



CITY CENTER COMMUNITY PLAN

Prepared by
The Design Group

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City of
Renton
Community & Economic Development



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City of Renton
Community & Economic Development



MAKERS architecture, planning, urban design



1. Introduction

Renton's City Center is expected to experience considerable growth and change in the next 20 years, in part because of the anticipated growth of the Puget Sound region, but also because a significant portion of the area is a designated Regional Growth Center. This Community Plan is intended to help shape and direct that growth in a way that reflects the vision and desires of the people who live, work, learn, and play in the City Center, while acknowledging the role the City Center plays in the City as a whole, as well as the entire region. This plan is also intended to provide a framework that will help to improve the livability of the neighborhoods, preserve unique identity and create community character, prioritize the provision of City services and investment in infrastructure, and provide the public with the opportunity to participate in shaping the future of the City Center.

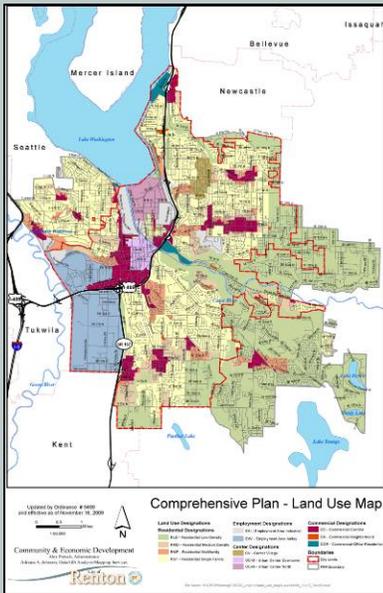
Context

The City of Renton is located in the Puget Sound region of Washington State and is positioned at the southern end of Lake Washington. It is the 10th most populous city in Washington state, and the fifth most populous in King County. As of 2010, the population of the entire City was approximately 86,230 people. As a rapidly growing city, Renton is required by the Washington State Growth Management Act of 1990 (GMA) to create a citywide Comprehensive Plan.

The City Center is a designated Regional Growth Center and is identified as such by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) in their February 2008 Vision 2040 report. According to the PSRC, Regional Growth Centers are a type of Urban Center that consist of areas of higher-intensity development and contain a mix of land uses and services. Regional Growth Centers also receive priority for major regional investments for transportation and other infrastructure.



Map of Renton in the regional context.



Renton's Comprehensive Plan Map.

City of Renton Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan provides policy guidance for the growth and the development of the City as a whole based on a community vision. The City of Renton Comprehensive Plan (Comprehensive Plan) is in compliance with the Growth Management Act (GMA). The GMA requires that Comprehensive Plans include policy direction for land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, and transportation.

The Comprehensive Plan incorporates statewide planning goals, including provisions that discourage urban sprawl, support affordable housing, protect the environment, and support provision of adequate urban services. The Plan is designed to accommodate 20 year growth forecasts, determined by regional agencies and local jurisdictions. Regional and countywide planning has defined “urban centers” in locations where concentrations of people and uses that can be served by transit are desirable.

Community Planning

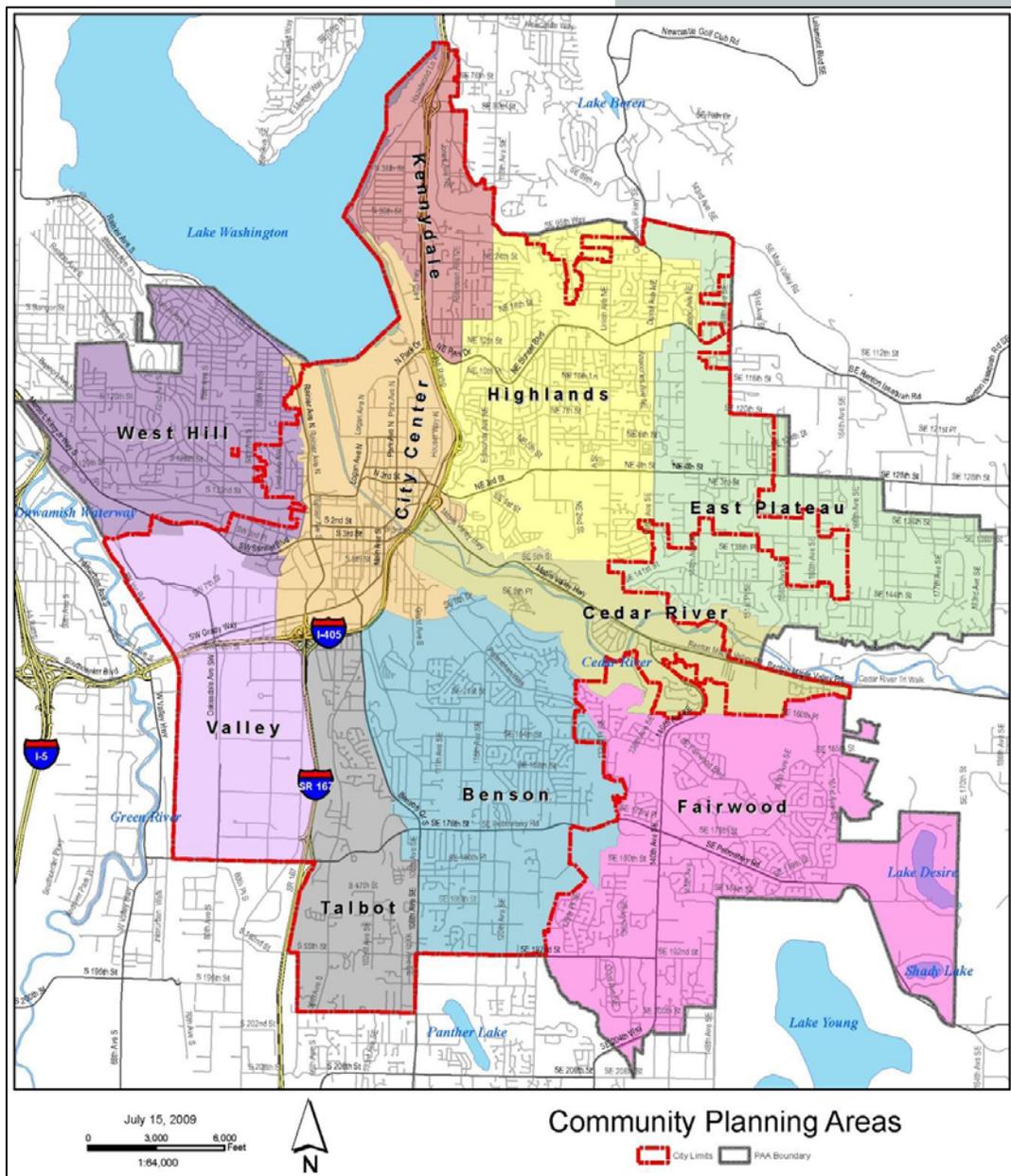
The City’s 2008 Comprehensive Plan laid out a community planning process to establish a vision for each geographical subarea within the City. The City’s goal is to include all of the neighborhoods of the City in a Community Plan.

The purpose of community planning in the City of Renton is to improve the livability of Renton’s neighborhoods, to preserve unique identity, create community character, prioritize the provision of City services and investment in infrastructure, and to provide the public with the opportunity to participate in shaping the future of their community.

Working with businesses, residents, and other stakeholders, the City will develop Community Plans that address local issues that are more specific than what is included in the Comprehensive Plan and work to enhance that which the community values.

All Community Plans will anticipate and accommodate future growth and must be consistent with the overall Comprehensive Plan and the Washington State Growth Management Act. Community Plans will strive to incorporate other planning initiatives, such as the Trails and Bicycle Master Plan, Museum Master Plan, and transportation planning efforts.

The Community Planning Areas Map (shown below) has been adopted to show ten Community Planning Areas in the City of Renton and its Potential Annexation Area. While the City Center is just one of ten Community Planning Areas within the City, the City began the community planning effort with the City Center, in part, because of its important role as a Regional Growth Center, both within the City and the entire region. Another reason the planning effort began with the City Center is because the area plays a unique and important role within the City. The area has regional employers, regional commercial businesses, regional parks that provide recreational opportunities, natural features that provide open space, and civic events, all of which serve as a magnet that draws people to the City Center.



Map of Renton's ten Community Planning Areas.

Framework Plan

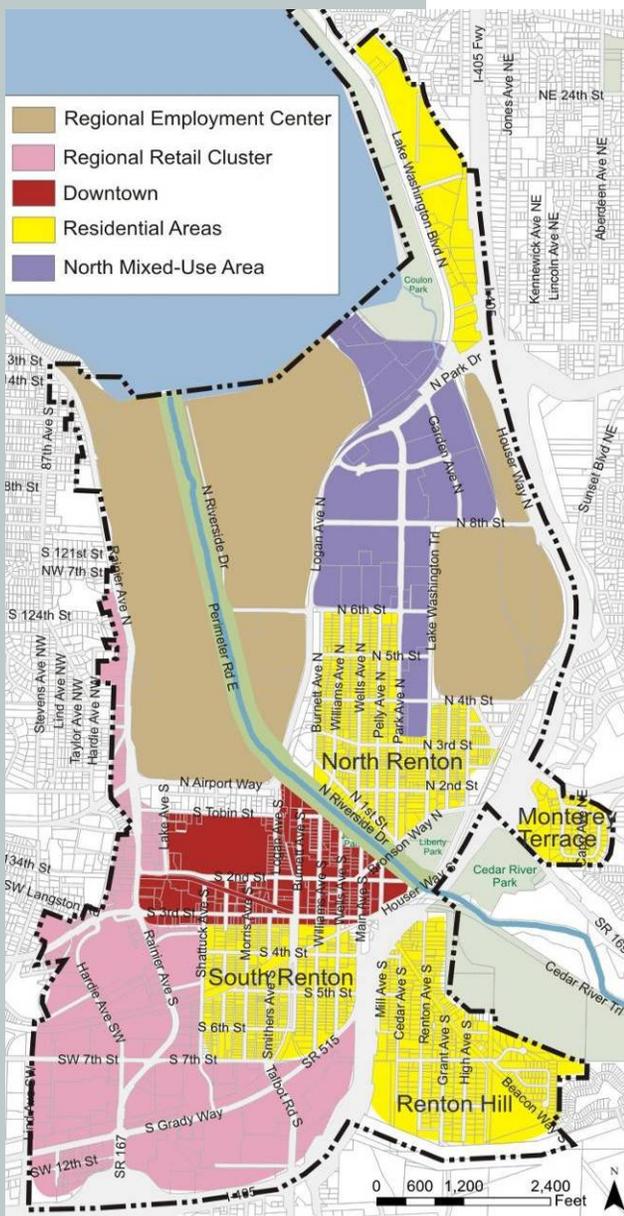
This “Framework Plan” is the first step in developing a full Community Plan that achieves the ultimate goals of making the City Center more livable and economically viable while accepting the necessary growth associated with the designation as a Regional Growth Center. The Framework Plan “frames” upcoming work by identifying issues, establishing a community vision, and identifying the next steps needed to achieve that vision. It is anticipated that many of these next steps will require further analysis, public engagement, and planning to make specific public improvement and program recommendations or establish regulatory measures.

The City has been working with residents, business leaders, employees, and property owners to understand their needs and desires to improve the City Center. The City has held a number of public meetings to solicit input on the Community Plan. The Framework Plan is intended to put forth the vision, goals, and objectives for City activities in the City Center and then the second phase will establish key strategies to ensure the plan is implemented.

Study Area

The City Center is comprised of very diverse activities and land uses ranging from airport industrial uses and retail districts to single-family neighborhoods. The City Center has numerous public facilities such as parks, trails, and public art; a list detailing these public amenities is included as Appendix B. In many ways, it is representative of the land uses of the entire Puget Sound region in microcosm. In 2009, the total population for the City Center was approximately 7,035.

In general, the City Center’s boundaries are Lake Washington to the North, I-405 to the south and east, and Lind Avenue SW and Rainier Avenue to the west. For a more detailed boundary, see the map to the left. The City Center is made up of six areas: Regional Employment Center, Regional Retail Cluster, Downtown, Residential Neighborhoods, the North Mixed-Use Area, and Public Amenities.



Map of the diverse areas of use in the City Center.

Regional Employment Center

The Regional Employment Center consists of employers who provide jobs for the region, not just for the City, and provide services and goods in and outside of the City. The Boeing Company makes up a large portion of this section of the City Center. PACCAR and the Renton Municipal Airport are also located in this area.

Regional Commercial Cluster

The Regional Commercial Cluster is located primarily in the southern portion of the City Center and serves as a regional retail hub, serving Renton and surrounding cities. This area consists of auto dealerships and other large-scale retail that consumers are generally willing to drive longer distances to reach. Offices and hotels also exist in the cluster.

Downtown

Downtown Renton is located in the heart of the City Center. It consists of a traditional retail “main street” on S 3rd Street with restaurants and shops and a number of multifamily residential developments. S 3rd Street is also designated as State Route 900. The Metro Transit Center, located at S 2nd Street and Burnett Avenue S, provides regional bus connections for the City Center and the City as a whole. The Events Center and Piazza Park border the Transit Center and offer a unique gathering space in the heart of Downtown.

Residential Neighborhoods

The City Center contains five residential neighborhoods. The Downtown area is a commercial center, but it is also a residential neighborhood that consists primarily of multifamily developments. Monterey Terrace and Renton Hill are separated from the rest of the City Center by I-405 and are therefore not as connected to the activities of the City Center, yet they are reliant upon it for goods, services, and transportation. These two neighborhoods consist primarily of single-family homes. The North Renton neighborhood, located just north of Downtown, and the South Renton neighborhood, located just south of Downtown, are two intact residential neighborhoods. These two neighborhoods consist primarily of single-family homes with multifamily residential buildings interspersed. Residents in both the North and South Renton neighborhoods are well organized and were engaged in this planning process.



The Boeing Company is one of the large properties that make up the “Regional Employment Center.”



Downtown.



Residential neighborhoods.



The Landing.



IKEA Performing Arts Center.

North Mixed-Use Area

Much of this area is a large, newer development called The Landing that consists of large and small-scale retail, restaurants, and multifamily housing. The Landing has become an entertainment destination for people within the City Center and within the City as a whole because of its variety of restaurants and movie theater. The area between The Landing and Lake Washington is also expected to develop as a large scale project.

Public Amenities

The City Center is an area rich with public parks, art, and facilities. Parks like Gene Coulon Memorial Beach Park and Piazza Park draw visitors from around the region. There are many other parks in the area including the City's Skate Park. The City Center also contains some of the most iconic public art in the City, such as the statue "Interface" in Gene Coulon Memorial Beach Park. Additionally, the area is home to the Main Library, the Renton History Museum, and City Hall. A complete list of the public amenities within the City Center can be found in Appendix B.

2. Public Outreach and Participation

As part of the community planning process laid out in the City's Comprehensive Plan, this Framework Plan is based on the feedback received from community business leaders, residents, and other stakeholders who were engaged throughout the process. The public outreach and participation process were split into two key phases, as described below.

Phase 1

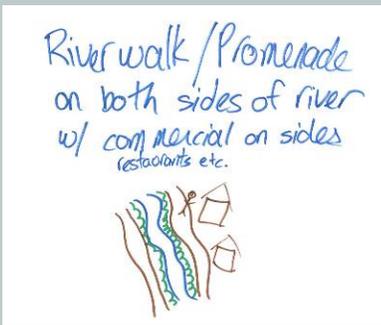
Neighborhood Meetings

The City solicited feedback from community residents at two different community meetings. The first opportunity to solicit feedback was at the North Renton Community Picnic at Jones Park on July 29, 2009 and the second opportunity was on August 12, 2009 at the Piazza. At both meetings, the City set up a booth where community members could chat with City staff and consultants about what they like and don't like about their neighborhood and the City Center as a whole. Participants were asked the following questions:

- What do you like about your neighborhood?
- What would you like to see changed about your neighborhood?
- What do you like about the City Center?
- What would you like to see changed about the City Center?



North Renton Community Picnic – July 29, 2009



Results and pictures from neighborhood meetings.

As residents gave responses, the consultants wrote their responses down and drew quick sketches representing the concepts. These diagrams and ideas were then put on display for all community members to see and comment. After the meetings were over, all of the comments were recorded and summarized. For detailed results of these meetings, please see Appendix A.

Business Stakeholders

The City also solicited feedback from the City Center business community and property owners in two meetings, one held on September 2, 2009 and the other held on September 18, 2009. These meetings consisted of a brief introduction and overview presentation of the City Center Community Plan and were followed by a roundtable discussion of the business community's concerns and visions for the City Center. The detailed results of these meetings can be seen in Appendix A.

Summary of Initial Phase of Public Participation

1. The City Center has many strengths and assets

- Regional employment base that any emerging city would envy
- An active Downtown
- Viable neighborhoods (people really like living in the neighborhoods)
- A broad spectrum of retail activities appealing to a regional, city-wide and local base
- Several (hidden) attractions – Cedar River, Coulon Park, Piazza
- Public art investments by the City and other community groups

2. There are issues and opportunities that should be addressed

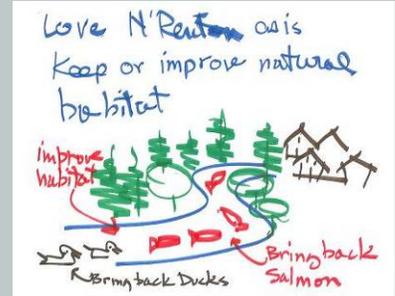
- Create a better identity for the City Center
- Improve connections and circulation between the different activity centers in the City Center (e.g. The Landing, Downtown)
- Protect the neighborhoods from intrusive development
- Upgrade both real and perceived security, safety, maintenance and environmental quality problems in the neighborhoods and Downtown
- Increase the “energy” in the Downtown business community
- Improve regional transportation connections to support the employment base and regional retail activities
- The City Center's most people friendly places and attractions are hidden in the center of the area without visible and direct access to highways. “Renton's City Center is a well kept secret,” was a comment heard in an outreach meeting.

3. Improvement ideas and suggestions

- Keep through-traffic out of Downtown
- Determine a preferred route for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and light rail service
- Continue to implement the pedestrian and bicycle plans
- Create gateways at key entry points into the City Center
- Re-evaluate the value/necessity of the one-way street system
- Coordinate and consolidate regional retail activities in the south end of the City Center
- Support The Landing's development and better connect it to other parts of the city
- Explore options for creating a multi-modal spine on Park Avenue with streetscape improvements
- Make a special effort to improve the identity and perception of the City Center, especially regarding safety in the Downtown
- "Naturalize" the Cedar River and improve access to leverage this key asset
- Improve and use the BNSF right-of-way
- In the long term, connect the Cedar River and Coulon Park with a shoreline trail
- Adjust zoning to reflect existing single family nature of the neighborhoods
- Undertake a neighborhood improvement program to address issues such as safety, security, property maintenance, local services, and pea patches.
- Establish (or strengthen) a Downtown business improvement group

Summary

- Build on the strengths of the employment and regional retail base
- Give high priority to circulation and connection improvements as they are necessary to support most of the other actions
- Continue to work on the City Center's identity and visibility
- Assist neighborhoods and the Downtown with a broad spectrum of support and self-help programs to address security, housing preservation, neighborhood services, and compatibility of new development. Adjust zoning to support single-family neighborhoods
- Plan for near and long-term opportunities such as transit system development, railroad ROW disposition, and potential large-scale changes in land use.



Results and pictures from neighborhood meetings.

Phase 2

Public Open Houses

On October 17, 2009 the City held a public open house at Renton High School. The City also offered a second opportunity for public input on the evening of November 12, 2009 at the Renton History Museum. Valuable input was received at both meetings.

Based on the feedback from the earlier community and business meetings, the City and consultant team put together a series of proposals for the City Center, broken into four key categories: transportation, economic and community development, neighborhoods, and parks and greenspace. These proposals were portrayed on a series of maps and participants were able to rank the proposals on individual comment forms. An overall vision map was also on display and participants were able to rank their top priorities with a dot exercise (see the following pages).

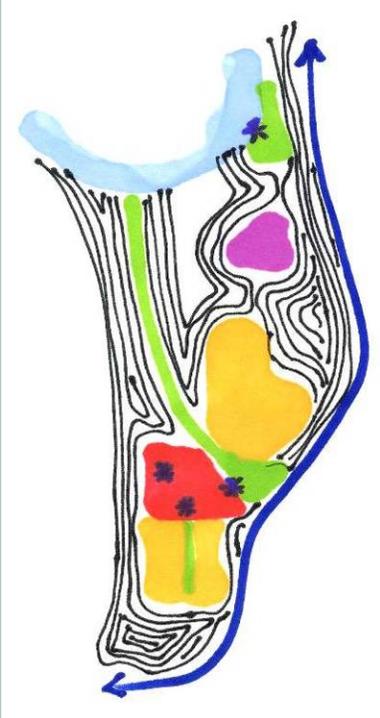
In general, participants were supportive of the proposals portrayed on the maps during the two open houses. Detailed results from these Open Houses are incorporated into the Framework Plan Elements and can be seen in Appendix A.



Community members evaluate alternatives at the October 17 Open House.

Results of the City Center Vision Priority Dot Exercise

Support the Regional Employment Center by improving regional transportation access, providing for employees' needs, and providing necessary utilities	● ●
Enhance the Regional Retail Cluster	● ● ●
Continue to enhance Downtown	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Provide additional space for small-scale, local retail	● ●
Retain single-family character of residential areas	● ● ●
Integrate North Mixed-Use Area	●
Initiate a City-sponsored traffic calming program and improve safety (and perception of safety)	● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Enhance gateways entering the City Center, improve visibility of Downtown, and implement a wayfinding system	● ●
Create a node to focus civic facilities, enhance identity, and connect the City Center	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Pursue possibility of future water taxi	● ●
Connect the City Center with pedestrian, bike, transit, and streetscape improvements on Park Avenue N	● ● ● ● ●
Focus arterial traffic on Logan	● ●
Work with WSDOT to direct regional through-traffic to I-405	●
Consider potential route for future BRT/LRT line	● ● ● ● ● ●
Consider future streetcar line	● ● ● ● ●
Proposed Trail (including long-term goal of connecting Coulon Park to Cedar River and connecting the Cedar River Trail to the Green River Trail)	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Preserve train tracks as rail and trail corridor	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
In the long term, enhance natural environment on the shoreline of Lake Washington and the Cedar River	●



Summary of Public Participation

Based on what was heard at the public meetings, there are eight key findings with associated goals for the City Center. The goals will help guide the framework plan.

1. The best parts of the City Center are hidden.

Many people that do not live or work in the City Center are not aware of the many amenities that the City Center has to offer. The City Center and Downtown are not visible and identifiable from the regional transportation corridors, such as I-405, that surround the City Center, so many people are not even aware that it exists. In addition, the City Center struggles with negative perception issues such as crime. The distinct districts within the City Center do not form a cohesive identity; therefore the City Center does not have a clear identity to which people can relate.

Goal 1: Improve the visibility of the City Center and Downtown, improve the perception of the City Center, and create a distinct identity.

2. The City Center has a diverse economic base and provides a good environment for small and large businesses.

Participants in the business stakeholder meetings agreed that the City of Renton and the City Center in particular, is a great place to do business. Stakeholders also discussed a number of things the City could work on to continue to improve the business environment for both employers and employees, including transportation improvements, creating a clear vision and identity for the City Center, and improving safety and the perception of safety.

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



3. Downtown has the potential to be a much more vibrant civic center, but the City’s existing civic amenities must be more visible and accessible.

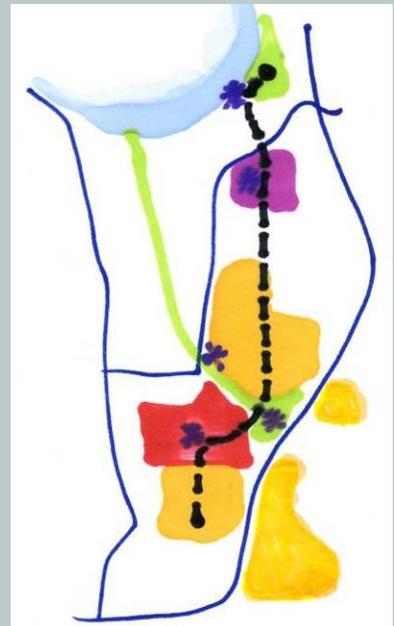
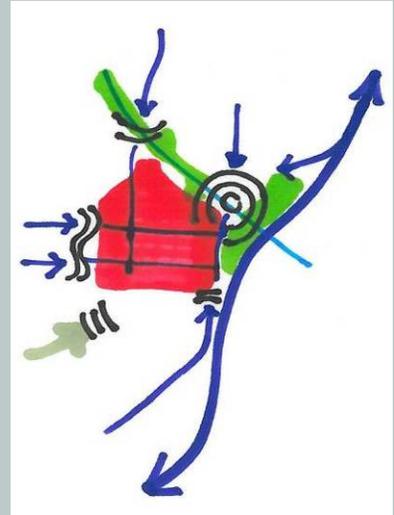
In particular, the Main Library, the Renton History Museum, the Cedar River and Cedar River Trails, and Liberty Park are all located in close proximity to each other and could form a cohesive civic activity node if accessibility and visibility of these amenities were improved.

Goal 3: Improve access and visibility at this important concentration of civic activities including Liberty Park, the Main Library, the Renton History Museum, and the Cedar River to create a dynamic civic node in Downtown.

4. The City Center’s residential neighborhoods are strong and cohesive.

The residential neighborhoods located in the City Center are strong residential neighborhoods whose citizens are well-informed and involved in community activities. Residents value their homes and their location within the City Center and are energized about improving the City Center. These neighborhoods have a connectedness to local businesses and provide important support for economic development within the City Center.

Goal 4: Protect and enhance the residential neighborhoods in the City Center.





5. The City Center serves as a regional employment and retail base and has a central location, but can be difficult to access due to traffic and connectivity issues.

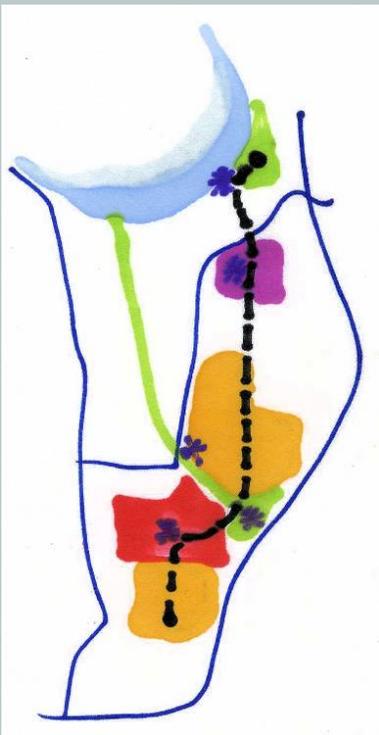
The City Center plays an important role in terms of regional employment and retail, but it can be difficult to reach. Transit improvements and improvements to I-405 interchanges would greatly improve access and connectivity for the City Center. Focusing through-traffic on I-405 and arterials will also help reduce traffic congestion on streets in the heart of the City Center.

Goal 5: Provide better regional transportation connections for a range of transportation modes to improve access to and from the City Center.

6. The City Center has a number of distinct activity centers and attractions, but they are not well connected. It is difficult to get from Lake Washington to South Renton Neighborhood by car, transit, or foot.

The City Center consists of distinct destination areas including Boeing, Lake Washington, The Landing, North Renton neighborhood, Downtown, South Renton neighborhood, and the regional retail area at the southern end of the City Center. Throughout the public participation process, participants mentioned that the City Center needs to be better connected especially from The Landing to Downtown or from the North Renton to South Renton neighborhoods. Currently, the existing street grid can be confusing for people who are not familiar with the one-way streets and the complex intersections. It is critical that improvements be made not only for vehicular traffic, but for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit. This includes improving pedestrian connections between key areas within the City Center, improving pedestrian safety on sidewalks and at intersections, and improving the pedestrian environment to make walking an appealing mode of transportation in the City Center.

Goal 6: Provide better internal connections between areas within the City Center, especially Coulon Park/Lake Washington, The Landing, North Renton neighborhood, Downtown, and the South Renton neighborhood.



7. The City Center is adjacent to several regional trails, but they are not well connected in the City Center.

The City Center lies at the crossroads of the Green River, Cedar River, Interurban, and Lake-to-Sound-Trails, all of which extend for miles throughout the region. The necessary connections through the City Center, however, have not been made. Connecting these trails would make the City Center a prominent (if not primary) hub of the region's trail system and could attract thousands of trail users annually. This, in turn, could substantially enhance the City Center's identity and have a positive impact on economic development.

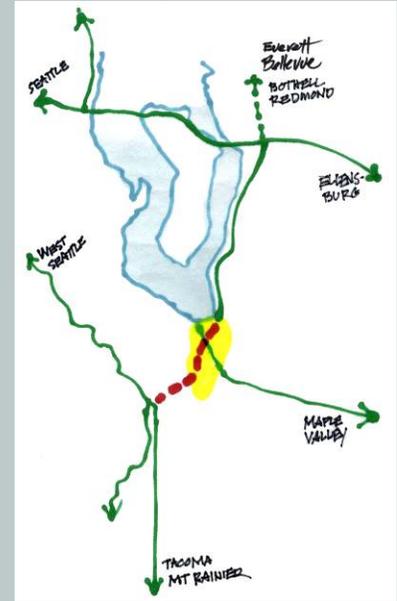
The City has completed a great deal of planning work to layout future connections including the Lake-to-Sound Trail Feasibility Study and the City's Trails and Bicycle Master Plan. The City should continue to work to implement those plans.

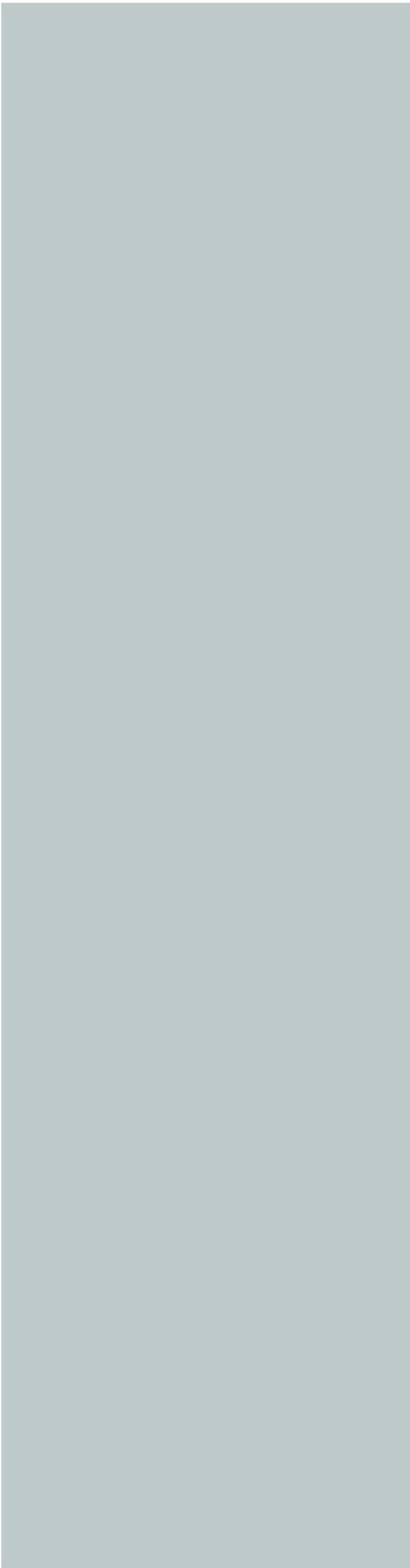
Goal 7: Connect regional trails in the City Center and build on these key connections as an economic development strategy.

8. The City Center's natural features and open space make it a unique place to live, work, learn, and play.

The Lake Washington shoreline and the Cedar River provide the City Center with excellent natural amenities that many public participants mentioned as being very important to the quality of life in the City Center. In particular, people mentioned the need to improve the natural habitat and environment of these areas. Existing parks and open spaces also provide natural features within the City Center.

Goal 8: Protect and enhance the natural features and open space in the City Center and improve public access to and connections between the Lake Washington shoreline, the Cedar River, and the variety of parks and open spaces throughout the City Center.





3. Vision

The vision for the City Center fits within the larger Citywide vision which is:

“Renton – The center of opportunity in the Puget Sound region where families and businesses thrive.”

In the City of Renton, urban living provides both choice and balanced opportunities for residents; employment and housing, recreation and religion, goods and services, are all available in the community.

Based on the feedback received from the public during the development of this framework plan and the goals and policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan, the vision for the City Center is:

“Renton’s City Center: To Live, To Work, To Enjoy”

In the year 2030, the City Center is a cohesive, identifiable urban center where people live, work, learn, and play. The City Center is the focal point of the City, with the City of Renton as a regional center in the triangle of cities on Lake Washington: Seattle, Bellevue, and Renton. Large businesses help Renton retain its identity as one of the region’s most important employment centers and smaller businesses continue to add the innovation and diversity necessary for a vital economy.



The City Center’s Piazza.



Broad spectrum of businesses.



Growing residential population.



Regional employment center.



Multimodal transportation.



Parks and natural areas.

The City Center features a broad spectrum of retail businesses. The regional retail cluster attracts shoppers from around the region; this may be partly due to the fact that they have better visibility from major arterials and are better connected to the rest of the City Center. Downtown caters to both the City Center residents for their every-day needs and to the larger city/regional population for specialty and entertainment services. The North Mixed-Use Area has expanded to the waterfront and offers both large scale stores and smaller “lifestyle” oriented services.

The City Center’s central location, easy access, and amenities have attracted a growing residential population. Residents enjoy a wide range of housing opportunities from solid, historic single family neighborhoods to new condos offering lakefront views and an active urban lifestyle. The older neighborhoods in particular, with their quiet streets and well kept houses, are attractive to young families and include schools and parks facilities for children.

In terms of transportation, “All modes lead to the City Center Renton.” Building on the early successes of the late 20th century transit center, the City Center is linked to the rest of the region with high capacity transit. It is also a hub in the region’s bicycle trail network. The City Center is characterized by five distinct areas that are well connected by transit and a street network that includes pedestrian and bike connections. As for internal circulation, the Park Avenue N spine provides a cohesive, attractive link for pedestrians, transit, and local traffic from South Renton to Lake Washington and Coulon Park.

Parks and natural areas figure prominently in the City Center. Cutting diagonally across the Center, the Cedar River Trail, with a naturalized shoreline, ample open space, attractive promenade, and appropriate commercial amenities provides a backbone of green infrastructure. A new constellation of civic facilities and open spaces in the Library/Liberty Park/Main Avenue vicinity now comprise the City’s civic and cultural heart, and trail connections further link local parks and amenities into an integrated network.

In short, Renton can boast that more than any other city of its size, its City Center *has it all*.

Another, more action-oriented way to state this vision is through the goals presented below, which are the result of this plan’s public participation activities.

City Center Goals

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

City Center VISION

As a long term goal, provide natural shoreline to Cedar River and Lake Washington

Support Regional Employment Center

Key route for through traffic

Improve Cedar River Trail

Plan for a future Bus Rapid Transit or Light Rail line

Small scale retail

Continue to enhance Downtown

As a long term goal, provide a trail connection to the Green River Trail

Preserve the BNSF corridor as a rail and trail corridor

Enhance retail cluster

Direct all regional through traffic to I-405

Support development of future water taxi

Extend Park Ave N

Enhance gateways entering City Center and increase visibility of Downtown

Integrate North Mixed-Use Area

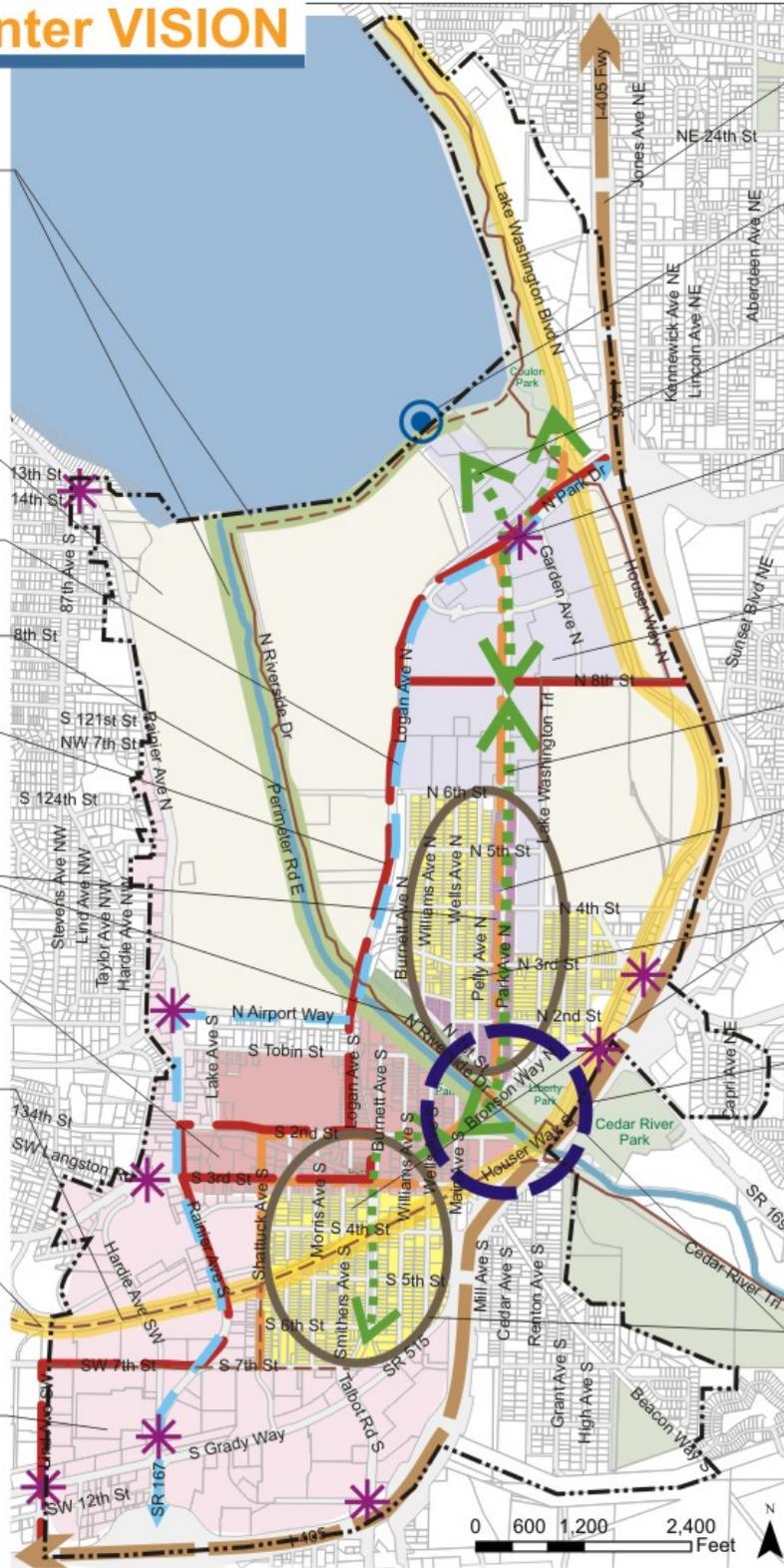
Connect City Center

Consider future streetcar line

Retain single-family character

Create a node to focus civic activity, enhance identity, and link City Center

Initiate a City sponsored traffic calming program and improve safety



4. The City Center Framework Plan Elements

This plan sets the framework for actions to be taken by the City to achieve the vision for the City Center over the next 20 years. This framework plan will then be followed up with an implementation strategy that will provide more details on how the City will make things happen.

The Framework Plan is separated into three main categories:

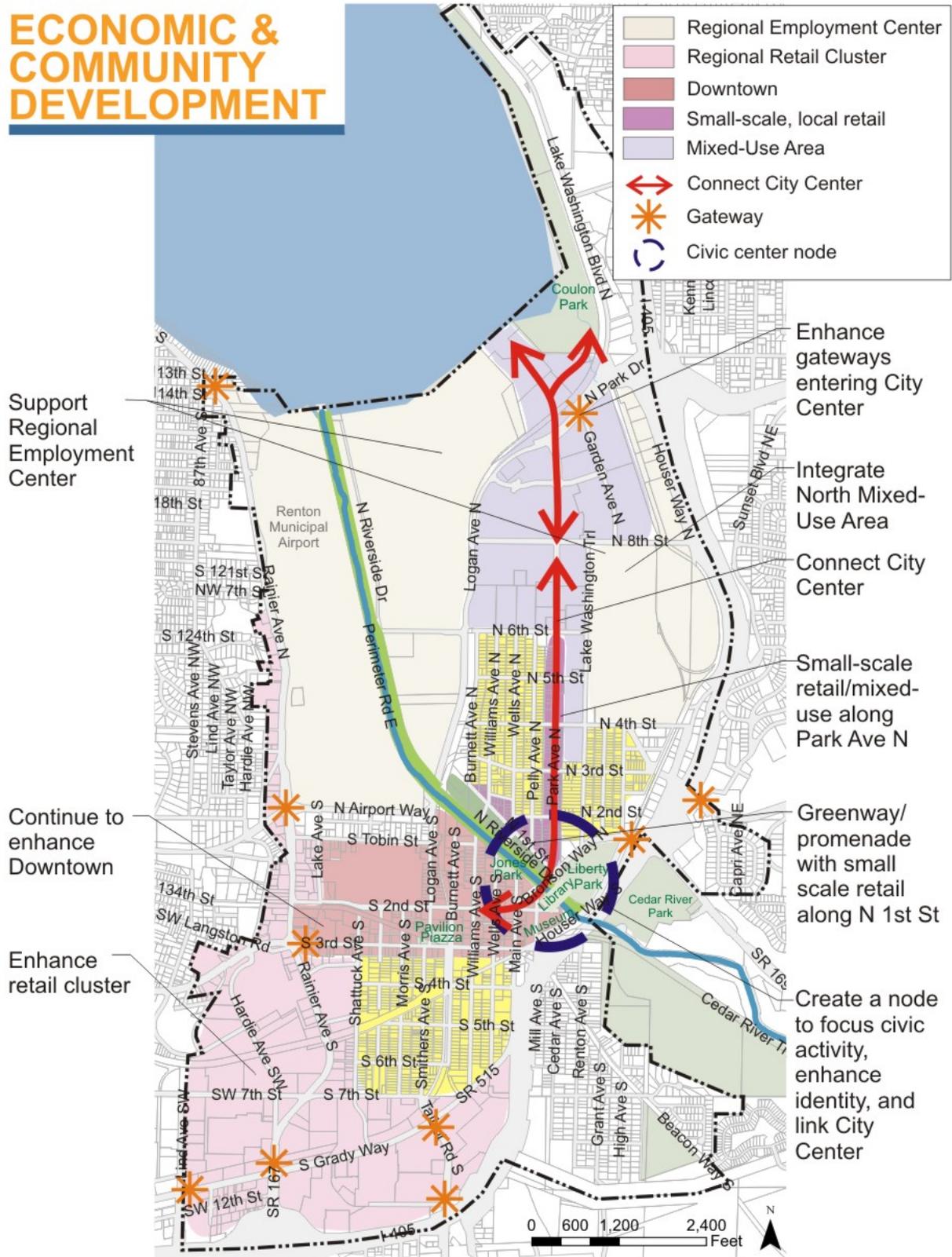
- Economic and Community Development
- Transportation
- Parks, Open Space, and Recreation

Each category has a number of goals and occasionally sub-goals, which were established through the public participation visioning process. Each goal is then followed by a series of policies that will help the City frame implementation strategies to achieve that goal.



Lake Washington from Gene Coulon Memorial Beach Park.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Economic and Community Development

Goal 1:

Create a distinct identity for the City Center, as well as improve the visibility the City Center and perception of the City Center the area.

Sub-Goal: Create a distinct identity and improve visibility.

- 1.1 *Provide more attractive entries into the City Center with signage and gateway features and improve the visibility of the City Center.*

Gateway signs or features would help indicate when people are entering or leaving the City Center so they can begin to identify the City Center as a distinct place. The gateways can be features such as distinctive landscaping, artwork, lighting, or signage or a combination thereof. The gateway features should be coordinated with the Downtown wayfinding program (discussed in 1.2) to ensure a consistent and less cluttered approach.

Bronson Way and Rainier Avenue/Grady Way are key entries into Downtown that would benefit from special gateway and streetscape treatments.

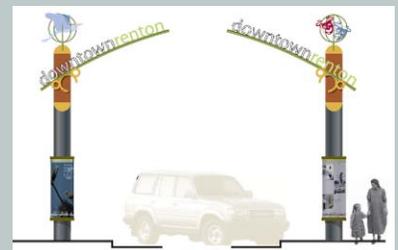
Currently, Downtown and the City Center are not visible or identifiable from the major regional corridors that surround the City Center or from Lake Washington. The City Center could be made more visible from outside the City Center by incorporating gateway features and wayfinding onto the regional corridors or by incorporating distinct architectural features into new development that are visible from outside the City Center.

- 1.2 *Build on the City's proposed wayfinding system for Downtown and extend it throughout the City Center.*

The City of Renton already has a wayfinding program designed and partially implemented for Downtown Renton. This program could be expanded to include the other areas of the City Center. The signs and maps could differ slightly in color or design depending on which area of the City Center they are in, but the overall theme and design should be consistent to tie the whole the City Center together. Wayfinding, gateway features, and directional cues to facilitate the movement between sub-areas and reduce the visual clutter of signs should also be implemented.



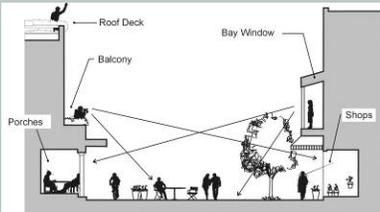
This gateway for the Cedar River Trail is an example of combining landscaping and signage.



Downtown's proposed wayfinding system.



Renton's history is an important part of its identity.



Safety can be enhanced using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) measures such as guidelines to “keep eyes on the street.”

1.3 *Build off the recommendations of the Arts and Culture Master Plan to expand the presence of art, art activities, and art facilities in the City Center, as well as to help create a distinct identity for the City Center.*

Art can be incorporated into the gateway and wayfinding features discussed above. New development should be encouraged to incorporate local artwork in plazas, on blank walls, and along the street.

1.4 *Preserve and maintain important historic features in the City Center to enhance the identity of the City Center.*

The City Center has important historic features, both land forms and buildings, which are important to the quality and character of the City Center and the city as a whole. These features should be preserved, maintained, and enhanced as new growth occurs. An ordinance that would protect significant historic features should be considered. In addition, opportunities to coordinate with the Museum Master Plan should be pursued.

Sub-Goal: Improve perception of safety:

1.5 *Address crime (both real and perceived) issues in the City Center.*

Work with business leaders and property owners and the Renton Police Department to come up with targeted strategies to address both real and perceived crime. This strategy could be coordinated with community policing efforts and Block Watch programs (discussed in 1.6) and the Business Improvement District (discussed in 2.3). Some strategies may be targeted police activities while others may be more community-based approaches where business members and residents work together to solve problems. A special emphasis should be placed on the Transit Center and policing strategies should continue to be employed, such as the Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit which conducts outreach Business Watch Services to businesses near the Transit Center. Human Services and non-profit organizations should also be engaged to address issues such as homelessness that also impact the perceptions of safety in and around the Transit Center. Other services and programs offered by the Crime Prevention Unit should continue to be strengthened and be provided Downtown, such as security surveys, crime prevention training for managers and employees, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) recommendations to property owners, Crime Resistant

Multi-Family Housing consultations, a Bank Watch group, and quarterly Business Watch newsletters.

1.6 Strengthen community policing and neighborhood crime watch programs to improve safety and the perception of safety, as well as to reduce crime.

Similar to the strategies for Downtown, the City should continue to work with community groups, business owners, property owners, and the Police Department to come up with a targeted strategy for improving safety throughout the City Center. The Police Department is currently working with the North and South Renton neighborhood associations on the Block Watch program. The Police Department should continue to strengthen this program and should continue to foster their relationships with community members.

1.7 Improve visual appeal of buildings and streetscapes.

The City should consider developing a building improvement program that could provide low-interest loans or grants to improve building facades and other improvements to help stimulate reinvestment in properties and to address building maintenance concerns. A target area should be the City Center's historic downtown core. The City should increase awareness of the federal and state funds that are available to help fund a program like this. This could also be funded through the Business Improvement District (discussed in 2.3).

Additionally, the City should pursue opportunities such as: including public art in new and remodeled developments through public/private partnerships, and the undergrounding of utilities with new development or if residents are interested, with a local improvement district in areas that are not expected to redevelop. The City should also ensure that roadways are improved and maintained.

1.8 Improve pedestrian-scaled lighting on streets and trails in the City Center.

In order to improve safety for pedestrians throughout the City Center, the City needs to invest in pedestrian-scaled lighting on streets and trails. The lights should be attractive, distinctive, and consistent throughout the City Center to help with wayfinding to identify key pedestrian routes to connect various parts of the City Center. Lighting for trails, such as the Cedar River Trail, should also be matched in style.



Neighborhood meeting participants stressed the desirability of pedestrian lights, especially on riverfront trails.

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

2.1 *Support the regional employment center and foster economic vitality by improving regional transportation access, serving employees’ and employers’ needs, and providing necessary utilities and infrastructure.*

Continue to work with business leaders, property owners, employers, and employees to better understand their needs and concerns. Continue economic development efforts, including business retention, expansion, and recruitment strategies to ensure a dynamic, diversified employment base. Continue to support the successful Renton Small Business Development Center.

2.2 *Enhance the regional retail cluster by:*

- *Improving identity, appearance, and circulation,*
- *Consolidating and coordinating uses,*
- *Enhancing and coordinating auto dealerships with more consistent signage and landscaping, and*
- *Exploring coordinated marketing and signage standards.*

Consider developing design guidelines or standards specific to this area that would address many of these issues. While the guidelines or standards would only apply to new development or redevelopment, the City could provide incentives to businesses to incorporate some of the elements right away.

Consider adopting a sunset clause for non-conforming signs and edge/screening/landscaping treatments.

2.3 *Create a Business Improvement District (BID)/Local Improvement District (LID) in Downtown to organize and fund joint marketing, joint parking strategies, property improvements, community events, and streetscape improvements.*

Work with business leaders, property owners, and the Renton Chamber of Commerce to establish a BID/LID and to establish goals and priorities. Joint marketing could include communication tools such as a Downtown business internet presence including a website, e-mail groups, and possibly social networking sites. A LID is more appropriate for funding joint public improvements such as sidewalks and



The Landing’s signs, landscaping, and building facades illustrate the way to create a positive identity.

special lighting and should be considered for these types of improvements.

2.4 *Identify and consider a package of incentives, such as New Markets Tax Credits, grants, and other tax credits to promote and expand private investment and employment in the City Center.*

These types of strategies should be considered as a means to continue to improve the economic strength and diversity of the City Center area.

2.5 *Better utilize the Events Center.*

The City should coordinate with the company that manages the Event Center to encourage more events that are open to the public and to ensure it is being used on a more regular basis.

2.6 *Enhance and provide space for small-scale, mixed-use, local retail on Park Avenue North connecting The Landing to Downtown.*

Consider changing the zoning along Park Avenue N from Bronson Way N to N 6th Street to allow small-scale, mixed-use buildings. Establish appropriate height limits and Floor Area Ratio (FAR)/density standards for mixed-use and commercial buildings that are appropriate with the surrounding single family neighborhood.

Consider adopting specific (or updating existing) design standards to ensure consistent and complimentary neighborhood-scale development.

2.7 *Create a greenway/promenade between the Cedar River and N 1st Street.*

The City should complete a conceptual plan and implementation strategy to naturalize the River corridor, improve the recreational opportunities, increase the greenspace in the area, and allowing for the possibility of commercial and residential opportunities.

2.8 *Integrate and coalesce the North Mixed-Use Area (including The Landing) to ensure it develops into a cohesive, connected area.*

Continue to implement and enforce existing design standards and guidelines. Perform an audit on existing guidelines to identify areas that should be updated to improve the North Mixed-Use Area.



The Events Center is a key resource that could be better utilized.



Renton's Clayton Scott Airport is a unique asset.



One of the City Center's many restaurants.

2.9 *Continue to support opportunities to create a more vibrant City Center where people live, work, learn, and play.*

In order to foster a City Center that is vibrant, new opportunities that attract people and businesses to the City Center should be sought. Existing efforts to recruit and retain businesses, to fill vacancies, and create retail opportunities should be supported. Consider ways to identify and promote interim uses that activate vacant spaces.

Pedestrian activity should be encouraged and uses such as sidewalk cafes should be considered. Community events such as the Renton Farmers Market, Holiday Tree Lighting, IKEA Renton River Days, and Coulon Family Concert Series should continue to be strongly supported.

2.10 *Pursue opportunities to construct a new City Hall.*

Renton's population may grow to well over 120,000 if the Fairwood and West Hill areas annex to the City. The existing City Hall may not be large enough to accommodate the staffing levels necessary to provide services to a city of that size. A new City Hall would present a unique opportunity to contribute to a more vibrant City Center with likely nearly 1,000 employees who would seek opportunities to shop and eat in the immediate area and other users coming for public meetings throughout the day and evening. If these annexations occur, the City should pursue opportunities to locate a new City Hall in a central location that would be more accessible by foot, bicycle, and transit, and would contribute to a more vibrant City Center.

Goal 3:

Improve access, circulation, and visibility of the concentration of civic activities including Liberty Park, the King County Library System Main Renton Library, the Renton History Museum, and Cedar River to create a dynamic civic activity node in Downtown.

- 3.1 *Coordinate Liberty Park, the KCLS Main Renton Library, the Renton History Museum, and the Cedar River as a key activity node for the City Center. The node should highlight and make visible this concentration of civic activities and emphasize that this is a critical crossroads connecting the north and south City Center areas.*

Build on the wayfinding program (discussed in 1.2) to direct people to the civic activities in this node. Consider using landscaping, water features, or artwork to highlight the entries to the civic activities. Coordinate with the transportation improvements (discussed in 6.5 – 6.7) to improve access and circulation for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles to this node.

- 3.2 *Ensure that the KCLS Main Renton Library building remains in public use even if the Main Library relocates in the future.*

Work with the King County Library System to better understand the long term plans for the Main Library. If there is a plan to relocate the Library in the future, the City should pursue other opportunities for this unique building that would keep it in public use to continue to be a civic amenity in Downtown.

- 3.3 *Implement the Tri-Park Master Plan. Unify this Tri-Park area which includes Liberty Park, Cedar River Park, and the NARCO property with better circulation, wayfinding, and coordinated amenities.*

Coordinate the implementation of the Tri-Park Master Plan with the improvements to the civic node (discussed in 3.1) and the transportation improvements (discussed in 6.5 - 6.7).



KCLS Main Renton Public Library.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Protect edges of single-family areas

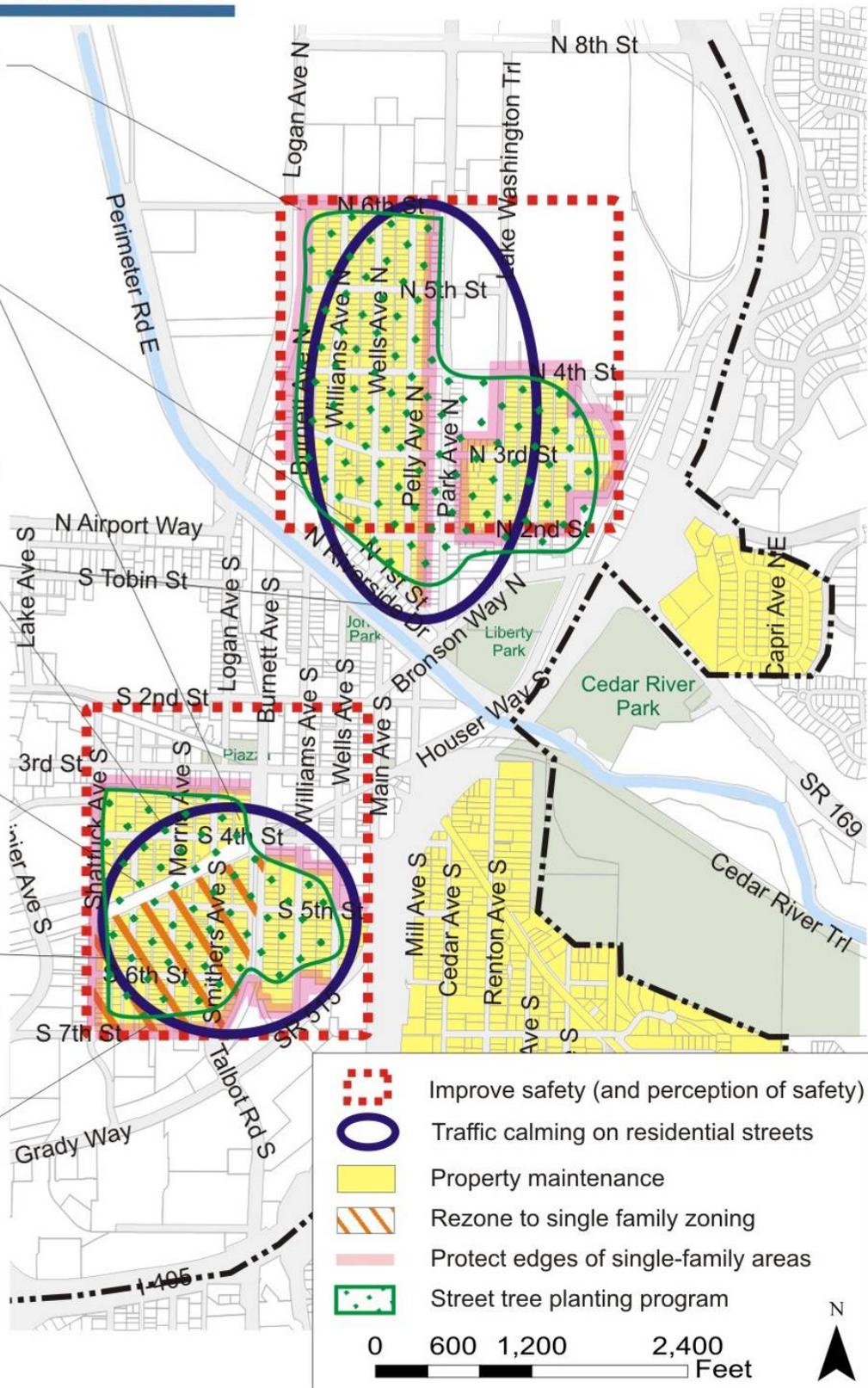
Implement a property maintenance ordinance and enforce existing codes in residential areas

Initiate City sponsored traffic calming program

Initiate street tree planting program

Consider rezoning area from multi-family to single-family zoning

Increase amount of neighborhood amenities in South Renton



Goal 4:

Protect and enhance the residential neighborhoods in the City Center.

- 4.1 *Implement a property maintenance ordinance to ensure the housing stock is maintained and codes are enforced in residential areas.*

The City should work with landlords and other property owners to develop incentives for housing stock improvement. Self-help “how-to” guides, such as how to: improve energy efficiency, hire a contractor, and/or apply for a building/electrical/plumbing permit could be developed. Another option is to assist in the coordination and establishment of a bank operated low-interest loan programs to help initiate building improvements. The City should also consider including single-family home rentals in the nuisance ordinance to ensure landlords are enforcing lease agreements and maintaining their properties.

- 4.2 *Consider rezoning the intact, single-family area of the South Renton neighborhood to ensure that the neighborhood remains intact.*

Rezoning this area to single-family zoning may help spur reinvestment in this area by removing some of the uncertainty single-family homeowners may have based on potential development that could occur in their neighborhood. It may also lessen property speculation that may be occurring.

- 4.3 *Enhance measures (such as setbacks, buffers, landscape screening, and height restrictions) to protect edges of single-family areas from adjacent development.*

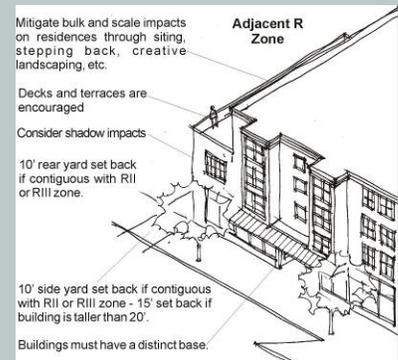
These measures can be incorporated into existing design standards or new design standards/guidelines can be developed to address the transition areas between commercial and multifamily development and single-family residential areas.

- 4.4 *Implement the City’s Urban Forestry Plan and initiate a street tree planting program in the residential neighborhoods to increase canopy cover, improve the streetscapes, and promote community building.*

Work with community groups to establish goals and priorities for a street tree planting program. The City could coordinate with local non-profit organizations or local nurseries to secure appropriate trees for distribution. The



Renton’s City Center includes active neighborhoods.



Regulations should be established to protect adjacent residences from the impacts of new development.



Volunteer efforts play an important part in neighborhood improvement efforts.



Examples of traffic-calming techniques.

City should establish street tree planting guidelines and training for community groups.

4.5 *Increase neighborhood amenities, including neighborhood gardens, greenspaces, and public art.*

Work with community members to identify and prioritize the needs and desires of the neighborhoods and develop strategies to provide new or improved neighborhood amenities, especially those that increase the amount of greenspace in the City Center. Perform a needs assessment in each neighborhood and compare the available amenities to those amenities in other communities.

4.6 *Improve residential streetscapes with landscaping, street trees, and sidewalks.*

The City should seek opportunities to increase the amount of greenspace in the City Center by utilizing planting strip areas between the sidewalk and street. Improving landscape strip areas also helps to improve perceptions of streetscapes. Sidewalks help to improve the pedestrian experience and safety for all users including the elderly, disabled, and children.

4.7 *Sign and enforce truck routes to keep trucks off residential streets.*

Coordinate with Renton Police to ensure truck routes are enforced and that trucks are kept off of residential streets. In addition, design residential streets so that they are not conducive or attractive for trucks.

4.8 *Ensure that the City Center is a place for families and a place that recognizes the diversity of the community.*

Work with the Renton School District to ensure that long-range plans address educational facilities within the City Center, especially for elementary school age children. Support uses such as day care centers and consider users of all ages in the development of parks.

Work to ensure that the City Center provides the full range of services and infrastructure that meets the needs of all members of the community and recognizes its diversity.

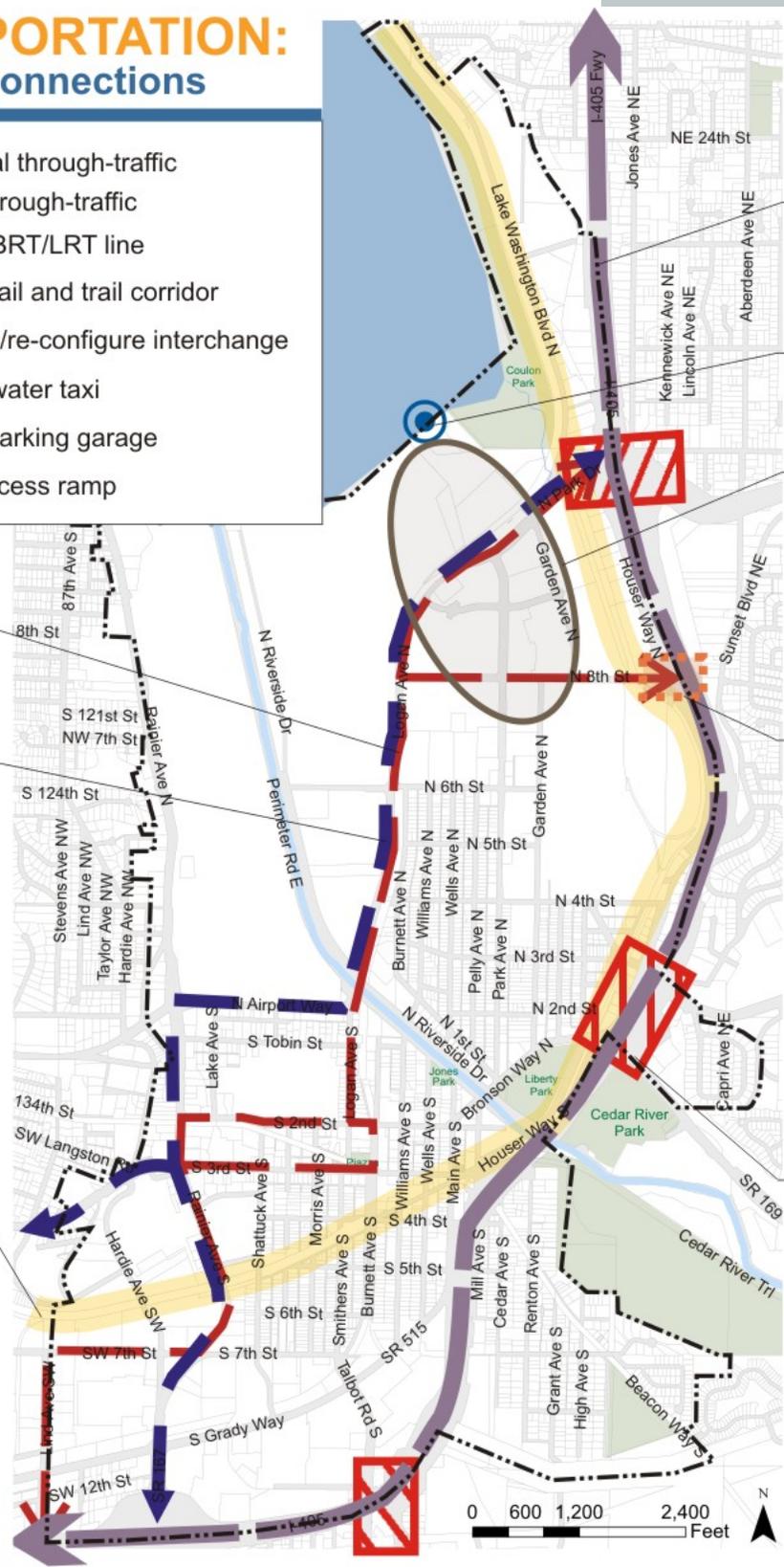
TRANSPORTATION: Regional Connections

-  Regional through-traffic
-  Local through-traffic
-  Future BRT/LRT line
-  Future rail and trail corridor
-  Improve/re-configure interchange
-  Future water taxi
-  Public parking garage
-  HOV access ramp

Key route for sub-regional through traffic

Identify a preferred route for a future bus rapid transit or light rail line (Line shown does not represent an actual proposal, but is used for illustration purposes)

Preserve the BNSF corridor as a rail and trail corridor



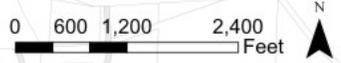
Direct all regional through traffic to I-405

Pursue future water taxi

Potential future parking garage in this vicinity (with potential coordination with a transit center)

Planned HOV access ramp

Improve/reconfigure interchange with I-405



implement the wayfinding and signage program (discussed in 1.1 and 1.2) to ensure that Downtown and other commercial areas are well identified from Logan.

5.3 Remove the truck route designation from Park Avenue North.

The north part of the City Center is served by several other designated truck routes, including Logan Avenue/Airport Way, N 8th, Houser Way N, and Sunset Blvd. If the City does remove the truck route designation for Park Avenue N, then the City’s official truck route map should be updated and truck routes should be clearly signed by putting up signs that indicate that these streets are no longer designated as truck routes. The City should work with businesses that could potentially be impacted by this change. The City should also work with its Police Department to encourage the enforcement of these truck routes (discussed in 4.7).

Sub-Goal: Explore transit options and prepare for opportunities as they arise.

5.4 Work with appropriate agencies and departments to identify a preferred route for a future bus rapid transit (BRT) and/or light rail transit (LRT) line that would best serve the City Center.

Initiate a study to thoroughly analyze a preferred route for BRT, in the short term, and LRT, in the long term, and coordinate with the appropriate transit agencies. Prioritize stops that will reach Downtown and The Landing. Support implementation of METRO’s BRT “F Line” that will connect with light rail and commuter rail to SeaTac Airport.

5.5 Continue to pursue opportunities for a future water taxi to connect Renton to other Lake Washington cities, such as Bellevue, Kirkland, Mercer Island, and/or Seattle.

Pursue potential funding opportunities, partnerships with other agencies, and/or relationships with private firms that may be interested in providing water taxi service to and from the City.

5.6 Encourage Sound Transit and/or Metro to build and operate a public parking garage in The Landing/Coulon Park vicinity.

A parking garage at Park Avenue N and N 8th Street is part of the Sound Transit Master Plan and part of WSDOT’s



City’s existing truck routes map.



City of Seattle’s water taxi.

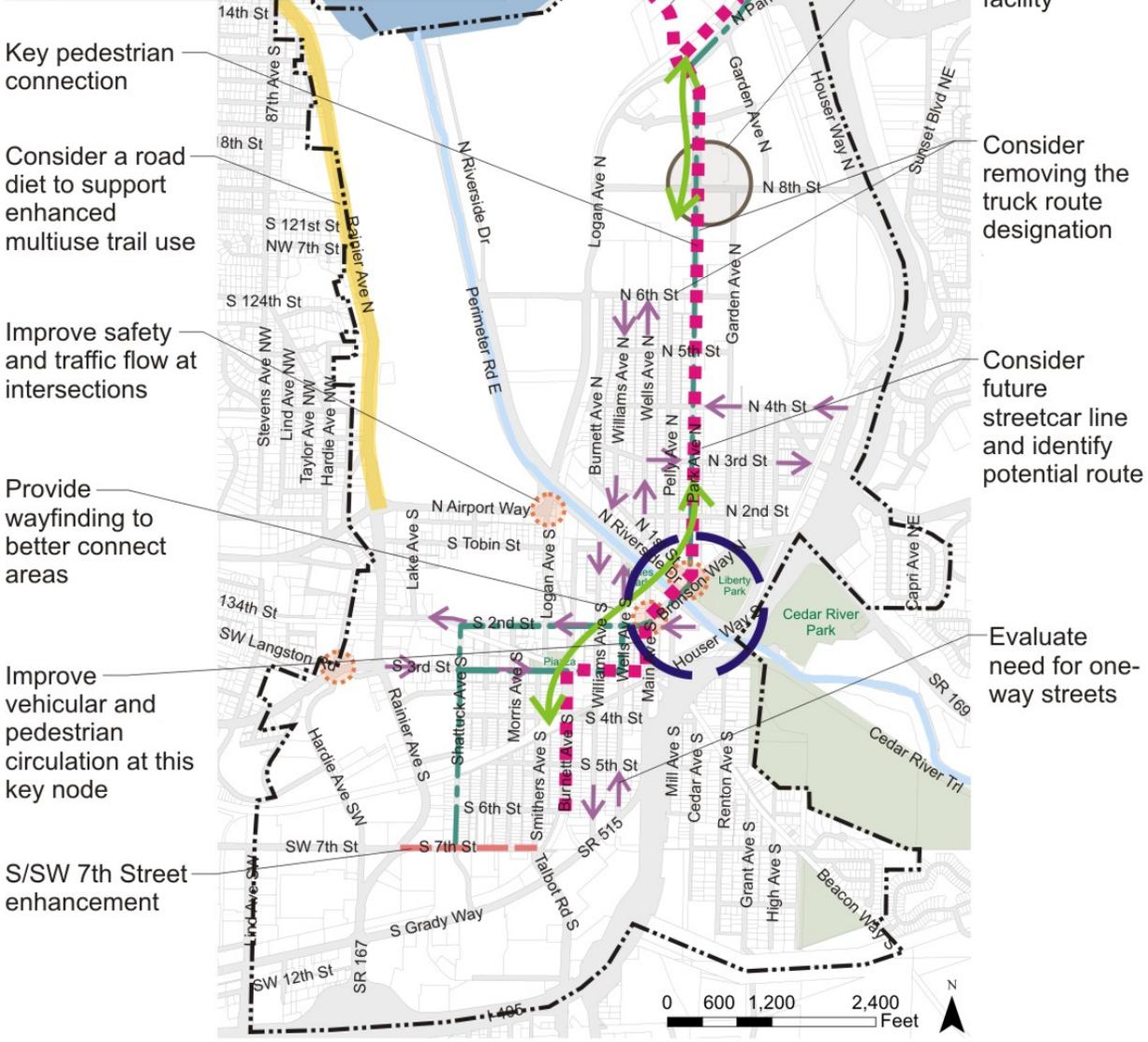


BRT service can be a substantial asset in terms of economic development, community livability, and transportation efficiency.

I-405 Master Plan and could be used as a park-and-ride facility for future BRT/LRT and for commercial uses in the northern portion of the City Center. The City should initiate a feasibility study to identify the ideal location for the garage based on the location of transit lines, I-405 interchange improvements, and a possible future water taxi. It will be important to ensure that the potential garage be integrated into the built environment in a manner that fosters the growth of the area as a destination rather than a point of transfer. The Puget Sound Energy property near Coulon Park could also be a potential location for a park-and-ride facility if the streetcar, or other transit system, extends to that location and the water taxi locates in that area.

TRANSPORTATION: City Center Connections

-  Key node
-  One-way streets
-  Key pedestrian connection
-  Improve intersection
-  Potential streetcar
-  Wayfinding
-  Road Diet
-  Transit Center/ Transfer Facility



Key pedestrian connection

Consider a road diet to support enhanced multiuse trail use

Improve safety and traffic flow at intersections

Provide wayfinding to better connect areas

Improve vehicular and pedestrian circulation at this key node

S/SW 7th Street enhancement

Extend Park Ave N to the north

Explore possibility of transit center/ transfer facility

Consider removing the truck route designation

Consider future streetcar line and identify potential route

Evaluate need for one-way streets

Goal 6:
Provide better connections between areas within the City Center.

Sub-Goal: Establish Park Avenue N as a multi-modal transportation corridor between Coulon Park and Burnett Avenue S.

Park Avenue N should serve as a key north/south connection for travel within the City Center, providing mobility and circulation for pedestrians, vehicles, and transit. This would provide strong connections between Lake Washington, The Landing, North Renton, Downtown, and South Renton. A variety of funding strategies should be considered, such as a Local Improvement District (LID) or a Transportation Benefit District, to help fund systematic improvements instead of incremental improvements, as development occurs. The City could tie the funding strategy to the potential increase in zoning capacity of Park Avenue N (discussed in 2.6). The City should conduct an urban design study for Park Avenue N that combines the potential rezone of this area with new design standards and guidelines (discussed in 2.6) and a street design study to pursue the following key strategies to implement the vision for Park Avenue N.



View of Park Avenue N looking south toward the Cedar River.

6.1 *Improve Park Avenue N as a key pedestrian connection between Coulon Park, The Landing, North Renton, Downtown, and South Renton with sidewalks, landscaping, wayfinding, public art, and other amenities.*

In addition to the change to zoning which would allow for pedestrian-oriented retail along Park Avenue N (discussed in 2.6), improve the streetscape of Park Avenue N to create a pedestrian-friendly environment that will provide a key pedestrian connection between Downtown and Lake Washington. The City should develop a streetscape design for Park Avenue N that will be consistent from Bronson Way N all the way to Lake Washington. The streetscape design should include wide sidewalks, consistent pedestrian-scaled lighting, street trees, wayfinding signs, and a variety of pedestrian amenities.

6.2 Consider a streetcar/trolley line, with the first phase running along Park Avenue N connecting Coulon Park, The Landing, Downtown, and the Transit Center. Future phases should connect the South Renton area, Grady Way, and the Sounder station at Longacres.

A streetcar/trolley would be a permanent transit connection between the Transit Center and Lake Washington. It would provide a clear, visible connection between the areas of the City Center that are currently not well connected. This permanent investment in transit could be a significant catalyst for new private development along Park Avenue N and in the City Center as a whole.

The City should pursue this concept by initiating a feasibility study to better understand the costs associated with building and running a streetcar. The study could pursue various funding opportunities and look at different ways of operating the line once it is built. A rubber wheeled trolley could be considered as an interim step to a fixed rail trolley.

A transfer facility or transit center near Park Avenue N and N 8th Street would provide transfer connections from the streetcar to express busses on I-405 via the HOV access and potential BRT/LRT stops. This facility could be in conjunction with the parking garage (discussed in 5.6) or could be a separate, much smaller facility that would not require parking or significant infrastructure investment.



The South Lake Union Streetcar in Seattle.



Improving transportation between The Landing and Downtown with a multi-modal connection on Park Avenue is an important goal.



Continue Park Avenue N to the north to connect to the Southport development.

6.3 *Extend Park Avenue N north of Logan Avenue N to the waterfront to connect to Southport, future development, potential future water taxi terminal, and Coulon Park.*

Providing an extension of Park Avenue N to Lake Washington will help complete the linear spine of the City Center. The City should develop a preferred alignment and concept for the new connection. The City should also work with property owners and potential developers to ensure that the new connection can be completed with a consistent streetscape to the rest of Park Avenue N. If a roadway extension proves infeasible in the near-term, the construction of a pedestrian bridge that also serves as an iconic gateway to the City Center should be pursued.

6.4 *Provide connections that allow multiple circulation routes from the Bronson/SR169 area to the vicinity of The Landing.*

As envisioned in this Plan, Park Avenue will be a pedestrian, transit and local vehicle access oriented street. Therefore, it is important to provide alternate routes for through traffic not destined for a site within North Renton. It is particularly important that not all traffic from northbound I-405 and westbound SR 169 travelling to the north be directed along Park Avenue. The planned interchange and frontage roads between SR 169 and Sunset Boulevard will facilitate northbound traffic movement to the Sunset Boulevard interchange. From there, vehicles can travel north on Houser or west on N 4th Street. In general, the I-405 access improvements will reduce congestion in the Bronson/SR 169 area which will facilitate local circulation and pedestrian improvements. In the implementation of street improvements serving the new interchanges, the City should ensure that through traffic is not necessarily funneled onto Park Avenue N and that there are multiple north/south connections. The street grid in North Renton already features large blocks and so connectivity of the street network should be enhanced rather than reduced.

Sub-Goal: Improve connectivity and mobility within the City Center.

Throughout the public participation process, participants mentioned that the City Center needs to be better connected and it needs to be easier to get from the southern end of the City Center to Lake Washington. Currently, the existing street grid can be confusing for people who are not familiar with the one-way streets and the complex intersections. The City should pursue the following opportunities to improve traffic circulation and safe vehicular movement, as well as improve connectivity and safety for bicycles and pedestrians in the City Center.

6.5 Evaluate necessity and benefits of the one-way streets within the City Center.

- **Williams Avenue N and Wells Avenue N:** Pursue changing one-way designations on Williams Avenue and Wells Avenue to two-way streets to improve north/south connectivity in the City Center. This change could occur in the short term and should not require major infrastructure changes. These streets are both currently designated bicycle routes. If the streets are converted to two-way, the City should consider both north and south bicycle routes on one of the streets instead of maintaining the split route.
- **N 3rd Street and N 4th Street:** Pursue changing one-way designations on N 3rd Street and N 4th Street to two-way streets. This change will likely need to be tied to improvements made to the I-405 interchange at Maple Valley Highway (SR 169) and Sunset (SR 900). A reconfigured two-way street system could provide an excellent connection between the I-405 interchanges and the Park Avenue N corridor.
- **S 2nd Street and S 3rd Street:** In the long term, pursue changing one-way designations on S 2nd and S 3rd Streets to two-way streets to facilitate vehicular circulation and mobility. This change could impact transit traffic patterns and could be tied to changing the designation of SR 900 from Downtown to Logan Avenue/Airport Way. The City should continue to work with property owners and business leaders on how to best study and evaluate this option. The planned improvements at the I-405 interchanges with the Maple Valley Highway (SR 169) and Sunset Way (SR 900) should also be studied in regard to this potential change.



One-way street on N 3rd Street.

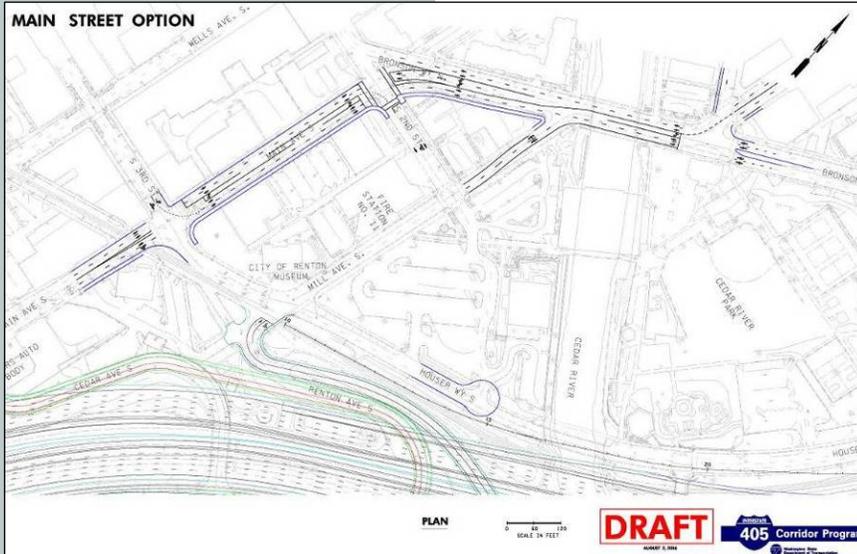


One-way street on S 3rd Street.

Main Avenue S and Mill Avenue S: The planned WSDOT improvements of I-405 just south of the Cedar River will result in the closure of Houser Way S, which currently serves northbound traffic access to the

I-405/SR 169 interchange. Closure of Houser Way S and modification of the crossings of I-405 via S 3rd Street/Mill Avenue S and at Renton Avenue S provides an opportunity to consider two-way traffic on Main Avenue S between Bronson Way S and S 3rd Street. This could improve local circulation within the Downtown area. Based on WSDOT studies, converting Main Avenue S to two-way operation would require property acquisition.

The studies showed that the property acquisition could come from the east side of the corridor. Alternatively, Main Avenue S would be maintained as the southbound route, with northbound traffic using Mill Avenue S one block to the east. The latter alternative could reduce the potential needs for property acquisition. WSDOT's studies show that both options could provide adequate capacity. The City should revisit and update the WSDOT studies and make a decision that could be implemented concurrent with or following construction of the changes to I-405 and closure of Houser Way S.



WSDOT's analysis for Main Avenue S.



Airport Way and Logan.



S 2nd Street, Bronson, and Main intersection.

6.6 Prioritize improvements to vehicular and pedestrian safety, connectivity, and traffic flow at the following key intersections:

- **Airport Way S and Logan Avenue N:** Evaluate opportunities to upgrade this intersection to improve traffic safety, pedestrian connectivity, and aesthetically enhance this important gateway to the Downtown.
- **S 2nd Street, Bronson Way N, and Main Avenue S:** Evaluate opportunities to upgrade this intersection to improve traffic flow. This intersection improvement needs to be tied to the decision for converting S 2nd Street/S 3rd Street and Main Avenue S/Mill Avenue S to two way operations (discussed in 6.5).

- **SW Langston, SR 900, and Hardie Avenue SW:**
Create a four-legged intersection by evaluating the possibility of realigning SW Langston.

6.7 *Improve streets, intersections, and wayfinding at the key civic node located at Bronson Way N, Park Avenue N, N 1st Street, N Riverside Drive, Houser Way S to enhance multi-modal circulation.*

The City should pursue opportunities to make street and intersection improvements that would improve circulation at this key node, including the intersection at N 1st Street, Park Avenue N, and Bronson Way N. The City should prepare conceptual designs and traffic studies to evaluate closing of N 1st Street and realigning Park Avenue N to intersect Bronson Way at closer to a 90 degree angle. Access to adjacent properties needs to be facilitated. Pedestrian crossings from the park and civic node to Park Avenue N and to the trail along the Cedar River also should be enhanced.

All improvements should be coordinated with the improvements to the civic amenities (discussed in 3.1 and 3.3). Improvements at this intersection should also be coordinated with the closure of Houser Way S which is part of the I-405 improvements just south of the Cedar River.

6.8 *Consider a ‘road diet’ on Rainier Avenue N between the City’s northern boundary and N Airport Way, which would reduce the right-of-way dedicated to vehicular traffic and provide right-of-way space for an enhanced multi-use path for the Lake Washington Loop Trail.*

The City should consider a roadway configuration to match the configuration of Rainier Avenue N with the plans to the south and to the north. The new roadway configuration would add a multi-use trail along Rainier Avenue N, improving bicycle connections from the west side of Lake Washington.

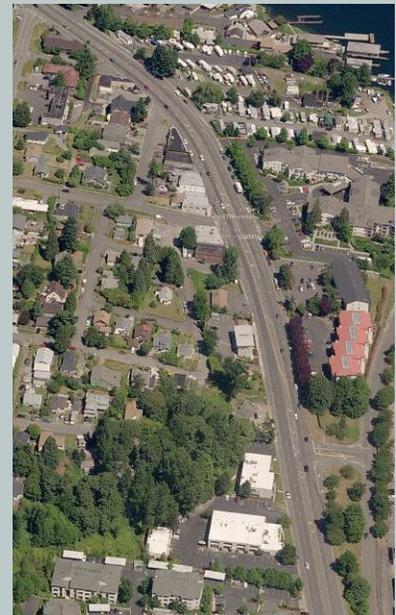
Coordinate with King County’s plans and configuration for Rainier to plan for eventual annexation of the West Hill.

6.9 *Consider the enhancement of S/SW 7th Street between Rainier Avenue S and Talbot Road S, with bus access improvements, an improved intersection at Talbot Road S, neighborhood traffic calming, and a separated bicycle trail.*

King County Metro is considering improvements and route changes involving SW 7th Street to facilitate bus circulation and potentially accommodate a new bus rapid transit (BRT) route. The intersection of S 7th Street and Talbot Road S warrants a signal but is not well configured for one. The



Civic node.



Rainier Ave N could benefit from a road diet.



S 7th Street between Rainier Avenue S and Talbot Rd S.

City Bicycle Plan identifies S/SW 7th Street as an alignment for a future regional bicycle trail. Finally, S 7th Street is the southern edge of the South Renton neighborhood and the community will want to ensure that any improvements to that street enhances the neighborhood edge and does not result in increased traffic or encroachment into the area. Given this spectrum of objectives, there is increasing impetus for a street improvement project. The City should explore opportunities for a multi-objective project, perhaps with intersection and lane improvements with a separated bikeway/greenway on the north side and traffic calming measures that would discourage cut through traffic.

If funding is not available, develop a process and guidelines for property owners at the block or neighborhood level to fund the measures themselves.

6.10 *Initiate a traffic calming program on residential streets.*

Develop a guidebook or toolkit with possible traffic calming techniques for residential streets that the City approves as being safe and effective. Coordinate with public safety officials to ensure the techniques are compatible with providing emergency services. Create a program in which neighborhoods can apply to the City for traffic calming measures.

6.11 *Continue to improve the overall safety and connections for bicyclists within the City Center.*

Bike connections to future BRT/LRT stops, as well as to current and future park and ride lots should be provided. The City should ensure that the City's Bike and Trails Master Plan is consistent with future plans for BRT and LRT stops. The City should also continue to implement the goals and strategies set forth in the City's Trails and Bicycle Master Plan and the Lake to Sound Trail Study.

Parks, Open Space, and Recreation

Goal 7:

Promote and pursue the expansion of, and improve access to, regional recreational trails in the City Center, and build on these key connections as an economic development strategy.

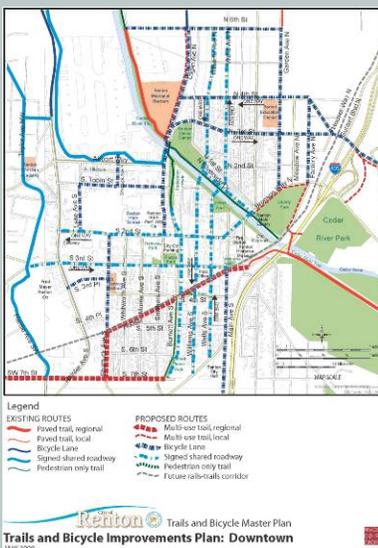
- 7.1 *Increase bike connections within the City Center and to existing recreational facilities, according to the City's Trails and Bicycle Master Plan and the Lake-to-Sound Trail Study.*

Build upon the work done in the City's May 2009 Trails and Bicycle Master Plan and the February 2009 Lake-to-Sound Trail Study to create coordinated bike connections throughout the City Center and to regional trail facilities. A separated trail between the Green River, Cedar River, and east Lake Washington Trails would make Renton's City Center the hub of Puget Sound regional trails and bring hundreds of thousands of cyclists through the City Center each year.

- 7.2 *As a long-term goal, provide connections between the Cedar River and Gene Coulon Memorial Beach Park and the Cedar River to the Green River Trail.*

The Cedar River to Coulon Park connection would provide excellent public access to the waterfront, as well as provide a key bike and pedestrian connection between the Cedar River Trail and Coulon Park. The City should continue to work and coordinate with the Boeing Company on possible implementation in the future.

The Cedar River to the Green River Trail (also called the Lake-to-Sound Trail) connection would connect the City Center to a regional trail system that could make the City Center a hub for bicyclists and other trail users. The long-term goal should be to have a multi-use trail along the BNSF corridor that would connect the Cedar River Trail to the Green River Trail. This will depend on the future of the BNSF line and continued coordination with BNSF. A feasibility study to design a multi-use trail along this route has been completed, and the City should continue its involvement in the design phase. In the short term, bike lanes on local streets could provide connections between the two trails.



City's existing Trails and Bicycle Master Plan.

7.3 *Preserve and maintain the BNSF corridor as a rail and trail corridor that could include both high capacity transit and a multi-use trail in the future.*

In the near term, the rail corridor within the City Center area is needed for use by the Boeing Company. Opportunities to enhance the corridor may be sought, but should not interfere with Boeing’s usage. Little is known about the long-term future of the BNSF corridor that is north of the City Center, but the City should continue to work with BNSF, King County, the Port of Seattle, and rail users to ensure that the corridor is preserved and can eventually be converted into a rail and trail corridor.

Goal 8:

Protect, enhance, and improve public access to and between the natural features in the City Center including Lake Washington, the Cedar River, and its many parks and open spaces.

8.1 *Provide a natural shoreline on the Cedar River and Lake Washington shorelines.*

The City should coordinate with the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) and create a plan for restoring the Cedar River shoreline. The plan should prioritize short-term and long-term actions. Similarly, for the Lake Washington shoreline, the City should coordinate with the shoreline property owners to implement the local SMP to create a plan for restoring the shoreline.

8.2 *Improve the Cedar River Trail with additional access trails, lights, public art, and amenities; and as a long-term goal, expand the trail to the opposite side of the river.*

The Cedar River Trail is a very important community amenity, but many participants at the public meetings noted that the trail could be improved to increase the number of people who use the trail and improve the overall safety of the trail. Pedestrian-scaled lights along the trail could help improve safety and increase the number of people who use the trail, especially in the darker winter months.

Walkways that connect parking and activity areas should have improved lighting. Priority walkways are the access road that extends beyond the City Center planning area from Liberty Park to Renton Community Center and the pedestrian walkway from RCC to the off-leash dog park. The City should also consider increasing the number of



BNSF corridor.



Lake Washington shoreline.



Cedar River shoreline and trail.



Cedar River trail.



Burnett Linear Park currently ends at S 5th Street.

access points to the trail and expanding the trail to the opposite side of the river.

The City should work to create a greenway/promenade between the Cedar River and N 1st Street (discussed in 2.7).

8.3 *Increase the amount of both passive and active recreational greenspace in the City Center, to include extending Burnett Linear Park north to the Cedar River.*

The City should seek opportunities to increase greenspace. Burnett Linear Park should be extended north to the Cedar River to provide greenspace and pedestrian amenities. Currently, Burnett Linear Park extends from S 6th Street to S 5th Street and provides valuable greenspace and a small playground for the South Renton community. The City owns the area to the north of S 5th Street, which is currently used as a parking lot. The City should evaluate the parking demand in this area and determine if there is enough parking capacity without the existing parking lot. If there is enough parking capacity, the City should convert this area into a linear park, extending Burnett Linear Park north from S 5th Street to Houser Way. If parking capacity is a problem in this area, the City should consider a combination of park space and parking areas. In the long term, the City should develop a plan to purchase the BNSF property between Burnett Place and Burnett Avenue S and develop an extension of Burnett Linear Park north of S 2nd Street to connect to the Cedar River.

5. Action Strategy

While many of the goals and policies laid out in this framework plan may take longer to implement than the 20-year horizon for this plan and will require additional city resources that currently do not exist, the purpose of this plan is to lay the framework for City actions to create a vibrant City Center.

The vision for Renton's City Center resulting from public input and City staff work suggests taking the eight framework goals and categorizing them into an implementation strategy consisting of three key elements:

- Protection and enhancement of the Downtown core and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Linking and integrating the activities and attractions within the City Center.
- Taking advantage of the emerging opportunities related to regional transportation and reconfiguration of major land uses.

Within these three elements is a broad spectrum of activities that the City and its partners can initiate. However, transportation is a keystone issue in all of them, either to enhance regional access, to serve local activities, or to mitigate congestion and traffic safety impacts. In addition, implementation of the transportation actions, in particular, is complicated because they are often dependent upon the activities of other agencies and organizations such as WSDOT, Sound Transit, major employers, and BNSF.



View of Downtown Renton.

The chart below illustrates that a number of plan objectives are dependent on actions by other agencies or entities. A dot in a cell indicates that an objective or action in the left column is dependent or partially dependent upon the action in the top row. For example, the I-405 connections that WSDOT plans to implement will provide freeway access routes that are necessary to support several transit related and street network configuration changes. Some of the circulation options, such as the expansion of Logan Avenue or segments of the trail system, must wait until the reconfiguration of major land uses.

Implementation Phasing

	Reconfiguration of Major Land Use	I-405 interchange Improvements (WSDOT)	BNSF Allows Rail and Trail	BRT Design (King County Metro)	LRT Design (Sound Transit)
2.1 Support regional employment center	○	●		●	●
2.7 Integrate North Mixed-Use Area	○	○		○	○
5.1 Logan designated as State Route 900	●				
5.3 Through traffic on I-405		●			
5.4 BRT/LRT line			○	●	●
5.6 Public parking garage		○		●	●
5.7 HOV access ramp		●			
6.1 – 6.3 Improve Park Avenue N		○		○	○
6.4 One Way Streets N 3 rd St and N 4 th St S 2 nd St and S 3 rd St		●		○	○
7.1 – 7.2 Bike connections	●		●		
7.3 BNSF as rail and trail			●		
8.1 Natural shoreline	●				
8.5 Landscape buffers		○			

Partially dependent - ○
Dependent - ●

This interdependence of various actions on each other and on actions by other organizations suggests a phasing in the City's implementation work plan.

Transportation Plan

The City should undertake the City Center transportation plans that prepare it to engage other agencies and organizations as they undertake their actions. Such plans may include:

- Exploration of highway designation and arterial improvement options, including alternative truck routes
- Evaluation of preferred BRT and LRT routes
- Parking and access strategies, including evaluation of parking structure options for the northern part of the City Center
- Identification of other transit improvements
- A conceptual design for Park Avenue N, including extension to the north and implications for future land uses along this spine
- Evaluation of street car options and feasibility
- Evaluation of internal circulation options including reconfiguration of one-way streets and addressing circulation around the Main/Park/Bronson node
- Identification of preferred BNSF track configuration
- Determination of regional and local trail connections and integration with local circulation
- Implications of future land use changes, especially redevelopment of large industrial sites
- Recommendations for pedestrian access and mobility improvements
- Recommendations on the interface between travel modes (i.e. between Sound Transit and a streetcar or between bicyclists and King County Metro)
- Discussion of a water taxi and incorporation of existing feasibility studies Identification of other intersection and roadway improvements



Addressing the City Center's complex transportation challenges is the keystone of a sound redevelopment strategy. A multi-modal perspective, as already initiated with the Transit Center, is critical.

Focus on Downtown and Neighborhoods

There is also a cluster of activities to stabilize and enhance the Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods that should be continued or initiated in the short term. As opposed to some of the major actions dealing with larger scale transportation issues, the activities below do not depend so much on other agencies' actions.

- Neighborhood improvement actions and programs including:
 - Neighborhood traffic calming
 - Tree planting
 - Other small-scale street and park improvements
 - Assistance programs for home improvements and establishment of a maintenance ordinance
 - Expanded Block Watch program
- Downtown business district improvements
 - Establishment of an LID or BID for physical improvements, parking strategies, security, community events, and marketing programs
 - Crime prevention program
 - Implement and expand wayfinding program
 - Support the Farmers Market, the arts, Holiday Lights, IKEA Renton River Days, and other events that draw people to the City Center

Additionally, there are some regulatory actions that the City can take in the short term to encourage positive growth while protecting existing assets. The development regulations, including design guidelines, should be reviewed and updated to ensure that they implement the objectives in this plan. Most notably, the development standards should ensure that new development does not adversely affect the livability of existing neighborhoods, such as along Park Avenue N where mixed-use development should be encouraged.

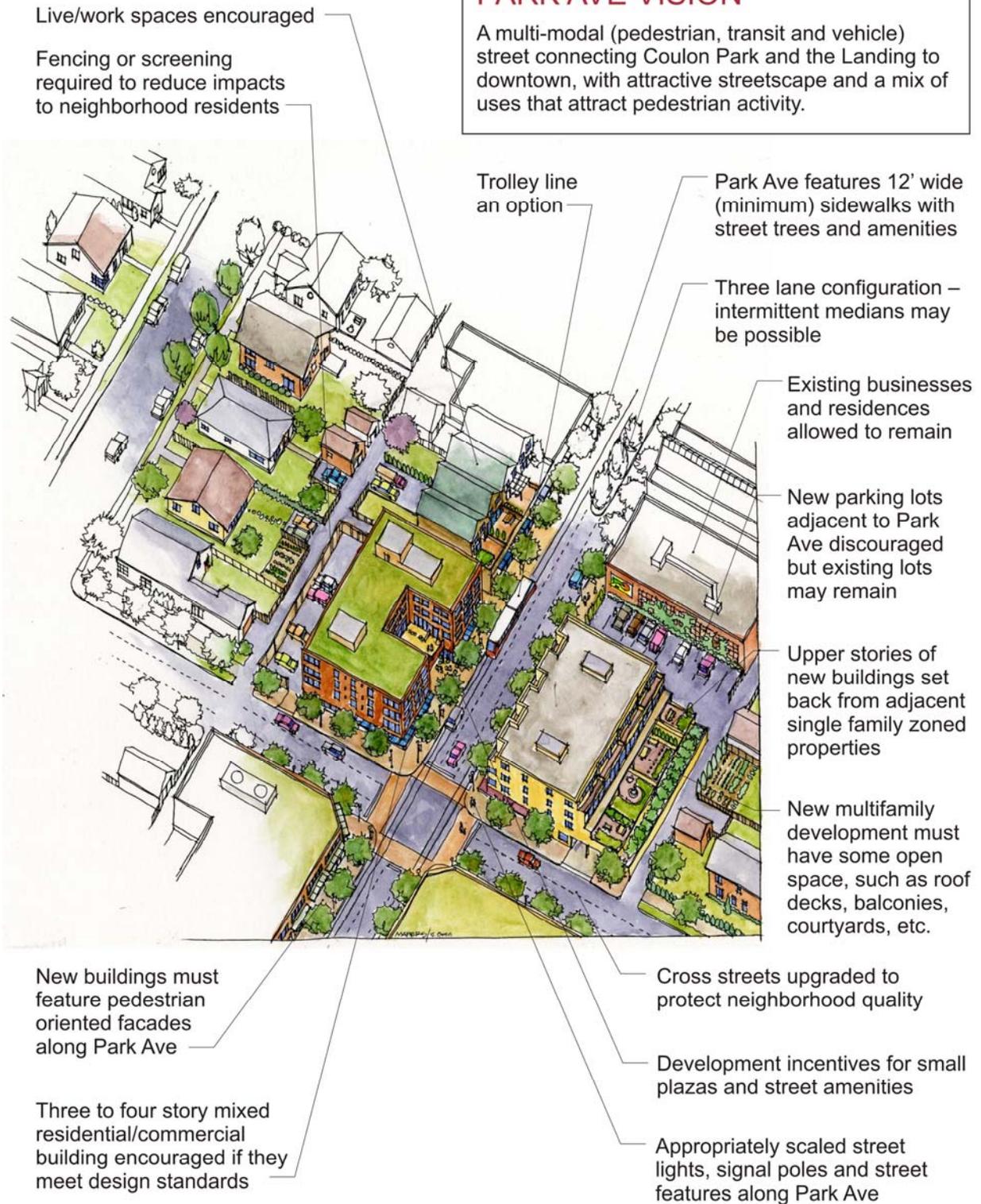
The rezoning of a portion of the South Renton neighborhood to single family should be considered (discussed in 4.2) as it is a largely intact single-family area that can provide stability for that part of the City Center.



Downtown and the neighborhoods are important assets in the City Center.

PARK AVE VISION

A multi-modal (pedestrian, transit and vehicle) street connecting Coulon Park and the Landing to downtown, with attractive streetscape and a mix of uses that attract pedestrian activity.



As this sketch illustrates, achieving the City Center's vision will require the integration of transportation, economic development, and community enhancement efforts.

Conclusion

The past two decades have seen dramatic changes in Renton's City Center. The City's commitment to the Downtown and new growth in other parts of the City Center make it one of the liveliest and well-balanced urban centers in south King County. These accomplishments leave Renton poised to address future challenges and opportunities, which promise to be just as dramatic as those of the past 20 years. This framework plan is a modest first step toward a more in-depth effort that will require significant engagement between the City and its partners in the business community and the neighborhoods, among others, which will help Renton achieve its vision.