

Achieving Equitable Community Development Priorities

Roosevelt Station



Report prepared by



Table of Contents

01

The Context

02

The Opportunity

03

The Approach

04

The Impact

05

Acknowledgements

The Context

The Roosevelt Neighborhood

The Roosevelt Neighborhood is a diverse, eclectic, socially-active community that serves as a transportation and commercial hub for Northeast Seattle. Through thoughtful planning, this **urban village** successfully integrates diverse housing and employment options, mass transit, thriving commercial activity, and open space to create a livable and sustainable neighborhood.

The neighborhood boundaries are Interstate-5 (I-5) on the West, 15th Ave NE on the East, Ravenna Blvd. NE on the South, and Lake City Way from I-5 to 15th Ave NE on the North (Figure 1).

In an effort to contain urban sprawl in the 1990s, Seattle adopted an **urban village strategy**, which channeled future growth into designated neighborhoods that contained existing recreational, residential, and commercial resources, and could support increased transit and density.



Figure 1. Map of the Roosevelt Neighborhood.¹

section 01

1. Neighborhood Map. <https://rooseveltseattle.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Neighborhood-Map.jpg> . Accessed March 15, 2019.

The Context

Proactively Planning for the Future of the Neighborhood

The Roosevelt Neighborhood Association (RNA) has a rich history of engaging local residents to collectively determine a community-driven vision for the neighborhood's future. The RNA's mission is to *“educate, engage, and empower those living in and around the area about neighborhood issues.”* A core value is including all residents, homeowners and renters alike, along with local small businesses, in community concerns and programs.

“RNA leadership's commitment to equity, inclusion, and community voice [is] evident in how they encourage community members to really get involved—regardless of level of expertise, the amount of time they could commit, tenure in the neighborhood, or whether they rent or own their homes.” – **Roosevelt Resident**

In the early 2000's, Sound Transit (ST), the regional authority that builds and operates public transit service throughout Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties, explored alignment options for a future light rail station in the Roosevelt neighborhood. ST proposed siting the station above ground along I-5, which was problematic for the community.

Roosevelt residents had a strong preference to **focus development in the core of the neighborhood's business district** by locating the station below ground along 12th Ave. between 65th and 67th Street. The RNA worked tirelessly to gather community support for the 12th Avenue alignment option and successfully advocated to the ST Board for moving the station into the center of the neighborhood, receiving unanimous ST Board approval in January 2005.

The Opportunity

Expanding Light Rail Service to Seattle's Roosevelt Neighborhood

In November 2008, Central Puget Sound voters approved [Sound Transit 2](#), which gave ST the ability to move forward with plans to extend light rail service by adding new stations in the University District, Roosevelt, and Northgate neighborhoods by 2021.

Recognizing the changes that would come with increased transit service, the RNA engaged Roosevelt residents in a community process to update their Neighborhood Plan to accommodate future growth. These efforts resulted in [up-zoning](#) blocks near the station to support [increased density](#). In addition, the RNA hosted [Land Use Academies](#) to educate residents on [land use history](#) and [generate local consensus](#) for development priorities, particularly around the light rail station. RNA members also connected with mixed-use housing developments in other neighborhoods to learn about [successful affordable housing strategies](#).

In 2016, ST engaged the RNA as a partner in leading a community engagement process that would result in a [resident-driven vision](#) for [transit-oriented development \(TOD\)](#) at the future station.

Transit-oriented development (TOD) involves a mix of housing and commercial uses that support the transit facility. Combining housing and commercial activity near the light rail station makes it easier for people to use transit, support local businesses, and contribute to neighborhood growth.

“For years leading up to the community engagement process with Sound Transit, the RNA built community awareness and understanding about transit-oriented development, zoning, and affordable housing...Their forward-thinking efforts really paved the way for a successful community engagement process in 2016-2017.”

— Roosevelt Resident

The Approach

Partnering to Engage the Community



section 03

The Approach

Partnering to Engage the Community

In partnership with ST, Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, and Seattle City Council, the RNA co-designed a **community engagement approach** that would inform the development principles used in ST's request for proposals (RFP) for the future TOD site. With a grant from **Enterprise Community Partners**, the RNA was able to involve a development consultant, Heartland, in the process to support deeper understanding of financial constraints, implications for affordable housing financing, ground floor uses, and public space design.

Throughout January and February 2017, the agencies gathered input from community members through an **open house** to inform residents about the planned process, a **survey** focused on identifying development opportunities and priorities, a series of three **interactive stakeholder workshops** designed to **generate consensus on core development principles**, and a second open house to share the principles generated from the community engagement process.

The workshops focused on three main areas:

1. Affordable housing
2. Community amenities
3. Urban design features



Workshop participants engaged in discussing affordable housing, site parameters, vehicular access, and ground floor plane constraints.

section 03

The Approach

Developing Community Principles

The Community Principles that emerged from the community engagement process determined that the TOD project should:



Create significant long-term **affordable housing** opportunities.



Maximize its orientation to **pedestrians**.



Minimize its orientation to **automobiles**.



Incorporate **active ground floor** uses.



Contribute to the **identity of the local community** and public realm.

In May 2017, the ST Board **adopted the Community Principles** as part of Resolution No. [R2017-20](#), which established the conditions for offering the Roosevelt TOD site for development.

In August 2017, an RNA representative participated in the **pre-proposal meeting** with ST and the Seattle Office of Housing, where the Roosevelt TOD RFP was presented to non-profit development teams and other members of the public.

During October and November 2017, the RNA representative also actively participated in **evaluating TOD RFP proposals** submitted to ST and engaged in the **selection process** for choosing the team that will develop the site. Giving the community a seat at the table in reviewing RFPs was a first for ST and a testament to the strength of the RNA.

The Approach



“Public property in a station area represents an opportunity to shape the future of the community, so it’s important the community understand the decision-making process and be engaged in guiding its future development. The Roosevelt community’s values and outcomes were incorporated in Sound Transit’s planning efforts and resulted in selecting a project that will deliver on [their] vision.”
-- Thatcher Imboden, Sound Transit TOD Project Manager

“Partnering and guiding the focus of the community outreach, had a direct impact on the community-principles, which were wholly incorporated into the Sound Transit RFP, thereby [impacting] the affordability and community goals of the Roosevelt neighborhood.”
-- Jay Lazerwitz, RNA Land Use and TOD Committee Chair



section 03

The Impact

Achieving 100% Affordable Housing

Bellwether Housing and Mercy Housing Northwest were selected to develop the Roosevelt TOD site. They will work together to bring high-quality housing, engaging retail, and community-centered space to the Roosevelt neighborhood.

The property adjacent to the light rail station will:

 Provide **245** homes, with an emphasis on families through offering over **100** two and three bedroom apartments

 Commit to **100% affordability** by exclusively serving households earning up to 30%, 50%, and 60% of area median income (AMI)

 Offer on-site, affordable, multi-lingual **childcare and early learning** services for up to 120 children between ages 0-5

 Provide outdoor **public gathering spaces** and a neighborhood community room

 Offer vibrant **ground-floor retail**

*"I think the Roosevelt neighborhood has accomplished something important and much needed. We have **welcomed affordable housing into the heart of our community** and demonstrated that **it can be a centerpiece of a larger vision for a transit-oriented neighborhood commercial center.**" – **Nancy Helm**, RNA TOD Committee Member*



Rendering of future development

section 04

The Impact

“The RNA brought a unique perspective to the discussion, supporting the concept of a 100% affordable development in the context of over 3,000 market rate units being added in the immediate station area. They also were instrumental in pushing for the inclusion of true family units of which virtually none [were] being built by the market.” – Al Levine, RNA TOD Committee Member and Former Deputy Director of Seattle Housing Authority

“The RNA worked closely with their neighbors to develop a strong vision for the Roosevelt TOD and worked with Sound Transit staff and the board to advocate for the implementation of that vision. I strongly believe the RNA’s leadership resulted in a project with more affordable units, deeper affordability and more community space than would have occurred without their participation.” -- Rob Johnson, Seattle City Council Member



Rendering of future development

section 04

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all who participated in the process to make this future possible!

Funding for this report was generously provided by Enterprise Community Partners.



Rendering of future development

Partners in this work included:

- Bellwether Housing
- Heartland
- Northwest Studio Architects
- Mercy Housing Northwest
- Roosevelt Neighborhood Association
- Seattle City Council Member Rob Johnson
- Seattle Department of Neighborhoods
- Seattle Office of Housing
- Sound Transit
- Three Square Blocks

Thank you to the Roosevelt neighborhood residents who dedicated their time to creating a shared vision for the TOD site though their participation in the survey, open house events, and stakeholder workshops!

For more information, please contact Jay Lazerwitz, at landuse@rooseveltseattle.org

