



# ***West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions***

## **Station Planning Progress Report**





# Welcome!

This document is designed to complement the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) developed for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project. While the Draft EIS studies the potential benefits and impacts of each alternative, this progress report captures our latest thinking about how pedestrians, transit riders, cyclists, and others will access the stations and how the stations might fit within each neighborhood. We will continue to refine and update station concepts as we advance the project design and solicit feedback and ideas from partners and community members.

Ideas presented in this document came from the active participation of people like you! Many people attended neighborhood forums or community briefings in 2019 and early 2020. As Covid-19 unfolded, we heard from more of you through our project web site, phone calls, and virtual community briefings. We look forward to seeing you in person again soon.







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## Project overview

The West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions would extend the 3 Line to the SODO, Delridge, Avalon, and Alaska Junction neighborhoods, and the 1 Line to the Denny Triangle, South Lake Union, Uptown, Smith Cove, Interbay and Ballard neighborhoods north of downtown. As part of the 1 Line extension, the project would construct a second tunnel through downtown to expand light rail system capacity at SODO, Chinatown-International District, Midtown, and Westlake.

The diagram at the right shows the Sound Transit network when the projects funded by ST3, including the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions, are complete. At the Westlake station and the International District/Chinatown station, passengers would be able to transfer between the 1 Line, 2 Line, and 3 Line. At the SODO station, passengers would be able to transfer between the 1 Line and 3 Line.



## Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)



The EIS describes the multiple alternatives being considered and how each alternative might affect adjacent neighborhoods, transportation systems, and the natural and built environment. The EIS process helps Sound Transit, the City of Seattle, partner agencies, and the public better understand the potential benefits and impacts of the project and identify ways it can be improved, both during construction and for the final operation of the light rail line.

The EIS process begins with the publication and public review of a “Draft” EIS. A “Final” EIS is then prepared and published, with responses to substantive comments. Your input on the Draft EIS is important and will help shape the final project. We encourage you to review the Draft EIS at [wsblink.participate.online](https://wsblink.participate.online) and submit comments.

## Project timeline



\*The Board’s realigned capital plan identifies 2032 as the timeframe Sound Transit can affordably deliver service from SODO to West Seattle. At the same time, Sound Transit is managing the Ballard Link Extension toward a 2037 delivery target by working to close a project affordability gap. If it is not possible to close the gap, current financial assumptions reflect Sound Transit’s ability to affordably open service to Smith Cove in 2037 and to Ballard in 2039.

## Draft EIS alternatives

Three types of alternatives, including route and station options, have been identified for study in the Draft EIS.

### Preferred Alternatives

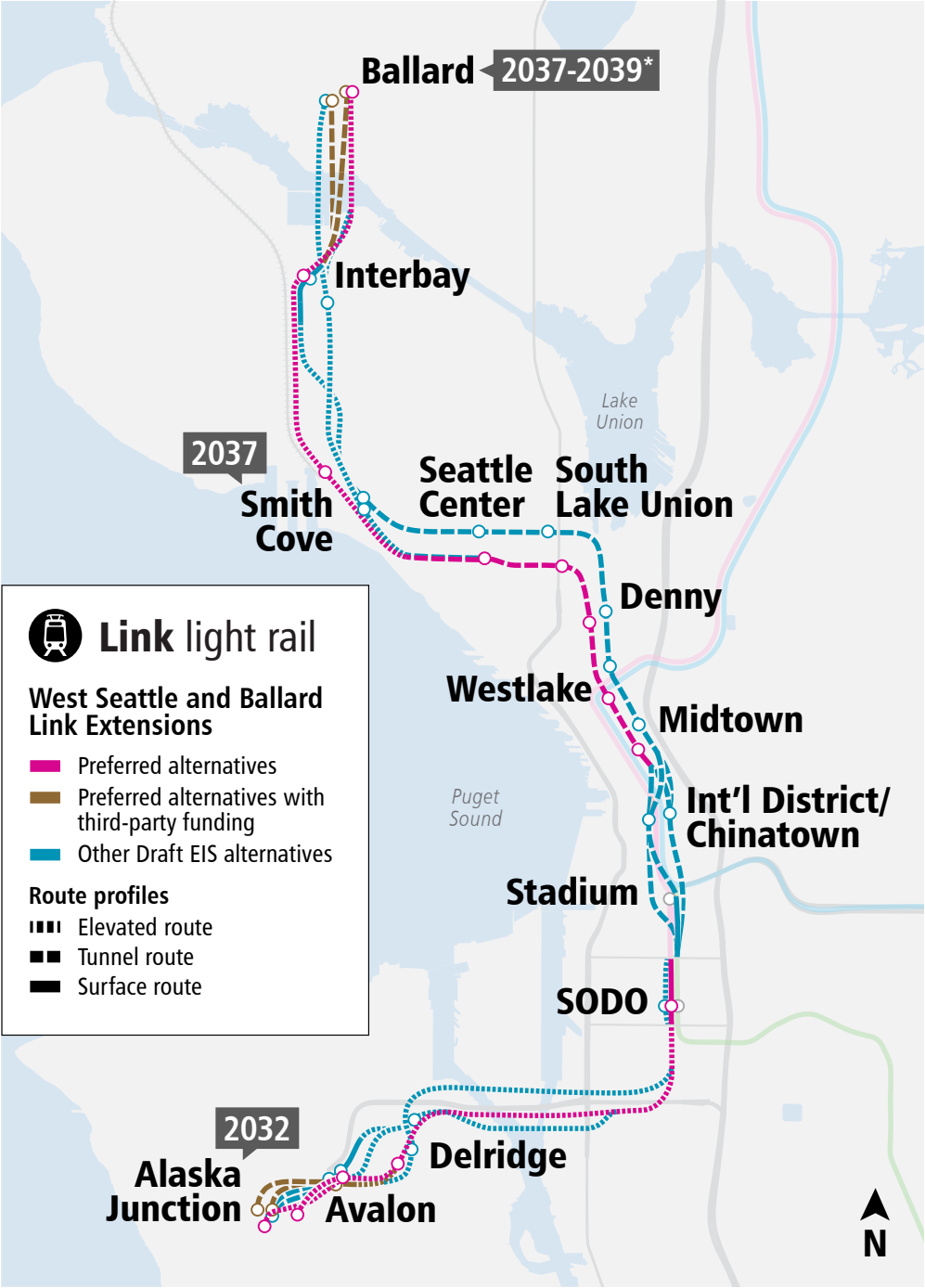
Identified by the Sound Transit Board in May 2019 (Board Motion Identifying Alternatives for DEIS, M2019-51) based on community and stakeholder input in the Alternatives Development phase. The Draft EIS further evaluates the preferred alternatives as well as other route and station options.

### Preferred with Third-Party Funding Alternatives

Also identified by the Board for study in the Draft EIS. Preferred alternatives with third-party funding include enhancements to the scope of the Sound Transit 3 Plan that could require third-party funding partnerships, such as contributions from partner agencies.

### Other Alternatives

Identified by the Board for study in the Draft EIS but not identified as preferred.

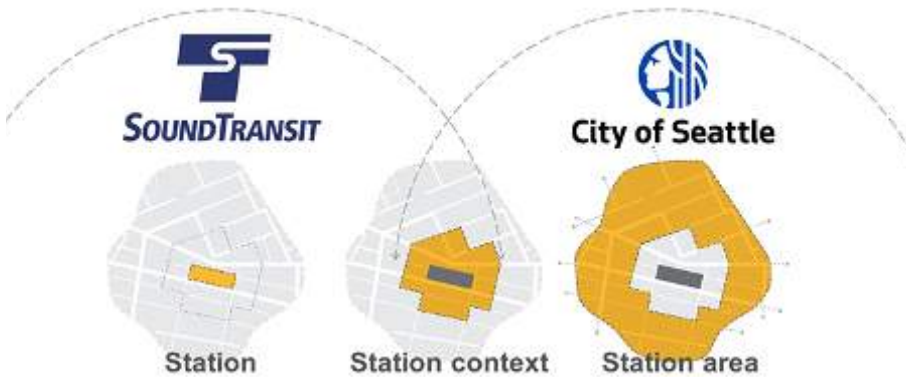




# Partnering with the City of Seattle and others



As part of our on-going partnership with the City of Seattle, we’ve been meeting regularly to discuss and build upon the ideas we heard from you. This report focuses on how the proposed stations could fit into their respective neighborhoods. Close partnership between the city and Sound Transit is important to ensure stations connect more people to more places and opportunities.



Sound Transit is responsible for the design of the station and the City of Seattle is responsible for shaping the “station area”—the neighborhood around the station. Sound Transit and the city may partner on improvements within the “station context”—typically two or three blocks from the station itself.

In addition to the City of Seattle, we also partner with King County Metro to ensure integration with future service plans, and coordinate with the Port of Seattle at specific stations that intersect with Port facilities and interests.



## Racial Equity Toolkit (RET)

Sound Transit and the City of Seattle have partnered on a Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) for the WSBLE project, beginning in 2018 during the alternatives development phase. The RET is designed to implement the city’s commitment to the Race and Social Justice Initiative, a vision to achieve racial equity in the community, end institutional and structural racism in city government, promote inclusion and full participation of all residents, and partner with the community to achieve racial equity across the City of Seattle. Corridor-wide outcomes for the RET include:

- Meaningfully involve communities of color and low-income populations in the project
- Advance environmental and economic justice to improve economic and health outcomes for communities of color
- Avoid disproportionate impacts on communities of color and low-income populations
- Create opportunities for equitable development that include expanding housing and community assets for communities of color
- Enhance mobility and access for communities of color and low-income populations
- Create a sense of belonging for communities of color at all stations, making space where everyone feels safe and welcome

The interagency team guiding this collaborative work has identified Chinatown-International District and Delridge as neighborhoods to receive focused attention. A RET report will be published in early 2022 that includes in-depth analysis and discussion of issues and priorities for meeting racial equity imperatives in these two focus neighborhoods and throughout the WSBLE corridor.

## Next steps

We look forward to hearing your thoughts on the Draft EIS. Your comments will inform the Sound Transit Board as they confirm or modify the preferred alternative we study for the Final EIS. Your input will also shape improvements around the stations in your neighborhood. As we continue our station planning for the Final EIS, we will reach out again to hear your thoughts!





# Station planning

Station planning involves looking at the various station alternatives from the neighborhood’s perspective. First, we want to understand how people get to the station—walking, rolling, biking, taking the bus, or being dropped off—and identify ways we can make these trips safer and more convenient. Next, we look at how the neighborhood around the station might change after the light rail is constructed by identifying opportunities to create housing, office space, shops, or public open space, bearing in mind what we’ve heard from community members about their needs and desires.

Additionally, Sound Transit and the City of Seattle have been engaged in discussions on how best to address the needs and desires of community members while creating an active and comfortable environment that reflects the unique character of each station location.

## Walking, biking, and rolling to the station

Ideas and recommendations to encourage walking, rolling, or biking to the station. Improvement ideas generally apply to the immediate area around a station. These could include larger projects, such as a bike trail or widened sidewalks, that involve partnership with others, or smaller projects, such as bike storage, that fall within the immediate station area.

## Connecting to the station

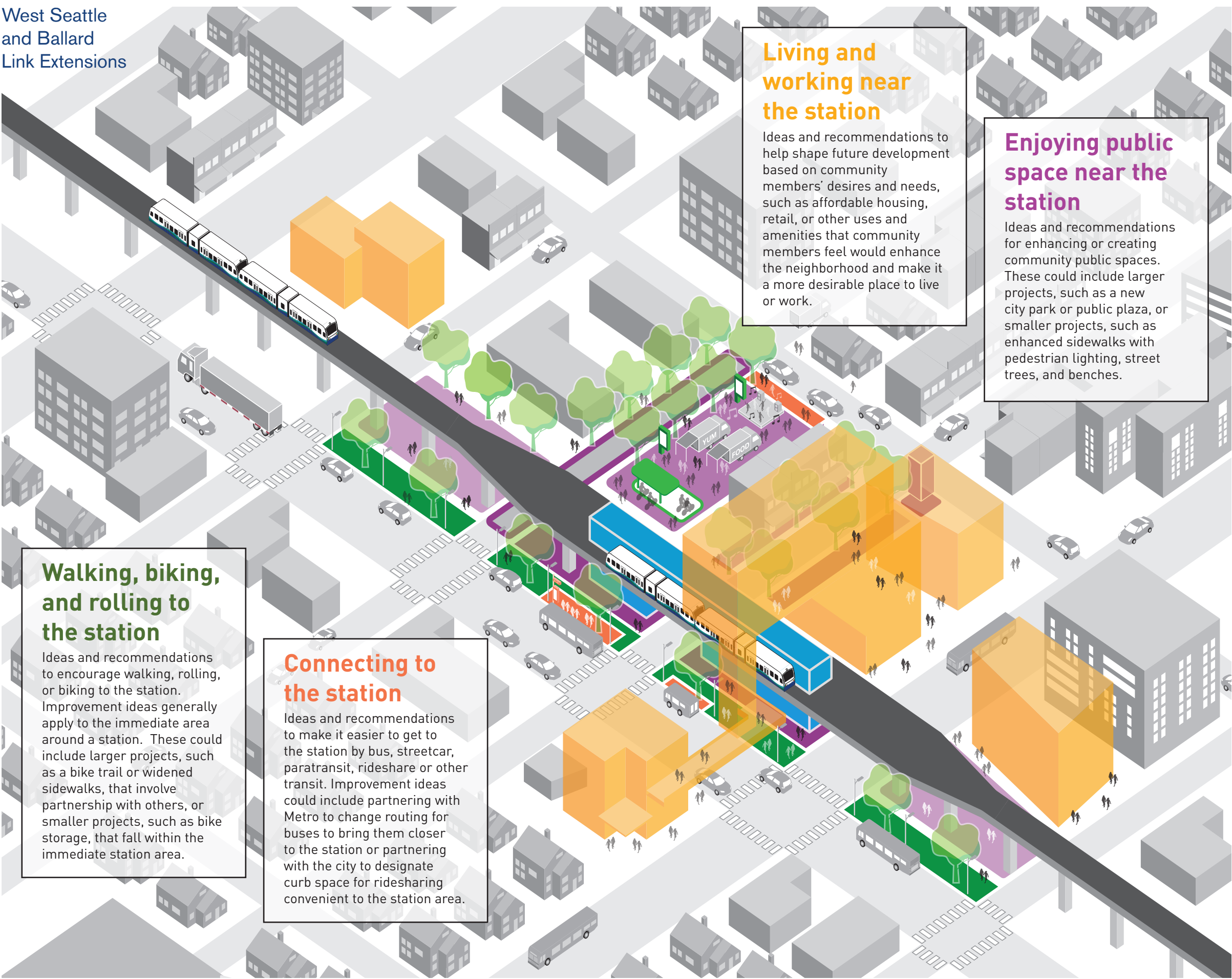
Ideas and recommendations to make it easier to get to the station by bus, streetcar, paratransit, rideshare or other transit. Improvement ideas could include partnering with Metro to change routing for buses to bring them closer to the station or partnering with the city to designate curb space for ridesharing convenient to the station area.

## Living and working near the station

Ideas and recommendations to help shape future development based on community members’ desires and needs, such as affordable housing, retail, or other uses and amenities that community members feel would enhance the neighborhood and make it a more desirable place to live or work.

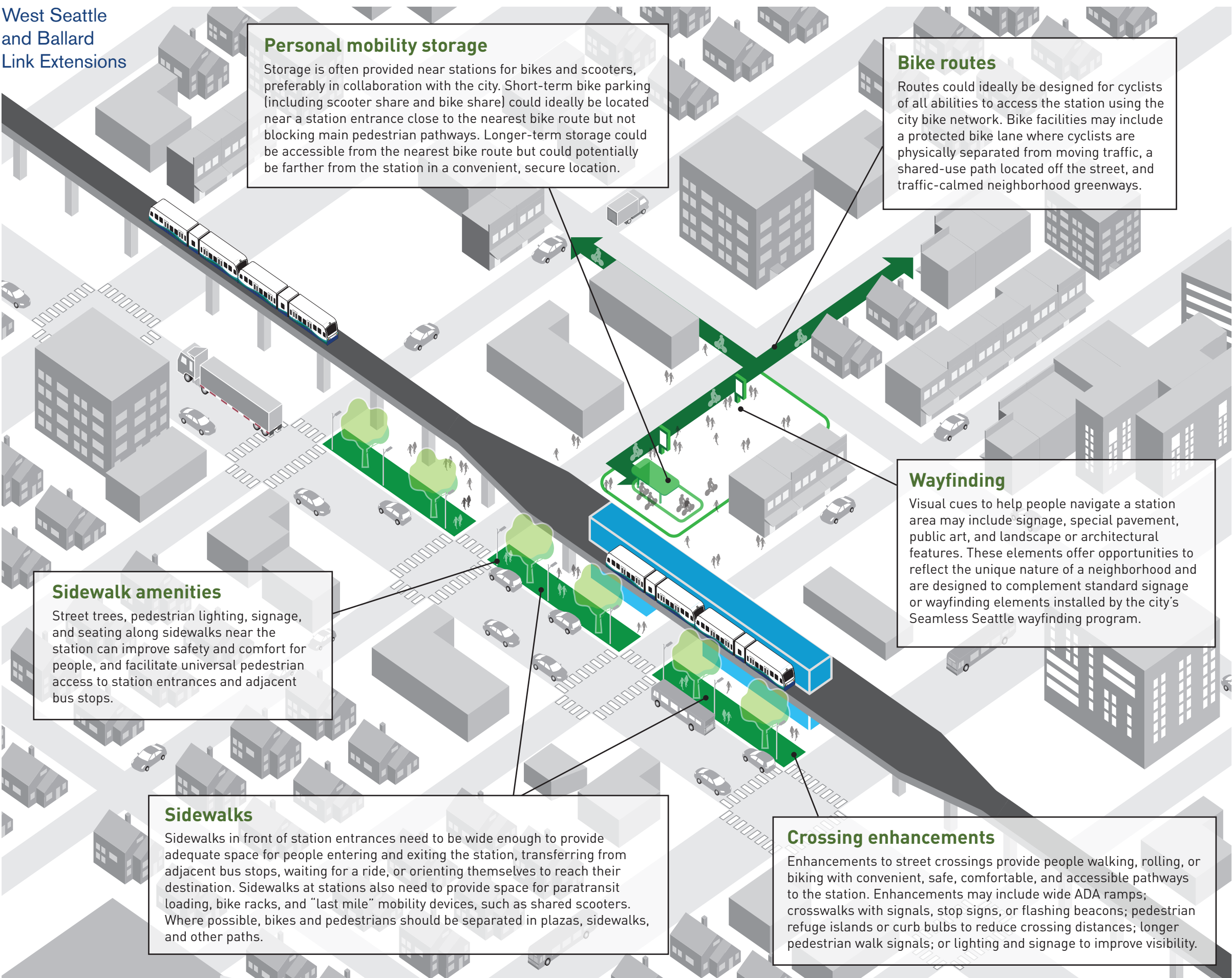
## Enjoying public space near the station

Ideas and recommendations for enhancing or creating community public spaces. These could include larger projects, such as a new city park or public plaza, or smaller projects, such as enhanced sidewalks with pedestrian lighting, street trees, and benches.



# Walking, biking, and rolling to the station

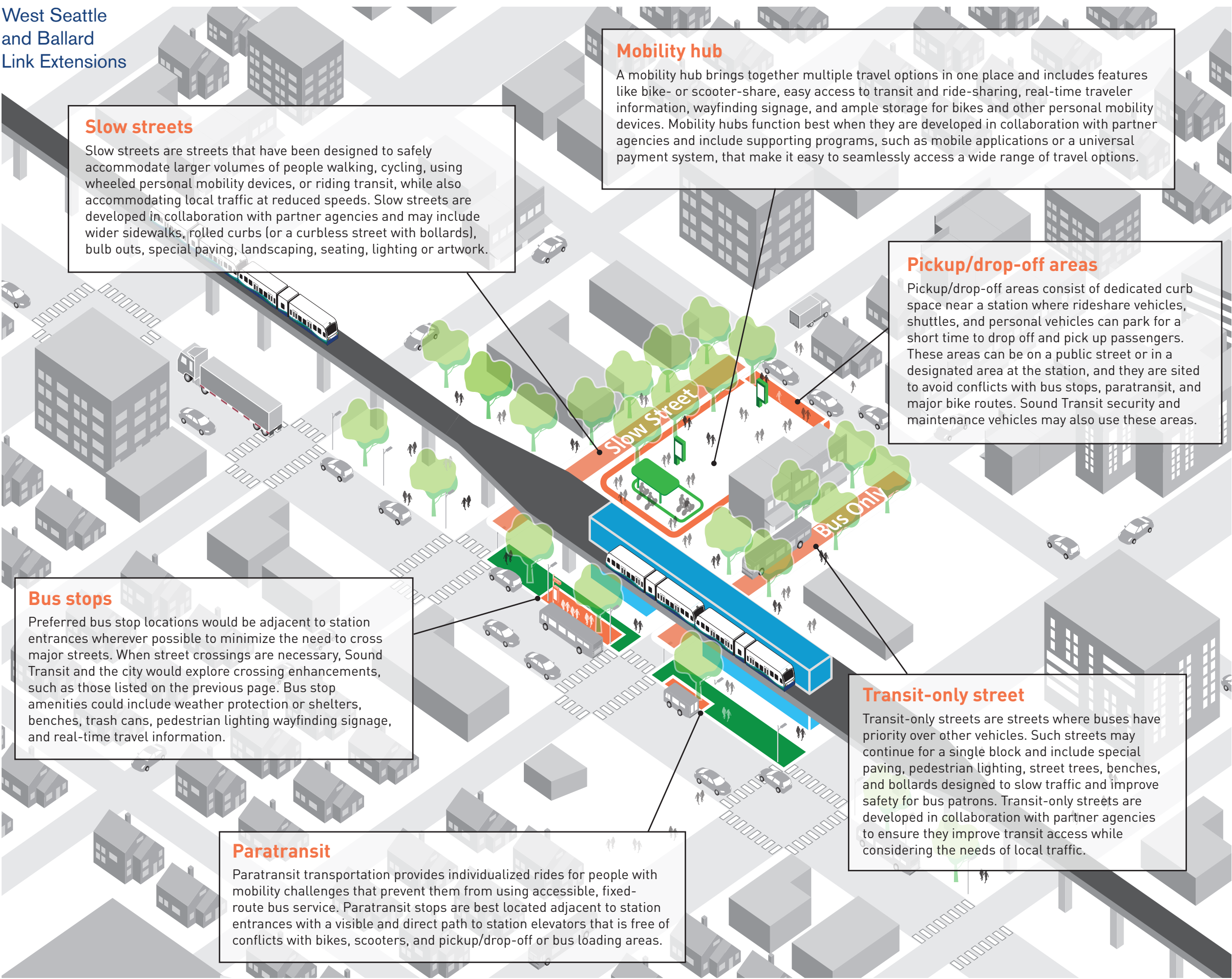
Each station area would be designed to make it easy to get to the station and move through the station area while walking, rolling, or biking. This can be accomplished by locating station entrances so they are easy to see and by providing safe biking, rolling, and walking routes to connect the station to the neighborhood.





# Connecting to the station

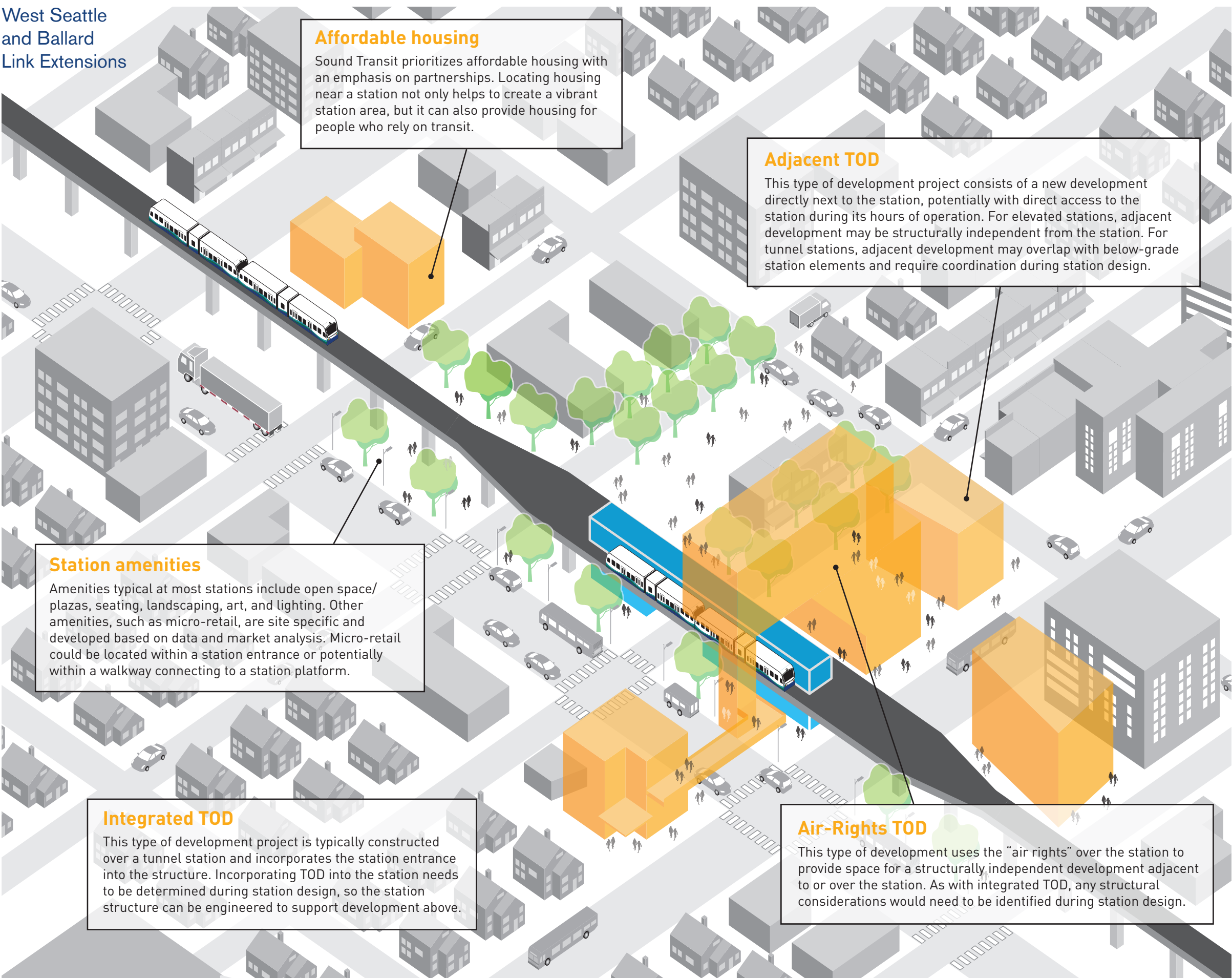
For passengers coming to the station by bus, streetcar, commuter rail, taxi, rideshare, or drop-off, the transfer to light rail should be a simple and intuitive experience. Sound Transit and the City of Seattle prioritize walking, rolling, biking and bus transfers over other vehicle modes.





# Living and working near the station

Adding a light rail station to a neighborhood introduces new opportunities to enhance livability in a neighborhood by adding different types of housing, new shopping, employment opportunities, and public open space or other recreational amenities. Sound Transit strives to support equitable transit oriented development (TOD) around the stations and explores opportunities to partner in potential development, with a priority on affordable housing and other uses that benefit communities. Community members will be involved as Sound Transit begins to identify potential TOD sites and uses.



**Affordable housing**

Sound Transit prioritizes affordable housing with an emphasis on partnerships. Locating housing near a station not only helps to create a vibrant station area, but it can also provide housing for people who rely on transit.

**Adjacent TOD**

This type of development project consists of a new development directly next to the station, potentially with direct access to the station during its hours of operation. For elevated stations, adjacent development may be structurally independent from the station. For tunnel stations, adjacent development may overlap with below-grade station elements and require coordination during station design.

**Station amenities**

Amenities typical at most stations include open space/plazas, seating, landscaping, art, and lighting. Other amenities, such as micro-retail, are site specific and developed based on data and market analysis. Micro-retail could be located within a station entrance or potentially within a walkway connecting to a station platform.

**Integrated TOD**

This type of development project is typically constructed over a tunnel station and incorporates the station entrance into the structure. Incorporating TOD into the station needs to be determined during station design, so the station structure can be engineered to support development above.

**Air-Rights TOD**

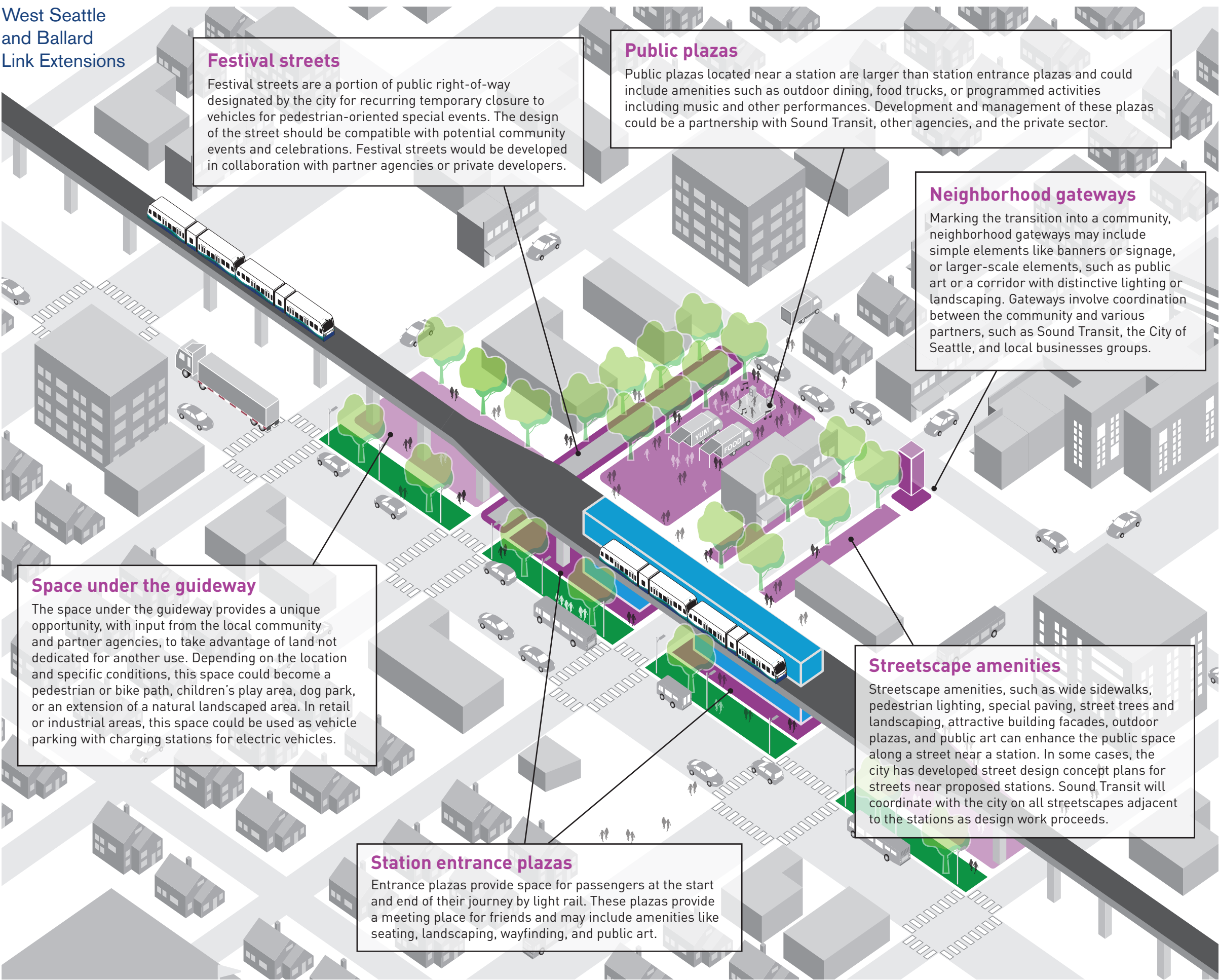
This type of development uses the “air rights” over the station to provide space for a structurally independent development adjacent to or over the station. As with integrated TOD, any structural considerations would need to be identified during station design.



# Enjoying public space near the station

Public open space within the station area can improve the quality of how people live, work, shop, recreate, and use transit. Stations provide the opportunity to encourage opportunities to utilize new and existing public space. This could be as simple as improving access to an existing public space or creating a new public space under the light rail guideway or near a station entrance to enhance the community.

Security and maintenance at and around the station can help increase the usability and vibrancy of a public space. Sound Transit and the City of Seattle will continue to assess maintenance and security needs as design work proceeds to ensure maintenance staff and public safety officials have convenient access to the stations.



**Festival streets**  
Festival streets are a portion of public right-of-way designated by the city for recurring temporary closure to vehicles for pedestrian-oriented special events. The design of the street should be compatible with potential community events and celebrations. Festival streets would be developed in collaboration with partner agencies or private developers.

**Public plazas**  
Public plazas located near a station are larger than station entrance plazas and could include amenities such as outdoor dining, food trucks, or programmed activities including music and other performances. Development and management of these plazas could be a partnership with Sound Transit, other agencies, and the private sector.

**Neighborhood gateways**  
Marking the transition into a community, neighborhood gateways may include simple elements like banners or signage, or larger-scale elements, such as public art or a corridor with distinctive lighting or landscaping. Gateways involve coordination between the community and various partners, such as Sound Transit, the City of Seattle, and local businesses groups.

**Space under the guideway**  
The space under the guideway provides a unique opportunity, with input from the local community and partner agencies, to take advantage of land not dedicated for another use. Depending on the location and specific conditions, this space could become a pedestrian or bike path, children's play area, dog park, or an extension of a natural landscaped area. In retail or industrial areas, this space could be used as vehicle parking with charging stations for electric vehicles.

**Station entrance plazas**  
Entrance plazas provide space for passengers at the start and end of their journey by light rail. These plazas provide a meeting place for friends and may include amenities like seating, landscaping, wayfinding, and public art.


**Streetscape amenities**  
Streetscape amenities, such as wide sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, special paving, street trees and landscaping, attractive building facades, outdoor plazas, and public art can enhance the public space along a street near a station. In some cases, the city has developed street design concept plans for streets near proposed stations. Sound Transit will coordinate with the city on all streetscapes adjacent to the stations as design work proceeds.



# Station context plans

Throughout this document, we use station context plans to visually represent how each station alternative could function. These context plans use a series of symbols to represent key project elements, described to the right along with a description of best practices for each element. In addition, the station context plans include callouts describing ideas and recommendations to improve access to the station, enhance public space around the station, or encourage transit oriented development near the station, potentially integrated with the station itself. We will continue to explore these ideas and recommendations with you as design work proceeds.

1



Station platform

A dark shaded box indicates an at-grade or elevated station platform; a dashed box with light shading indicates a tunnel station platform. Station platforms are 380 feet long and the width varies.

2




Existing signalized intersection and/or crosswalks



Proposed signalized intersection and/or crosswalks

Signalized intersections and crosswalks provide safe street crossings for people walking, rolling, and biking to the station.


3



Bike and personal mobility storage

Two types of storage are planned at stations – longer term (all day/overnight) secured and covered storage, and shorter term covered or uncovered bike racks. Ideally, storage should be located along bike routes and be immediately adjacent to the station; however, it should not conflict with main pedestrian paths, bus stops, paratransit, and pickup/drop off areas.


4



Existing bike route

The city's bike network includes off-street trails, cycle tracks, protected bike lanes, and neighborhood greenways that facilitate connections to destinations throughout Seattle.

5



Planned bike route

Planned bike routes show city-led improvements to the existing network that will further improve connectivity throughout the city. As station plans are developed, planned routes may be shifted and new routes added to best accommodate station access.


6



Bus route(s)

Bus routes are based on King County Metro's long range plans and may not reflect routes that exist today. Sound Transit and King County Metro continue to coordinate bus routing to improve future transfers between buses and light rail.


7



Active bus bay

Bus stops are located as close as possible to the station entrances so riders can efficiently transfer from bus to train. For rider comfort, canopy coverage, seating, and lighting is often incorporated.


8



Paratransit

Service provided by King County Metro for persons with mobility challenges. Paratransit stops are located as close as possible to station entrances for direct access to the station, avoiding conflicts with other vehicles and cyclists.


14



Station entrance

A pink arrow indicates where passengers physically enter the station and the pink shading indicates the building face that is "active" – inside space is visible to people with potential for windows or storefronts (if combined with a development). The station "box" includes stairs, elevators, escalators, and support spaces, and the size varies based on station location and configuration.

13



Existing pedestrian connection

An existing off-street walkway or staircase that could be through an existing building, park, or private development.


12



Proposed pedestrian connection

Proposed off-street walkway, or a new staircase, that could be through potential development project (public or private) or other open space.

11



Pedestrian focused area

Sidewalk or plaza space intended to prioritize pedestrian functions including walking, sitting, dining, and recreating, generally adjacent to station entrances and along major pedestrian pathways. Improvements to these areas are often done in partnership with others.


10



Potential transit oriented development (TOD)

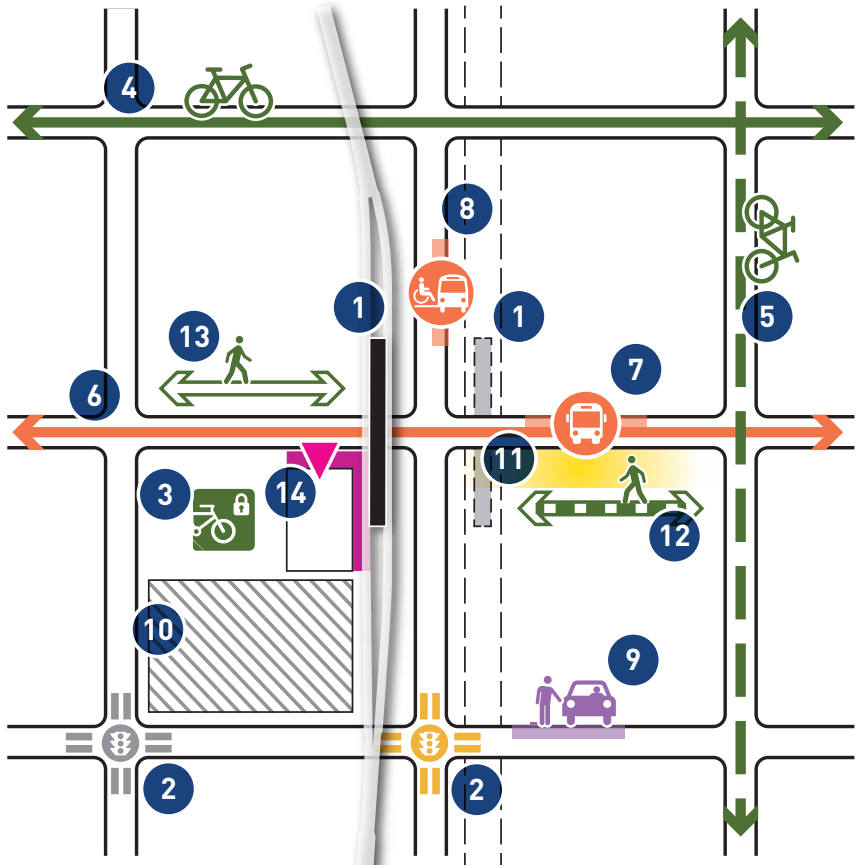
Sound Transit partners with private and non-profit developers to build transit oriented development (TOD) on property affected by construction or operation of a transit project. Sound Transit TOD projects typically focus on creating housing affordable to a range of income levels, as well as retail, restaurants, offices, and community spaces, all of which contribute to creating vibrant neighborhoods with direct access to transit.

9



Pickup/drop-off area

On-street or off-street designated area where passengers are picked up or dropped off by others. Preferred locations are near a station entrance but away from bus stops, paratransit areas, and major streets, and ideally within view of the station entrance.

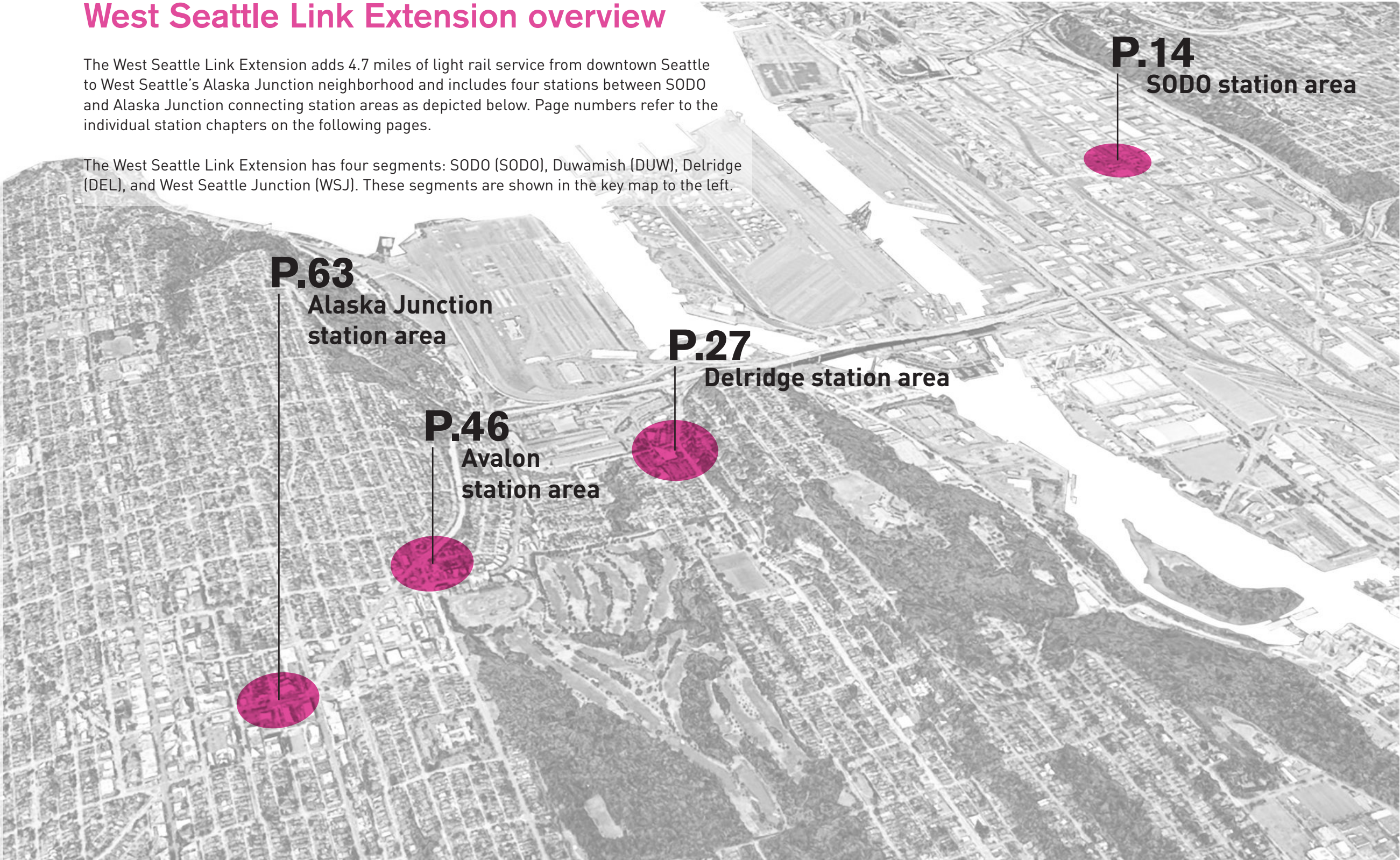
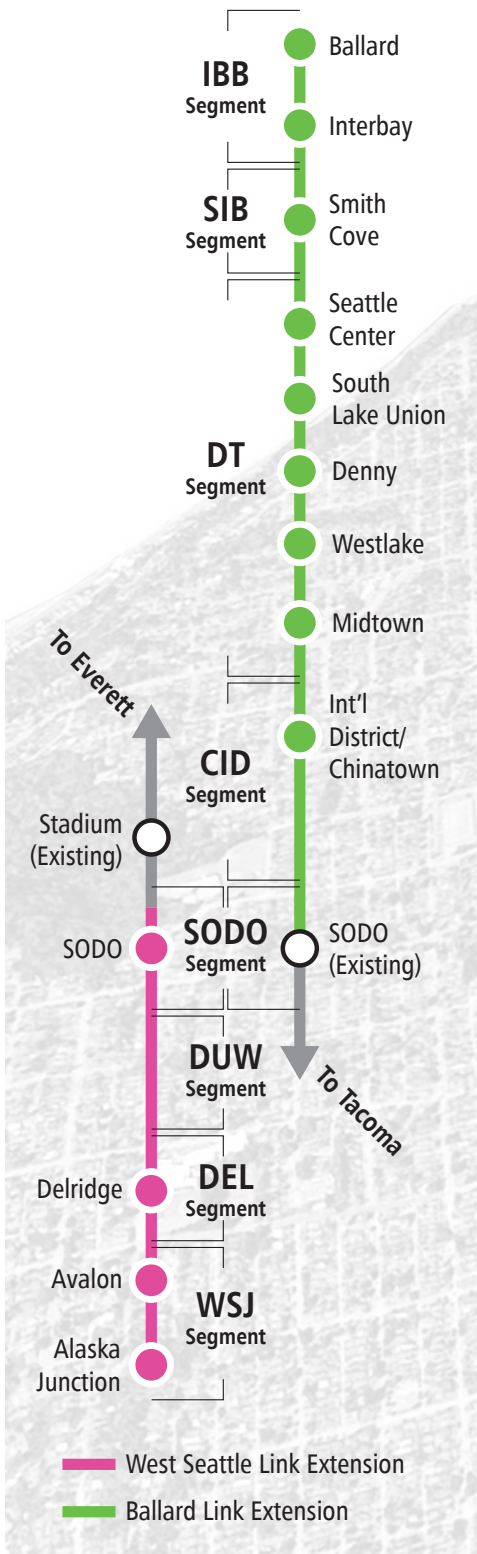




## West Seattle Link Extension overview

The West Seattle Link Extension adds 4.7 miles of light rail service from downtown Seattle to West Seattle’s Alaska Junction neighborhood and includes four stations between SODO and Alaska Junction connecting station areas as depicted below. Page numbers refer to the individual station chapters on the following pages.

The West Seattle Link Extension has four segments: SODO (SODO), Duwamish (DUW), Delridge (DEL), and West Seattle Junction (WSJ). These segments are shown in the key map to the left.





Navigating the report

West Seattle  
and Ballard  
Link Extensions

