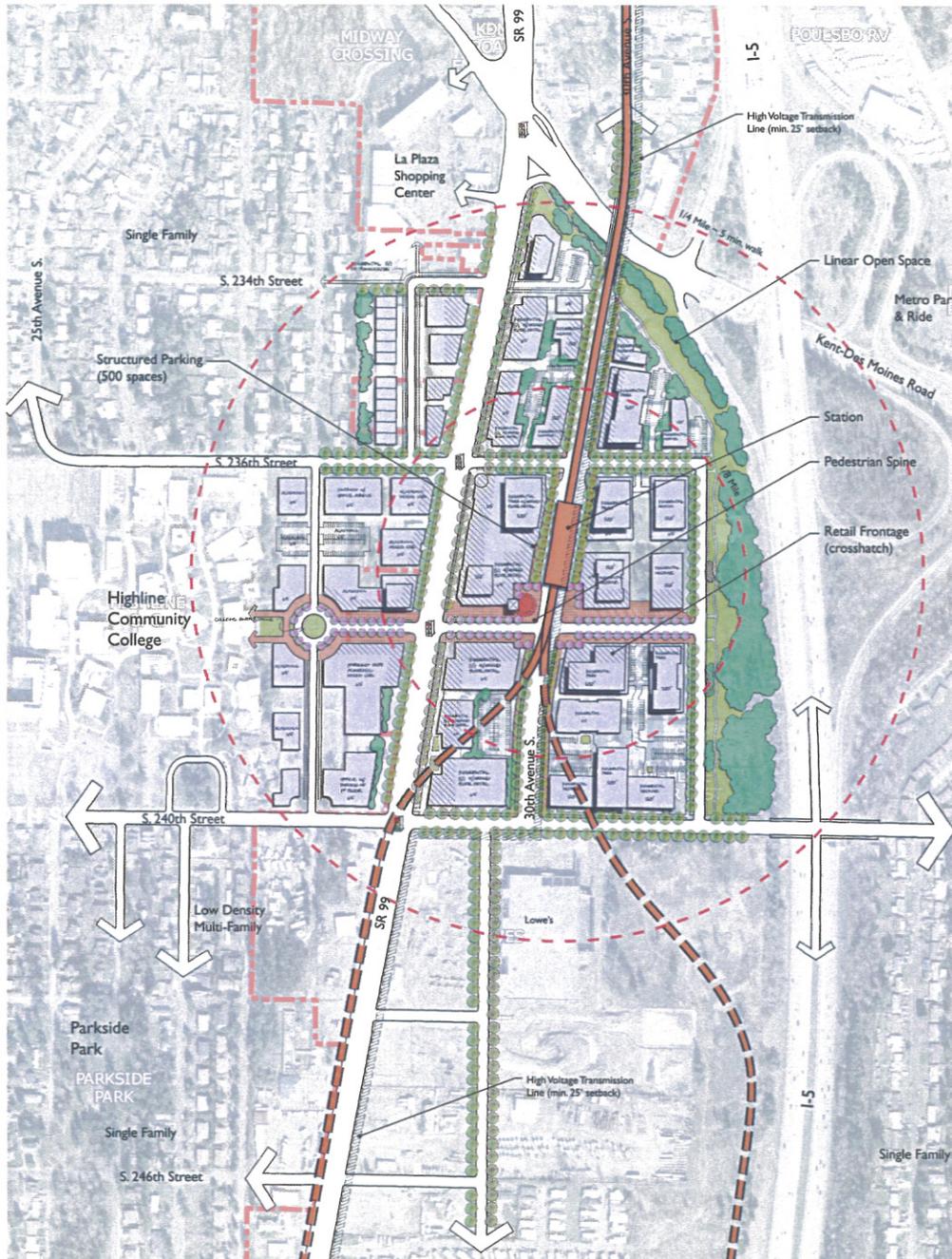
November 12, 2008



SR 99 Cross Section



Midway Light Rail Station Area Concept: 30th Avenue S.

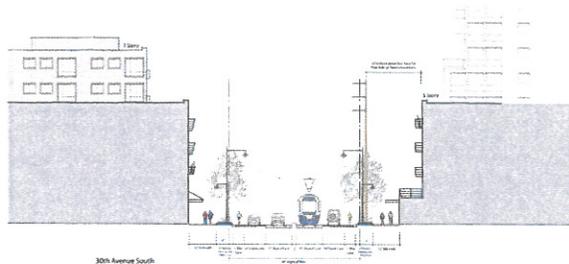


Pros:

- New 'Great Street' with urban feel
- New alternative N/S corridor for all modes of travel
- New link for Des Moines & Kent over SR-518
- Slow rail speed connects riders with passing community
- Provides E/W pedestrian link at-grade across SR-99
- Supports major employment center (HCC)
- High development potential in 1/4 mile radius
- Convenient METRO link from I-5
- Convenient HOV link from I-5
- No impact to SR-99 properties
- No impact to SR-99 street improvements

Cons:

- Proximity to vehicular traffic
- Reduces fast service to speed of auto
- Brings regional traffic into neighborhood
- Brings METRO links into neighborhood
- Need to acquire significant ROW
- Costly to link Des Moines & Kent over SR-518
- Lacks visibility to regional transportation corridor SR-99
- Does not enhance HCC campus
- Siting conflicts with high tension power lines
- Reduces development potential by 1/3



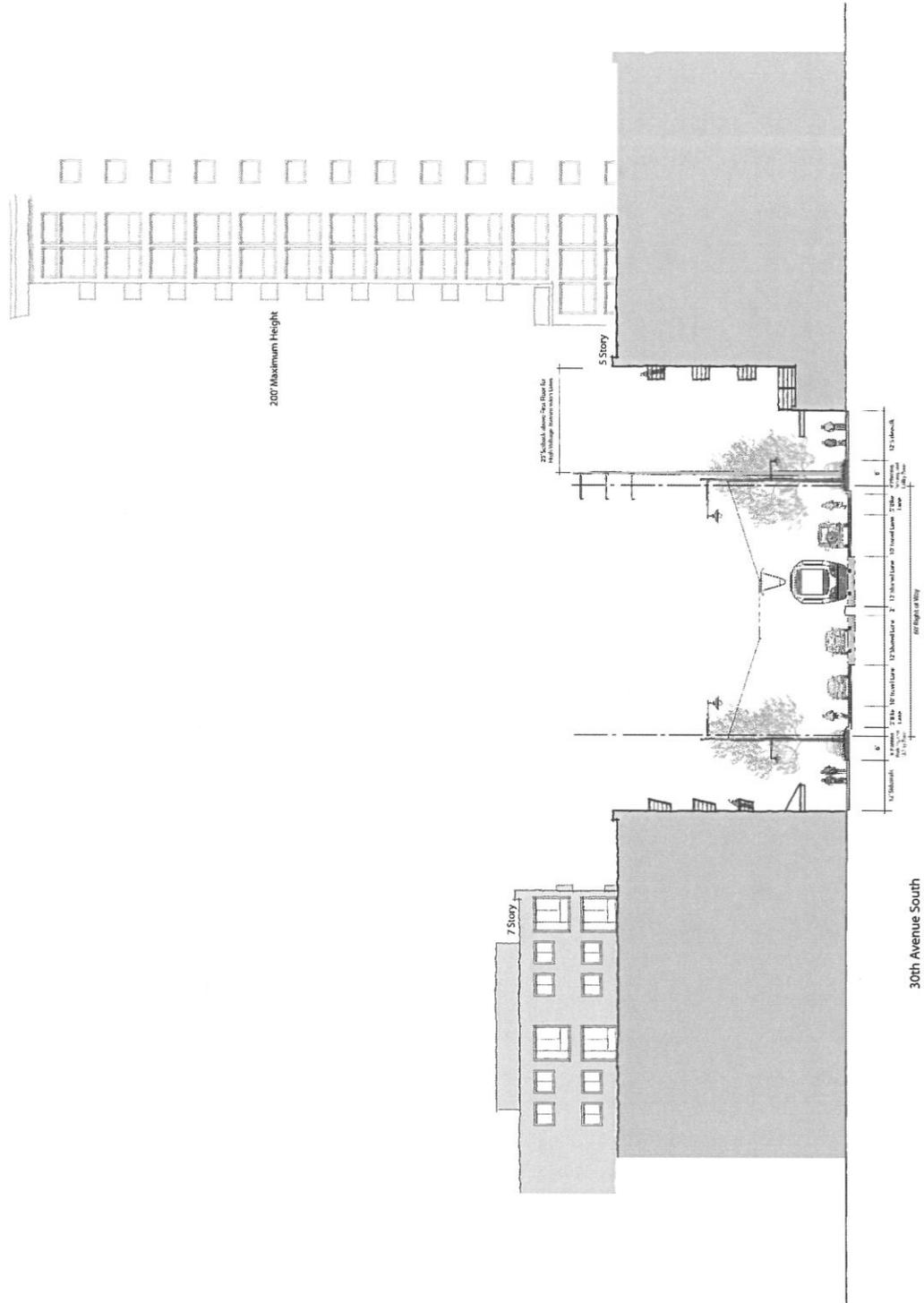
November 12, 2008



1" = 150'



30th Avenue S Cross Section



Midway Light Rail Station Area Concept: I-5

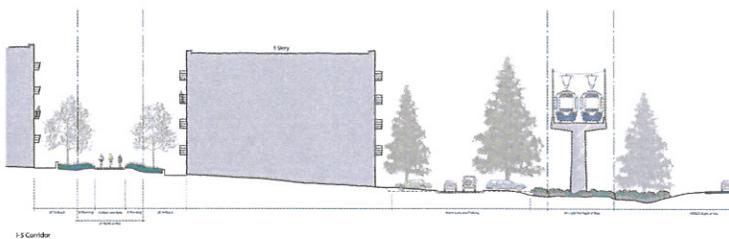


Pros:

- Removes conflict with autos
- Provides fast service
- Convenient METRO link from I-5
- Convenient HOV link from I-5
- Creates sound barrier neighborhood at west

Cons:

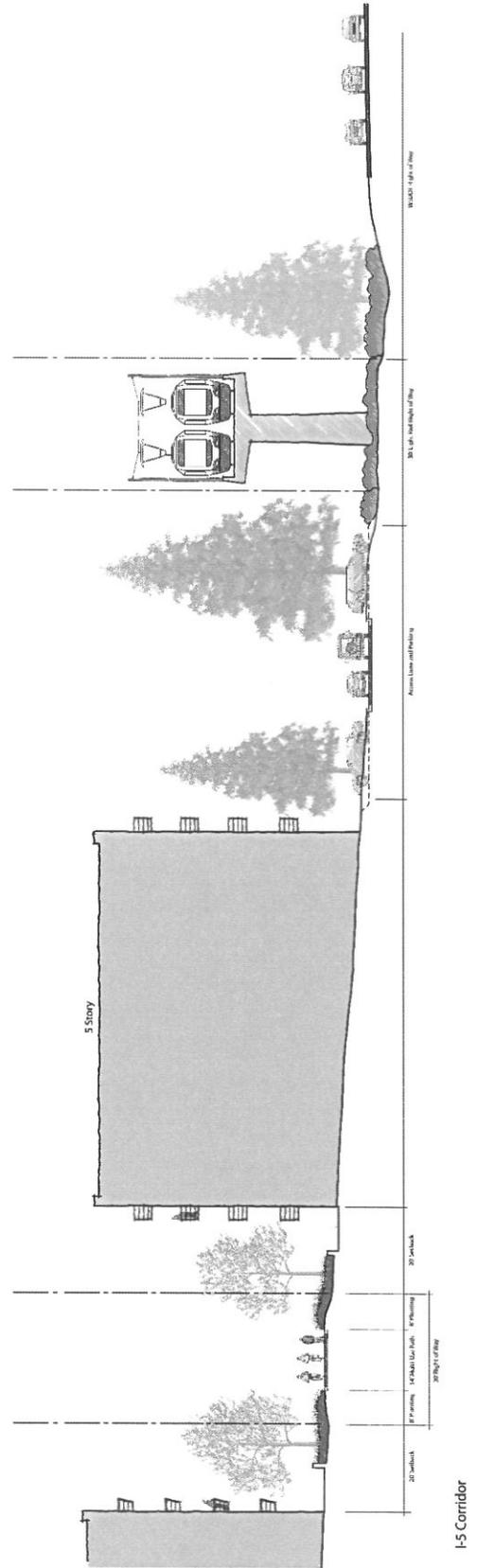
- Exceeds 1/4 mile radius to major employment center (HCC)
- Does not enhance HCC campus
- Lacks visibility to regional transportation corridor SR-99
- Brings regional traffic into neighborhood
- Brings METRO links into neighborhood
- Need to acquire all ROW
- Reduces development potential by 1/2 in 1/4 mile radius
- Uphill walk for pedestrians going west
- May require transit shuttle for rider-ship success



November 12, 2008



I-5 Cross Section



Scenario 3.0

Transit Oriented Village

- High intensity transit supportive mixed-use with residential bias
- Strongly pedestrian oriented with small walkable blocks
- 35' to 200' height limit
- Lowered parking requirement
- Uses:
 - Market rate and affordable housing
 - Office
 - Retail
 - Hotel
 - Neighborhood services
 - Civic uses
- No single use, big box, industrial, or auto-dependent uses

Mixed Use - Pacific Ridge

- Auto-accommodating community and citywide retail and services
- Pedestrian oriented
- Mixed use with office or residential
- 35' to 85' Commercial height limit
- 35' to 200' Residential height limit
- Uses:
 - Residential
 - Community, citywide and regional retail
 - Office
 - Hotel

Mixed Use - Kent Highlands

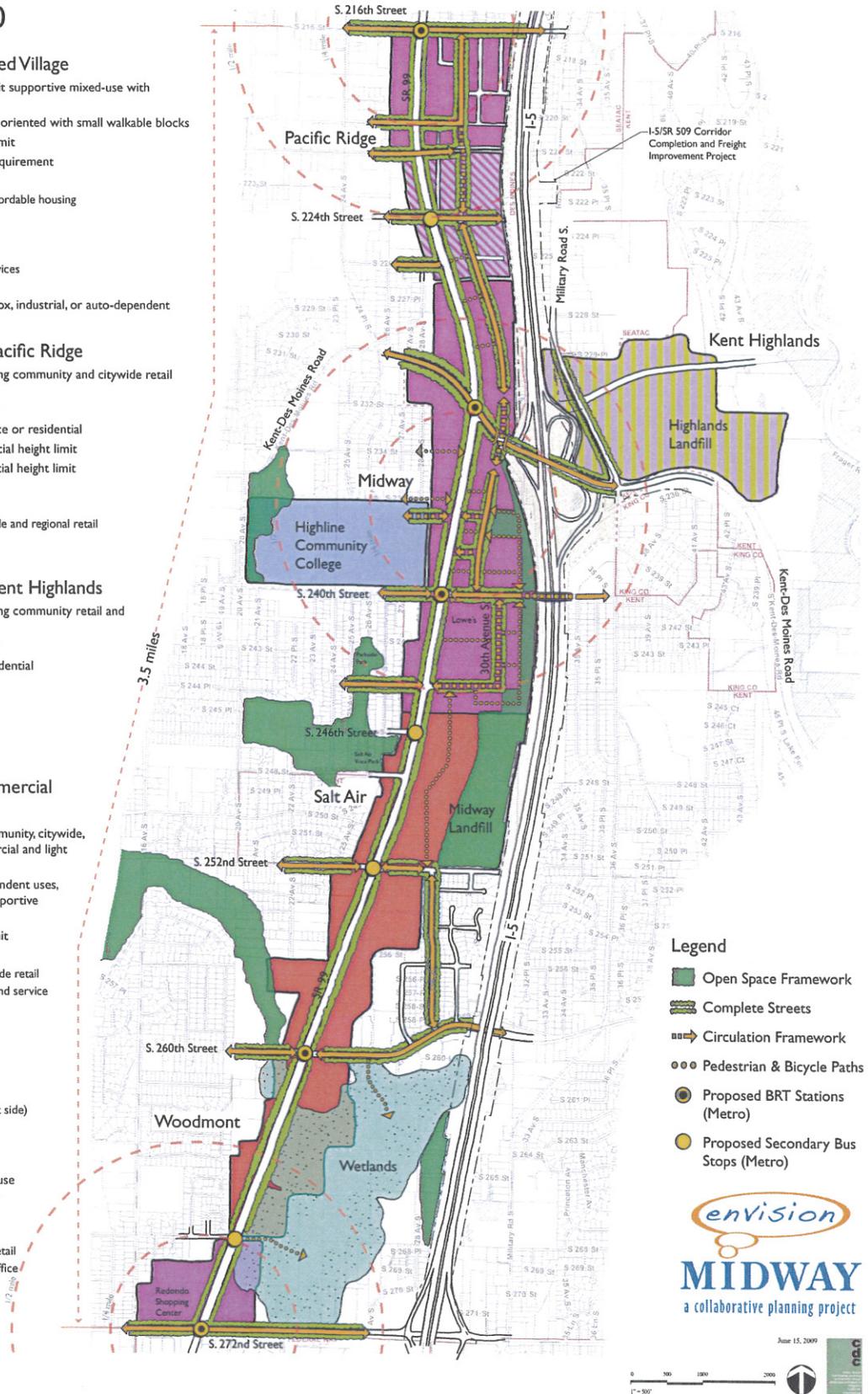
- Auto-accommodating community retail and services
- Pedestrian oriented
- Mixed use with residential
- 200' height limit
- Uses:
 - Residential
 - Community Retail
 - Hotel

Highway Commercial Corridor

- Wide range of community, citywide, or regional commercial and light industrial uses
- Primarily auto-dependent uses, with pedestrian supportive facilities
- 35' to 50' height limit
- Uses:
 - Regional and citywide retail
 - Automobile sales and service
 - Light Industrial and manufacturing
 - Trucking
 - Outdoor storage
 - Office
 - Flex-tech
 - Mixed use (on west side)
 - Live-work

Institutional

- Institutional mixed use residential or office
- Uses:
 - College academic
 - College oriented retail
 - College oriented office
 - Student and faculty rental housing



The following Comprehensive Plan goals, policies and strategies were adopted Nov. 12, 2009 by Ordinance No. 1469) following the Envision Midway visioning project and the 2009 update to the Des Moines Transportation Plan:

Land Use Element

Strategy 2-04-11 Negotiate with Sound Transit and the Cities of Kent, SeaTac and Federal Way on the extension of light rail through Des Moines. **Strategy 2-04-12** Prepare a subarea plan/s, prepare zoning amendments and prepare design guidelines for the light rail station areas to be located within the South Des Moines and Woodmont Neighborhoods, considering the joint planning with the City of Kent on the Midway area.

Transportation Element

3-03 Transportation Goals by Category

3-03-04 Public Transit GOAL TR 4: Encourage the expansion of public transit services to provide convenient and affordable transportation alternatives for all residents and employees.

DISCUSSION:

Transit service is an increasingly important element of Des Moines' transportation system. Improved transit service and new capital investments are integral to meeting the City's land use goals and the needs of the community. Expanding service would improve mobility not only within the City but provide more connections to regional destinations for employment. The City supports regional plans for high capacity transit (HCT) in Des Moines, including RapidRide bus rapid transit and Link Light Rail, and the expansion of local bus service needed to provide convenient connections with these systems. However, unlike the street and non-motorized systems, the City does not directly provide transit service. Instead, the City must coordinate service expansions and changes with the region's two providers --- Sound Transit and King County (Metro). The City often works with other cities in South King County to lobby these providers for expanded service and better transit options for residents. Figure 3-5 recommends a set of transit improvements for the short term, mid-term, and long term.

CROSS REFERENCE:

City policies promote transit-supportive land uses (See Goal TR1), including higher densities and enhanced circulation for pedestrians, and call for new developments to provide convenient pedestrian access to transit stops (See Goal TR5). City policies support the programs of Sound Transit and King County Metro that expand the number of transit routes and increase the frequency of service on existing routes.

3-03-06 Parking

GOAL TR 6: Establish parking strategies that support economic activity, transportation, circulation, and for existing and future land uses.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of establishing parking strategies is to effectively balance the demand for parking with the supply. Parking issues in the City are generally focused around the Marina District, Highline Community College and Redondo, although there are some localized parking concerns within some neighborhoods. The addition of planned transit facilities, RapidRide, Link Light Rail, and potential passenger-only ferry service will create new parking issues and challenges near their stations. As the Marina District continues to develop, parking demand will grow as businesses, retail, and residences increase, leading to more competition for the limited supply of on-street parking. Parking management techniques will be needed to balance the employee, customer, visitor, and residential demand for the same on-street parking. The City may create and implement a parking program that minimizes on-street surface parking; encourages shared, clustered parking to reduce the total number of spaces needed; and considers reducing parking requirements for developments near transit stations. The City could consider establishing minimum parking standards as regional and local transit service in the neighborhood improves and as light rail is provided in the city.

CROSS REFERENCE:

The CTP identifies a set of strategies, a toolbox of the best practices in parking management (CTP Table 4-13), but as the complexity of the actions are considered, a detailed parking plan will provide the best actions for the community.

Strategy 3-05-04 Public Transit

- (5) Support regional plans for high capacity transit (HCT) and opportunities that extend the regional transit system (including BRT and light rail) to provide convenient connections to Des Moines. (CTP TR 4.6)

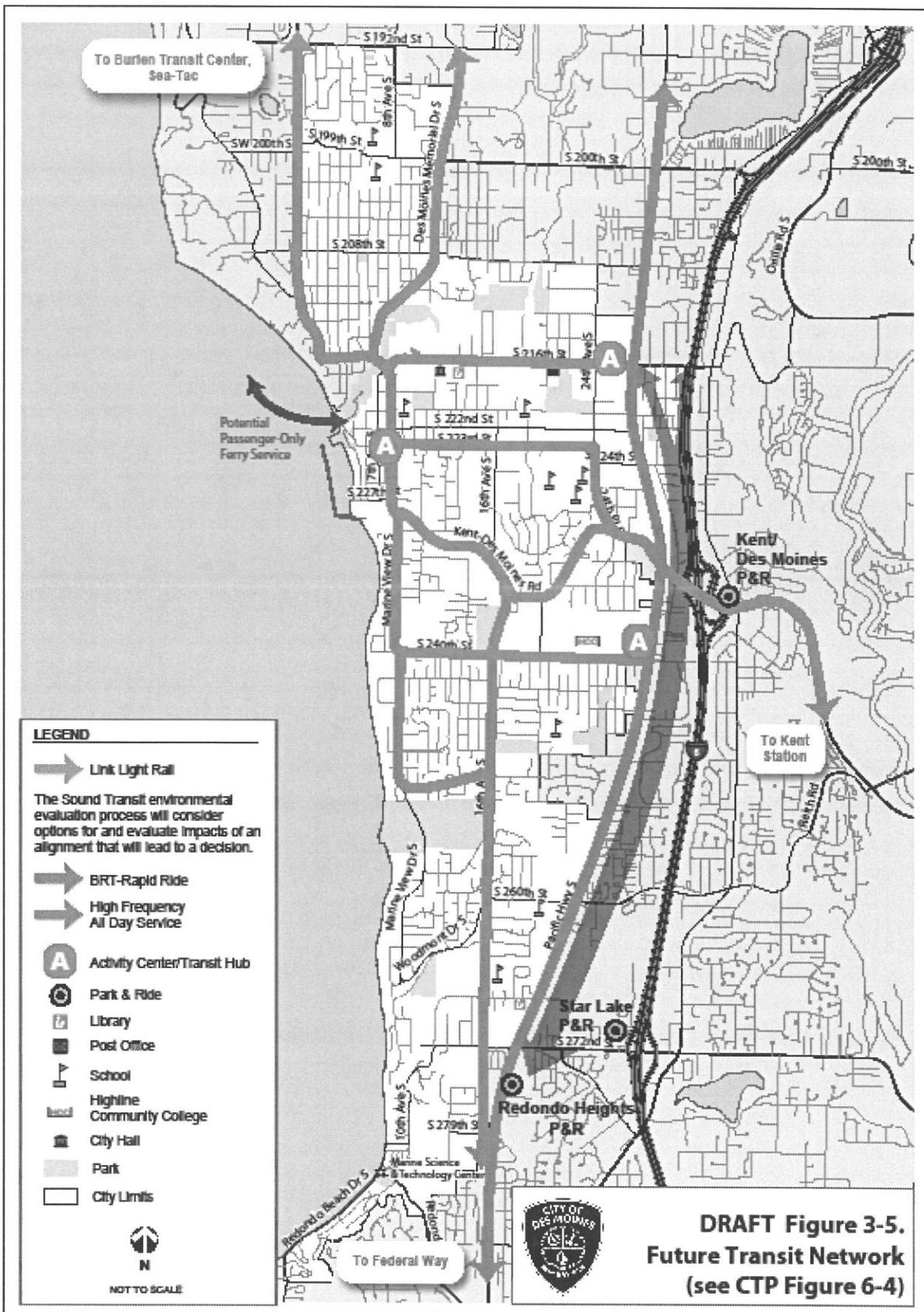
- (7) Support Sound Transit light rail (LRT) station(s) in Pacific Ridge, Midway, and Woodmont areas on Pacific Highway South. (CTP TR 4.8)

- (8) Support frequent local service linking Downtown, Des Moines businesses and Highline Community College with HCT on Pacific Highway South. (CTP TR 4.9)

- (9) Work with Sound Transit to establish a light rail transit stop at South 216th Street. (CTP TR 4.10)

- (10) Work with Sound Transit on station area planning for Midway and South 272nd Street stations. (CTP TR 4.11)

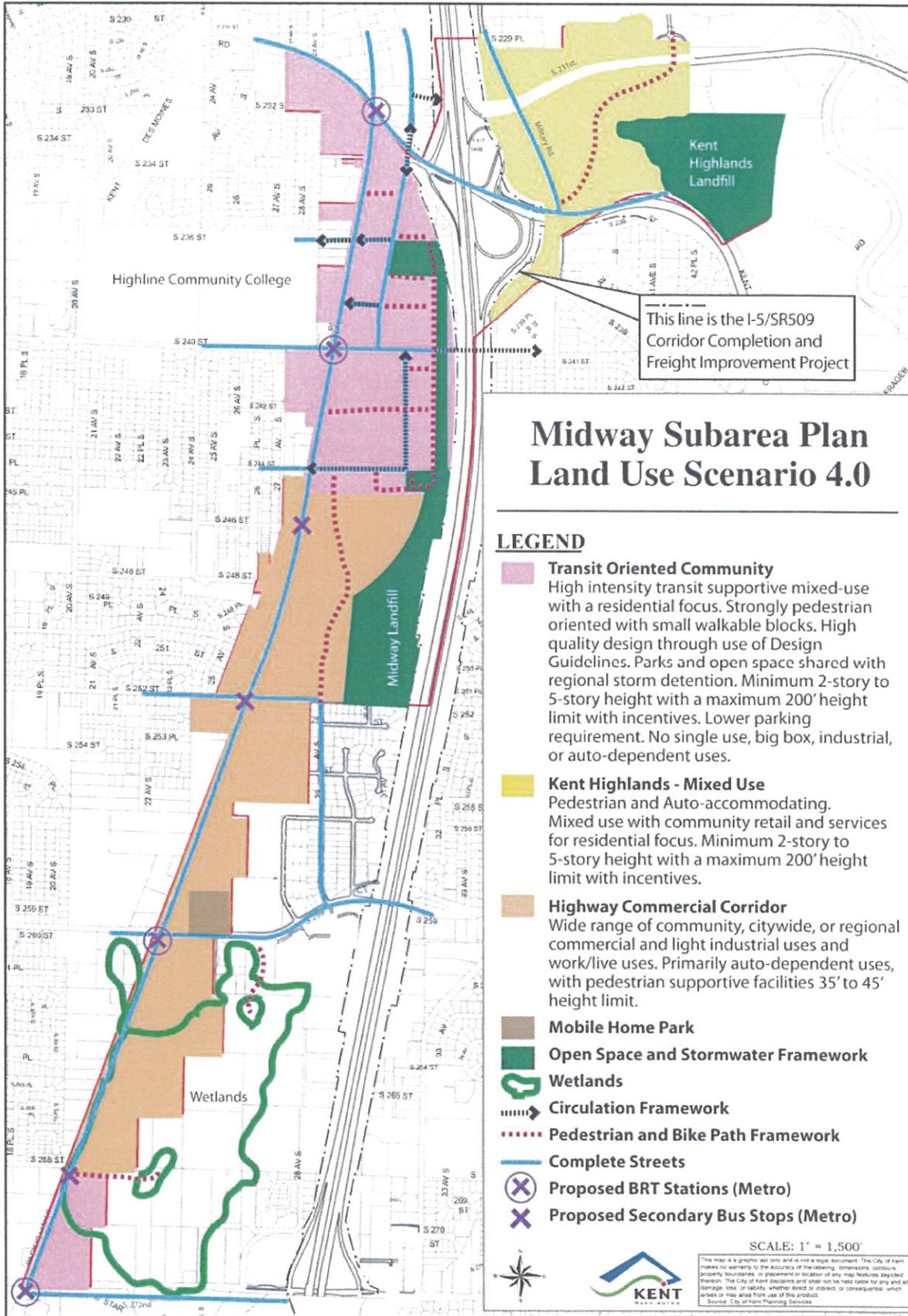
- (11) Coordinate with the City of Kent for the Midway subarea. (CTP TR 4.12)



Pacific Ridge Element

Policy 11-03-11 Coordinate with Sound Transit and the Cities of Kent, SeaTac and Federal Way on the extension of light rail through Des Moines.

Strategy 11-04-07 Support a light rail alignment on or east of the SR 99 center median, or along 30th Avenue South, provided a light rail stop is added in the vicinity of South 216th Street; or designate the west margin of Interstate 5 as the light rail corridor through Pacific Ridge. Work with Sound Transit to establish a light rail stop in the vicinity of S 216th Street.



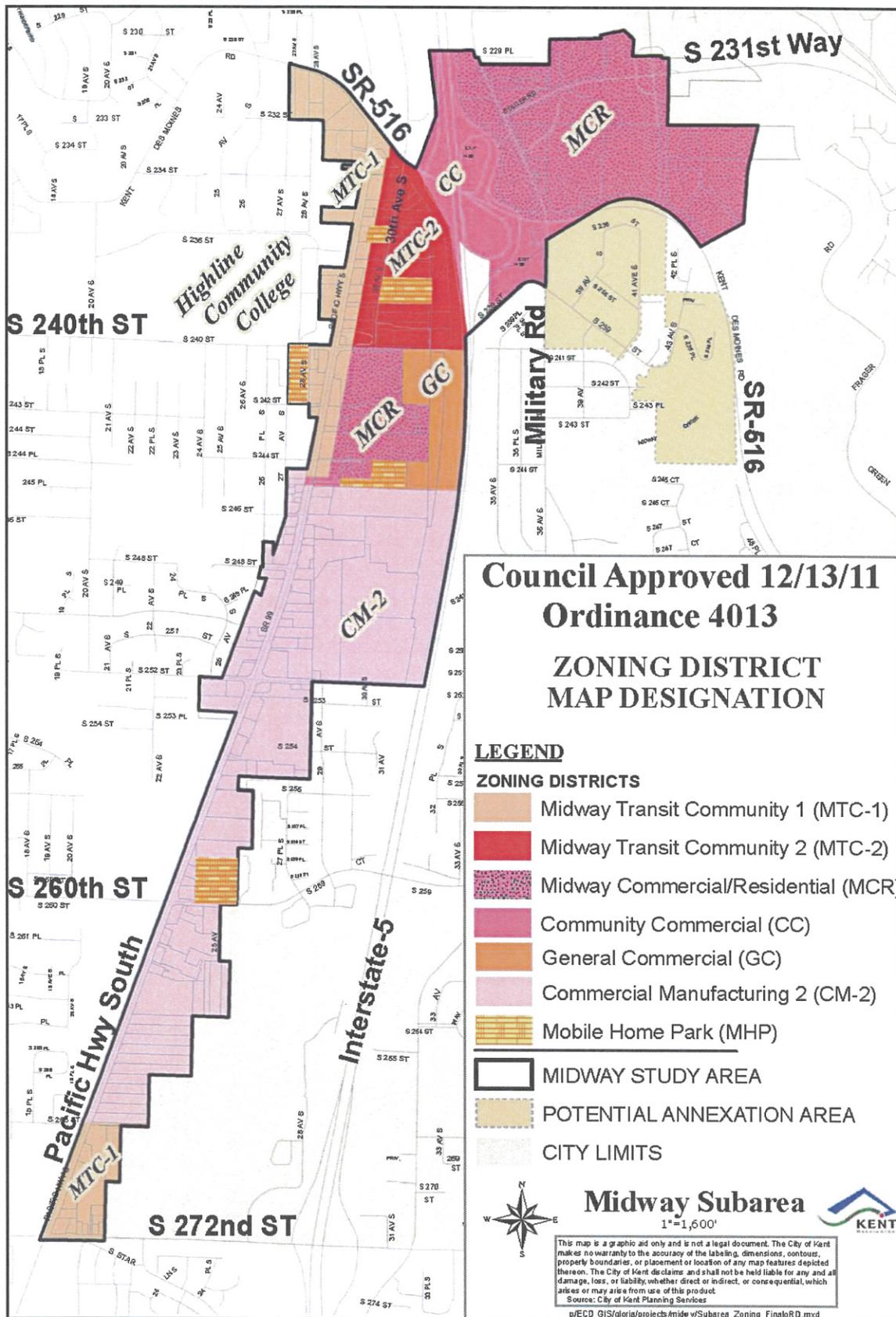
Midway Subarea Plan Land Use Scenario 4.0

LEGEND

- Transit Oriented Community**
High intensity transit supportive mixed-use with a residential focus. Strongly pedestrian oriented with small walkable blocks. High quality design through use of Design Guidelines. Parks and open space shared with regional storm detention. Minimum 2-story to 5-story height with a maximum 200' height limit with incentives. Lower parking requirement. No single use, big box, industrial, or auto-dependent uses.
- Kent Highlands - Mixed Use**
Pedestrian and Auto-accommodating. Mixed use with community retail and services for residential focus. Minimum 2-story to 5-story height with a maximum 200' height limit with incentives.
- Highway Commercial Corridor**
Wide range of community, citywide, or regional commercial and light industrial uses and work/live uses. Primarily auto-dependent uses, with pedestrian supportive facilities 35' to 45' height limit.
- Mobile Home Park**
- Open Space and Stormwater Framework**
- Wetlands**
- Circulation Framework**
- Pedestrian and Bike Path Framework**
- Complete Streets**
- Proposed BRT Stations (Metro)**
- Proposed Secondary Bus Stops (Metro)**

SCALE: 1" = 1,500'

This map is a graphic aid only and is not a legal document. The City of Kent makes no warranty to the accuracy of the labeling, dimensions, contours, property boundaries, or placement or location of any map features depicted thereon. The City of Kent disclaims and shall not be held liable for any and all damage, loss, or liability, whether direct or indirect, or consequential, which arises or may arise from use of this product.
Source: City of Kent Planning Services



Federal Way Transit Extension

City of Des Moines City Council Workshop

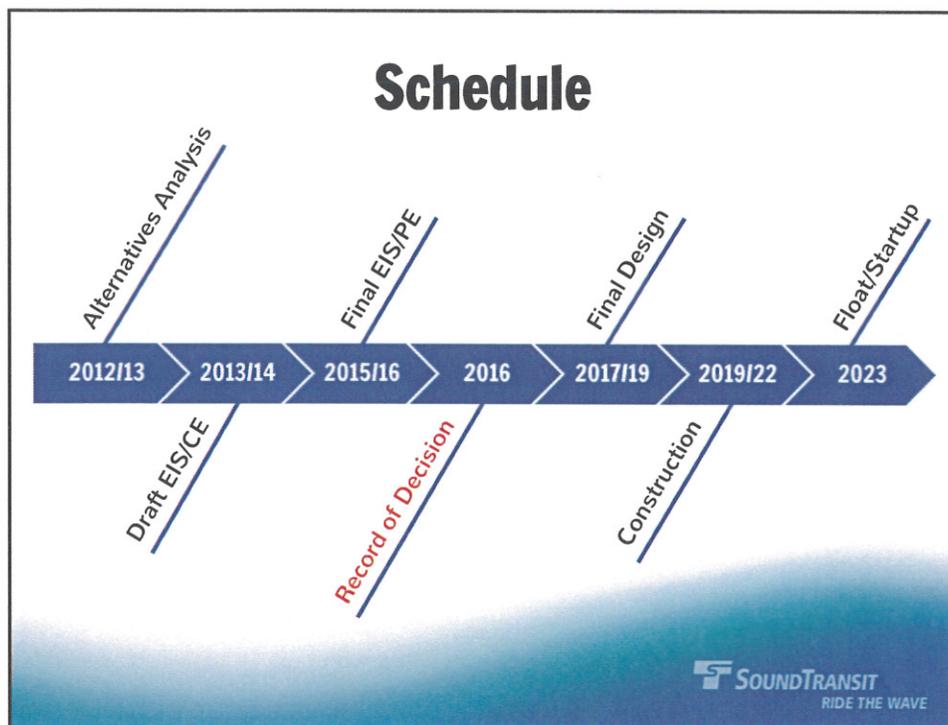
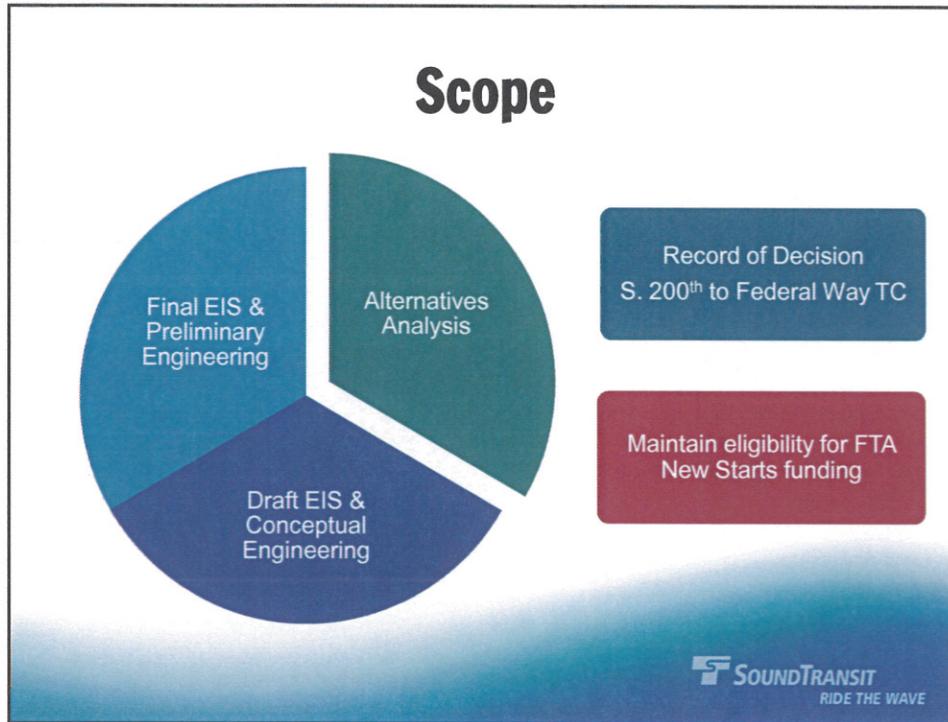
October 18, 2012



Federal Way Transit Extension

- 7.6 mile corridor
- S. 200th to Federal Way Transit Center
- Potential stations:
 - Kent/Des Moines
 - South 272nd
 - Federal Way TC



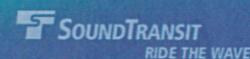
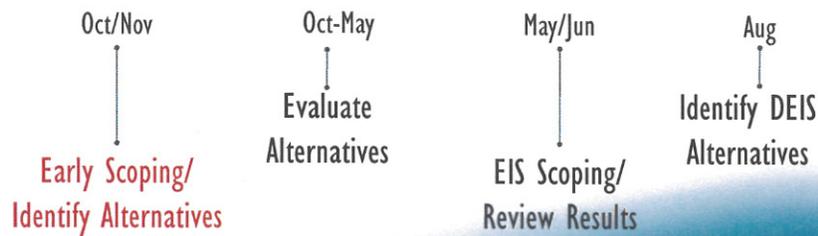


Alternatives Analysis Process

- Identify Alternatives (during Early Scoping)
- Evaluate reasonable alternatives in detail
- Review results with public (during EIS Scoping)
- Advance most promising alternatives to DEIS

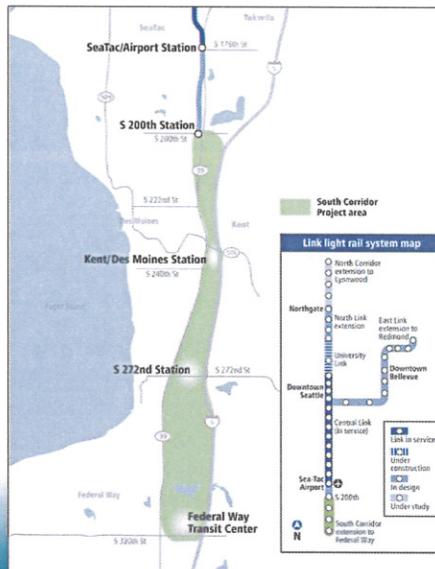


Alternatives Analysis Timeline



Potential Alternatives

- Mode:
 - LRT, Bus, other
- Alignment:
 - I-5, SR 99, other
- Profile:
 - Elevated, At-Grade, Mixed
- Stations:
 - Kent/Des Moines, S. 272nd, FWTC, other



Draft Evaluation Criteria

- Ridership potential
- Reliability
- Connectivity to regional transportation system
- Accessibility for transit dependents
- Consistency with local and regional plans
- Effect on natural and built environment
- Physical and engineering constraints
- Relative cost

Early Scoping Public Meetings

- Thursday, November 8
 - 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
 - Highline Community College – Building 2
- Tuesday, November 13
 - 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
 - Truman High School - Gym



 **SOUNDTRANSIT**
RIDE THE WAVE

Early Scoping Meeting Purpose

- Formally introduce FWTE to public, agencies, stakeholders
- Get feedback on purpose and need, alternatives, evaluation process
- Present timeline, decision-making process, and opportunities for public involvement

 **SOUNDTRANSIT**
RIDE THE WAVE

How We are Getting the Word Out

- Postcard Mailing
- Project corridor plus ½ mile on all borders
- 24,852 addresses
- Will hit mailboxes on or about October 26



SOUNDTRANSIT
RIDE THE WAVE

How We are Getting the Word Out

- Print and Web Ads – ads running week before and week of the meetings
 - Federal Way Mirror
 - Highline Times
 - Kent Reporter
 - Thunderword (Highline CC newspaper)
 - Korea Daily
 - Russian World
 - El Mundo
 - Phuong Dong Times
 - Neighborhood Blogs
 - Waterland Blog
 - SeaTac Blog



SOUNDTRANSIT
RIDE THE WAVE

How We are Getting the Word Out

- Early Scoping Notice in Federal Register
- Print Legal Notice
- E-Mail notification to subscriber list
- Project website and calendar
- Media advisory
- Posters in park and ride lots, transit centers, light rail stations, and other community gathering places
- Outreach to riders at the Federal Way Transit Center
- Partnerships
- Newsletters (Chambers, Jurisdictions, Community Groups)
- Somali TV



How to Comment

(Comments due by November 19)

- In person, at public or agency scoping meetings
- Email: FWTE@soundtransit.org
- Mail: Sound Transit
Attn: FWTE
401 S. Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104
- Online web questionnaire:
www.soundtransit.org/FWextension

