



**SOUTH  
DOWN  
TOWN  
HUB**

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# South Downtown Hub

## Engagement Summary

June 2026

# CONTENTS

- INTRODUCTION ..... 1
- ENGAGEMENT AT A GLANCE ..... 2
- EQUITABLE ENGAGEMENT APPROACH ..... 3
- PROCESS AND TIMELINE ..... 4
- WHAT WE HEARD ..... 7
- CONCLUSION ..... 24

# FIGURES

<b>FIGURE 1:</b> SOUTH DOWNTOWN HUB PROJECT AREA.....	1
<b>FIGURE 2:</b> SENIOR TOUR OF PROGRESS EXHIBITION IN CANTONESE .....	2
<b>FIGURE 3:</b> TIMELINE OF ENGAGEMENT .....	4
<b>FIGURE 4:</b> WORKSHOP 1 VISION BOARD WITH FEEDBACK FROM THE COMMUNITY.....	5
<b>FIGURE 5:</b> EXHIBITION 1 IN THE GREAT HALL AT UNION STATION .....	7
<b>FIGURE 6:</b> STITCH FOCUS AREA STREET CONNECTION CONCEPTS.....	9
<b>FIGURE 7:</b> STITCH FOCUS AREA CONCEPT.....	11
<b>FIGURE 8:</b> CENTRAL FOCUS AREA STREET CONNECTION CONCEPTS .....	12
<b>FIGURE 9:</b> CENTRAL FOCUS AREA CONCEPT.....	13
<b>FIGURE 10:</b> POSSIBLE FUTURE EXAMPLES OF UNION STATION ACTIVATION.....	15
<b>FIGURE 11:</b> SOUTH FOCUS AREA STREET CONNECTION CONCEPTS.....	16-17
<b>FIGURE 12:</b> SOUTH FOCUS AREA CONCEPT .....	19
<b>FIGURE 13:</b> NORTH FOCUS AREA CONCEPT .....	22

# INTRODUCTION

The South Downtown Hub (SDH) Plan emerged from Sound Transit's Further Studies work for the Ballard Link Extension Project in late 2022 and early 2023, during which the Chinatown-International District (CID) and Pioneer Square communities shared ideas and identified opportunities to enhance the South Downtown area.

The Sound Transit Board responded to the community's feedback on the South Downtown area by directing Sound Transit staff to work with the City of Seattle, King County, and the community on a vision for improved and strengthened multimodal connections, enhanced public spaces, and safer streets benefiting the neighborhoods of CID and Pioneer Square as well as regional transit riders. This is the primary focus of the South Downtown Hub Plan.



Figure 1: South Downtown Hub project area

# ENGAGEMENT AT A GLANCE

Over **1,600** impressions to date throughout the South Downtown Hub Planning Project engagement.

## ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES:



**2** open houses with over **280** attendees

- Open house 1 (Nov. 15, 2023)
- Open house 2 (April 2, 2025)



**2** workshops with over **210** attendees

- Workshop 1 (Feb. 28, 2024)
- Workshop 2 (July 17, 2024)



**2** online surveys with **623** responses

- Survey 1 (July – Aug 2024)
- Survey 2 (April – May 2025)



**2** exhibitions with **318** written comments

- Exhibition 1 (July – Dec 2024)
- Exhibition 2 (April – May 2025)



**12** community forums with **196** participants



**20** newsletter notifications with **164,052** articles opened



Figure 2: Senior tour of progress exhibition in Cantonese

# EQUITABLE ENGAGEMENT APPROACH



Community engagement shaped the scope and direction of the SDH planning efforts. The project ideas for South Downtown Hub were based on past community plans and project ideas. To advance the study, the planning and engagement teams worked collaboratively with community members throughout the study by asking questions, facilitating engagement exercises, and progressing concepts and technical analysis based on community members' thoughts on opportunities, issues, and trade-offs, as well as identifying how concepts might support neighborhood goals.

The SDH planning process employed a range of tailored engagement methods to enhance public involvement, encourage meaningful community participation in decision-making processes, and foster inclusivity, transparency, and equitable outcomes. Primary in-person engagement included public open houses and workshops. For those unable to attend these events, we provided online surveys for virtual feedback and displayed two exhibitions in the Great Hall at Union Station for drop-in viewing and commenting. In addition to the opportunities for feedback outlined above, we held small group forums, meetings, and tours to reach residents, business owners and employees, community associations, and other CID and Pioneer Square community members with a vested interest in this project. All of these events were co-hosted in partnership with community-based organizations, property managers, and businesses to ensure broad and inclusive participation.

To remove barriers to participation and reach community members representative of the CID and Pioneer Square neighborhoods, we provided language interpretation in Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese during in-person events. Meeting materials in Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, and Vietnamese were also available in-person and posted online.

We collaborated with the City of Seattle's Department of Neighborhood's Community Liaisons (CLs) program to reach limited-English speaking audiences, provide language translation and interpretation at events, and conduct door-to-door business outreach to notify the community about engagement opportunities. Notifications for outreach activities also involved working with CID-based media outlets and community-based organizations to notify additional neighborhood audiences.

Online resources were available for individuals unable to attend in-person events. The South Downtown Hub project website was built with accessibility in mind, featuring descriptive alt text on all images, screen reader-compatible links throughout, and content available in English, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, and Vietnamese. Throughout the process, we shared summaries of feedback and key themes on the SDH website following each engagement phase. Community members and partners were able to navigate the site to learn about the project, upcoming engagement opportunities, and take online surveys. The following report shares a summary of common themes in community feedback from Nov. 15, 2023, through May 16, 2025.

# PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The South Downtown Hub Planning process was implemented as an iterative series of engagement events that were built upon one another to refine community priorities and inform concept development. Community feedback from workshops, forums, exhibitions, and surveys can be found in Appendix A.

Fall 2023	Winter 2024	Summer 2024	Spring 2025
<p><b>Kick-off Open House</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answer questions</li> <li>• Community themes and highlighting ideas from past projects</li> </ul>	<p><b>Workshop 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Big picture visioning</li> <li>• Develop overall concepts for community and station connections</li> </ul>	<p><b>Workshop 2, Public Exhibition, and Online Survey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area-specific opportunities and issues</li> <li>• Evaluate concepts for connections and places</li> </ul>	<p><b>Open House, Progress Exhibition and Online Survey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present refined designs</li> <li>• Confirm concepts for connections and places</li> </ul>

Figure 3: Timeline of engagement

## Fall 2023: Kickoff Open House

Engagement for the SDH project began in Fall 2023 with a kick-off open house on Nov. 15. More than 150 people attended the event, including 30 Cantonese and Mandarin speaking community members. The event was staffed by Sound Transit, partner agencies, consultants, Community Liaisons, and Cantonese, and Mandarin language interpreters. The open house introduced the South Downtown Hub study and invited participants to review and prioritize themes from past plans and determine focus areas for Workshop 1. Participants also had the opportunity to share feedback about community values and priorities as well as placemaking and place-keeping ideas in the Pioneer Square and Chinatown-International District neighborhoods.

## Winter 2024: Workshop 1

On Feb. 28, 2024, we held the first SDH workshop. Workshop 1 explored design options with participants creating vision boards of priorities for safety, mobility, public space, and elements missing from initial concepts.

The interactive vision board activity used transparency overlays and photo cards to depict urban design concepts and features. Staff introduced options and helped participants visualize and navigate the benefits and challenges of different concepts. Several smaller, focused forums followed the workshop, held with organizations and groups throughout the community utilizing the same vision board activity. Over 200 community members participated in the tabletop activity, including 60 of which participated in two fully Cantonese and Mandarin forums.

## Summer 2024: Workshop 2, Public Exhibition, and Online Survey

A second workshop was held on July 17, 2024, and built on prior input with more detailed scenarios. Workshop 2 focused on enhancing public spaces and potential transit-oriented development (TOD) at and around existing and potential future transit stations in these neighborhoods.

Community participants at this workshop took part in an interactive and facilitated small-group activity using transparency overlays of street and infrastructure concepts, along with photo cards, to visualize urban design features and amenities. Follow-up community forums were held with community organizations and residents using the same workshop 2 activity. Some of these meetings were conducted in Cantonese and Mandarin and tailored to older adults living in the CID. More than 135 community members participated in Workshop 2 or a community forum, including 44 Cantonese and Mandarin speaking participants.



Figure 4: Workshop 1 vision board with feedback from the community

A public exhibition opened at Union Station, along with the workshop, and remained up through December 2024. The exhibition summarized existing conditions, past plans, Workshop 1 outcomes and technical analysis responding to early community questions posed in Workshop 1, inviting feedback via comment boards and QR surveys. The exhibition also had space for the public to provide written feedback and 152 comments were documented.

The visioning activity was also shared through an online survey – available in English, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, and Vietnamese – to provide an additional opportunity for community members to comment on the SDH Plan. 456 community members took the online survey.

### **Spring 2025: Open House, Progress Exhibition and Online Survey**

An open house was held on April 2, 2025, at Union Station, where draft concepts were shared. We asked attendees to review project design and phasing concepts, share their thoughts on whether the project concepts were headed in the right direction, and provide any suggestions for further refinement. More than 150 community members attended the open house.

The event also kicked off a six-week exhibition showcasing the proposed SDH plan vision and updated project design concepts. The concepts reflected feedback from previous workshops and engagement, as well as technical analysis and interagency collaboration. The exhibition at Union Station remained open for further input through mid-May, and 166 written public comments were documented.

Following the open house, we led a tour of the exhibition in Cantonese and Mandarin for 26 senior residents in the CID and gathered their feedback. After the open house, the project team launched an online survey – available in English, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, and Vietnamese – to provide an additional opportunity for community members to provide feedback. 229 community members took the online survey.

# WHAT WE HEARD

## OVERALL

The kick-off open house in fall 2023 introduced the South Downtown Hub Plan and invited participants to review and prioritize themes from past plans and determine focus areas to guide the development of concepts and designs.

Eight key themes were presented based on a City of Seattle synthesis of past plans done by city departments and community organizations:

- **Public space:** Enhance public space, streets, alleys, and open spaces to increase safety, social connections, and physical activity
- **Equitable development:** Minimize cumulative harm and/or displacement and encourage equitable development
- **Public safety:** Improve public safety, experience, and perceptions
- **Community benefit:** Maximize community benefit and ownership of land
- **History & culture:** Retain historic and cultural character
- **Address historic racism:** Acknowledge and address historic racism that has and continues to impact neighborhoods
- **Connectivity:** Improve mobility and connectivity
- **Economics:** Encourage economic development



Figure 5: Exhibition 1 in the Great Hall at Union Station

We kept these themes at front of mind as we developed concepts and framed the presentation of concepts as responses to the themes. The SDH planning work focused on three geographic areas (Central, South, and North) to identify how to best connect neighborhoods with the sites of existing and potential future transit stations, historic buildings, and significant new developments. Although each focus area had unique feedback and priorities, we also received feedback on priorities that were universal. Building off of the key themes, we were able to keep continuity while gathering feedback on current top priorities.

- Public safety: Improve lighting, visibility, and enhanced street crossings to foster safer mobility and neighborhoods.
- Connectivity: Widen sidewalks, protect bike lanes, and develop more open and clear entries to transit stations to strengthen connections to and between the CID, Pioneer Square, and adjacent neighborhoods.
- History and culture: Incorporate design elements and art opportunities that reflect local history and culture and reinforce a sense of place and belonging.
- Public space: Create public spaces that promote community values, including affordable living, mixed-use buildings, improved walkability, and expanded green spaces to contribute to a vibrant and resilient neighborhood.

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## NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

A key focus of the SDH planning process was to reveal which connections community members felt needed the most attention. Participants considered street and infrastructure adjustments and transformations in the CID and Pioneer Square neighborhoods.

- Adjustment scenarios – targeted, incremental changes that improve safety and connectivity while maintaining existing traffic patterns.
- Transformation scenarios – bold reconfigurations of streets to prioritize pedestrian safety, public spaces, and multimodal connectivity.

Of the connectivity concepts presented, the majority of participants preferred transformative options that prioritize pedestrians over vehicles, with the often-shared caveat that the community was wary of construction related disruptions, traffic added to local streets, and/or the ongoing activation and maintenance needs required of new public spaces.

## STITCH FOCUS AREA FEEDBACK

The stitch focus area represents the heart of the plan, connecting Pioneer Square and the Chinatown-International District through Union Station and King Street Station. The concept looks at the area around 2nd Ave Ext S, 4th Ave S, and S Jackson St. It is envisioned as a more walkable and people-centered environment that unites the two neighborhoods through upgraded plazas, improved crossings, and enhanced pedestrian areas.

### Stitch focus area street and hub connections:

Based on feedback through the first workshop, 71% of participants expressed interest in converting Second Ave Ext S into a pedestrian and transit-only corridor, and possibly phased in as a festival street. The transformation concept was seen as an opportunity to create a more vibrant, people centered space; however, several concerns were raised. These included possible impacts to bus access and reliability, the need to maintain access to local businesses, regular maintenance of the public spaces, and the potential of increased traffic congestion in surrounding areas. Participants also emphasized the importance of minimizing construction impacts on nearby neighborhoods and called for incentives to attract new businesses and support street-level activation. An adjustment concept focused on widening and improving the quality of the sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure without closing 2nd Ave Ext S to through traffic was also considered, offering a balanced approach to enhancing mobility and public space while preserving vehicle access, possibly addressing some of the concerns expressed.

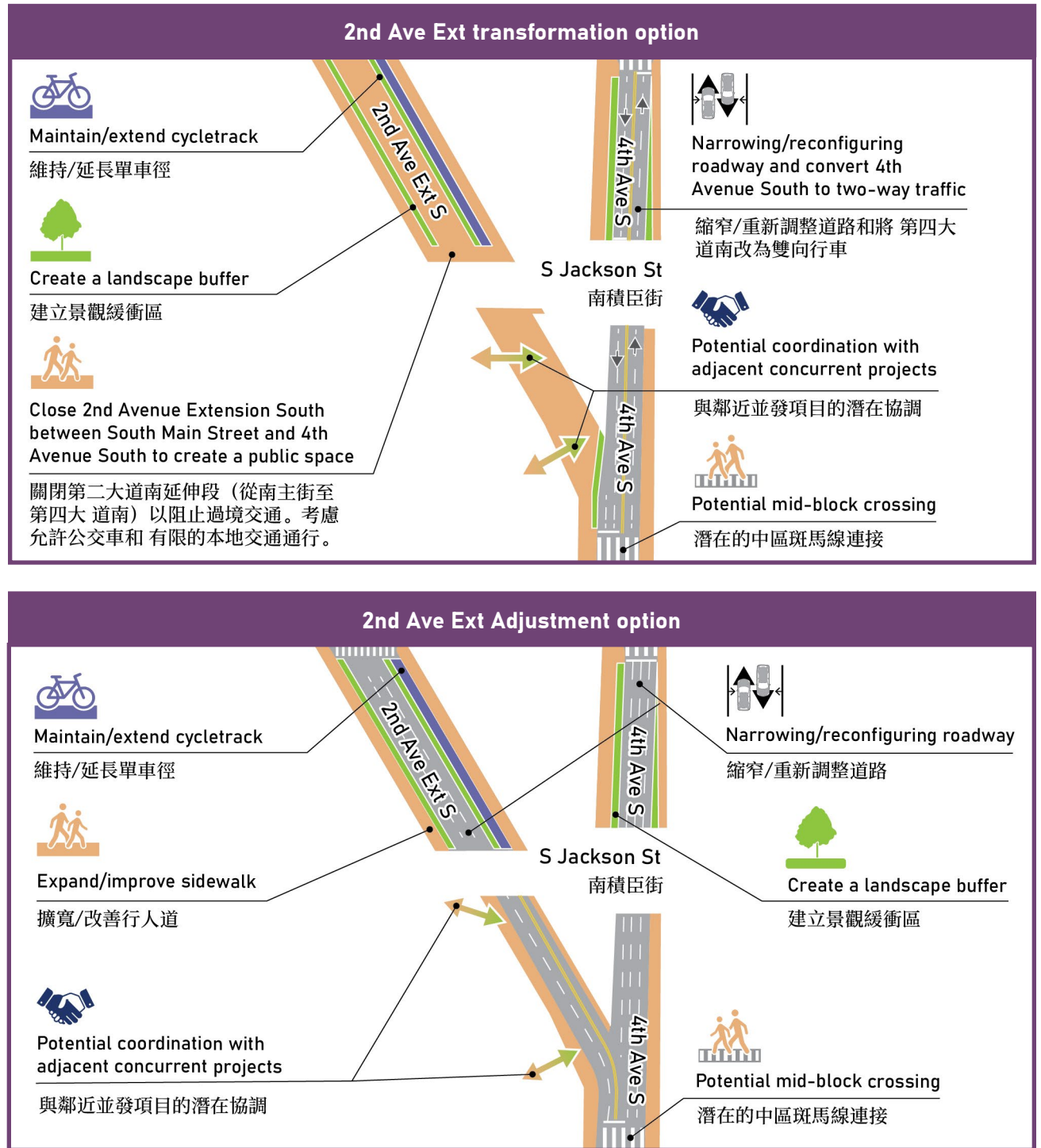


Figure 6: Stitch focus area street connection concepts

## Stitch focus area feedback outlined by key themes

### WE HEARD:

#### Public safety

- Improve public safety measures including:
  - Better lighting and visibility
  - Enhanced street crossings
  - Security cameras
- Prevent illegal parking on 4th Ave S by making the bus lanes red
- Incorporate street design changes that reduce car access and prioritize people over vehicles.

#### Connectivity

- Enhance pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly infrastructure, including:
  - Widened sidewalks
  - Protected bicycle lanes and sidewalks, especially on 2nd Ave Ext S
  - A two-way bike path on 4th Ave S that connects to Main St.
  - Clear signage and wayfinding to support navigation and accessibility

#### History & culture

- Add design elements and art opportunities that reflect local history and culture

#### Public space

- Create cleaner public spaces with more greenery and plants

**"Please go big & be ambitious! We deserve green space"**

**"Road diet on 4th Ave is badly needed. Crossing over 4th via Jackson is unpleasant and scary. Cars speed a lot here."**



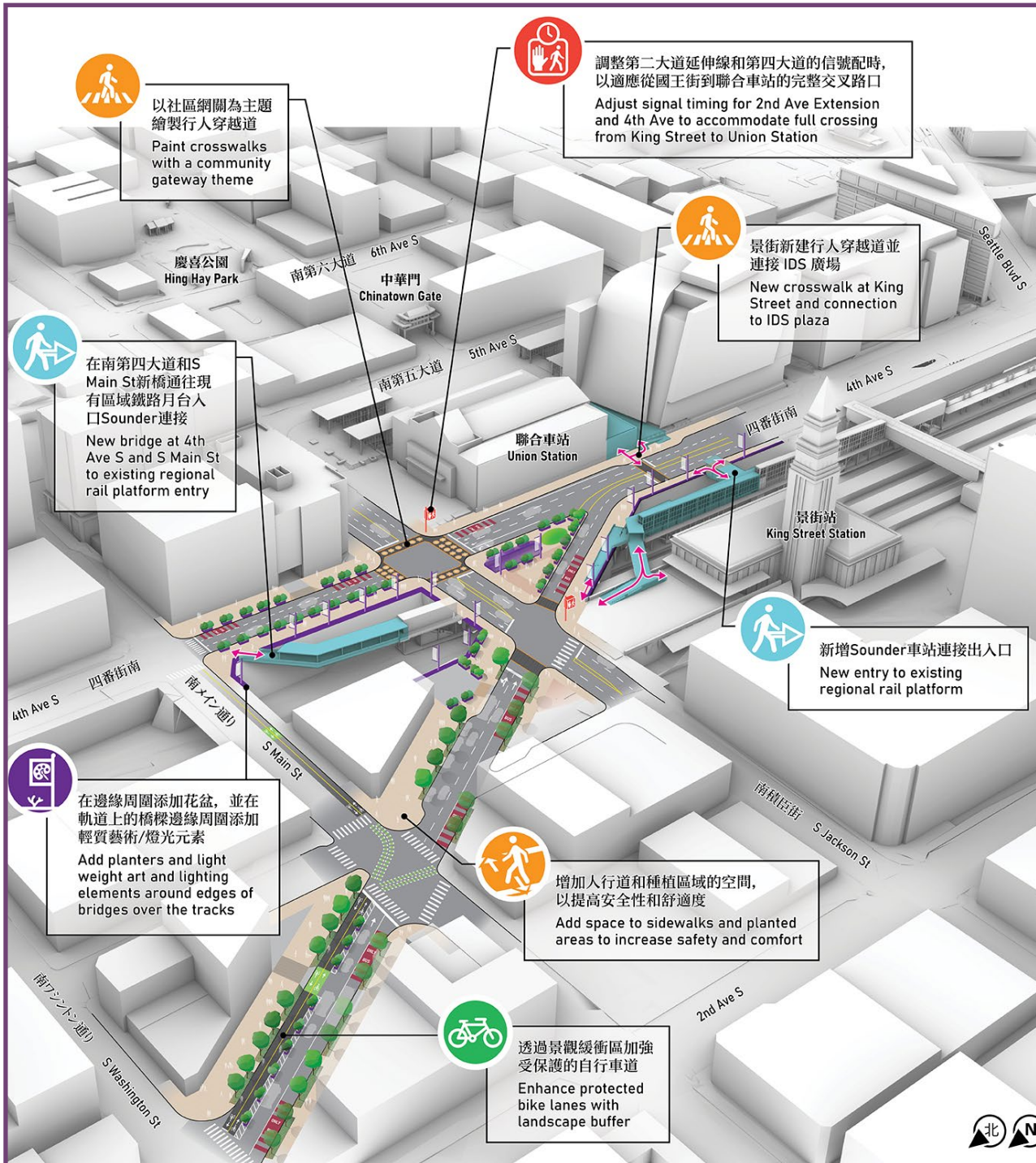


Figure 7: Stitch focus area concept

## CENTRAL FOCUS AREA FEEDBACK

The central focus area includes Union Station, King Street Station, surrounding plazas, and both existing and potential future light rail stations. The focus at this location was to consider ways to create vibrant public spaces and bridge physical barriers between existing transit centers. The majority of participants showed interest in transformative improvements in this area.

### Central focus area street and hub connections:

The community was supportive of street improvements along S Jackson St, with 72% of in-person and 58% of online participants preferring the transformative option. Participants also had interest in a railroad lid option to cover the open triangle to the south of Jackson Street and around the Sounder entry for easier access to the trains and improved pedestrian space.

The S Jackson St transformation improves sidewalk space, adds pedestrian scale lighting and planters, and adjusts signal timing to allow for more time to cross the street from King St to Union Station. Participants also expressed interest in art or plantings to cover the open triangle to the south of S Jackson St and around the Sounder entry, providing a better experience while moving through the area.

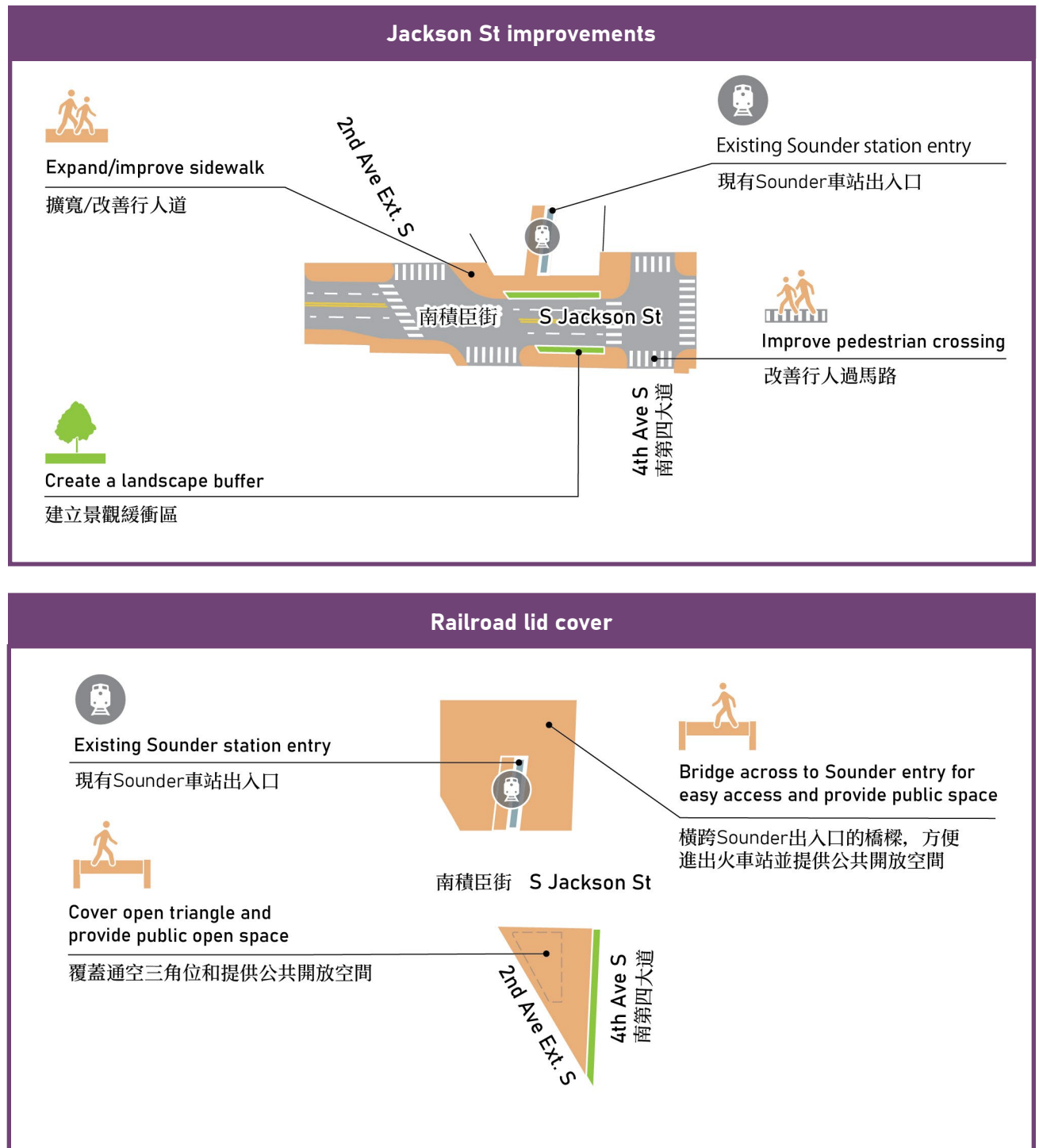


Figure 8: Central focus area street connection concepts

## Central focus area feedback outlined by key themes

### WE HEARD:

#### Public Safety

- Improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, including:
- Pedestrian-only areas and festival streets
- Wayfinding and audible cues for accessibility.
- Prioritize safety including better lighting, visible police presence, security cameras, emergency phones, and concept designs that discourage loitering.

#### Connectivity

- Enhance pedestrian- and bike-friendly infrastructure, including:
  - Protected bike lanes
  - Wider sidewalks and improved crosswalks
  - Short, direct, and weather-protected transit transfers
- Develop a multimodal transportation hub with integrated connections between King Street Station, Union Station, and International District/Chinatown Station.
- Improve transit connectivity by adding bus stops near light rail stations, as well as streetcar speed and reliability.
- Mixed views on limiting car access in the CID. Some support it for safety and pedestrianization, while others are concerned about parking availability, traffic flow, and business access.

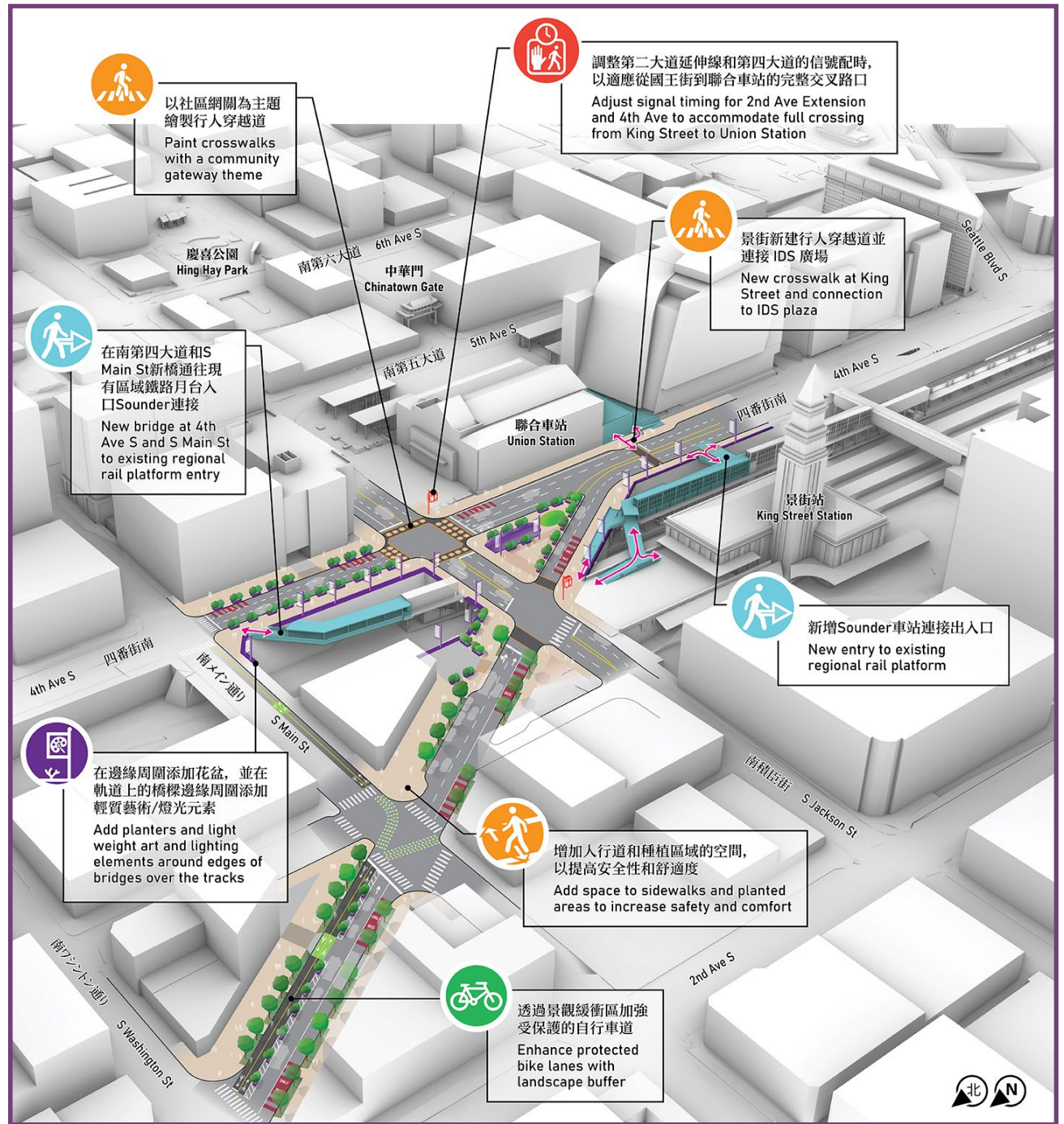


Figure 9: Central focus area concept

## History & culture

- Preserve Chinatown's historic character and reflect CID culture in Union Station and new developments.
- Integrate local art and design elements that reflect culture. Specifically, there is strong interest in Chinese aesthetics, memorial art, and cultural displays.
- Protect and support existing local businesses, especially culturally significant ones in the CID.
- Engage community groups and provide business liaisons during construction to minimize disruption and preserve the culture of the area.
- Invest in transit-oriented development in the CID that minimizes disruption and harm.

## Public space

- Incorporate more green space, street trees, shaded areas, and living walls.
- Activate Union Station into a community hub with:
  - Public access to lower levels and the concourse
  - Uses like childcare, storage, office space, food kiosks, events and performances
  - Activities like dance, tai chi, mahjong, movies
- Add public amenities to this area, including:
  - Public restrooms and water fountains
  - Outdoor plazas with weather protection
  - Public spaces that include uses such as a library, meeting/conference spaces, a community kitchen, and childcare facilities

**"Open and activate Union Station's space for public use. Open up the space for plaza dancing"**

**"Change is great. Let there be a safe place to travel!"**



## Equitable development

- Add new businesses that complement and enhance the current neighborhood economy.
- Transforming Union Station into a welcoming, multi-use community hub that supports economic activities, including:
  - Affordable commercial spaces for small businesses and tech/startup offices on the Garden Level
  - Small-scale food hall with permanent vendors to support local food culture in the Great Hall
- Prioritize tourism and beautification.

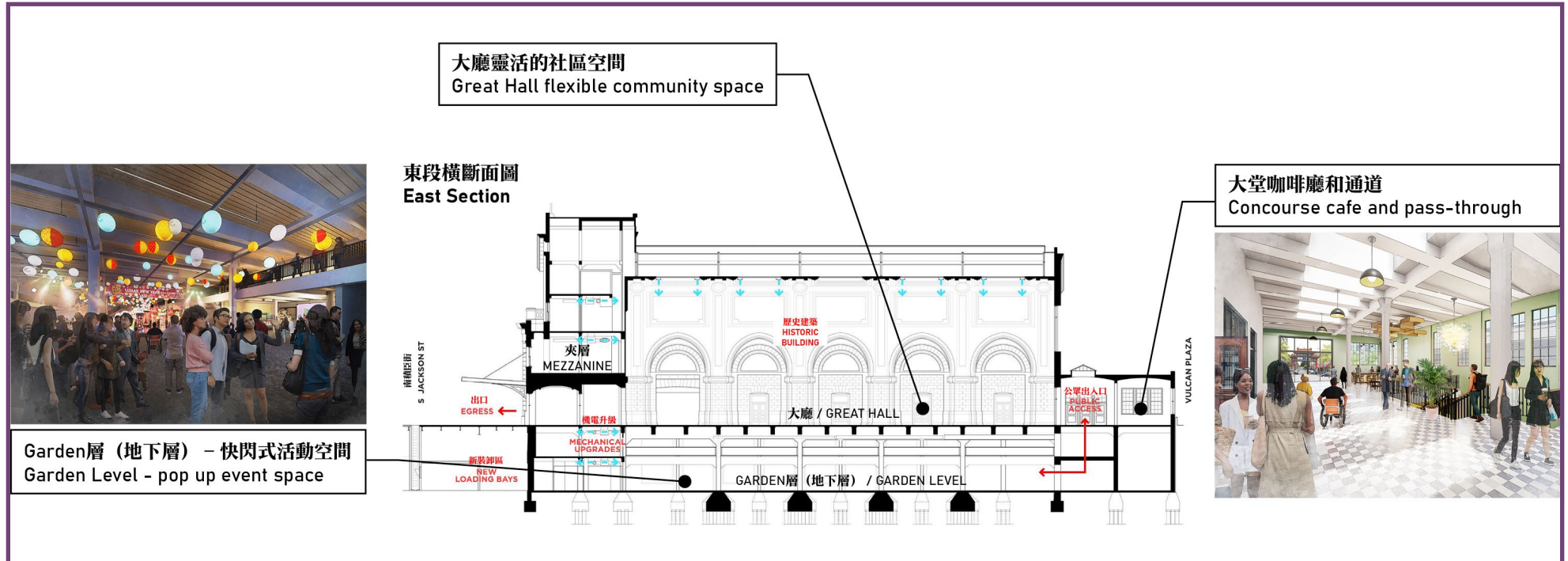


Figure 10: Possible future examples of Union Station activation

## SOUTH FOCUS AREA FEEDBACK

The south focus area consists of the area around S Dearborn St and Seattle Blvd S. The focus in this area was to consider changes for streets and public spaces to make it easier and more enjoyable to access the potential new light rail station near the INSCAPE Arts and Cultural Center and the surrounding neighborhoods. Participants considered how to prioritize street uses, level of density, and connections to public space. The majority of participants showed interest in transformative development in this area, regardless of the future light rail station location.

### South focus area street and hub connections:

94% of in-person and 77% of online participants were interested in a transformation option at S Dearborn St and the intersection of Seattle Blvd S, which would create a shared space that prioritizes pedestrian uses and movement. Proposed improvements would include wider, higher quality sidewalks, new and safer street crossings, and a new pedestrian bridge connecting Seattle Blvd S to Pioneer Square and the stadiums.

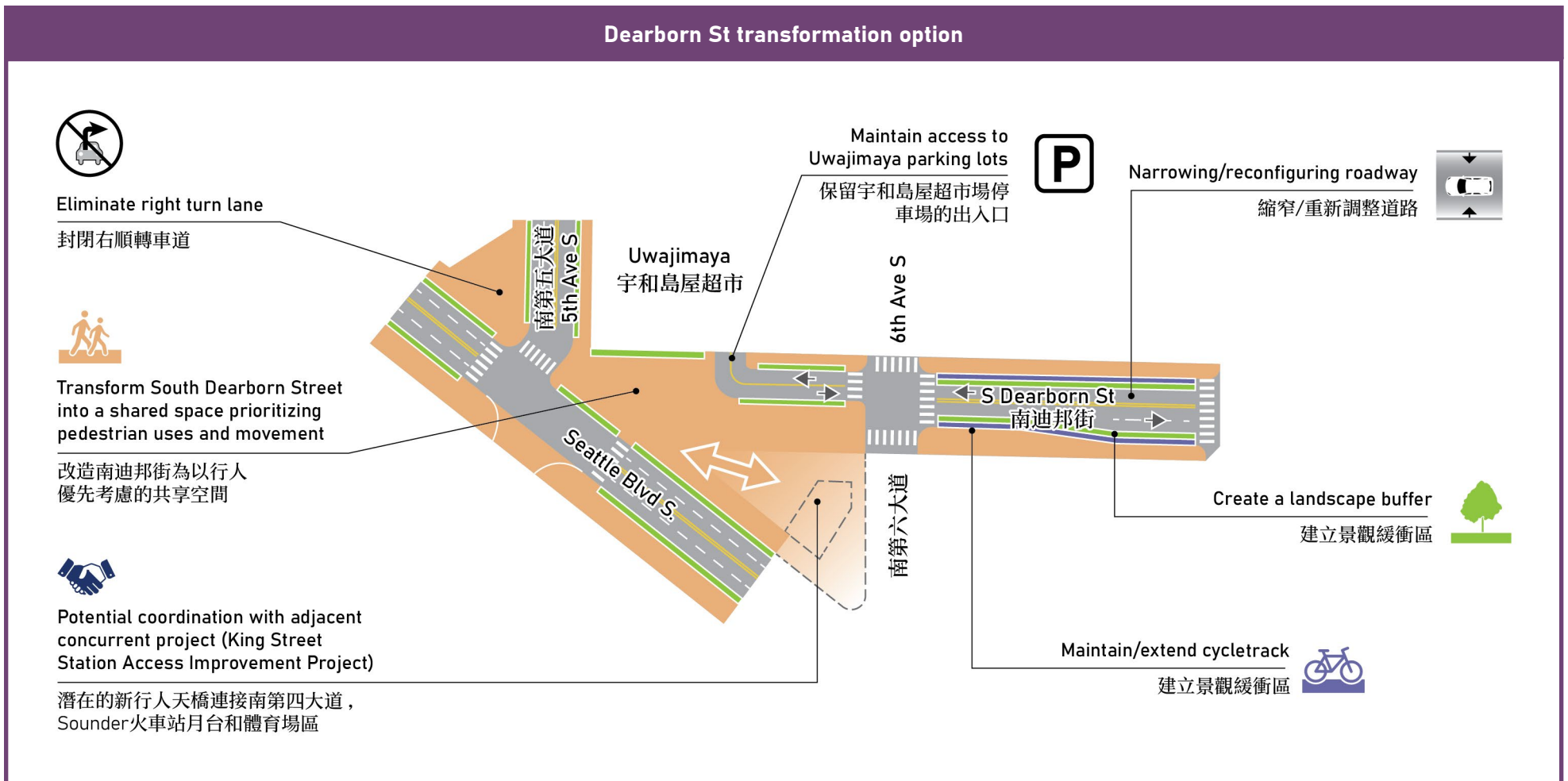


Figure 11: South focus area street connection concepts

## Dearborn St adjustment option



Eliminate right turn lane  
封閉右順轉車道

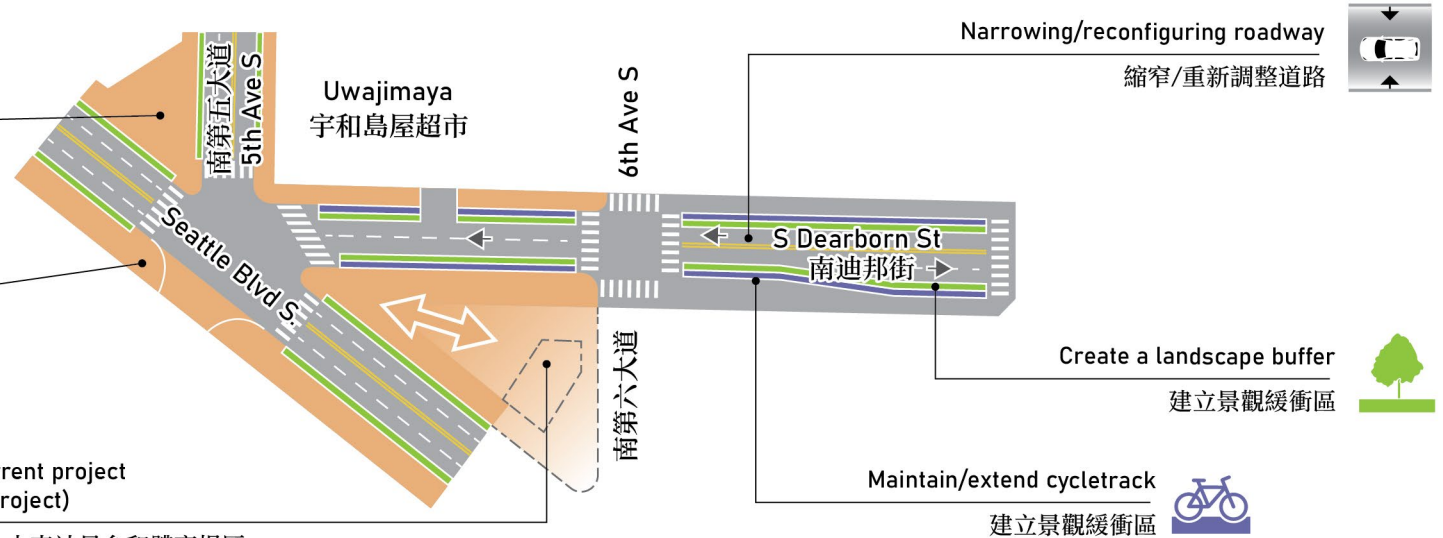


Expand/improve sidewalk  
擴寬/改善行人道



Potential coordination with adjacent concurrent project  
(King Street Station Access Improvement Project)

潛在的新行人天橋連接南第四大道，Sounder火車站月台和體育場區



## Bridge across BNSF crossing

Lumen Field parking lots  
Lumen Field大型體育場的停車場



Potential new pedestrian bridge to connect  
between 4th Avenue South, Sounder  
station platform, and Stadium District

潛在的新行人天橋連接南第四大道，  
Sounder火車站月台和體育場區



Potential coordination with adjacent concurrent project  
(King Street Station Access Improvement Project)

潛在的新行人天橋連接南第四大道，Sounder火車站月台和體育場區



Figure 11: South focus area street connection concepts

## South focus area feedback outlined by key themes

### WE HEARD:

#### Public safety

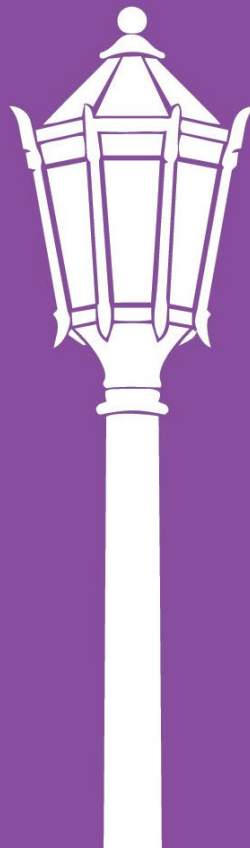
- Improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, including:
  - Wayfinding and audible cues for accessibility
  - Traffic calming measures, especially on Airport Way S, Seattle Blvd S and 5th Ave South
- Add better lighting and pedestrian visibility to increase safety and help make the area feel more inviting.

#### Connectivity

- Enhance pedestrian- and bike-friendly infrastructure, including:
  - Protected bike lanes
  - Wider sidewalks and improved crosswalks
  - Underground pedestrian walkways connecting a potential Dearborn St Station Alternative
  - A pedestrian bridge connecting 4th Ave S, the Sounder platform, and the Stadium District.
- Update the street grid realignment to improve connectivity, and incorporate seamless transfers between light rail, buses, and regional transit.
- Create bus priority lanes, median busways, and new bus stops to improve flow and access.
- Concerns about distance and lack of connectivity to the existing CID light rail and bus stations

"Must include low income housing"

"Better bike connections!"



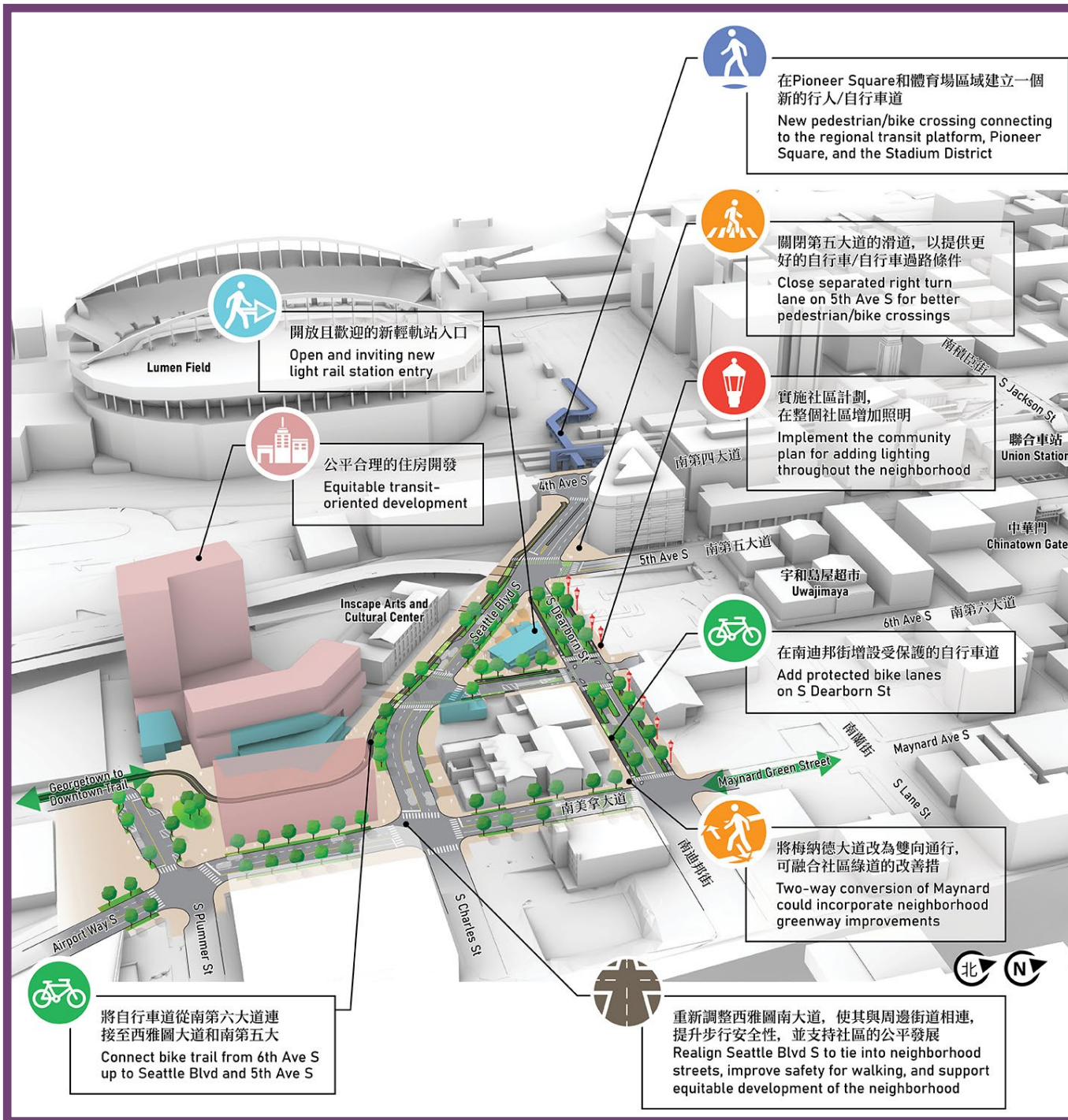


Figure 12: South focus area concept

## History & culture

- Incorporate public art, placemaking installments, and repurpose underused infrastructure (e.g., old I-90 ramp) in public spaces.
- Protect and activate historic buildings.
- Retain Inscape Arts.

## Public space

- Add public amenities to this area, including:
  - Community spaces such as a library, pool, service center, small grocery, affordable retail
  - Public plazas, courtyards, and community gathering areas
  - Parking garages with active ground-floor uses
- Incorporate street trees, landscaping, parks, gardens, and other green spaces in the area.

## Equitable development

- Transform the south focus area from industrial to a welcoming, multi-use community hub that supports:
  - Affordable multi-generational housing and mixed-use buildings
  - Community-led development
  - Retail such as a pharmacy, a post office, a gas station, and small, local businesses
  - Hotel space that can host small conferences and activate the street level
- Keep new development six stories or less, if possible. Taller buildings are acceptable if they include open space and gardens.
- Prevent over-commercialization and keep a residential feel in the neighborhood.
- Support local businesses during construction through grants and collaboration between businesses and SDH partners



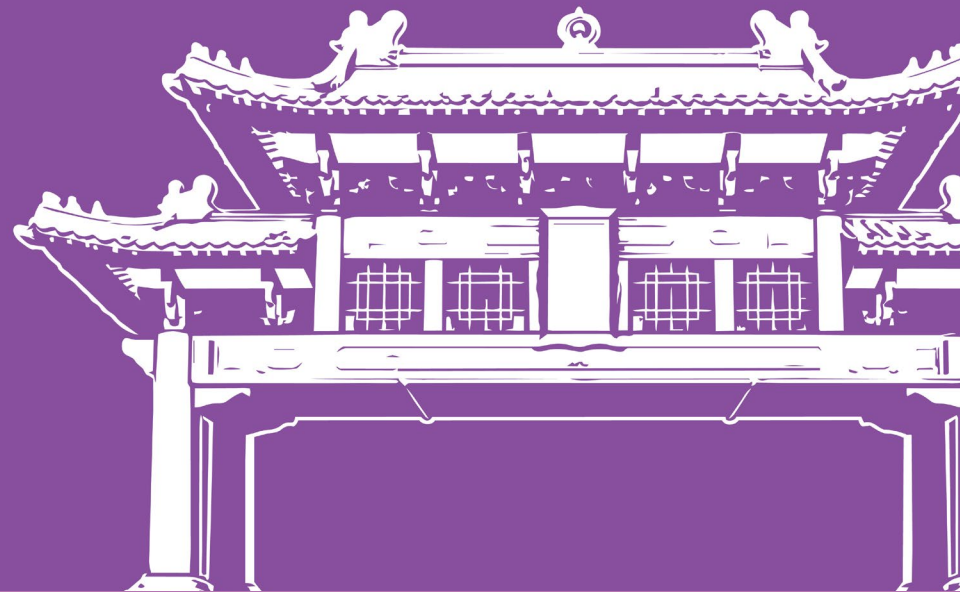
## NORTH FOCUS AREA FEEDBACK

The north focus area centers on the King County Civic Campus and surrounding blocks near Jefferson Street. The community provided feedback on approaches to development surrounding a potential new light rail station near Seattle City Hall and King County Courthouse. Key considerations included what uses to prioritize, level of density, and connections to public space. Transit-oriented development such as housing, retail, cultural uses, and green space could reinvigorate underutilized buildings and spaces. 69% of in-person and 61% of online participants preferred transformative improvements in this area.

Most improvements in this area rely on partnerships between King County, the City, and Sound Transit as the County has a master plan for the area and owns much of the property. The City of Seattle Parks Department also has plans to redevelop City Hall Park and Prefontaine Square nearby.

**"Make this [4th Ave S by City Hall Park] bike path 2-way and provide a safe path via 4th to main."**

**"Can we remove this paving/parking [at City Hall Park]? More park!! Less parking!"**





## North focus area feedback outlined by key themes

### WE HEARD:

#### Public safety

- Improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, including:
  - Timed pedestrian signals
  - Raised intersections
  - Clear signage and wayfinding to support navigation and accessibility
- Improve public safety measures including:
  - Better lighting
  - Emergency call boxes
  - Visible police presence
  - Anti-camping design

#### Connectivity

- Ensure the Midtown Station has direct links to RapidRide G, the First Hill neighborhood, and existing transit hubs.
- Create underground connections to improve system efficiency and minimize transfer times.
- Develop a hill climb (outdoor preferred) with rest areas, wayfinding signage, and escalators or moving walkways.
- Improve neighborhood connectivity and avoid designs that treat the area as a pass-through.
- Prioritize accessibility for elderly and disabled users.

#### History & culture

- Invest in transit-oriented development that minimizes disruption and harm.
- Prioritize people who live and work in the area and avoid residential and business displacement.
- Preserve existing buildings where possible.
- Support local businesses during construction through grants and collaboration between businesses and SDH partners

#### Public space

- Incorporate more green spaces and parks in the area, including green features for an exterior hill climb.
- Add public amenities to this area, including:
  - Pedestrian-only and festival streets
  - Street cafes
  - Public plazas
  - Covered walkways
  - Activated alleys and paths, especially near Yesler Way and 6th Ave S

#### Equitable development

- Create mixed-use, transit-oriented development in the north focus area that supports:
  - Small businesses, offices, and retail space (not just office towers)
  - Retail spaces designed with tenants in mind to avoid long-term vacancies
  - Market spaces and local character to avoid sterile, underused areas
  - Small hotels (preferably unionized)
- Create residential development of all types and income levels, especially:
  - Family-sized, low-income, and multi-generational housing.
  - Mixed-income and market-rate housing.
  - Housing to address displacement and homelessness
- Keep new development to mid-size buildings under 100 stories tall.
- Protect critical services, especially the Department of Corrections Reentry Center, which supports formerly incarcerated individuals.
- Incorporate community-led input in development decisions.

## CONCLUSION

Based on what we heard through community engagement and interagency coordination, 26 unique projects were identified as part of an overall vision in the SDH framework plan. A phased implementation approach - with project timing of less than 5 years, 5 to 15 years, or more than 15 years - was also developed based on project prioritization and funding. More details about the SDH process, potential project leads, and concepts can be found in the final South Downtown Hub Framework Plan. As planning progresses, partner agencies will continue to work through the details, including responsibilities for funding, implementation, and maintenance. We will continue engage the community every step of the way inform further development of project concepts, including detailed design and implementation . Together we are laying the groundwork for a more connected, vibrant, and inclusive South Downtown.

