

An aerial photograph of the Everett station area, showing a complex of infrastructure including a multi-lane highway, industrial buildings, a river, and a residential area. The image is overlaid with a dark, semi-transparent layer to accommodate text.

convergence

everett station area tod study

05.07.2021

executive summary

catalyzing a hub for green, equitable, and employment-focused economic development

Why conduct this Study?

As the hub for Sounder Commuter Rail, Amtrak, and Community Transit and Everett Transit bus service, Everett Station is the city’s most transit rich neighborhood. But, it is also one of its most under utilized.

Within a quarter mile of the station, the preponderance of publicly owned property restricts the potential for private-market-driven development. The lack of high-quality parks and open spaces, affordable childcare and schools, and other necessary components of livability tamp down the demand for, and thus the delivery of, diverse new housing choices. Pedestrian and bicycle unfriendly streets inhibit safe and secure access to the station. Abundant and free surface parking lots encourage automobile traffic and reduce the footfall needed for sidewalk-oriented businesses to thrive. And the new Metro Everett zoning code, which enables a mix of new high-density land use types (that can tend to create development pressures that push light industrial and manufacturing uses out), has left many within the existing Everett Station business community feeling as if their days are numbered. Together, these factors are working to hold back progress toward broad, shared community objectives, including:

City of Everett Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies	
EDE.V.E.2	<i>“[Everett Station] should not be allowed to become merely a parking lot for transit users.”</i>
HE.IVC. Policy 4.3.10	<i>“Provide incentives to site affordable housing in planned targeted areas that are within walking distance to public transit lines and transit centers.”</i>
HE.III.C. 15.	<i>“In an effort to become carbon neutral more households will need to be located near convenient public transit service.”</i>

City of Everett Climate Action Plan Goals	
T-1	<i>“Embrace non-car travel;”</i>
GE-1	<i>“Position Everett as a green economy hub of the future,”</i>
LU-1	<i>“Create centralized activity centers with a dense and diverse mix of services, amenities, jobs, and housing types in areas well-served by public transit,”</i>
LU-2	<i>“Develop vibrant, healthy, and livable, neighborhoods.”</i>

In 2036, Sound Transit 3 (ST3) will bring new light rail service to Everett Station, connecting the neighborhood to the SW Everett Industrial Center and to the corollary regional jobs centers (Seattle, Bellevue, and Tacoma) that comprise the expanding Puget Sound light rail network and economic cluster. This presents a transformational opportunity to change the status quo.

Study is needed to better understand the optimal suite of actions that can leverage the potential of ST3 to advance City goals for Economic Development, Affordable Housing, Transportation Access, Climate Action, and Equity.

What *does* this Study do?

With a focus on two City-owned property assemblies within the Everett Station Area (the Public Works/ Everett Transit Cedar Street Campus and Everett Transit Park and Ride Lot A), this study builds on prior neighborhood planning efforts to explore the potential for physical development to advance City goals for Economic Development, Affordable Housing, Transportation Access, Climate Action, and Equity.

It is intended to provide a vision and holistic roadmap for further neighborhood planning efforts, public private partnerships, and near-, mid-, and long-term actions to help catalyze transit-oriented development.

What *doesn’t* this Study do?

This study does not seek to supplant or conduct the City’s long range planning, or presuppose the future area planning processes required to determine the new ST3 Everett Link Station and track alignment.

This study also does not propose actions to private properties within the Everett Station area, with the exception of the Depot property abutting Park and Ride Lot A, which is used as a representative example of a number of properties that Housing Hope is exploring for acquisition to develop as a mixed-use catalyst project.

Who is involved?

This study is funded by the Washington State Legislature through the Department of Commerce and facilitated by Housing Hope, Hopeworks, and the Everett Station District Alliance (ESDA).

A consultant team, led by Northwest Studio, undertook the planning and urban design work. Consultants included, Heartland (Market and Real Estate Analysis), MIG (Landscape Architecture and TOD Infrastructure); Nelson Nygaard (Transportation Demand Management).

An independent Technical Assistance Panel (TAP), composed of regional leaders in TOD planning and convened by the Northwest Chapter of the Urban Land Institute (ULI), supplemented the effort by providing recommendations for interface with future Sound Transit planning, example station area developments, and recommendations for financing and ongoing neighborhood governance.

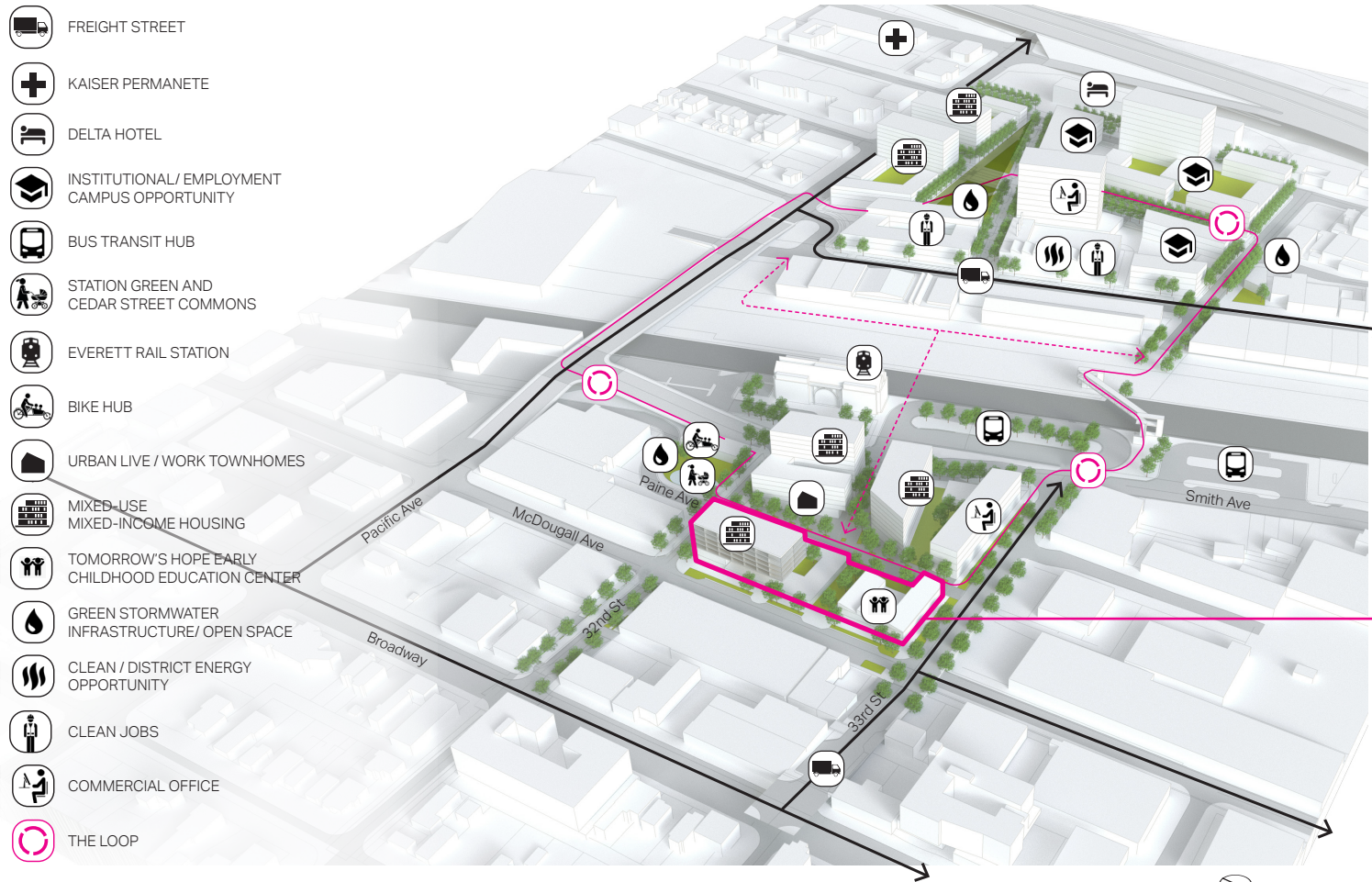
To support the effort, ESDA facilitated a diverse, all-volunteer “Committee on Creating a Just and Equitable Community,” a “Committee on Community Leadership” composed of public sector decision-makers, and more than a dozen stakeholder outreach meetings, focus groups, and project open houses.

vision and actions

What is this Study's *vision* for the future of Everett Station?

A neighborhood hub for green, equitable, and employment-focused economic development.

At Everett Station, the City can leverage the strength of the existing manufacturing and industrial business community, a large portfolio of publicly owned land, and planned investments in transit infrastructure to grow a resilient employment center, focused on green construction and next-generation clean energy industry jobs, together with support programs and services that allow working families to thrive—early childhood education, affordable housing within walking distance, healthy food options, and opportunities for job training and professional development.



A example catalyst development on a nearby site, such as the Depot property, can help to set this vision in motion.

What are the top five *actions* needed to achieve the vision?

- 1 Update City plans and policies to support existing local light industrial and manufacturing businesses and promote new, green economy employment in the Everett Station neighborhood. This should include:
 - **Overlay a responsive land use framework** that helps to protect light industrial zoned land from future development pressure.
 - **Create a Freight Master Plan** that links local truck routes to a Citywide system.
 - **Update the Bicycle Master Plan** to expand the neighborhood's mobility shed.
 - **Revise the Metro Everett zoning code** to better support active neighborhood industrial ground floor uses, small business, property improvements, and light industrial redevelopment.
- 2 With a focus on social, economic, and environmental equity and inclusion, develop neighborhood-specific plans for:
 - **Public Realm and Placemaking**, including the repurposing of the Everett Station Employee Parking Lot north of 32nd, the transition of 32nd to a "shared streetspace," and the future creation Cedar Street Commons East of the tracks.
 - **Mobility, Station Access, and Transportation Demand Management**, including the establishment of a roster of street types and a district-wide parking strategy.
 - **Environmental Sustainability**, in alignment with Climate Action Plan goals.
 - **Neighborhood Business Collaboration**, including the establishment of support services and programs that promote capacity building (social and capital); professional and trade growth; and local economic development.
 - **Governance and Neighborhood Management** (see Appendix, ULI TAP Report Recommendations Section)
 - **Project Funding**, including strategies for leveraging district-wide financing such as LCLIP and TIF. (see Appendix, ULI TAP Report Recommendations Section)
- 3 Promote the creation of a mixed-use, mixed-income, multi-generational focal point for the neighborhood, "Convergence Place," centered on Park and Ride Lot A. This should include:
 - Develop a **Parking Replacement Plan** for the existing Park and Ride Parking.
 - Prepare a **Request for Proposals (RFP)** for development partners and proponents and engage in a joint **Public-Private-Partnership (PPP)** development project.
 - Establish a **Phasing and Partner Interaction strategy** for partnering developers, project funders, and owner(s) and/or operator(s) of the project.
- 4 Implement a **"Loop"** of key public realm improvements that promote placemaking, multi-modal access to the station, and environmental sustainability, including the extension of Paine Avenue through Park and Ride Lot A and a Station Green (and Bike Hub) on the surface lot North of 32nd Street, in concert with Metro Everett recommendations.
- 5 Establish a plan and solicit Requests for Expressions of Interest (RFEOI) for PPP development of the Public Works/ Everett Transit Cedar Street Campus, East of tracks.

When is action needed?

With ST3 Light Rail arriving in 2036, the timing of recommended activities and decisions in the Everett Station area will be critical to achieving goals for Economic Development, Affordable Housing, Transportation Access, Climate Action, and Equity. The schedule at right outlines the recommended sequence and interrelationships between actions and actors.

Actions are color-coded according to the primary entity responsible: Sound Transit (grey); City of Everett (black); and public-private-partners, such as Housing Hope (magenta).

Actions are organized according to near-, mid-, and long-term timeframes, which correspond to the ST3 schedule for planning, final design, and service operations and the planning horizons for the City of Everett Comprehensive Plan, the Climate Action Plan, and PSRC Vision 2050.

Development of a catalyst project on the Depot site, or on another nearby property, is encouraged to help to set the recommended actions in motion.

TIMELINE LEGEND

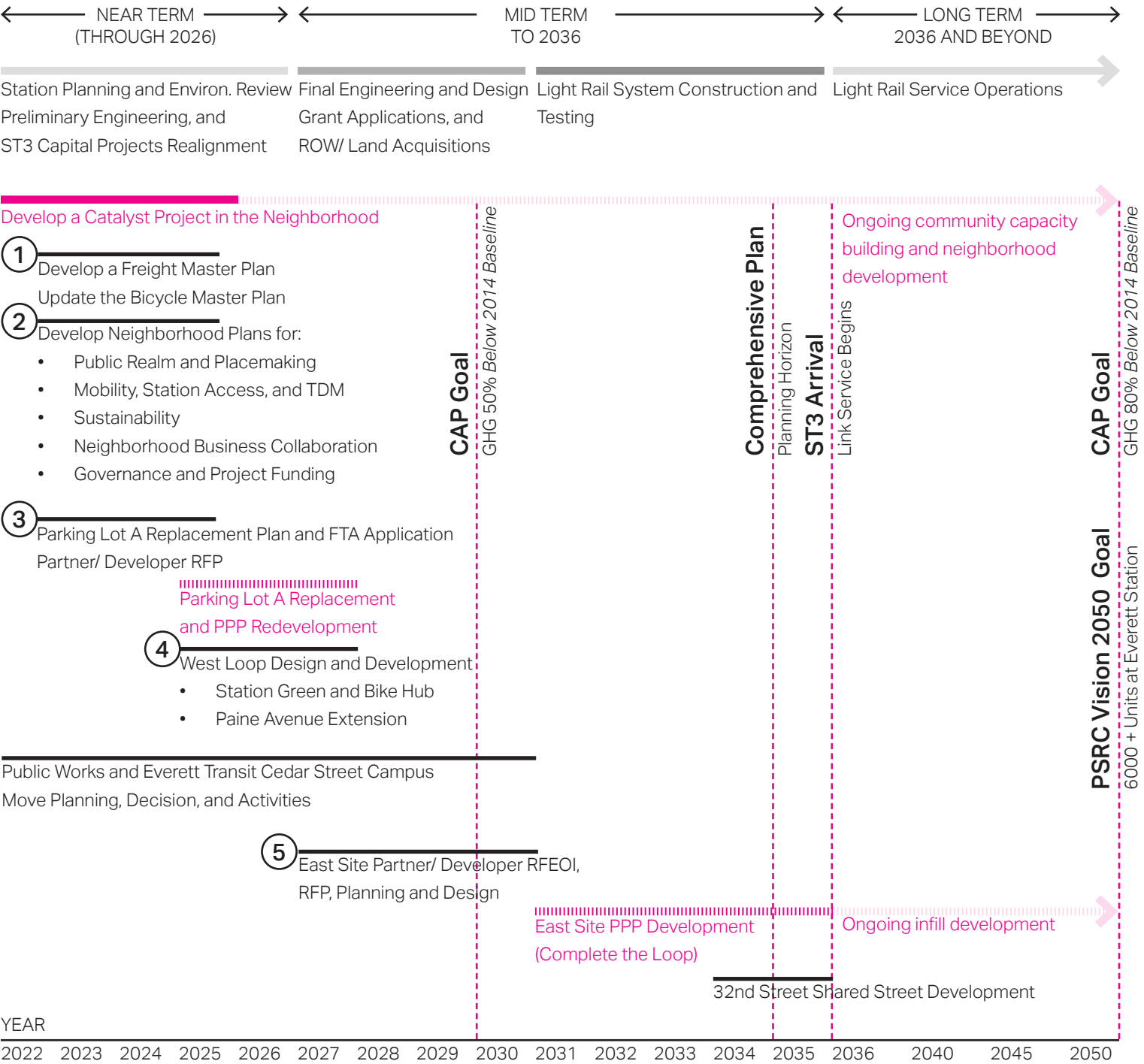
Housing Hope Actions

Public-Private-Partner Activities

City of Everett Actions/ Decisions

Sound Transit/ ST3 Activities

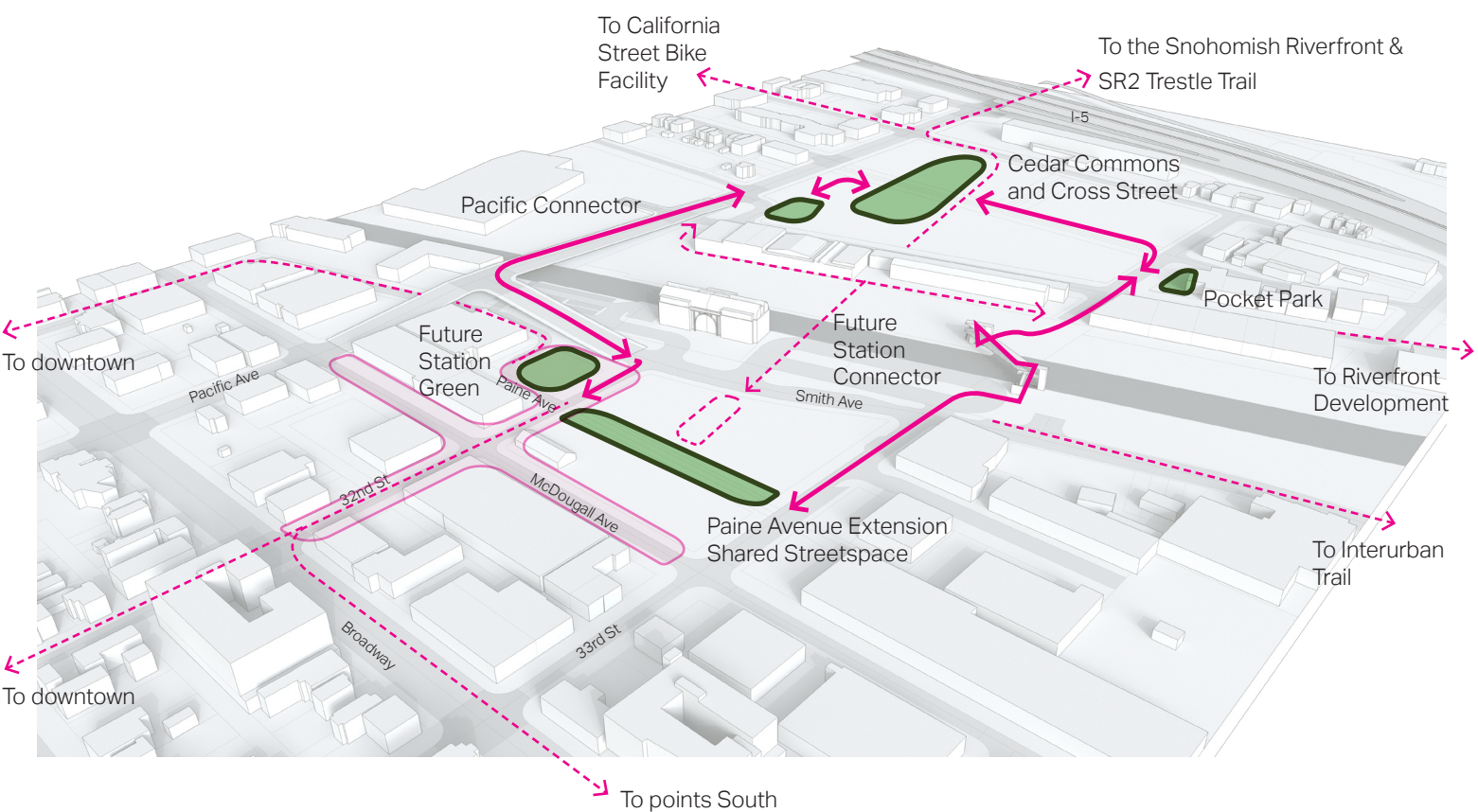
Implementation Timeline



organizational frameworks

The “Loop”

This study envisions a “Loop” of coordinated public realm improvements that protect and support local business and catalyze new programs and development. As a clear and overarching organizational structure (to be defined through further planning and design), the Loop can function as a responsive, flexible framework to welcome additional residents and jobs to the neighborhood and contribute to delivering on City goals for Economic Development, Affordable Housing, Transportation Access, Climate Action, and Equity.



- ↔ “the loop” enhanced public realm connections
- ⚡ potential public realm connections
- “the loop” proposed public spaces and infrastructure improvements
- Metro Everett recommended pedestrian oriented area

How is the report organized?

The “Convergence: Everett Station Area TOD Study” provides additional detail about each of the components outlined in this executive summary.

The study is organized as a graphically intensive set of letter-sized “spreads” (facing pages intended to be read together as a single tabloid sheet). The narrative follows a four part structure, outlined in the Table of Contents. For the study’s recommended Vision, skip to the end, Section 4, Delivery. For the strategic underpinnings of the plan, see Section 3, Design. For the research behind it all, see Section 2, Discovery. For the project impetus and equity principles that have guided the work, start with Section 1, Introduction.

- 1. Introduction.** Background and Process
This section traces the history of Everett Station area planning work, establishes the impetus for this project, and offers a series of key questions and principles for equity that frame the project and guide recommendations for action.
- 2. Discovery.** Research and Analysis
This section summarizes the on-the-ground observation and mapping analyses used to establish the key project drivers. Areas of analysis include the planning and urban design context, market and real estate conditions, mobility and transit access conditions, and the City of Everett and Sound Transit variables that underpin the work, such as Public Works and Everett Transit facility move plans and property locations and potential ST3 station locations.
- 3. Design.** Strategic Concepts
Synthesized through a series of focus groups, public meetings, and exploratory scenario planning exercises, this section outlines the set of overarching planning and urban design principles that will guide project recommendations.
- 4. Delivery.** Master Plan Concept
This section proposes a vision for the Everett Station Area, drawn from research, analysis, public outreach, and testing of development scenarios. Actionable strategies, specific development programs, funding opportunities, and timelines for action are provided.

See Recommendations Summary for synopsis of strategies and actions evaluated for performance relative to the Equity Principles developed by the project’s Committee on Creating a Just and Equitable Community, the ULI TAP report recommendations, and select City of Everett plans and policies.

project impetus

the case for a catalyst at everett station

The Case for a Catalyst

The Neighborhood

For more than twenty years, Everett Station has been the recipient of significant public investments in transit service, civic infrastructure, and planning, intended to help expand access to mobility choice, increase ridership, and lay the groundwork for economic development near downtown. Sounder Commuter Rail, Amtrak, Community Transit and Everett Transit bus service, the Everett Station Building, the 33rd Street Pedestrian Connector, the Pacific Avenue Bridge, land acquisition for convenient Park and Ride parking—each of these is a component of this effort.

But today, the surrounding neighborhood remains characterized by low-density land uses, limited housing options, few sidewalks, and slow growth.

Over the next fifteen years, Sound Transit 3 (ST3) will deliver millions of new public dollars to the area. As the terminus of the ST3 Everett Link Extension project, Everett Station will receive new light rail facilities and station access improvements to help connect the neighborhood to the expanding Link network, and importantly, to the SW Everett Manufacturing and Industrial Center and regional jobs centers (Seattle, Bellevue, and Tacoma) that comprise the Puget Sound economic cluster.

If the past offers any guidance for the future, it is that it is difficult to affect economic development with public infrastructure alone. Private and nonprofit sector partners are needed, not only to demonstrate “proof of concept” in the market, but also to do so reasonably quickly. With ST3 arriving in 2036 and the abundance of publicly-owned under-utilized property in the district, now is the time to build the public-private-nonprofit partnerships that can help speed the transition to a transit and opportunity rich, people-oriented neighborhood. Now is the time for a catalyst development project.

A catalyst development can...

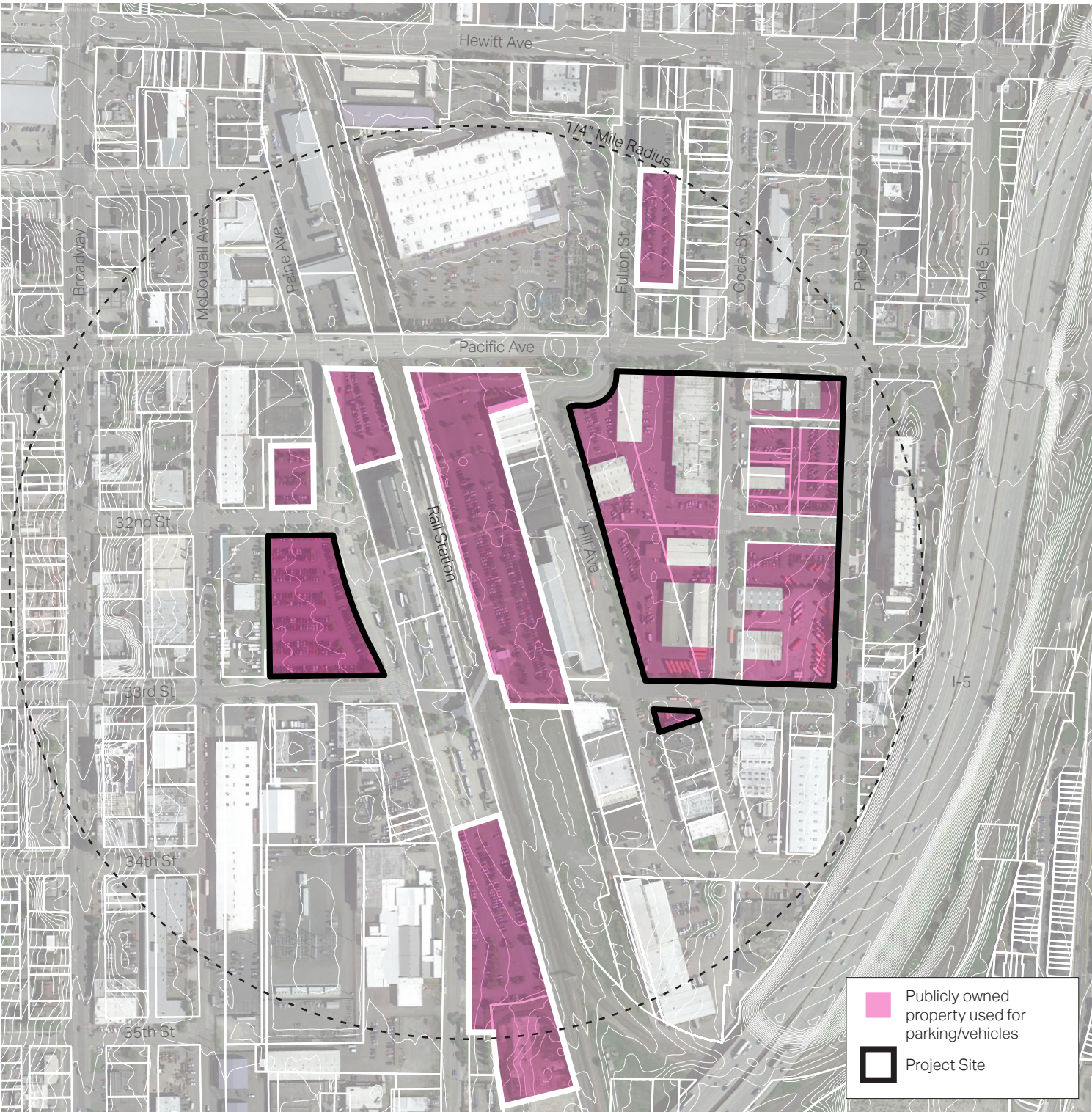
Protect and Stabilize Local Business

Nearly half of the neighborhood’s existing land base is used for commercial, manufacturing, or light industrial business—a sector that has provided relatively stable family wage jobs throughout market cycles.¹ Annual earnings from industrial lands jobs average roughly 140% of the average Puget Sound area wage and over 220% of retail trade jobs.² As the Everett Station Area grows more diverse and more dense under the new Metro Everett development code, new residents will expand the employee base; new jobs in support services such as childcare and education will nurture the local business workforce and their families, and new clusters of synergistic companies may arise to grow local business market sectors and improve resilience through market cycles. Each can be a foundational component of a stable and equitable future.

1 ESDA, Everett Station Neighborhood Future Concepts 2020.
2 PSRC, “Industrial Lands Analysis for the Central Puget Sound Region,” March 2015.

“This area should not be allowed to become merely a parking lot for transit users. Economic development activities benefiting from proximity to the station are encouraged in the station area.”

City of Everett Comprehensive Plan, Economic Development Element



EVERETT STATION AREA - EXISTING CONDITIONS

SCALE: 1" = 400'

Accelerate Economic Development

New development can augment existing commercial activity by delivering program spaces tailored to contemporary employer and employee needs, future-proofed with adaptable floor plans, building infrastructure, and wrap-around support services. At Everett Station, five key components could promote and strengthen an employment-friendly district:

Early Childhood Education. “Simply put, before parents can return to a workplace, they need reliable, affordable care for their children.”³ Where childcare can be located close to work and home—and mass transit—parents’ and employers alike have additional flexibility to grow careers and companies in a way that works for all.

Flexible and Affordable Business Spaces. New and emerging businesses benefit from access to clusters of synergistic companies and streams of information. Providing low-cost, adaptable work spaces, ‘landing pads’ for self-employed workers and entrepreneurs, training programs, spaces for networking, and wrap-around support services can help to encourage these clusters to develop and can help grow the local economy from the ground up.

District-wide Improvement Services. Delivering coordinated and well-managed community safety, economic support, and neighborhood improvement services is critical to attracting and retaining commercial activity.

Community-Oriented Common Spaces. In any high density jobs-rich environment, high-quality public spaces are critical for gathering, breaks from the workday, and connecting with customers, clients, and partners.

Commuter Facilities. Providing end-of-trip facilities for bike and transit commuters will help to welcome new and diversified businesses to the District.

Enable Housing Choice

Access to high-quality, reliable, affordable housing is an important factor in household health and upward mobility. With an existing residential density less of than 0.5 units per gross acre, the Everett Station area represents a void at the heart of the city. The Metro Everett Subarea Plan puts it more succinctly: “There is nowhere in Metro Everett where someone working a full-time minimum wage job could afford an unsubsidized apartment unless they were to share with others.”⁴ New housing supply that provides a mix of unit types and affordability levels—from low-income to workforce and market rate housing—is a critical factor in lowering housing costs for Everett’s hard working families. Everett Station can help to deliver on the Everett Comprehensive Plan’s policy to “promote high density housing in the downtown, areas around the downtown, and in commercially zoned areas, in transit station areas and transit corridors, to enable people to live near employment and commercial services.”⁵

3 Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco
4 City of Everett, “Metro Subarea Plan”
5 City of Everett, “Comprehensive Plan,” Housing Element, Policy 4.4.2

housing choices



source: HopeWorks Station II, Everett



childcare and mobility infrastructure
source: CBS Montessori School, Utrecht



business spaces
source: Framework, Portland



public spaces
source: Sandridge Commons, Oklahoma City



community bike and commuter facilities
source: Spring District Cycle Pavilion, Bellevue. Northwest Studio.



green building
source: Habitat for Horticulture at SF MOMA

Example catalytic development programs for the Everett Station Neighborhood

Achieve Climate Action Goals

Transportation emissions account for almost half of Everett’s total GHG emissions (361 KT CO2e) and stem mainly from passenger vehicles, but they also include municipal fleet trips and public transit.⁶ Increasing land use density and diversity around low-carbon transportation choices is one of the most potent methods to reduce the City’s GHG emissions profile. It will almost certainly need to be a key component of meeting Climate Action Targets, which have initial benchmarks coming due in 9 years (as of this writing), 6 years ahead of when Link Light Rail is anticipated to arrive:

- Communitywide Target.** Reduce Everett community GHG emissions 50% by 2030 (50x30) and 80% by 2050 (80x50), compared to the 2014 baseline.
- Municipal Operations Target.** Reduce municipal GHG emissions 50% by 2030 (50x30) and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

Expand Transportation Access

Park and ride surface parking next to a bus/rail station is an outdated method of increasing transit ridership. It induces single occupant and carpool vehicle traffic coincident with transit headways, which can contribute to congestion (impeding bus transit and freight traffic) and greenhouse gas emissions (counteracting the benefit of low-carbon transit service). It also reinforces the notion that the station is not a destination in its own right, but rather a waypoint through which daily commuters pass. In the Everett Station neighborhood, near the heart of the city, the parking-oriented environment is organized to encourage people to leave and go somewhere else.

Leverage Real Estate Value to Create Civic Value

The capacity and potential development density of publicly owned land within 1/2 mile of Everett Station is among the highest in the city. Several close in private properties also possess significant development potential. Together the combination presents a prime opportunity to spur progress towards key City policy goals, including economic development, housing affordability, access to healthy food options, fostering equity, and climate action.

Everett Station represents a convergence of opportunity for moving towards a more equitable and accessible city. A catalyst development can jump start the process.

6 City of Everett, “Climate Action Plan”



source: SLU Arbor Blocks, Seattle

The Arbor Blocks in Seattle’s South Lake Union neighborhood (a light industrial hub and tech-oriented jobs center).



prepared for **housing hope** by:

northwest studio
architects urban designers

Heartland
Nelson Nygaard
MIG