

WHY IMAGINE GREATER DOWNTOWN?

Seattle's Greater Downtown is the vibrant heart of our growing region. Our downtown neighborhoods encompass many histories, journeys and special places in a setting of unparalleled natural beauty.

In Greater Downtown we are removing the Alaskan Way Viaduct and building a new Waterfront for All. We are planning new light rail lines and RapidRide routes to greatly expand our connectivity. What will be the next challenges for our public spaces and transportation networks and what are the big ideas that can address them?

Imagine Greater Downtown is a vision for our streets—both as **places for movement and public life**. It guides our next generation of partnership and planning to ensure that the future heart of Seattle is a place we all love.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Imagine Greater Downtown is a partnership among the City of Seattle, King County Metro, Sound Transit, and the Downtown Seattle Association, in coordination with Washington State Department of Transportation and the Port of Seattle.



TEN UNIQUE NEIGHBORHOODS

Seattle's 10 Greater Downtown neighborhoods are at the center of a complex, vital, and growing city and region. Every neighborhood is unique. Each has histories, character, and places that Seattleites love, cherish, hope to preserve, and celebrate.

UPTOWN

- Home of World's Fair in 1962, leading to development of Seattle Center. Neighbors have been working to integrate Seattle Center into the fabric of the neighborhood.
- Once home to professional basketball, Seattle Center Area is undergoing a major rehabilitation to once again house professional sports teams, concerts and other events.

SOUTH LAKE UNION

- Birthplace of Boeing, and home to Amazon, and bio-tech companies.
- Vibrant public spaces, the gateway to Lake Union, and home to MOHAI.

DENNY TRIANGLE

- This relatively flat district was originally a steep hill, flattened as part of the Denny Regrade. From 1990 to 2018, the Convention Place Station was located here.
- A dynamic neighborhood with much recent change including a new substation and a major expansion of the Washington State Convention Center (2020 opening).

CAPITOL HILL

- Capitol Hill has historically been home to LGBTQ people, services, and parades.
- Today one of the city's most vibrant arts and entertainment districts.

BELLTOWN

- Before Denny Hill was sluiced into Elliott Bay (1897-1899), this neighborhood was separated from downtown and was a low-income, semi-industrial district.
- In recent years, Belltown has become one of the densest residential neighborhoods in Seattle and is home to many nightclubs and human services.

COMMERCIAL CORE

- Completed in 1914, the 38 story Smith Tower was the tallest building west of the Mississippi for almost two decades.
- Today the Commercial Core is the largest employment center in the Pacific Northwest and is home to many civic functions including courts and City Hall.

PIONEER SQUARE

- Native American longhouses once stood along Elliott Bay, near the current western terminus of Yesler Way. The site of King Street Station was a tidal marsh where Native Americans fished in the abundant waters. Many trails led to this area, which the indigenous people called "Little Crossing-Over Place."
- The region's largest hub for waterborne transportation – Colman Dock – will be rebuilt and open anew as a multimodal hub and front door from the water in 2023.

PIKE/PINE

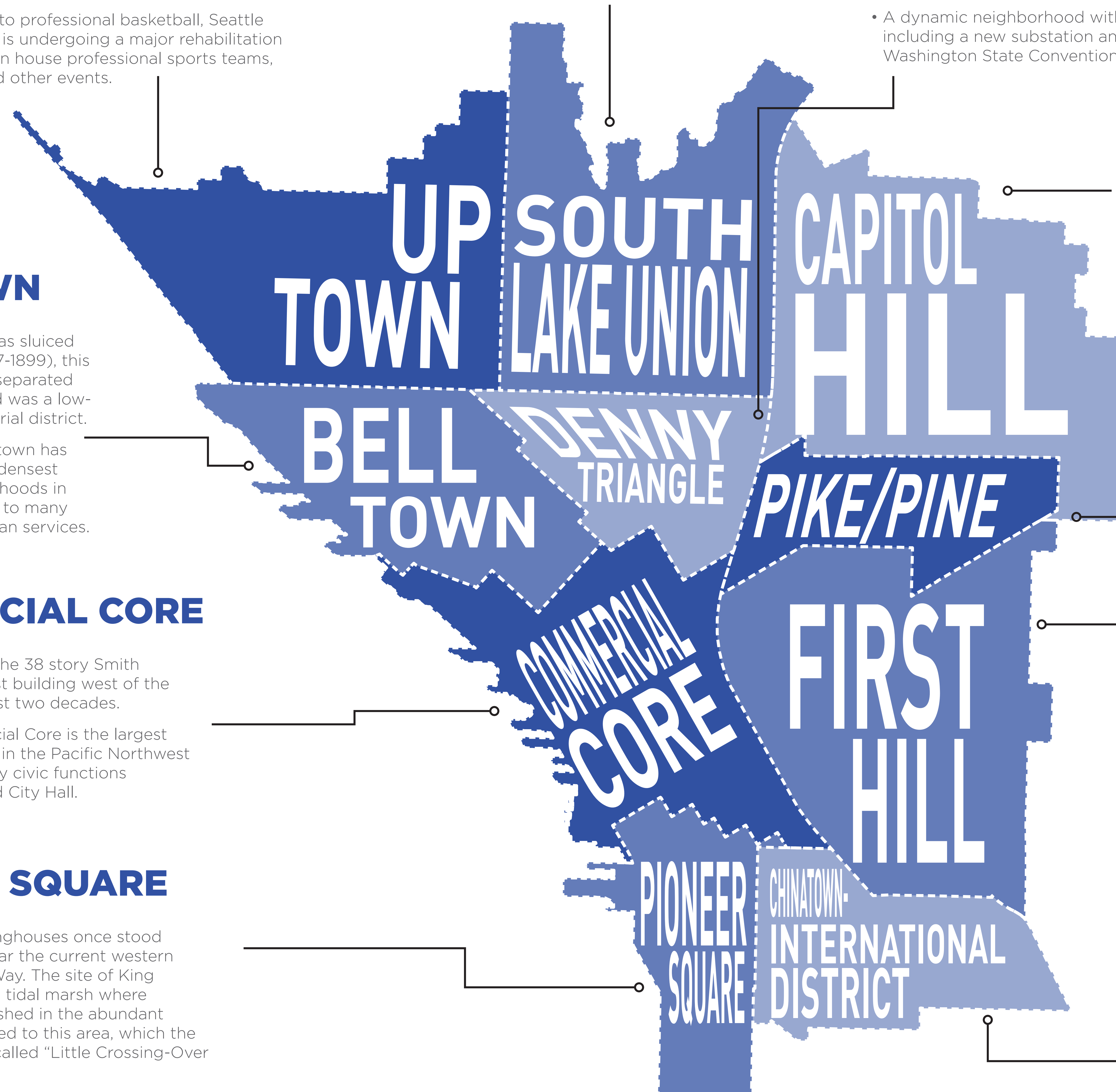
- Two of the least steep grades running east to west, Pike and Pine Streets carried streetcar service between 1st Avenue and 15th Avenue and E Madison Street.
- The Pike/Pine district on the uphill slope east of I-5 has maintained a commercial flavor and is home to many restaurants, bars, and shops; downslope the streets terminal in the famous Pike Place Market.

FIRST HILL

- Settled in the 1870s, this was one of Seattle's first residential neighborhoods, located just upslope from the commercial district. Once a forested slope, First Hill now has very little park land.
- Today this neighborhood is a center for regional health care and home to dense urban living including senior and assisted living.

CHINATOWN/ INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT

- The first Chinese settlers to Seattle lived along the waterfront. Chinese people were forced to relocate first, after the Great Seattle Fire of 1889, and again, to the present Chinatown/International District, after the construction of Smith Tower.
- Today there are people of over 10 Asian ethnicities living in Chinatown/International District. This vibrant district is a unique part of Seattle and is susceptible to change.





Source: Downtown Seattle Association

VISION

In 2035 the heart of Seattle will be a place for us all, with diverse neighborhoods, active streets, and inviting public spaces.

VALUES

1 PEOPLE FIRST

- **Cultivate Community:** Create places and experiences that bring us together and encourage positive interactions
- **Promote Health:** Support active lifestyles that foster physical and emotional well-being

2 RACIAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

- **Lead with Equity:** Improve outcomes for the most vulnerable groups and individuals
- **Proactive Participation:** Initiate, invite, listen to, respect, and empower all people

3 ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

- **Provide Efficient Mobility Options:** Implement distributed, convenient, reliable, and accessible mobility options
- **Connect Safely:** Ensure that streets and public spaces are safe, accessible, and comfortable
- **Prioritize People and Goods:** Create efficiency where needed to keep streets moving

4 ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

- **Be Bold Leaders:** Model climate-positive policies and actions for a sustainable future
- **Let Nature Thrive:** Foster connections with nature and integrate natural settings into daily life

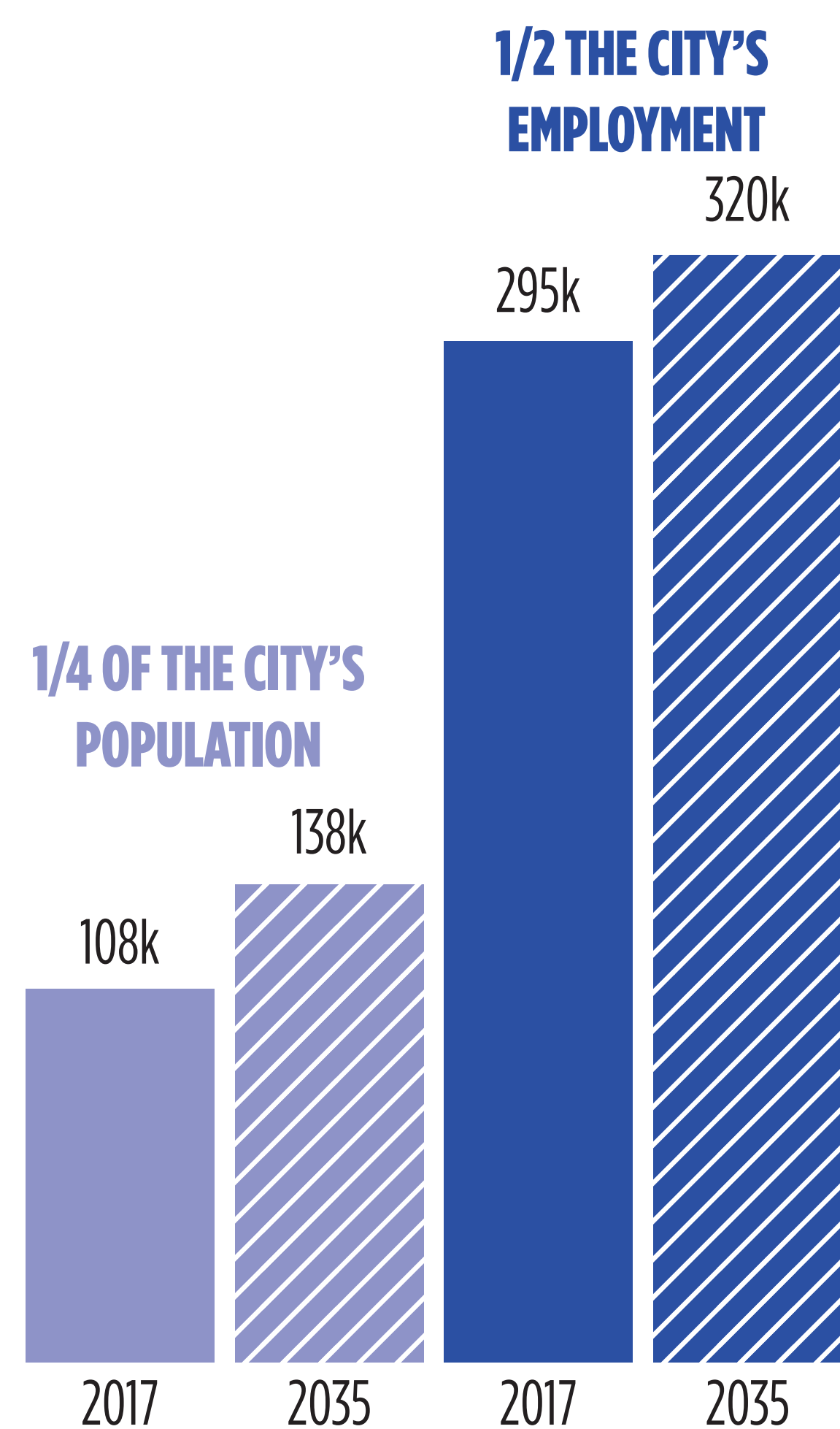
5 CULTURAL DIVERSITY

- **Celebrate Seattle:** Enhance each neighborhood's identity and individual belonging in streets and public spaces
- **Honor All Cultures:** Acknowledge the triumphs and challenges of our intersecting and sometimes conflicting pasts

6 COLLABORATION

- **Co-Create Success:** Engage people to develop shared outcomes that invest in future generations
- **Take the Long View:** Steadily build an honorable legacy together

THE CHALLENGES

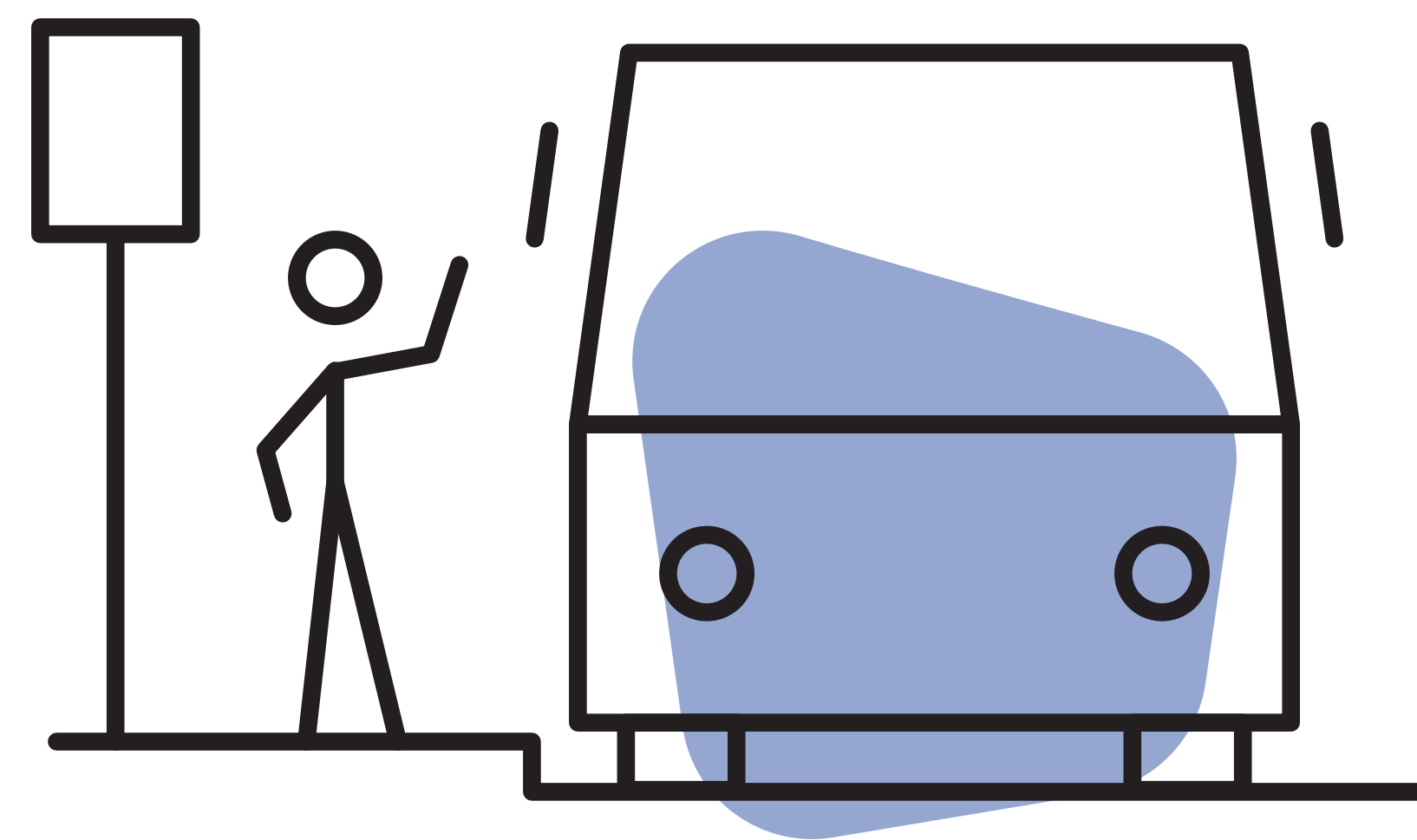


1 DENSITY WITH LIVABILITY

Greater Downtown is growing rapidly. As more people join us to live and work, it can impact the livability, affordability, and the neighborhood-oriented culture Seattleites have long-cherished. To continue to thrive as an inclusive place for families, seniors, and people of different races with diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, we need to prioritize our public spaces for public life and sustainable transportation.

- From 2010 to 2018, the population under 18 in the Greater Downtown grew **five times as fast** as the rate for the city and 13 times as fast as the region.
- The number of school age children in the center city **almost doubled** from 1,767 to 3,356 between 2010 and 2018.

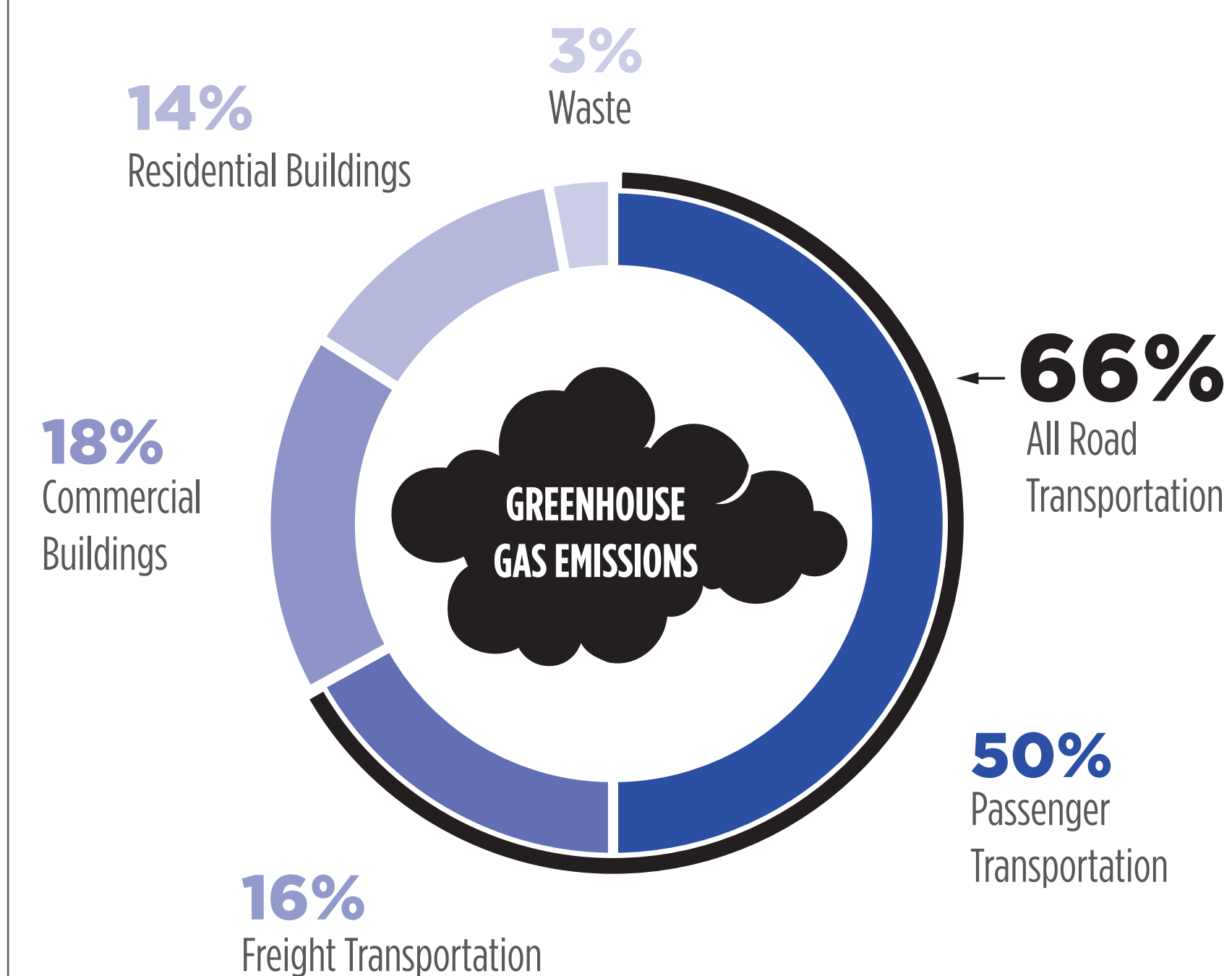
TRANSIT MODE SHARE HAS INCREASED 6% IN THE PAST DECADE



2 TRANSIT-ORIENTED FUTURE

Transit use in the Center City has been growing, absorbing roughly 70% of all new commuters since 2010. In 2017, nearly half of all commuters used bus, light rail, or streetcar to get to and from work, twice the rate of the next highest mode. Yet, just **1% of Greater Downtown's streets are dedicated transit only lanes.**

As housing and employment grows and the region makes strides to reduce GHG emissions we need to make transit the best way to travel to and around Greater Downtown.

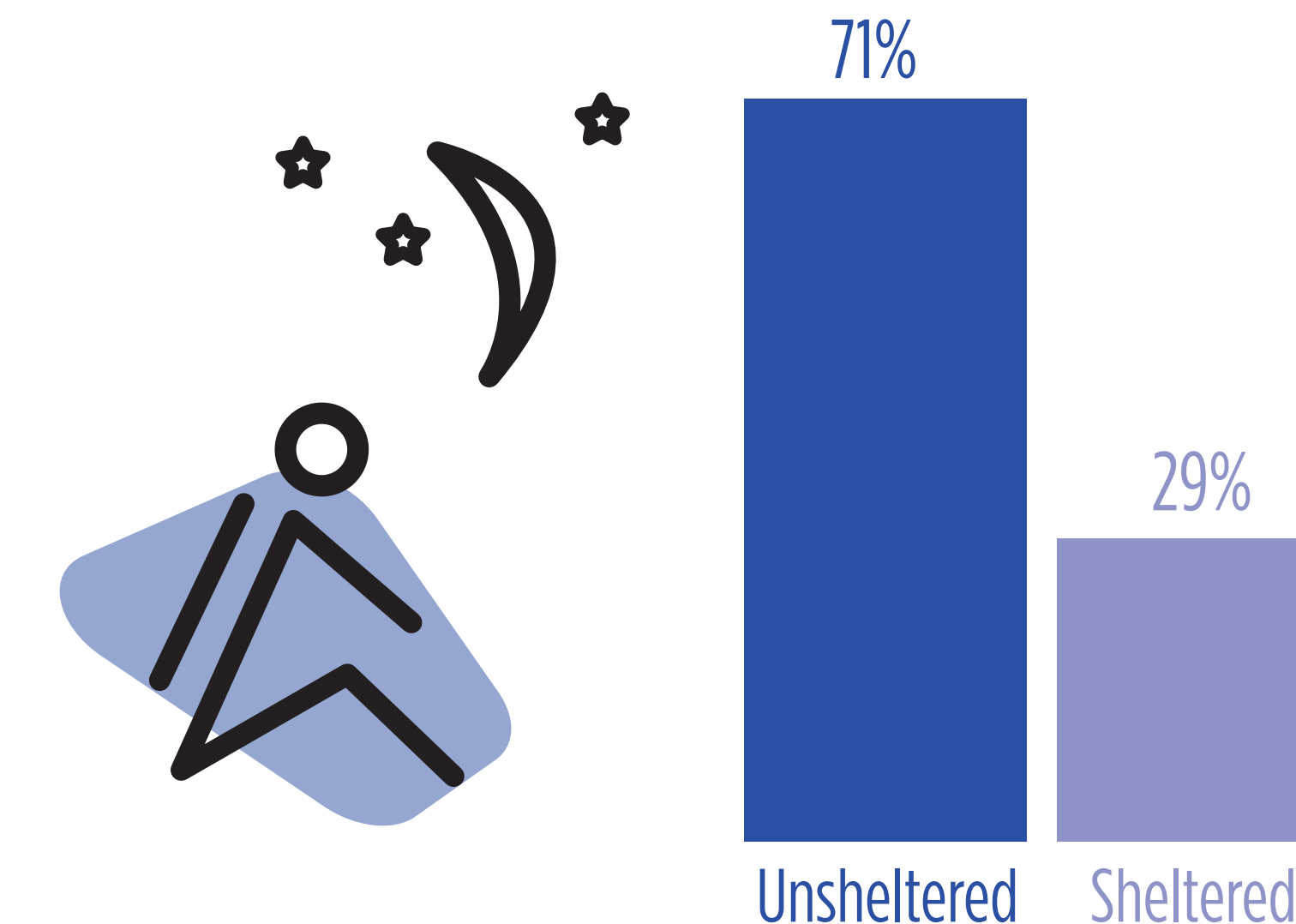


3 CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate science is clear: unchecked greenhouse gas emissions pose a real threat to our communities locally and globally. Here in Seattle, while we enjoy clean hydro-powered electricity, we have significant emissions from transportation.

Urban neighborhoods provide the greatest opportunity to lower our carbon footprint because residents and jobs are in close proximity. We need to provide infrastructure to support choices that can curb emissions and do so in a way that does not disproportionately impact people of color, low-income residents, and our vulnerable neighbors.

4,500 people experience homelessness within Seattle.



4 DISPLACEMENT AND HOMELESSNESS

Greater Downtown has become an expensive place to live, and a particularly difficult and dangerous place to experience homelessness. Many sectors are working to find solutions to help our fellow Seattleites find shelter, jobs, and services, and to maintain clean, healthy, and safe streets, parks, and plazas. Affordable travel options to and around Greater Downtown reduce people's overall cost burden

- More than 12,000 people are experiencing homelessness within the Seattle/King County area, and each night roughly half of them sleep on our streets or are unsheltered.
- Some of our most culturally rich neighborhoods and areas with the highest concentrations of foreign born residents, including Chinatown-International District are at greatest risk of displacement.

Rideshare is creating more traffic



10% of all traffic on downtown streets

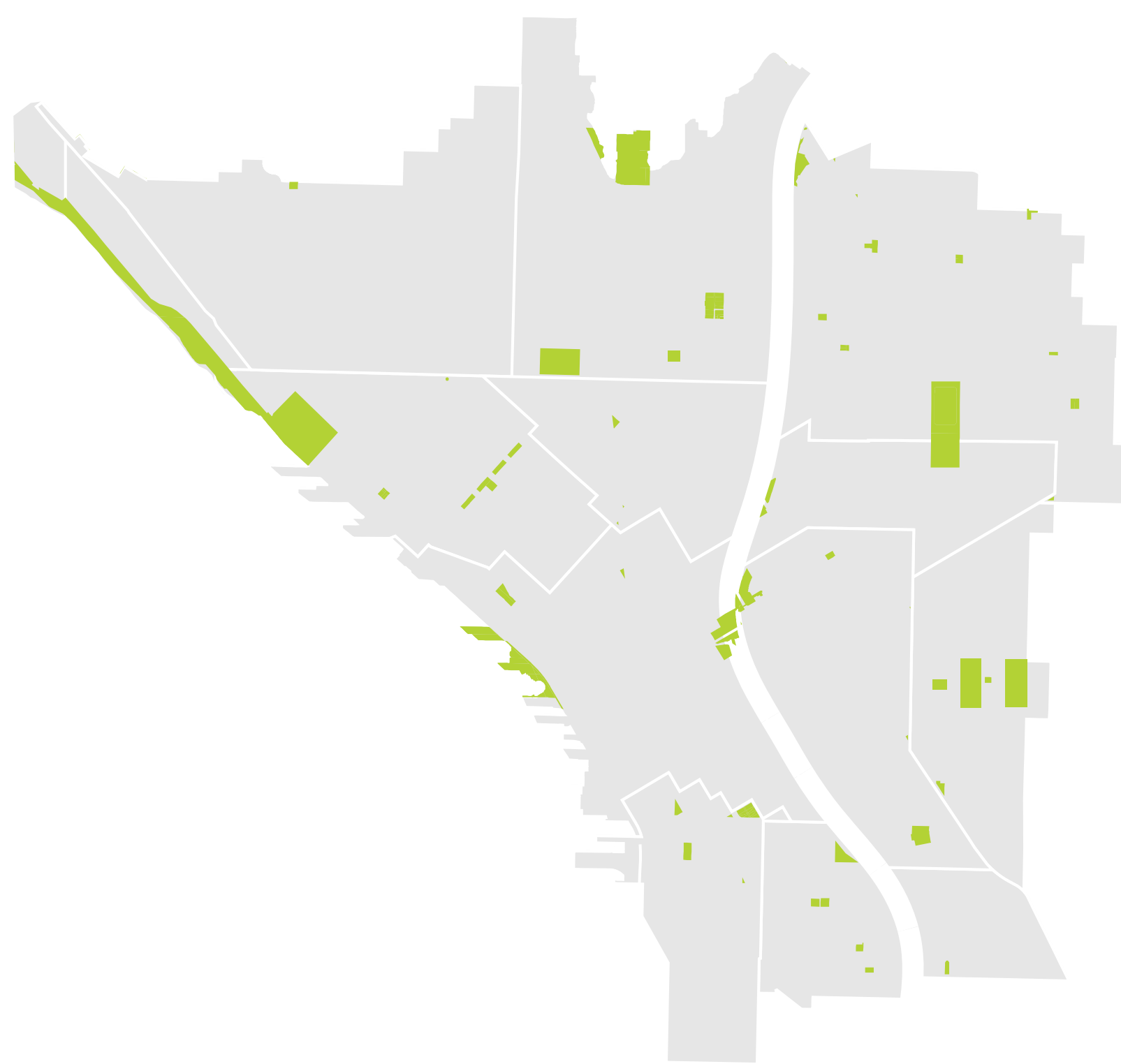
5 URBAN TECH DISRUPTION

Unprecedented investment in urban technology has led to proliferation of shared mobility services. Several are already on our streets – shared electric bicycles and car sharing – others are yet to arrive – scooters, delivery robots, etc. Innovation is making mobility better for some, but it's imperative that new mobility offerings align with our shared values.

- Ridehail vehicles represent roughly **10% of all circling traffic on downtown streets.** This is consistent across time of day and includes TNCs, taxis, and other fixed rate for-hire services.
- Package and food delivery demands are increasing with the rise of on-line shopping
- More off-street parking is being constructed with new development; an autonomous and shared vehicle future may reduce the need for this resource and create opportunity for new uses.

THE CHALLENGES

JUST 6%
OF TOTAL SPACE DOWNTOWN IS PARKS OR PUBLIC
OPEN SPACE **RELATIVE TO 12% CITYWIDE**

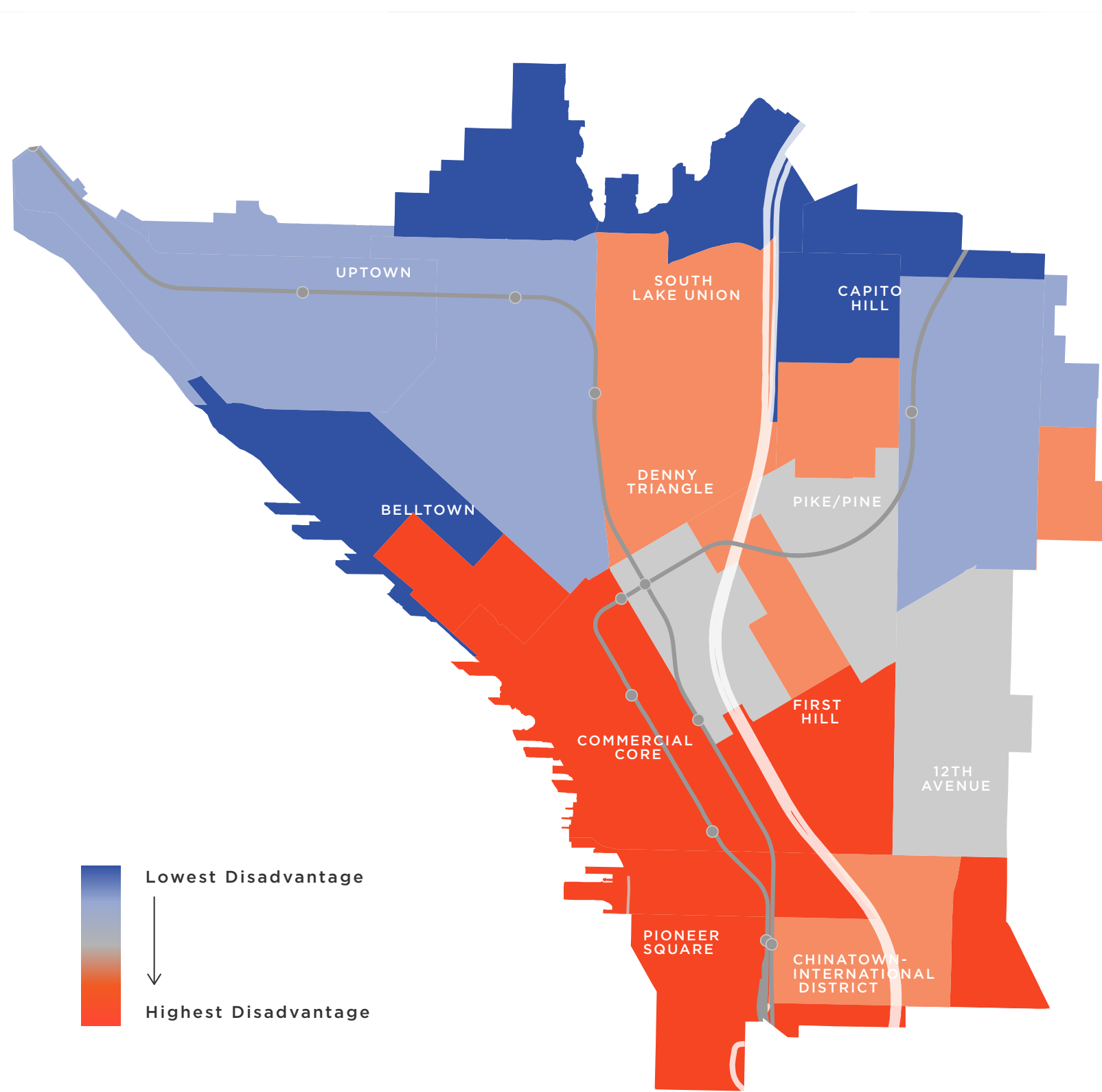


6 LACK OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Greater Downtown has a disproportionately small amount of park and public open space relative to the rest of Seattle. This deficiency is amplified given it is home to 25% of the City’s population and 50% of its jobs.

Playgrounds and broad open spaces are few and access is uneven. Some neighborhoods have limited access to the water and few parks and recreation opportunities within a reasonable walk from their homes. As Greater Downtown density increases, investments in open spaces will be ever more crucial for creating a livable community.

COMMUNITY HEALTH DISADVANTAGE INDEX



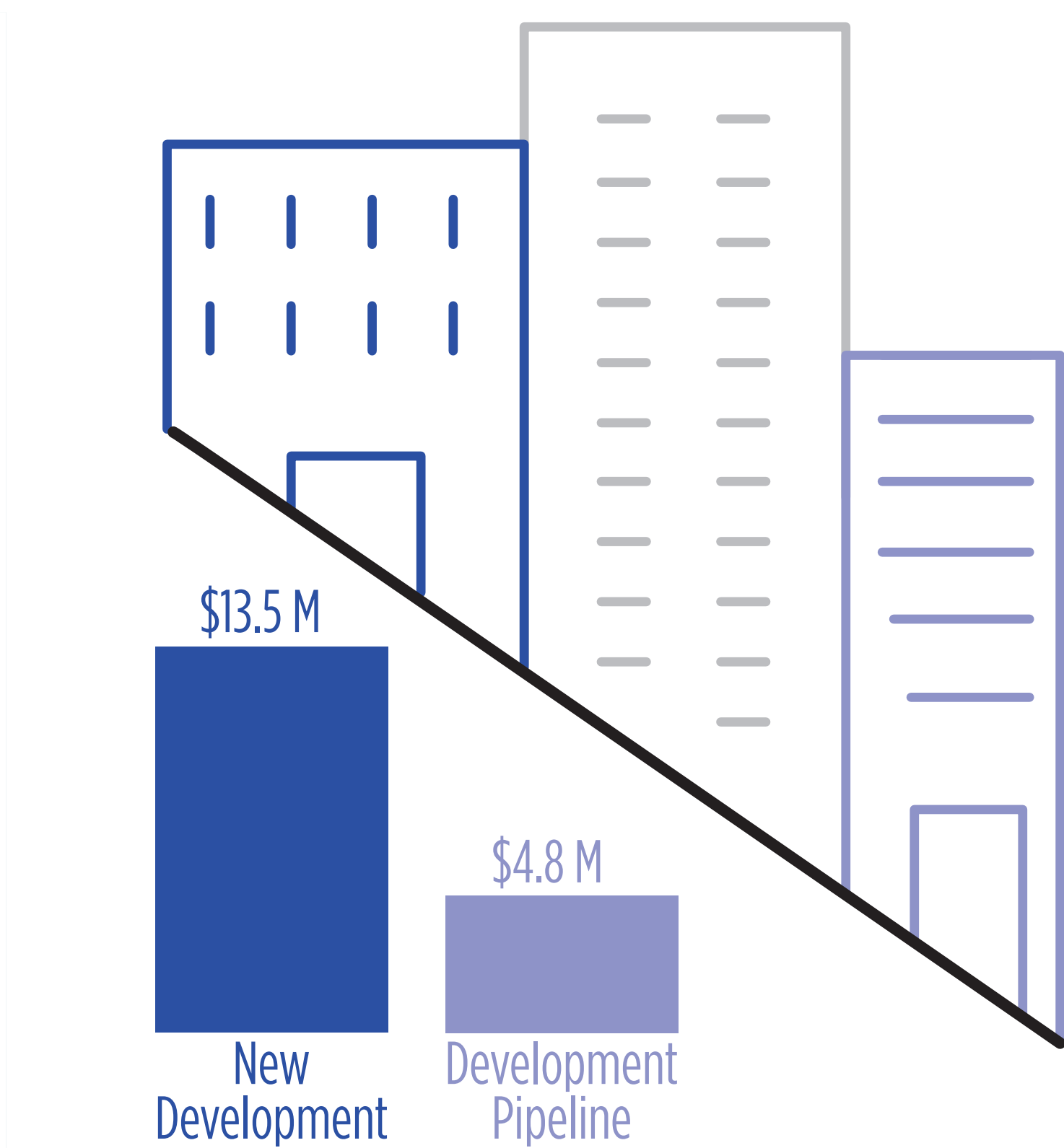
7 DISPARITY IN HEALTH OUTCOMES

Seattle is one of the healthiest cities in the U.S. However, not all neighborhoods are doing so well. Those living in Yesler Terrace, Chinatown/ID, and Belltown—home to many seniors, low income households, and people of color—are more likely to have poor long-term health outcomes. Air, noise, and other pollution from I-5 creates health impacts for those that live or work nearby.

The health disadvantage index rank census tracts by an index of seven equally weighted measures:

- Percentage of adults engaging in no leisure-time physical activity
- Percentage of adults with diabetes
- Percentage of adults who are obese
- Percentage of adults indicating mental health not good for >= 14 days out of a month
- Percentage of adults who have asthma
- Low life expectancy at birth
- Percentage of adults with one or more disabilities

REDEVELOPABLE LANDS



8 LEVERAGING PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT FOR PUBLIC BENEFIT

Currently, Greater Downtown has nearly \$13.5 billion in new development in the pipeline, including \$4.8 billion under construction. During the current development cycle (starting in 2010) Greater Downtown has represented approximately half (49%) of the City’s development.

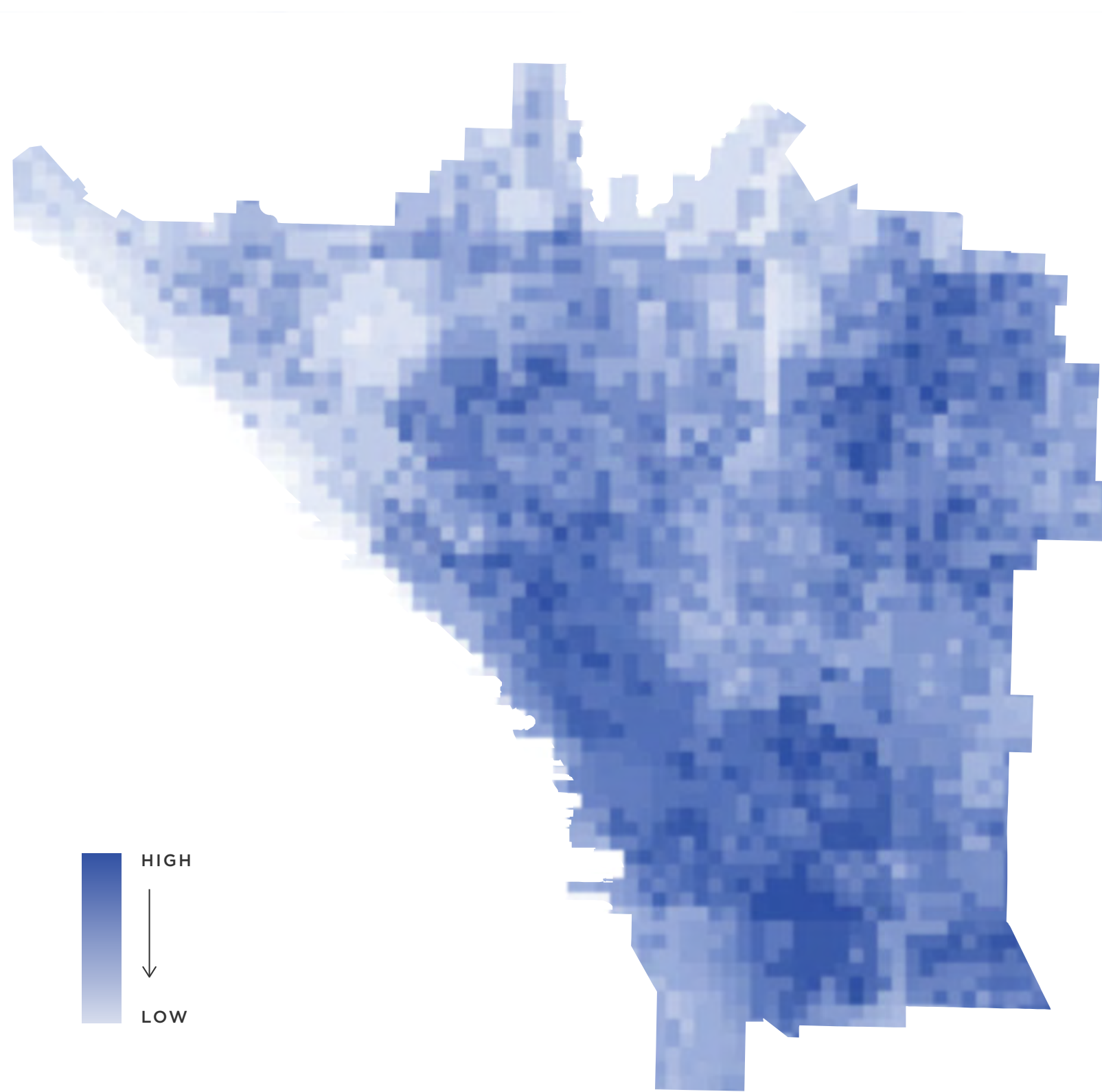
Available space for new public parks is limited and expensive, and while there are many privately owned public spaces, many are not fully usable or clearly accessible to the public. Given there are few redevelopable parcels throughout Greater Downtown, our challenge is to make the most of existing spaces and development.

Average Cost of Housing + Transportation as a Percent of Median Income by Block Group

Data Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology,

US Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, 2015

DISPLACEMENT RISK INDEX

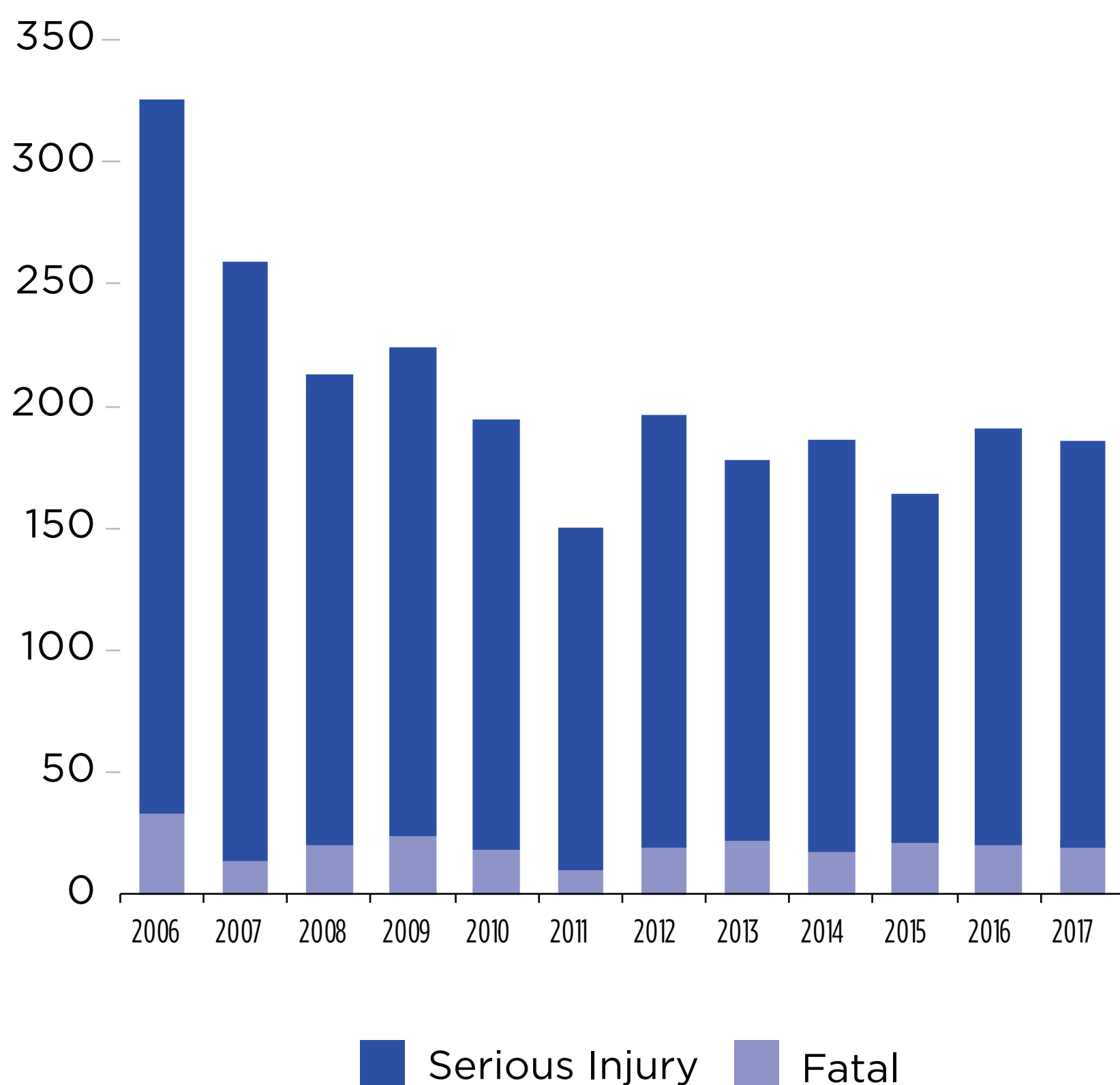


9 THREATENED DIVERSITY

A sustainable future requires that we welcome many new residents to the Greater Downtown area. While doing so, we also need to ensure that existing communities of color continue to have places to grow, thrive and belong. Balancing our housing needs, a sustainable transportation system, and our historic culture of inclusivity is one of our greatest challenges.

- Uptown, Denny Triangle, Commercial Core, First Hill, Capitol Hill, Pike – Pine, and Pioneer Square all saw a decrease in people of color (as percent of the population) between 1990 and 2010.
- Some of our most culturally rich neighborhoods and areas with the highest concentrations of foreign born residents, including Chinatown-International District are at greatest risk of displacement.

FATAL/SERIOUS INJURY COLLISION TREND



10 SAFETY FOR OUR MOST VULNERABLE TRAVELERS

SDOT is committed to making streets safe for everyone, including our most vulnerable travelers. Still, many sidewalks are sub-standard, multi-lane arterial streets can be intimidating to cross, signals are often prioritized for vehicles, hills are challenging for people with disabilities, and wayfinding is inconsistent.

- Traffic deaths are declining in recent years; however, pedestrians and bicyclists still make up 40% of all traffic fatalities.
- Many of our city’s highest crash locations are on arterial streets in Greater Downtown. Major arterials such as Mercer, Denny, Boren, and 4th Avenue are frequently cited as safety concerns and physical barriers between places people, live, work, and recreate.

HOW WE GOT TO THE BIG IDEAS

WE LISTENED AND LEARNED FROM THE COMMUNITY

This draft vision framework is the product of hundreds of your ideas and expertise across the partner agencies. Since summer 2018, we have:

- Attended over 35 different events for public input
- Hosted community conversations
- Listened and spoke at community meetings
- Collected comments in online open houses
- Brought together an Advisory Group of engaged stakeholders

Our Advisory Group is composed of 34 Center City residents and workers. They represent different non-profits, commercial businesses, neighborhood groups, races, ethnicities, and abilities. We have been engaging community members, many of whom have not been a part of other planning efforts—particularly communities of color, ethnic minorities, and low-income individuals to put racial and social justice at the heart of this plan.

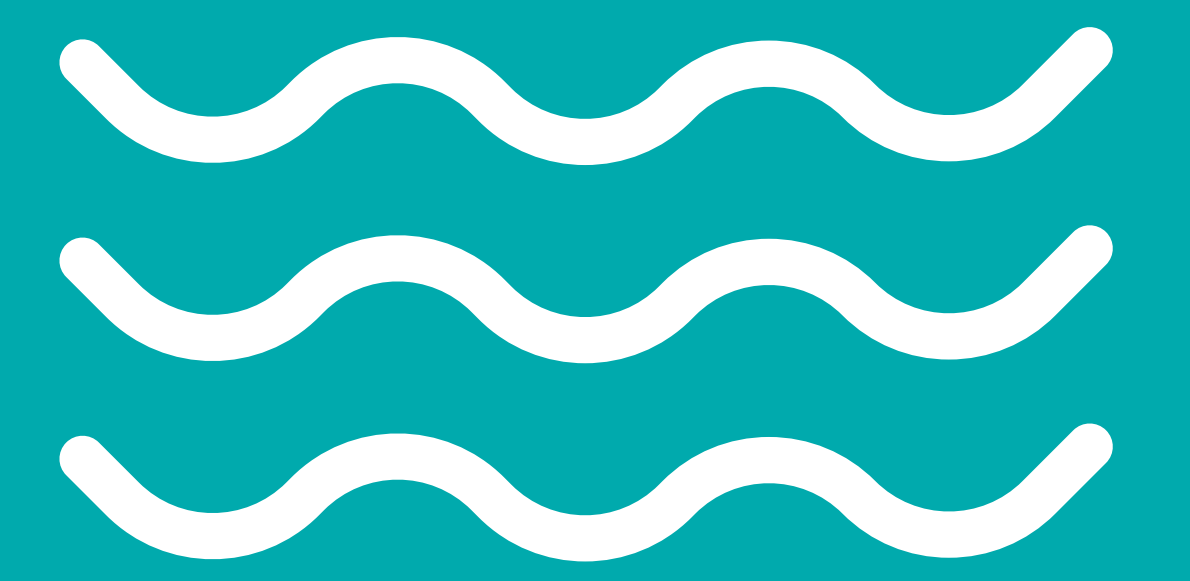
We are grateful for the participation of so many people, including you. Together we will imagine a brighter future for our Greater Downtown.



INTRODUCING THE BIG IDEAS FOR GREATER DOWNTOWN

 CONNECT US TO THE WATER	 STITCH THE I-5 DIVIDE	 GREENING GREATER DOWNTOWN	 GREAT PLACES FOR COMMUNITY LIFE	 STREETS WE LOVE, STREETS THAT WORK	 EXCELLENT TRANSIT EXPERIENCE	 MAJOR HUBS, GREAT PLACES
Inspiring and interactive experiences on the lake, sound and in public spaces	Reconnect neighborhoods and improve access over, under, and across I-5	Infuse more parks and nature in the urban landscape	Distinct neighborhoods with inviting places and destinations	Safe, sustainable, and well-organized streets for every form of travel	People prefer transit to access and travel within Greater Downtown	Celebrate culture and arrival, create seamless mobility connections, and reinforce the gateway portals to Greater Downtown
Connect People to the Lake and Sound	Open Spaces Over I-5	Connect People with Nature	A Community Heart in Every Neighborhood	People-First Streets	Foundation: Frequent, Reliable Transit	Integrated Network of Hubs
Accessing and Experiencing Water	Bring Light and Purpose to the Spaces Under I-5	Restore Our Natural Habitat	Place Specific Features in Every Public Space	Safe and Sustainable Streets	Fundamentals: People Centered Transit	Jackson Hub Gateway
	Streets and Places for People Across I-5		Places To Enjoy and Gather	Making New Mobility Work for Us	Finishes: Exceptional Transit Environments	Westlake Crossroads

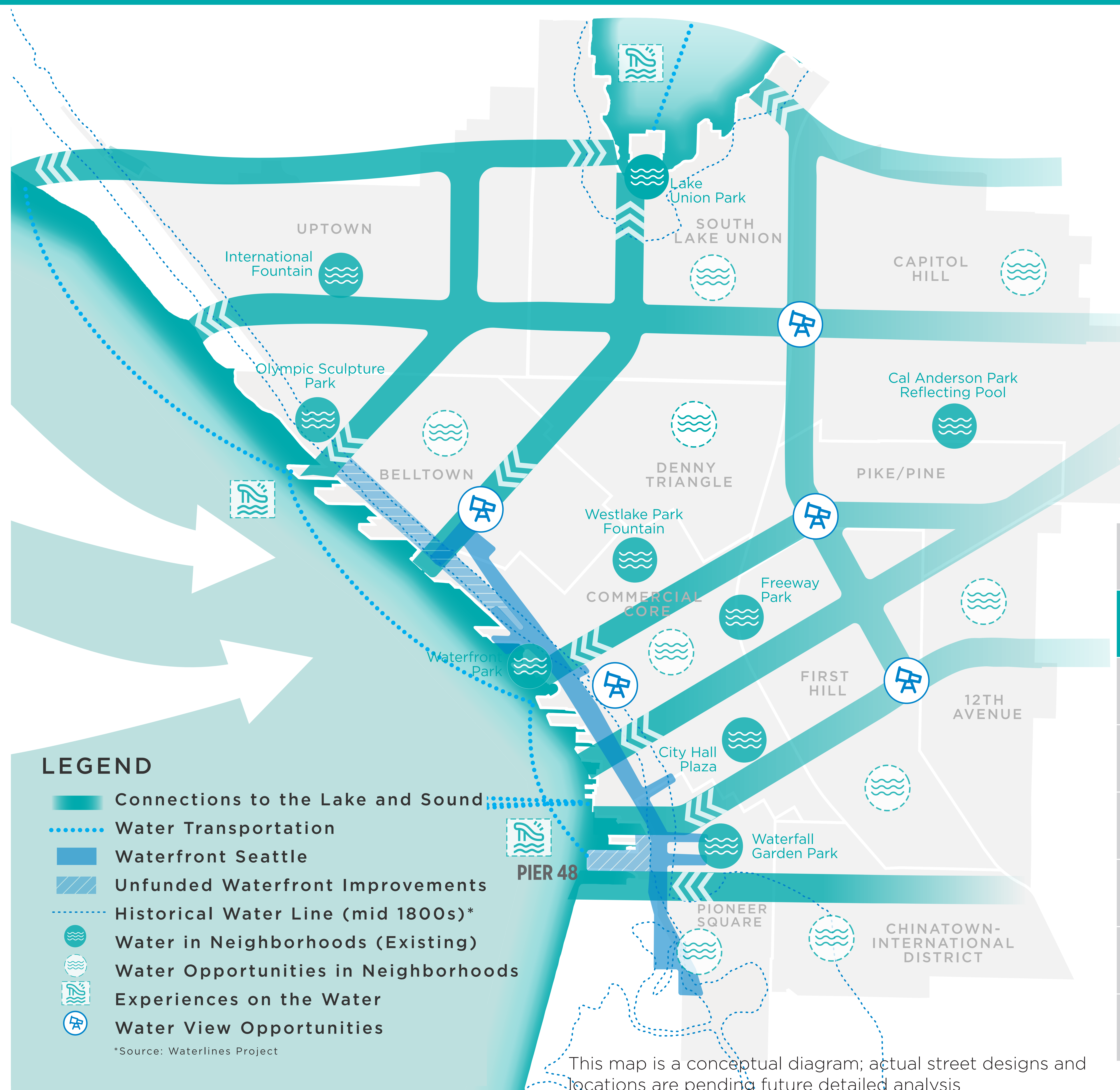
CONNECT US TO THE WATER



Inspiring and interactive experiences on the lake, sound and in public spaces

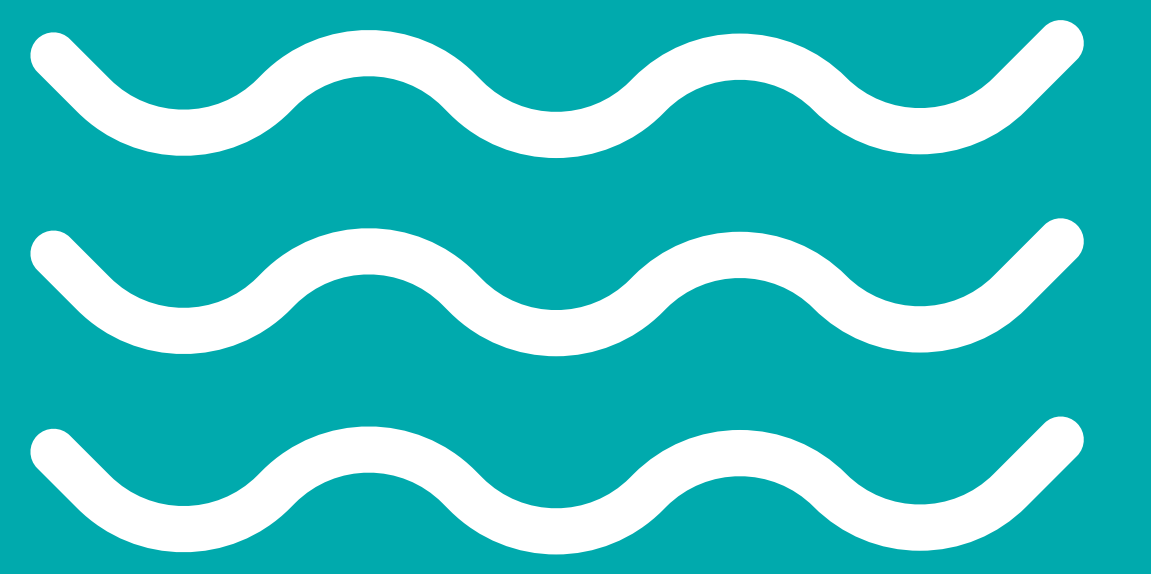
VISION

- Our public realm teaches people how water shaped Seattle from the time the area was populated by Native people, to the arrival of Europeans through to present day.
- Seattle is one of the most interesting and beautiful cities to be outside when it rains.
- Everyone - including people with disabilities, children, seniors, and families - can recreate and travel on the water.
- People can view or experience Seattle from Lake Union and Elliott Bay at low- or no-cost.
- Access and views from the water to the land are as important as from the land to the water.
- People of color and ethnic minorities feel welcome to enjoy and experience the water.



CONNECT US TO THE WATER

THE ELEMENTS



1 CONNECT PEOPLE TO THE LAKE AND SOUND



REALIZE THE FULL WATERFRONT SEATTLE VISION

Build the unfunded Waterfront Seattle improvements (e.g. Pier 48), and improve physical and visual connections to Waterfront from uphill neighborhoods in Greater Downtown.

Source: Waterfront Seattle



TRACE HISTORIC WATER LINES AND INDIGENOUS HISTORY

Design interventions that connect us to the region's indigenous history and the natural history of Elliot Bay.

Location: Pacific Northwest

2 ACCESSING AND EXPERIENCING WATER



GET PEOPLE ON THE WATER

Connect people to the water from the land, and from the land to the water.

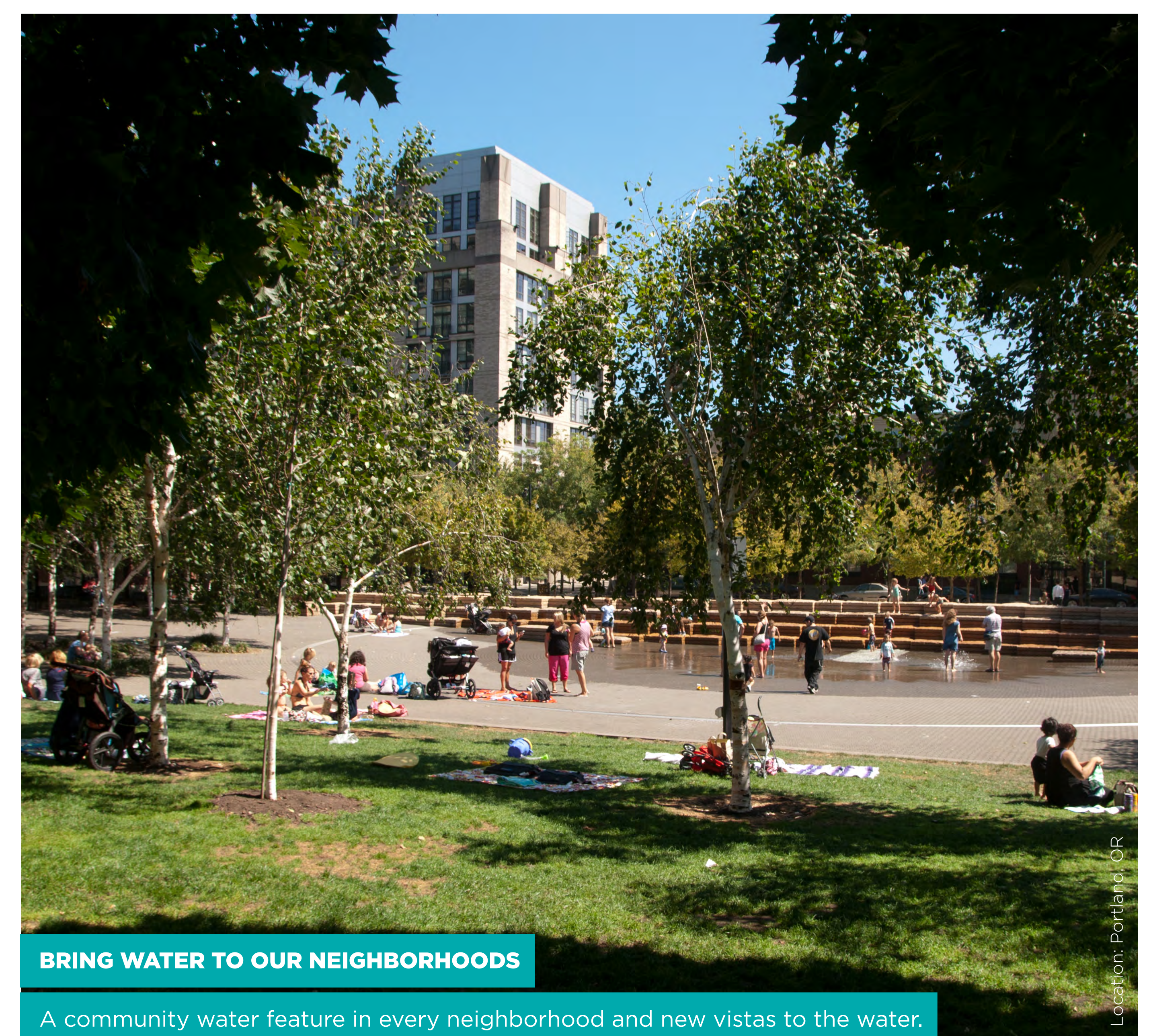
Location: Barcelona



CULTURAL PLACES AND CONNECTIONS

Celebrate Seattle's deep connection to the water.

Location: Seoul



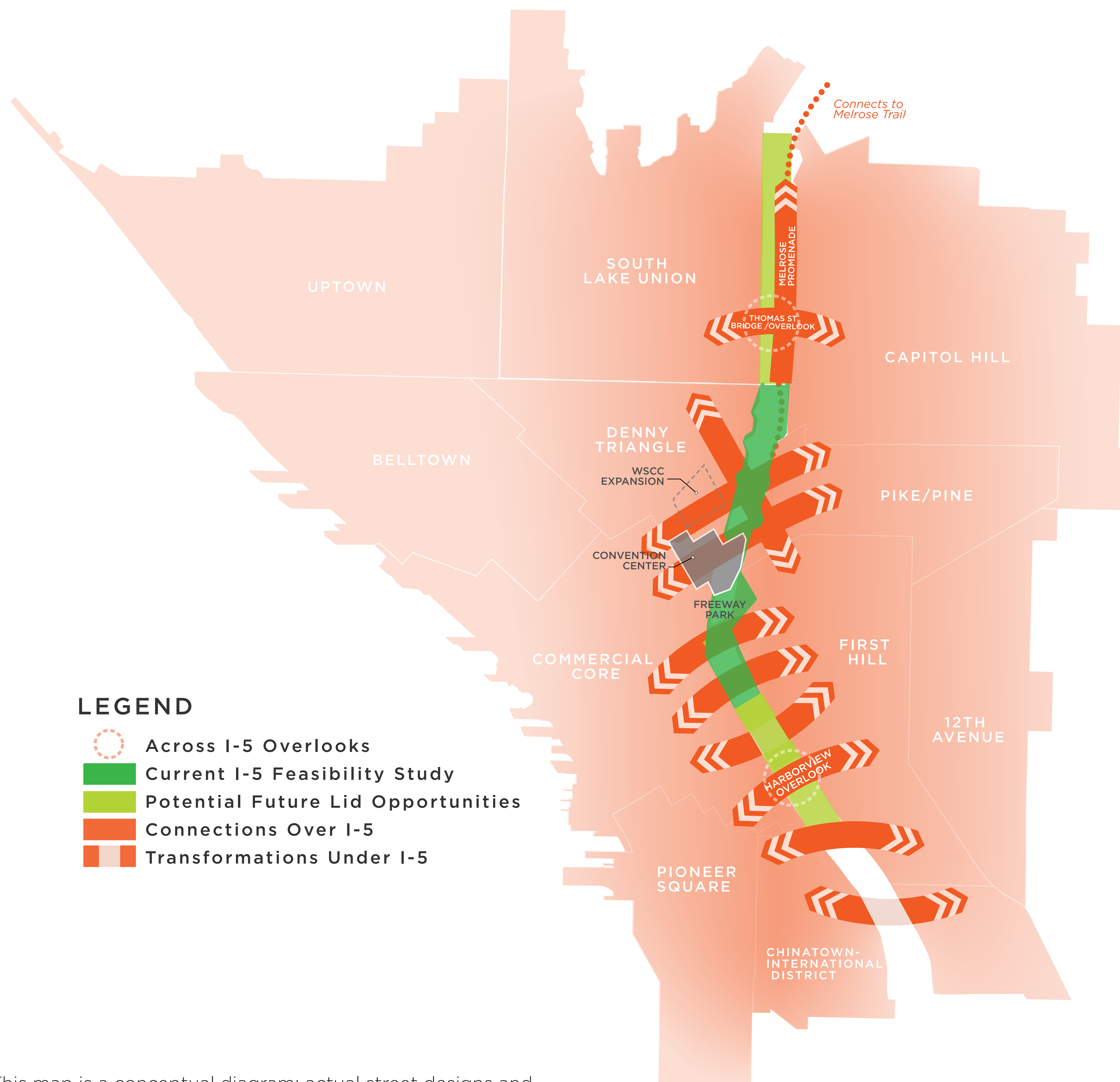
BRING WATER TO OUR NEIGHBORHOODS

A community water feature in every neighborhood and new vistas to the water.

Location: Portland, OR



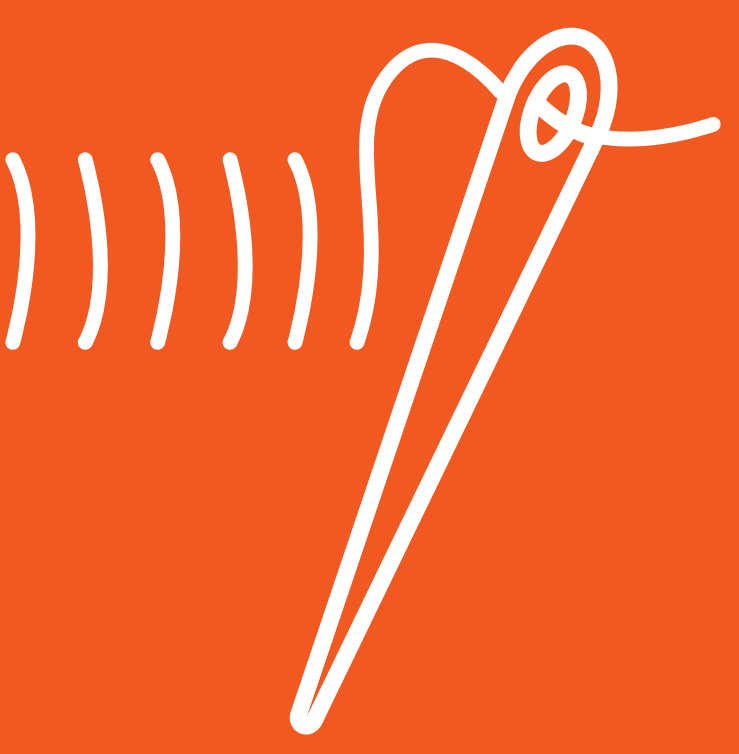
- Neighborhoods divided by I-5 are reunited with new connections and urban spaces.
- A unique opportunity to create large green and open spaces is realized.
- Mobility across, over, and under I-5 is easier and more enjoyable for every traveler—especially for people walking, biking, or rolling.
- Traffic noises and views of the highway are reduced, covered, or camouflaged.
- New places for people to exercise, and socialize.



This map is a conceptual diagram; actual street designs and locations are pending future detailed analysis

STITCH THE I-5 DIVIDE

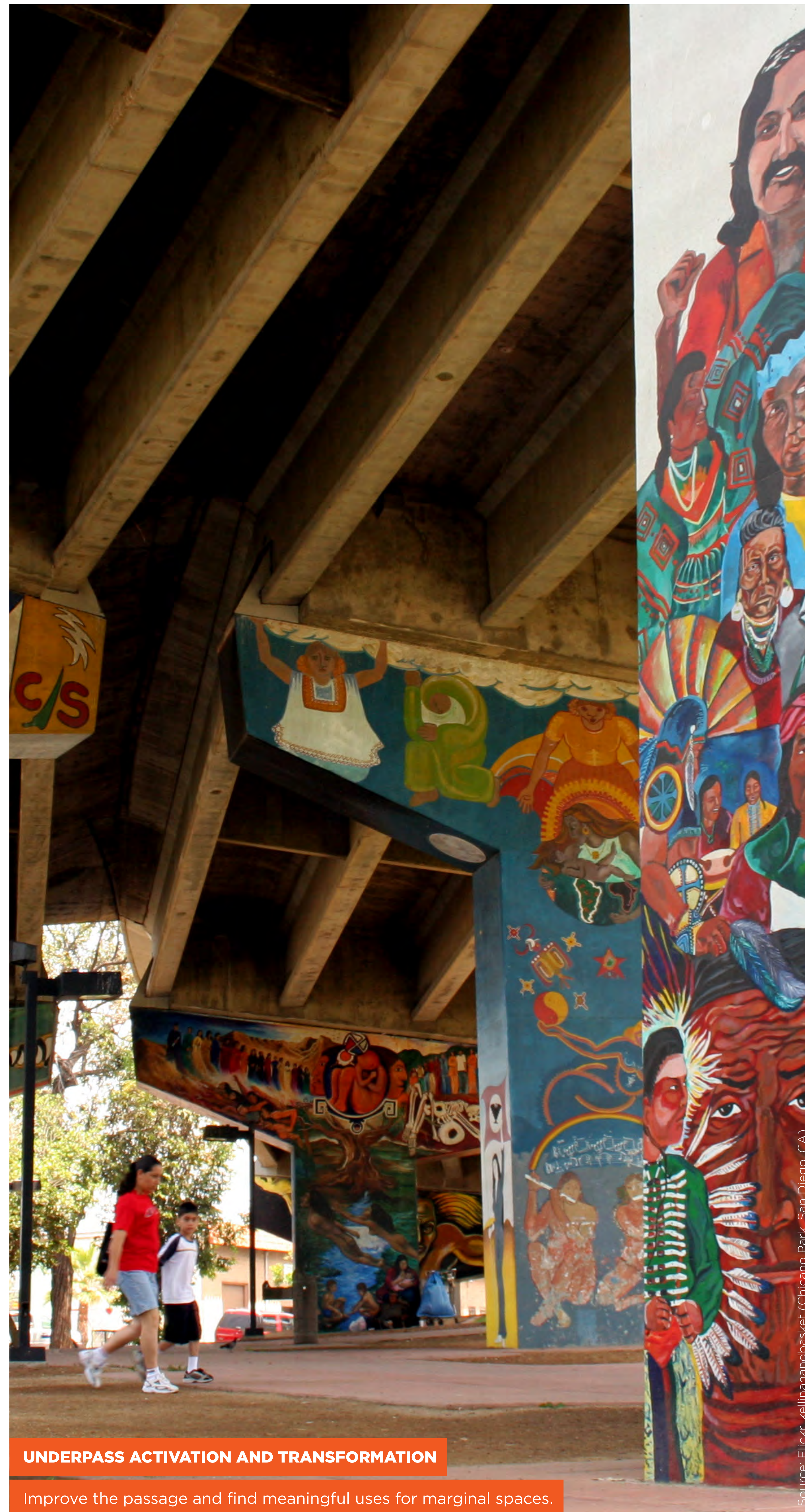
THE ELEMENTS



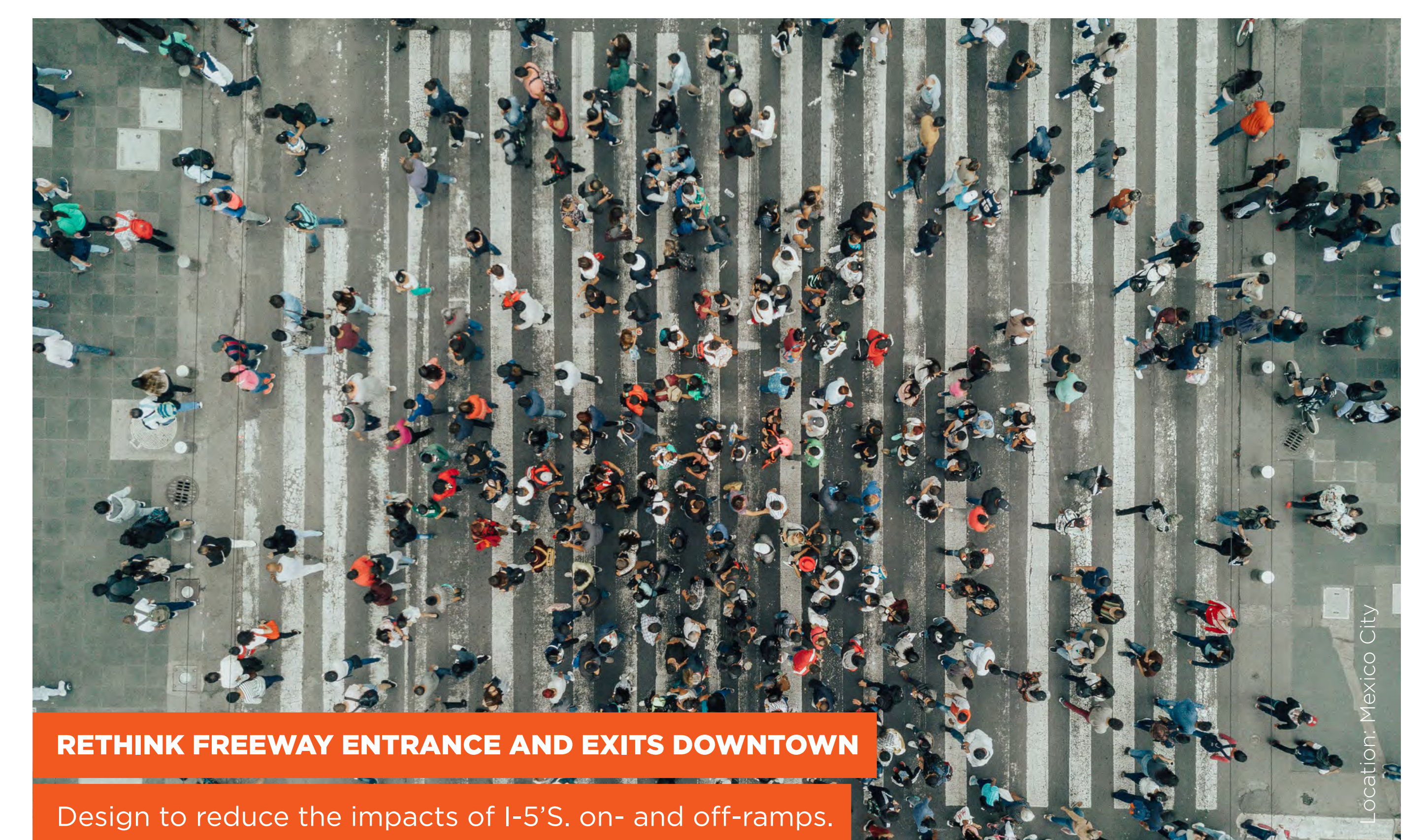
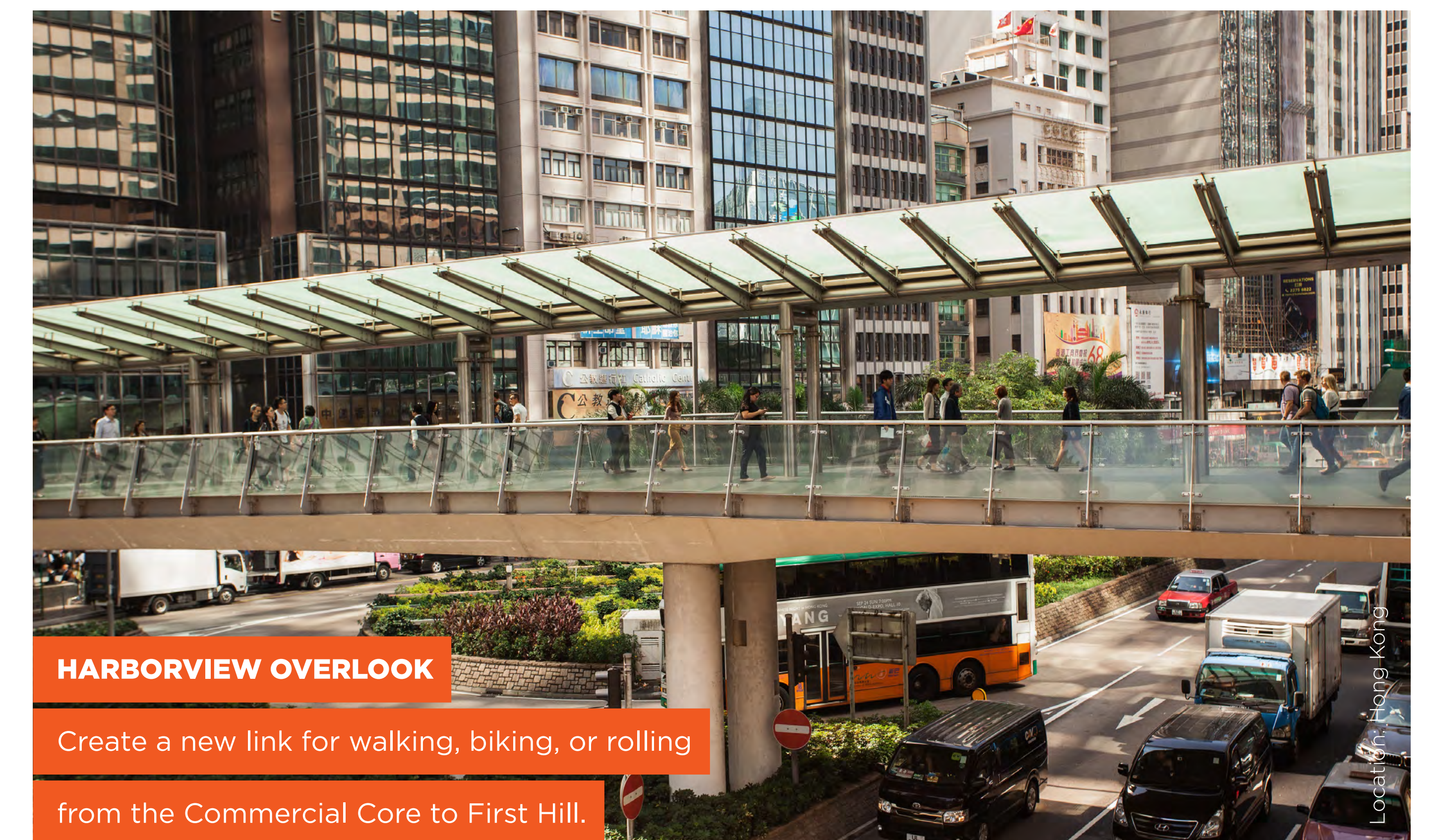
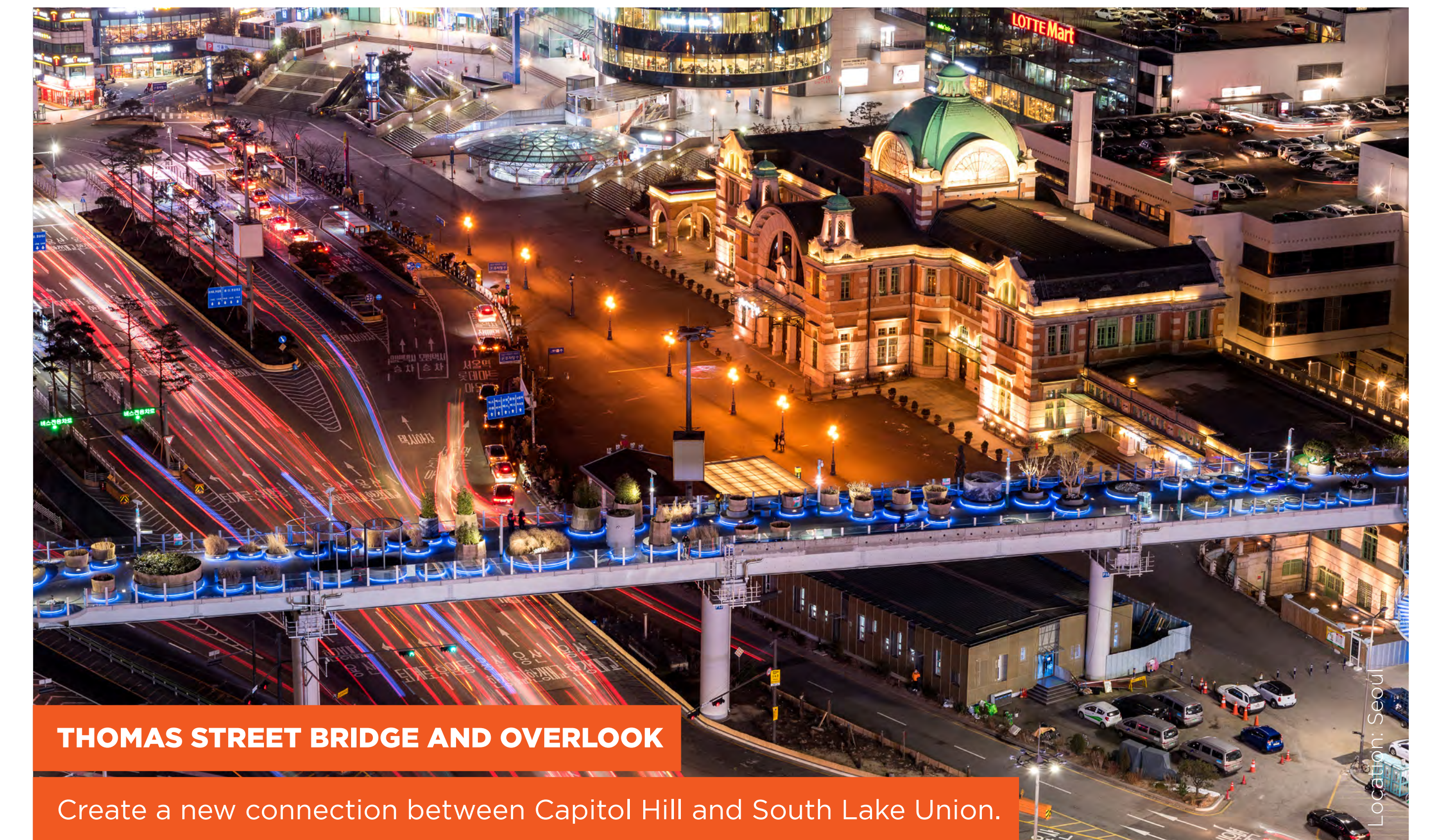
1 OPEN SPACES OVER I-5



2 BRING LIGHT AND PURPOSE TO THE SPACES UNDER I-5



3 STREETS AND PLACES FOR PEOPLE ACROSS I-5



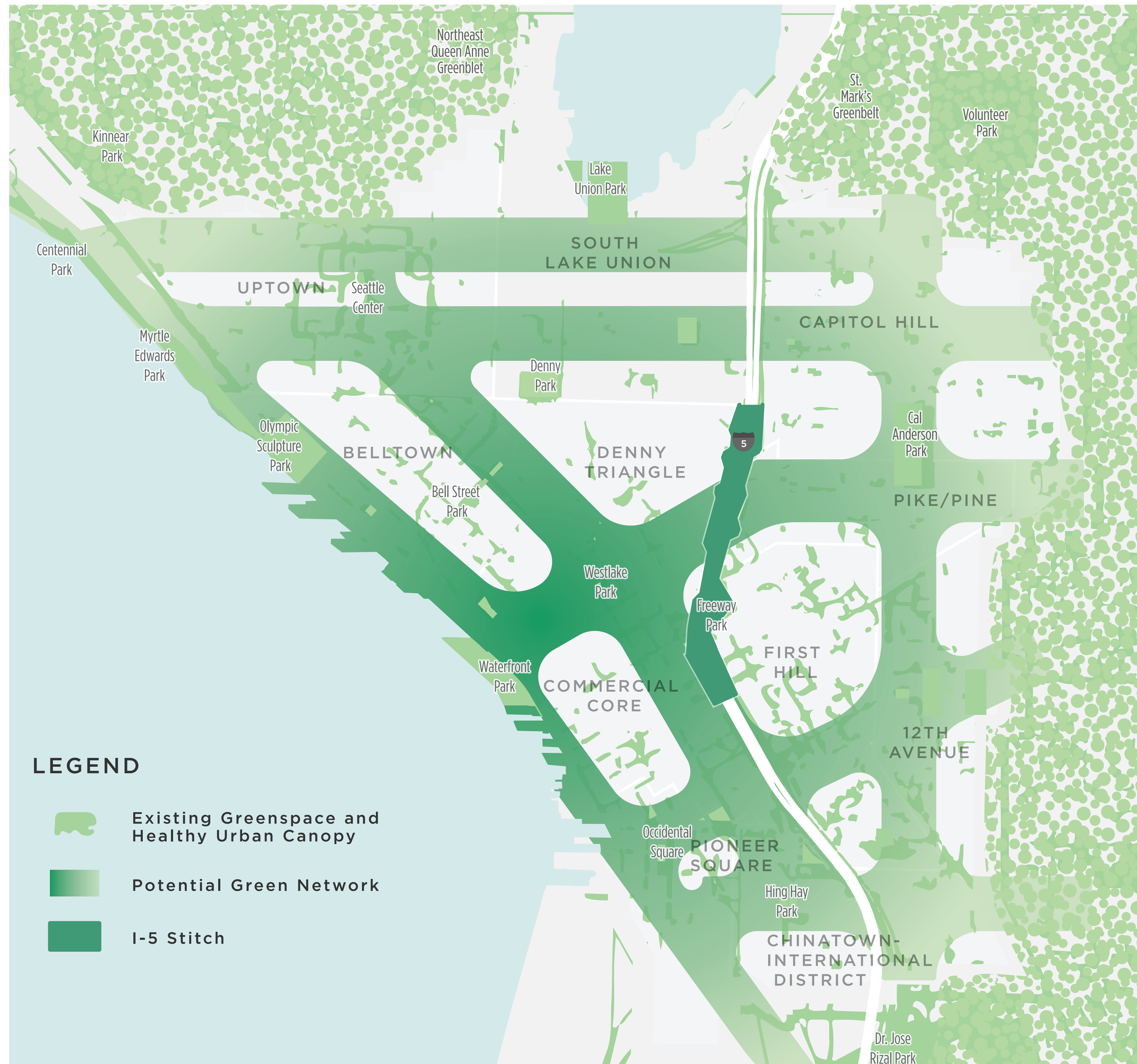
GREENING GREATER DOWNTOWN



Infuse more parks and nature, in the urban landscape

VISION

- Greater Downtown has a robust and varied collection and distribution of native plants, trees, and greenery that promote beauty and well-being in the Center City.
- Streets and public spaces use are designed to improve the environment, restore natural habitats, and support climate resilience.
- Parks and open spaces connect with adjoining development for the right mix of private and public uses and activities so the benefits of parks spill over into adjacent streets.
- Streets and public spaces promote climate resiliency and adaptation, water retention and reuse.



This map is a conceptual diagram; actual street designs and locations are pending future detailed analysis

GREENING GREATER DOWNTOWN

THE ELEMENTS



1 CONNECT PEOPLE WITH NATURE



GROW THE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE NETWORK TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE MOST DENSE PART OF SEATTLE

Innovatively use public space to create new parks and open spaces.

Location: Seattle

2 RESTORE OUR NATURAL HABITAT



INVITE NATURE INTO GREATER DOWNTOWN

Share our urban realm.



PLACES TO CONNECT WITH THE LAND AND NATIVE CULTURE

Look to the past to better future stewardship.



USE TREES AND ROOFTOPS TO GROW OUR GREEN CANOPY

Increasing our urban tree canopy cools, beautifies and creates a carbon sink.

Location: Hong Kong

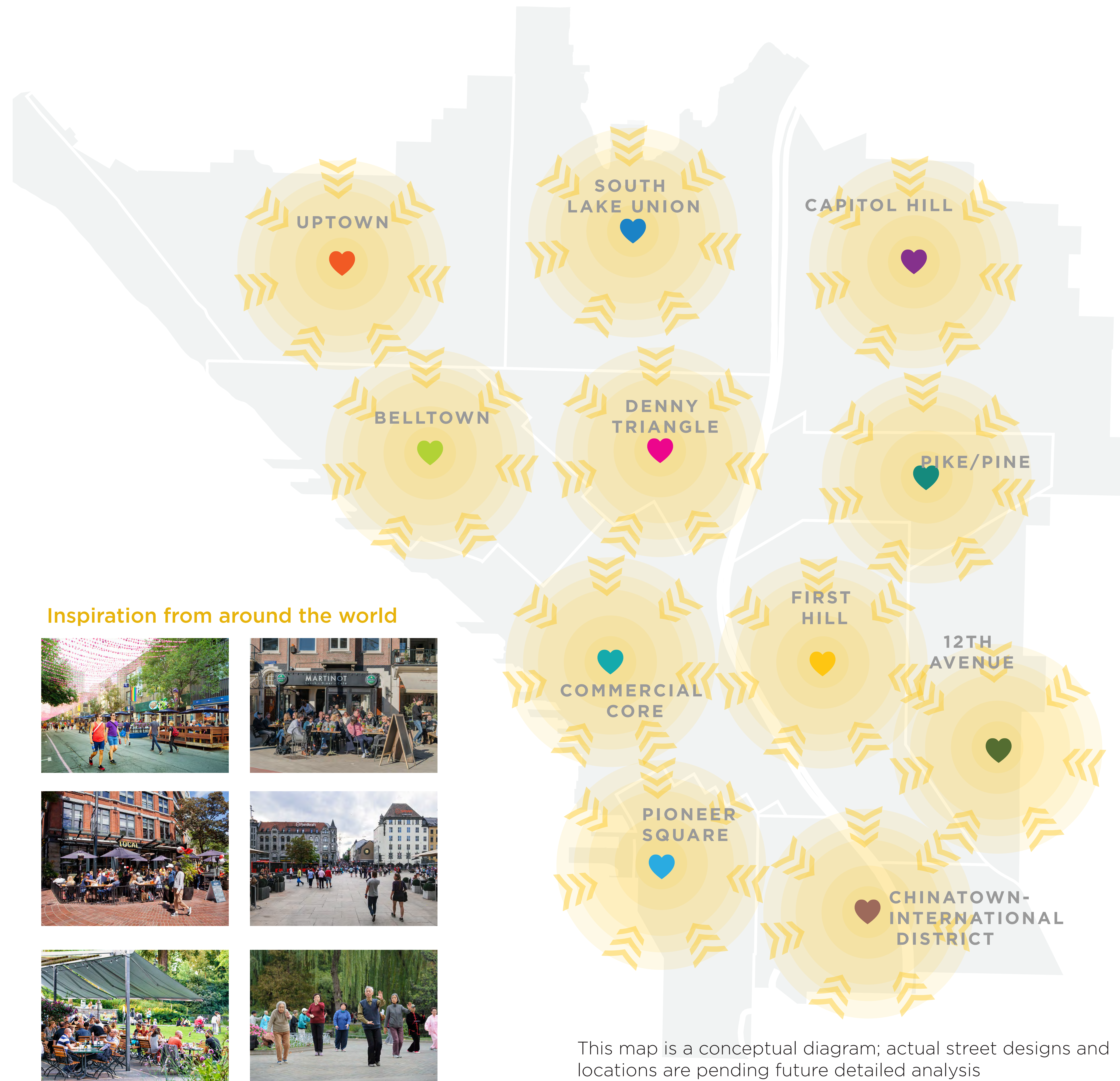
GREAT PLACES FOR COMMUNITY LIFE



Distinct neighborhoods with inviting places and destinations

VISION

- Each neighborhood has a variety of inviting public places, interesting streets, arts, and cultural destinations that reflect and celebrate distinct communities, neighborhood identities, and cultures.
- There is always a place to go to gather, people-watch, and have a uniquely Seattle experience in Greater Downtown.
- Public space downtown becomes a collective front porch, where people feel welcome, and experience positive interactions intentionally and spontaneously.
- Downtown's public realm is high quality, where people take pride in the places and spaces in their neighborhoods.



This map is a conceptual diagram; actual street designs and locations are pending future detailed analysis



1 A COMMUNITY HEART IN EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD



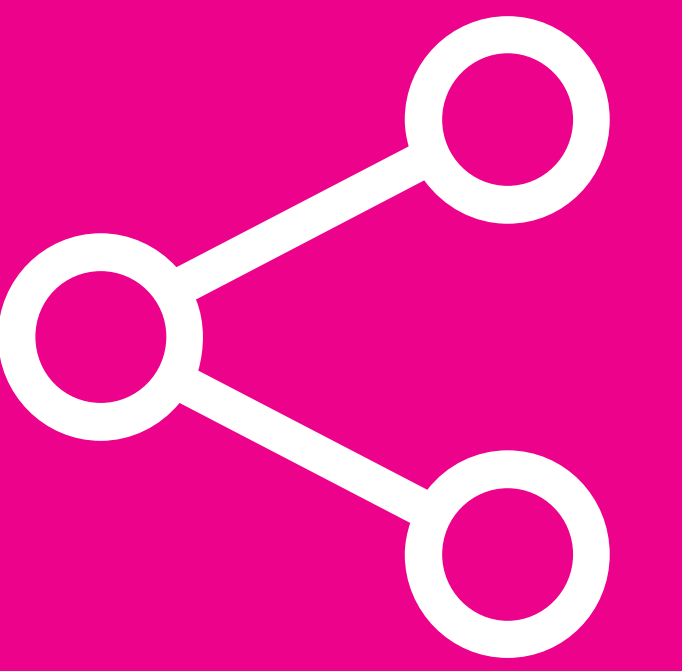
2 PLACE SPECIFIC FEATURES IN EVERY PUBLIC SPACE



3 PLACES TO ENJOY AND GATHER



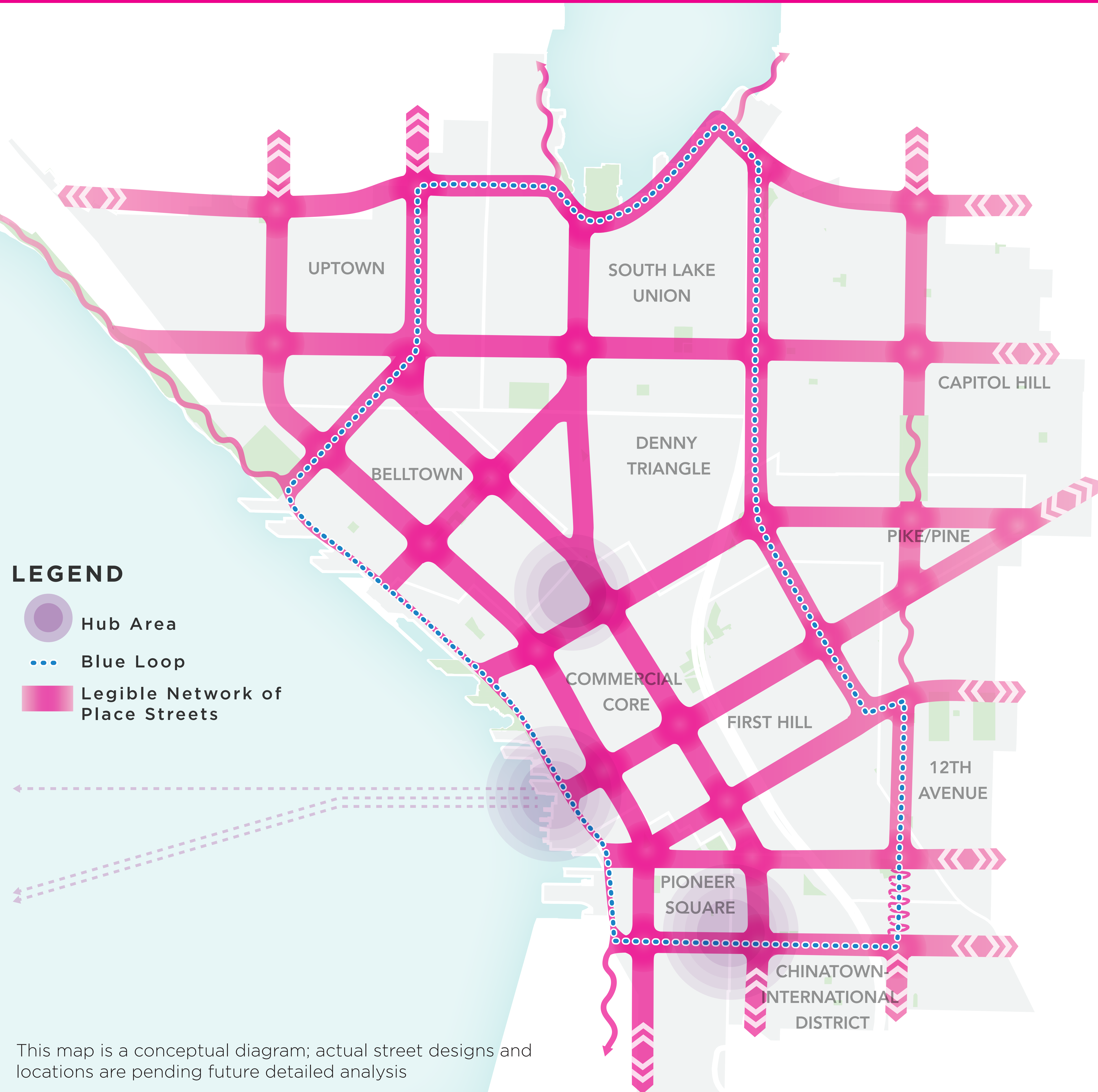
STREETS WE LOVE, STREETS THAT WORK



Safe, sustainable, and well-organized streets for every form of travel

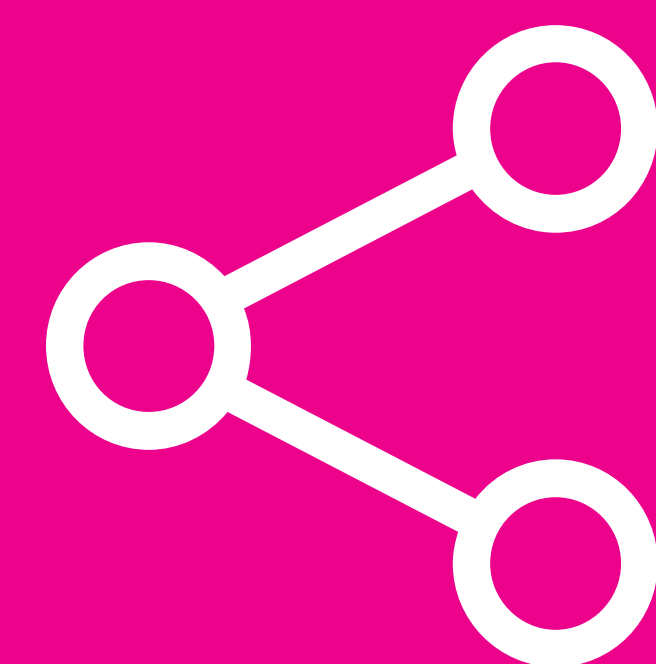
VISION

- We design and operate our streets for people and goods movement, reducing our impact on the planet and keeping our economy strong.
- A legible network of great walking streets fosters a culture of strolling and public street life.
- Our streets and pathways are accessible places for people of all ages and abilities.
- Our streets and mobility systems afford people of color, low-income people, and vulnerable communities, equal access to work, housing, and welcoming places to play and gather.
- Micro-mobility options and emerging technologies such as autonomous vehicles and ride-hailing are integrated into today's shared modes and required to fulfill our goals of equity, inclusion, and carbon neutrality.



STREETS WE LOVE, STREETS THAT WORK

THE ELEMENTS

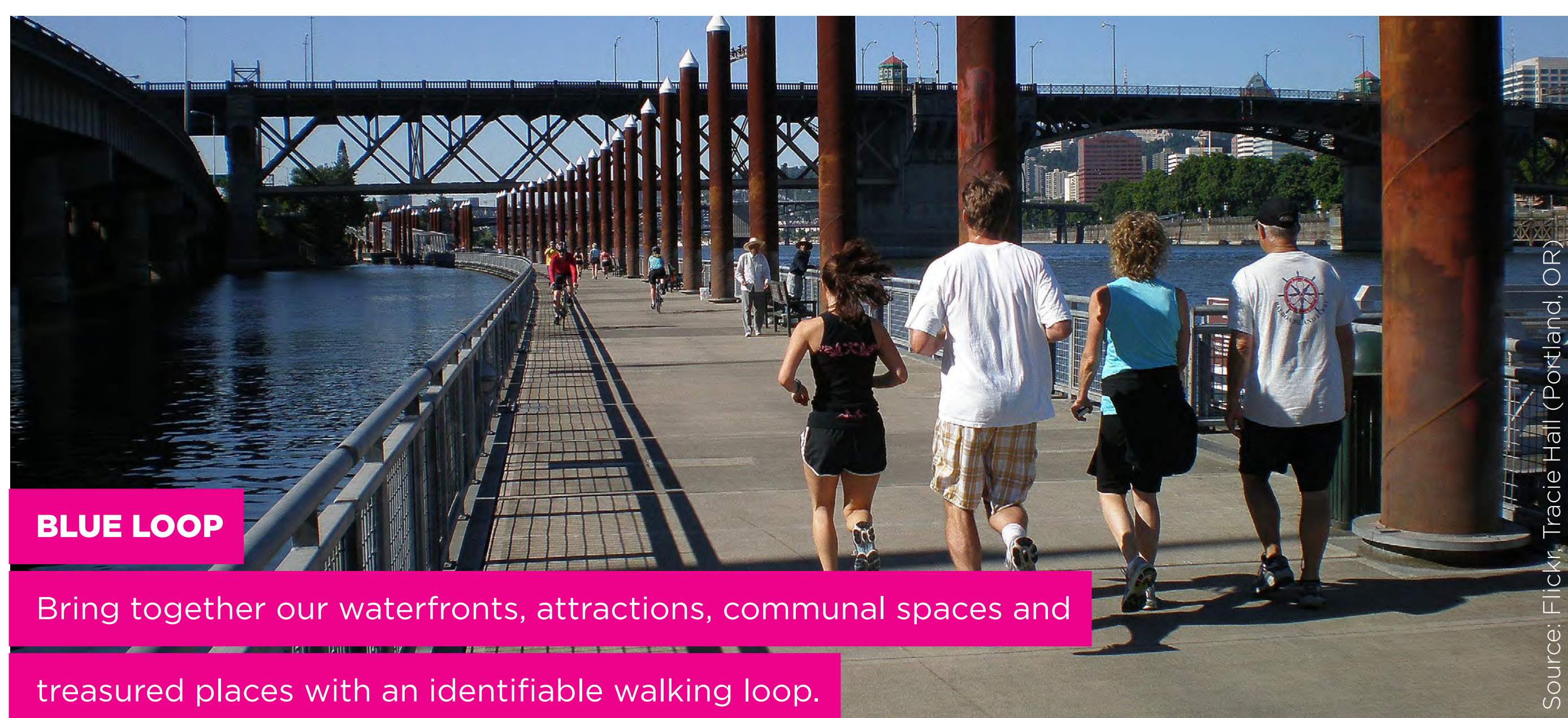


1 PEOPLE-FIRST STREETS



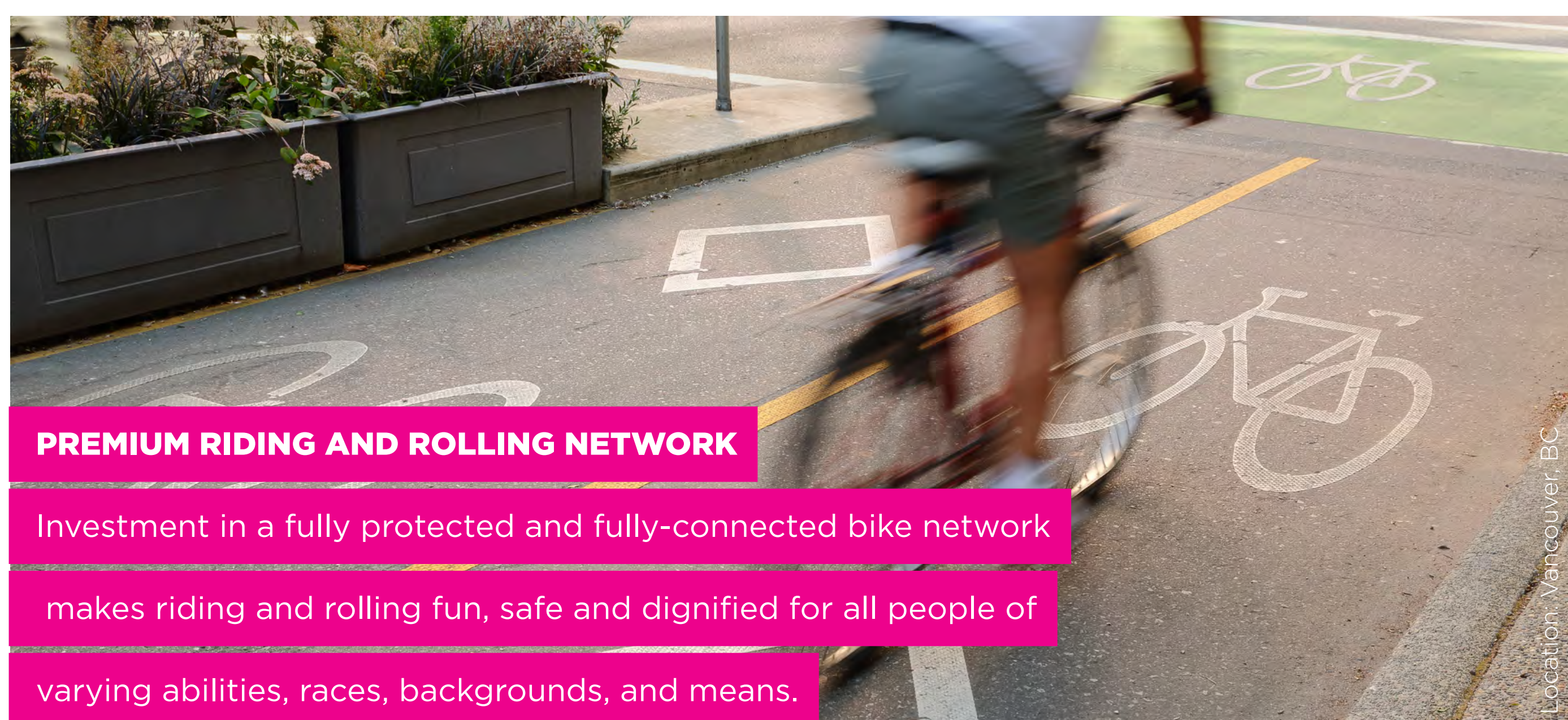
CONNECT NEIGHBORHOODS WITH PLACE STREETS

A steady rhythm of high-quality streets which are designed primarily for the pedestrian to walk, stay, and interact.



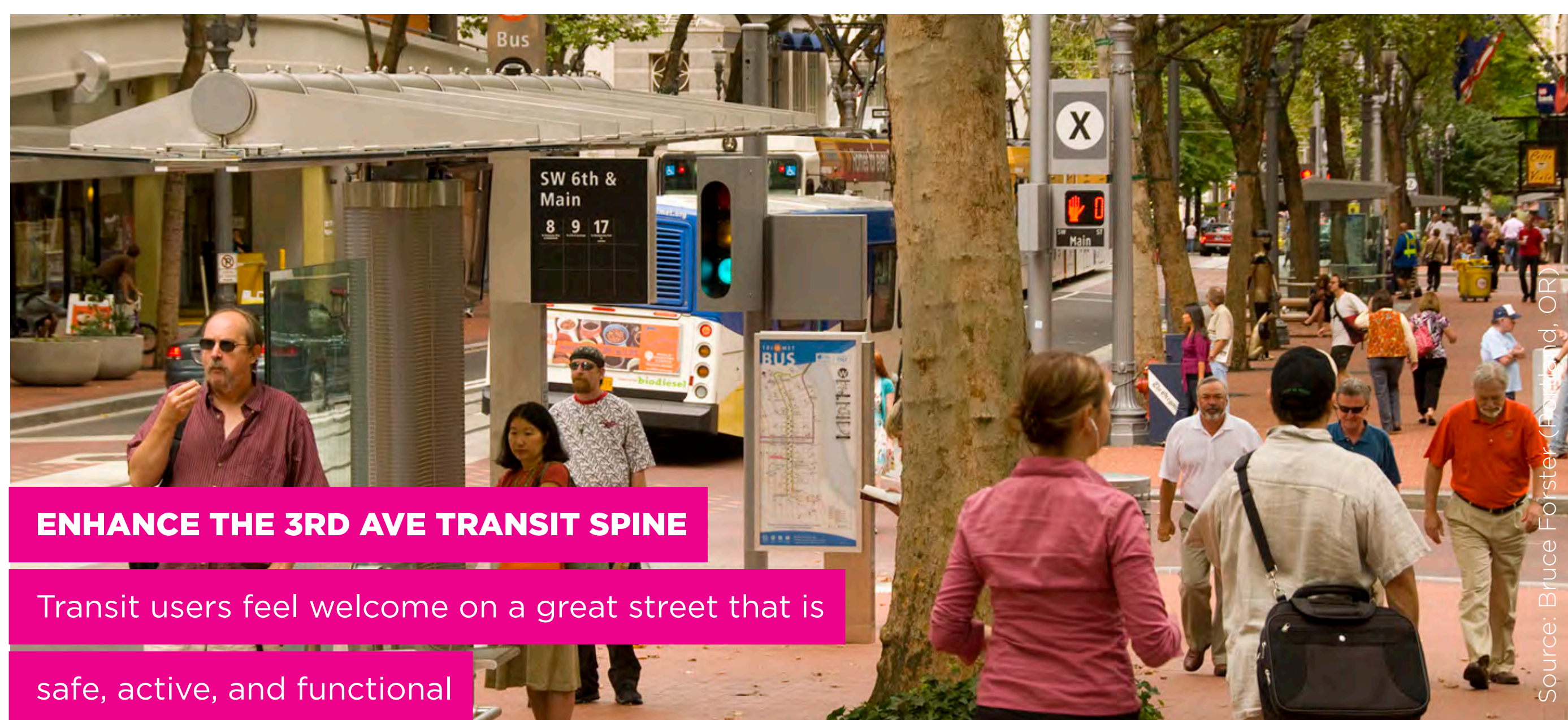
BLUE LOOP

Bring together our waterfronts, attractions, communal spaces and treasured places with an identifiable walking loop.



PREMIUM RIDING AND ROLLING NETWORK

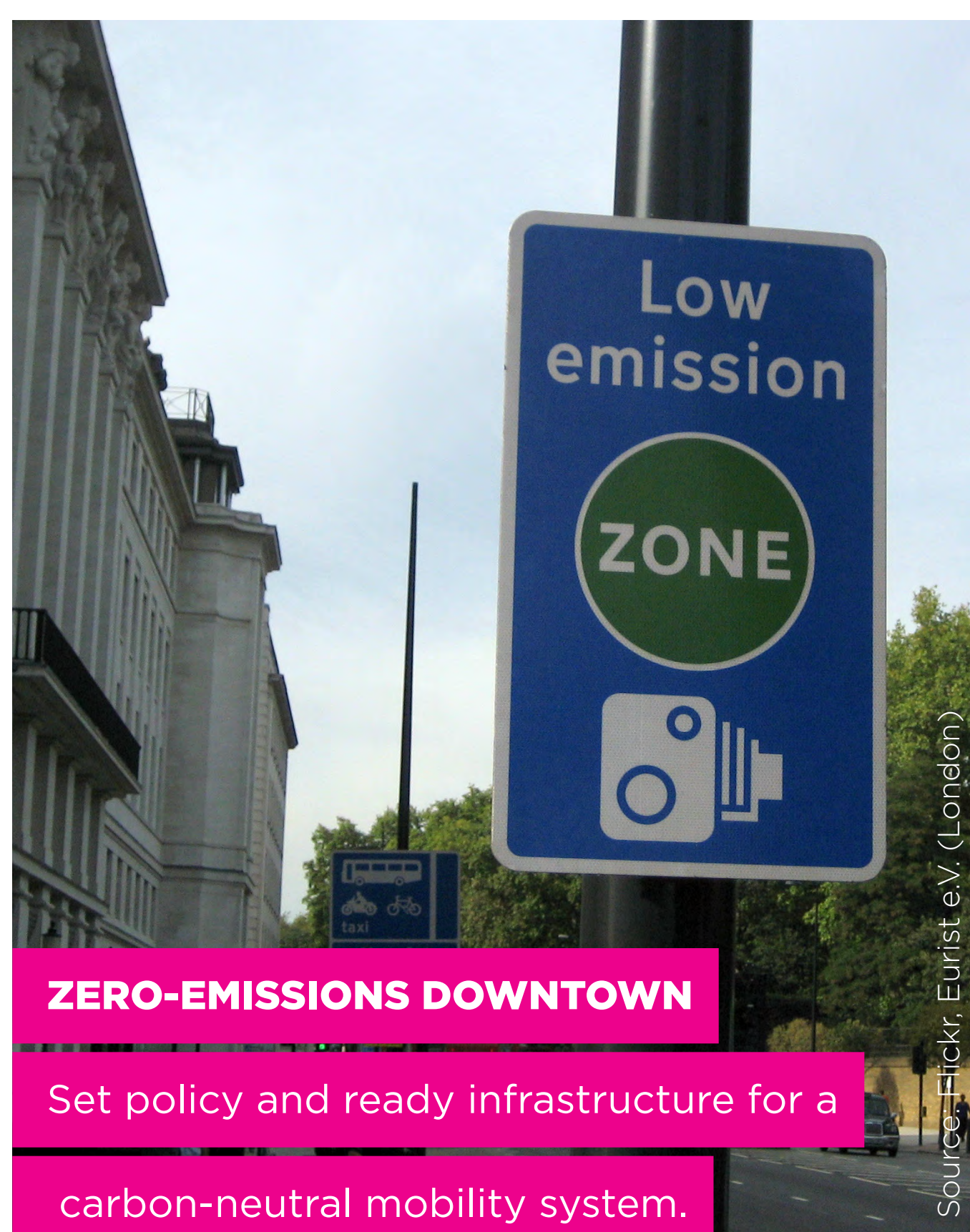
Investment in a fully protected and fully-connected bike network makes riding and rolling fun, safe and dignified for all people of varying abilities, races, backgrounds, and means.



ENHANCE THE 3RD AVE TRANSIT SPINE

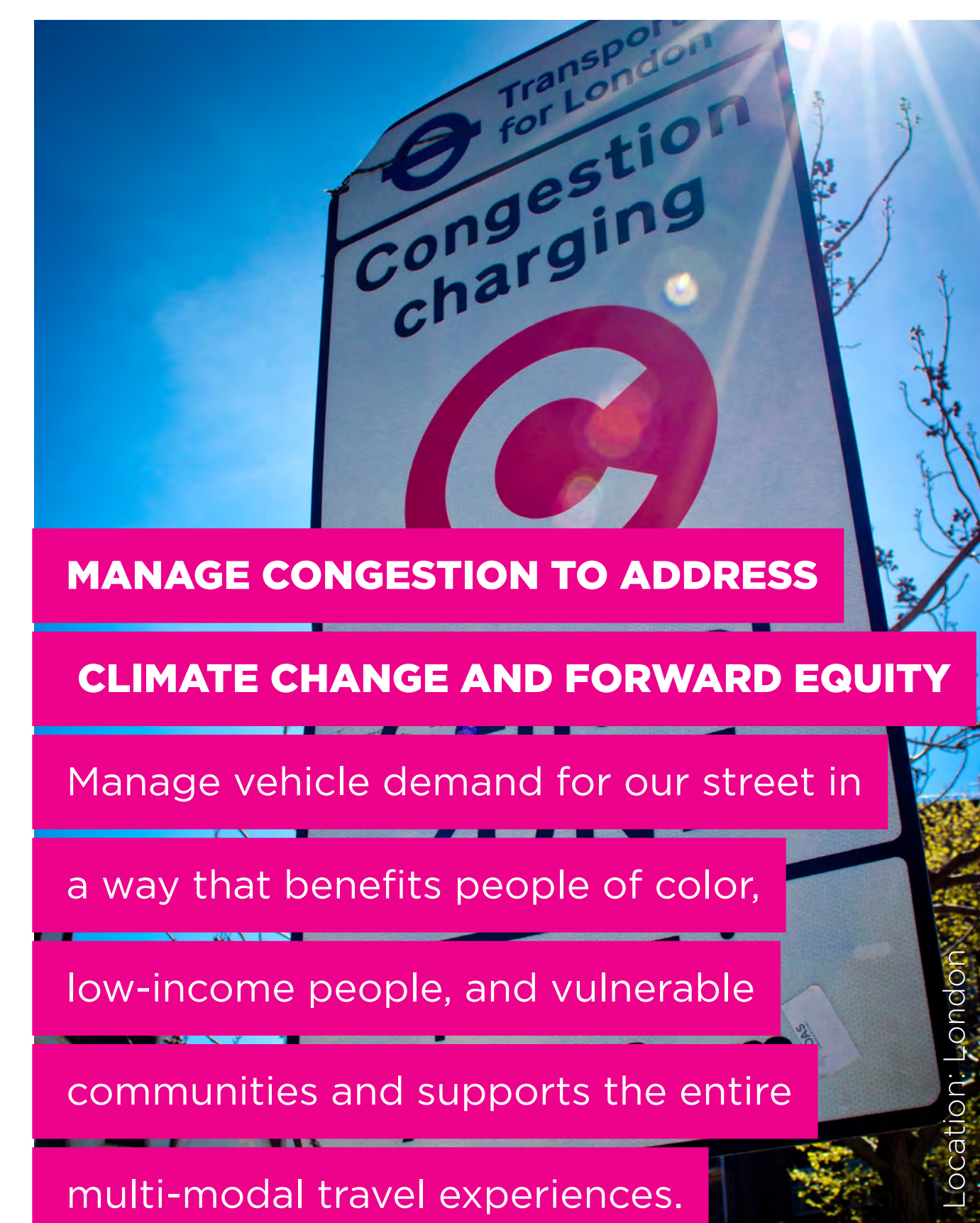
Transit users feel welcome on a great street that is safe, active, and functional

2 SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE STREETS



ZERO-EMISSIONS DOWNTOWN

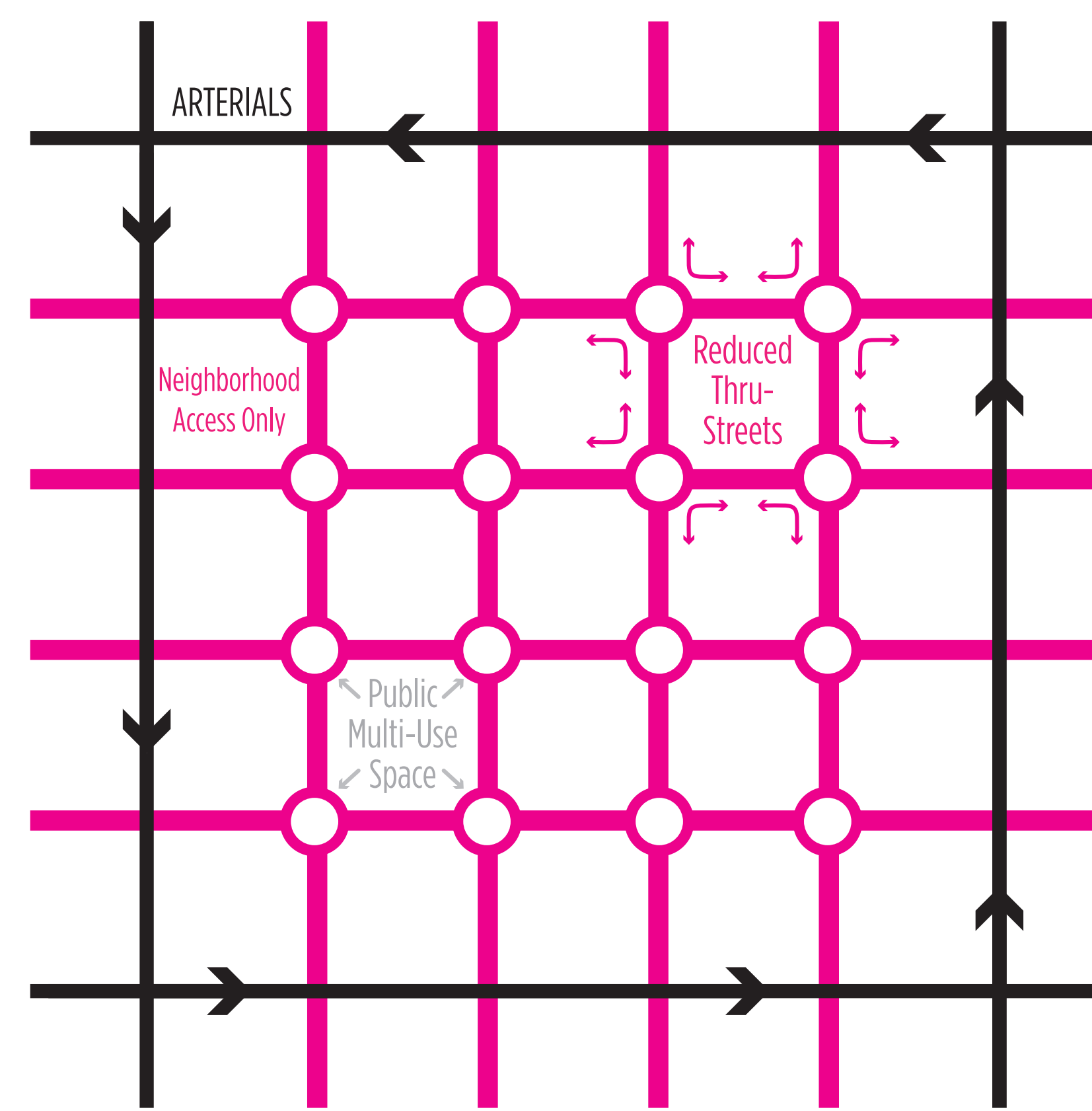
Set policy and ready infrastructure for a carbon-neutral mobility system.



MANAGE CONGESTION TO ADDRESS

CLIMATE CHANGE AND FORWARD EQUITY

Manage vehicle demand for our street in a way that benefits people of color, low-income people, and vulnerable communities and supports the entire multi-modal travel experiences.



DEVELOP PEDESTRIAN BLOCKS, DISTRICTS AND FOSSIL FUEL FREE STREETS

Our streets prioritize people and in doing so, reduce our impact on the planet.

3 MAKING NEW MOBILITY WORK FOR US



READY STREETS FOR MICROMOBILITY

Priority corridors are designed to support people cycling and using micro-mobility at multiple speeds (e.g., 0-10 mph lane, 10-20 mph lane).

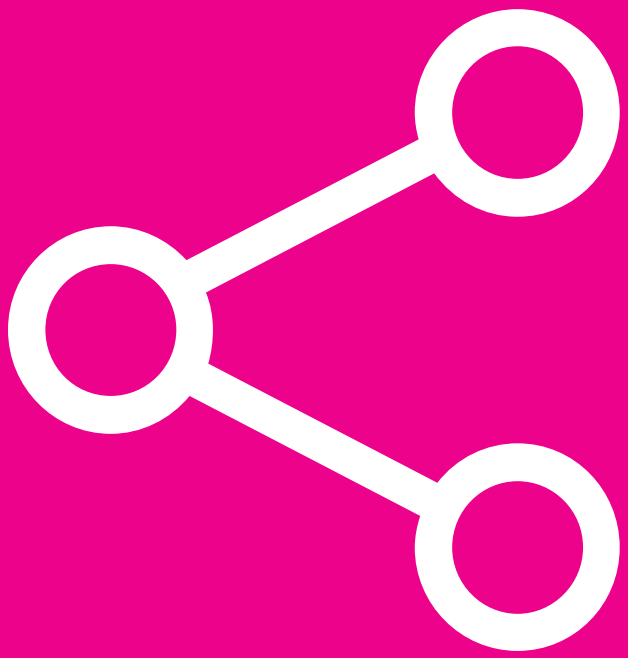


NEIGHBORHOOD GOODS DELIVERY HUBS

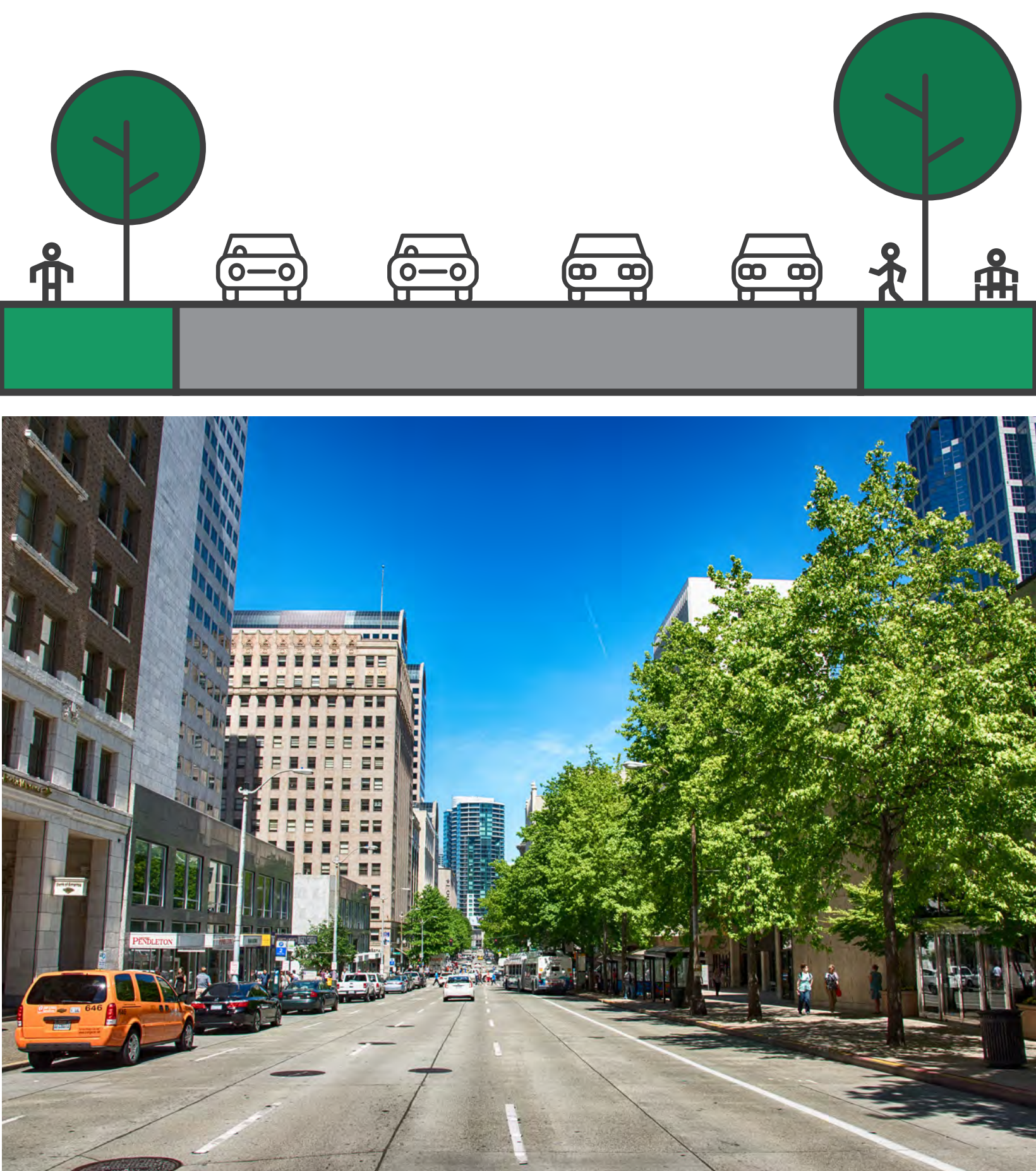
Personal goods delivery is connected with transit stations and civic hubs.

STREETS THAT WORK, STREETS WE LOVE

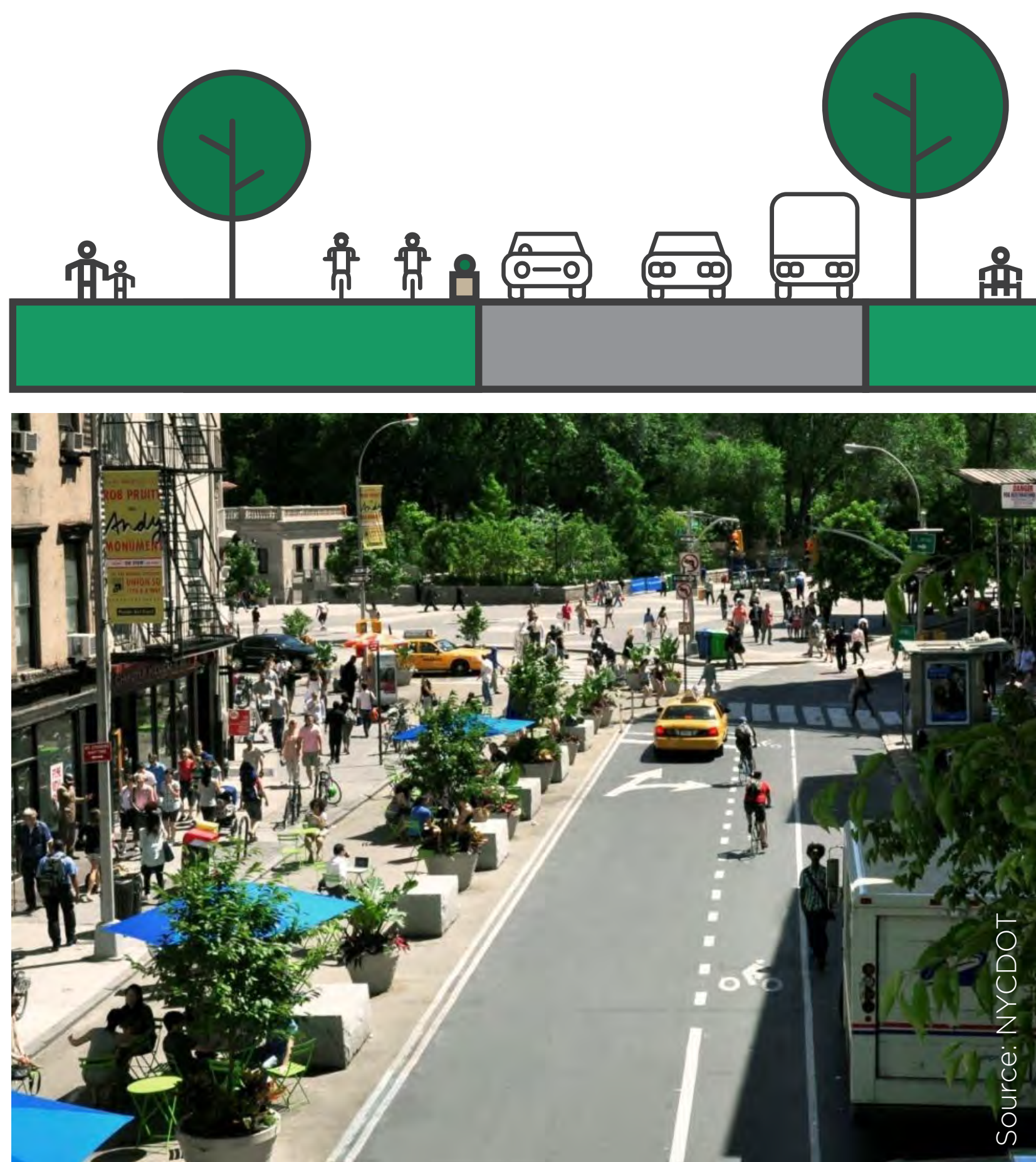
PEOPLE-FIRST STREETS ILLUSTRATED



EXISTING



ENHANCED
PEDESTRIAN STREET



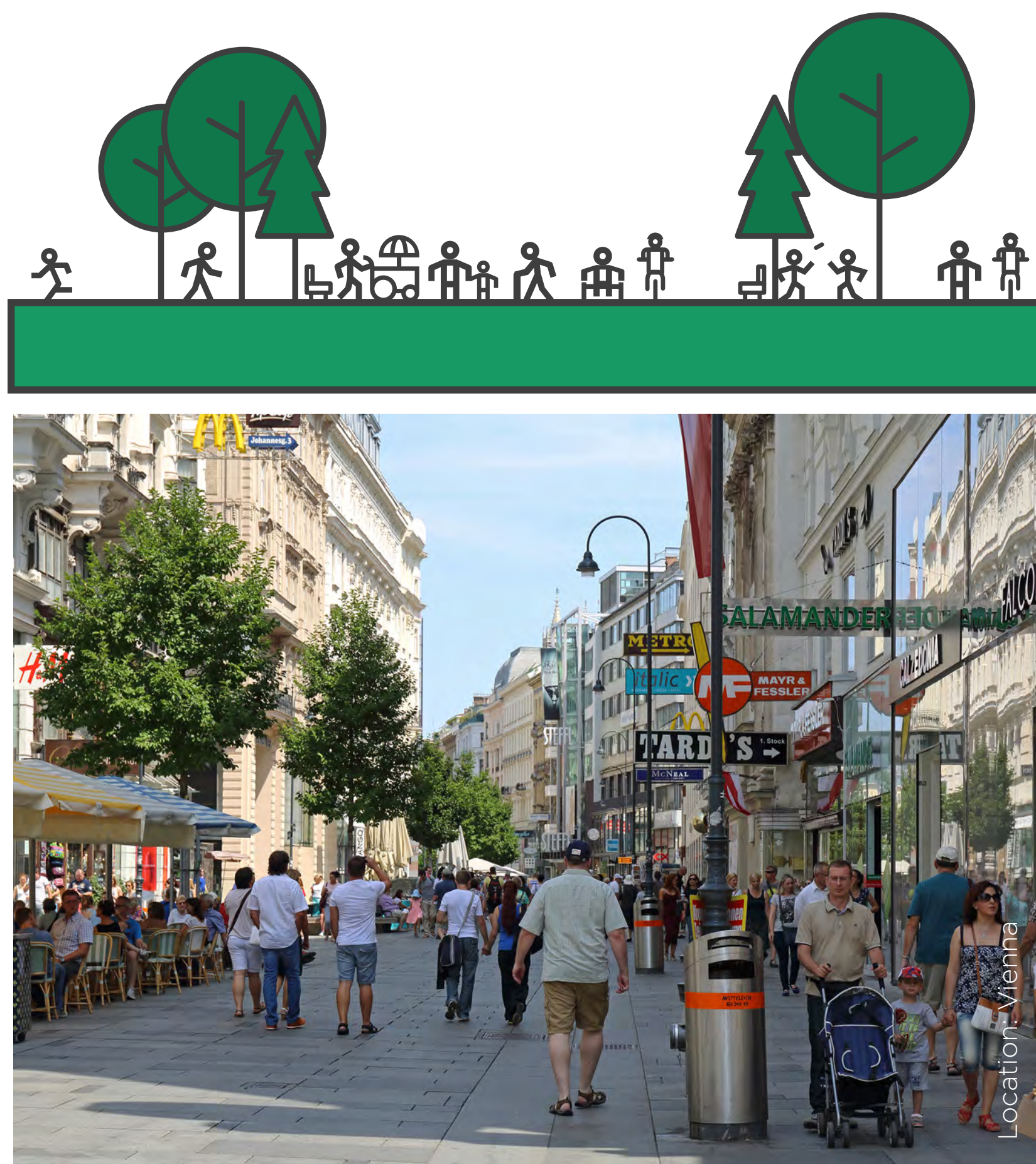
TRANSIT STREET



PLACE STREET



PEDESTRIAN-ONLY
PROMENADE



65%

PERCENTAGE
OF RIGHT OF WAY

35%

MOVEMENT

PLACE & PEDESTRIAN COMFORT

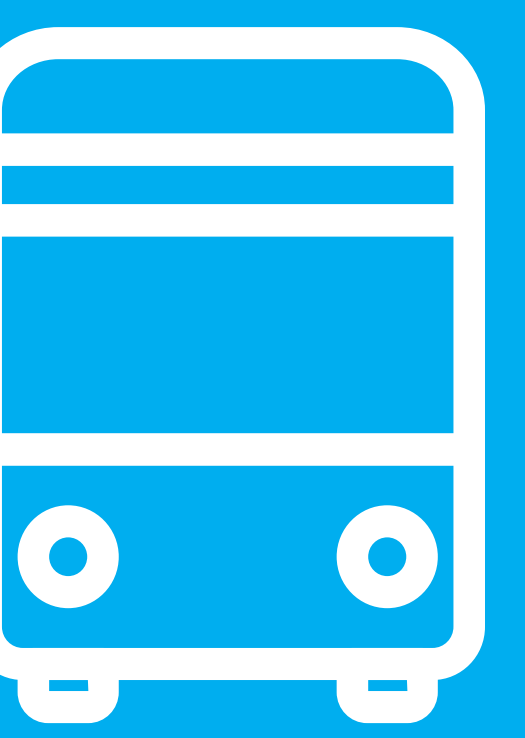
5%

PERCENTAGE
OF RIGHT OF WAY

95%

STREET PRIORITY

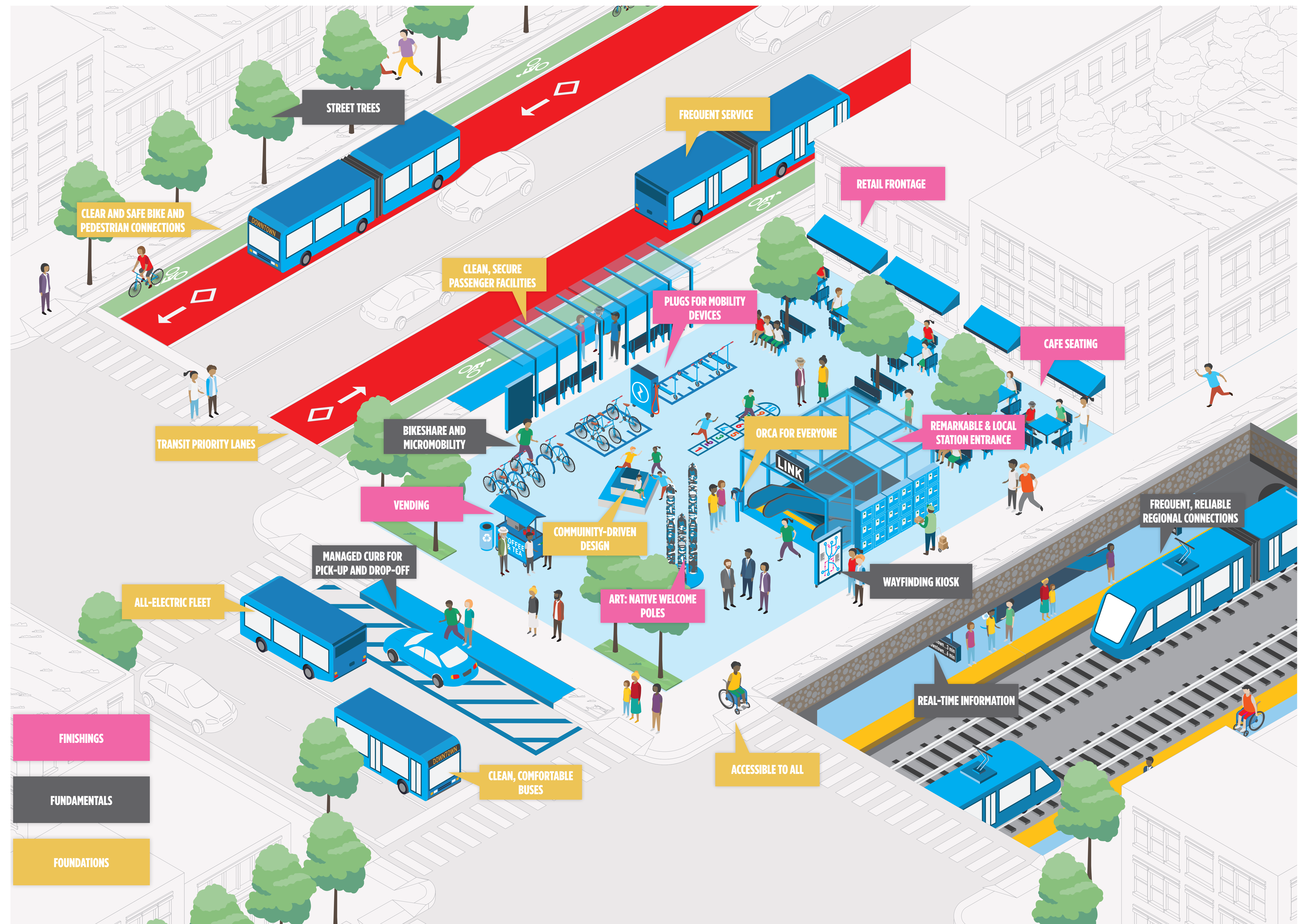
EXCELLENT TRANSIT EXPERIENCE



People prefer transit to access and travel within Greater Downtown

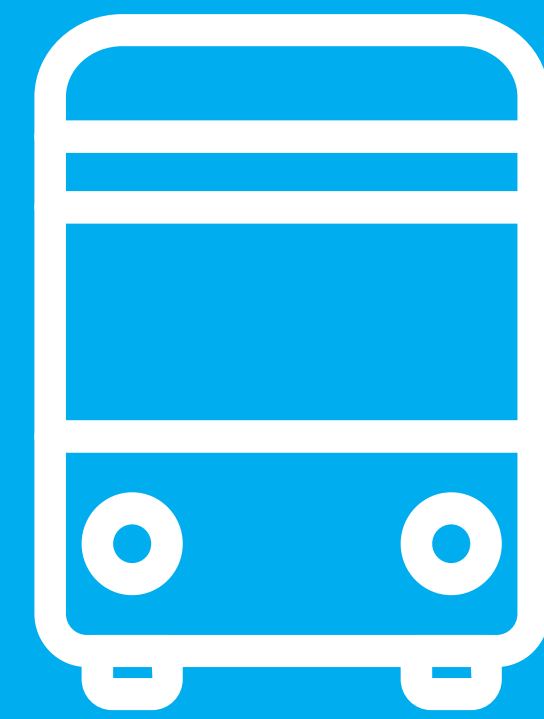
VISION

- In 2035 Seattle's transit system is known as the highest quality, and most reliable in the United States.
- Seattle's transit service is used by everyone—all income levels, all races, all ages, and all abilities.
- Transit is one of the city's greatest social and cultural asset. Transit facilities are celebrated as lively communal spaces, where people meet, congregate, and socialize. These places reflect the communities they serve and are models for user-centered design.
- Amenities, arts culture and commerce make transit a truly enjoyable travel option.

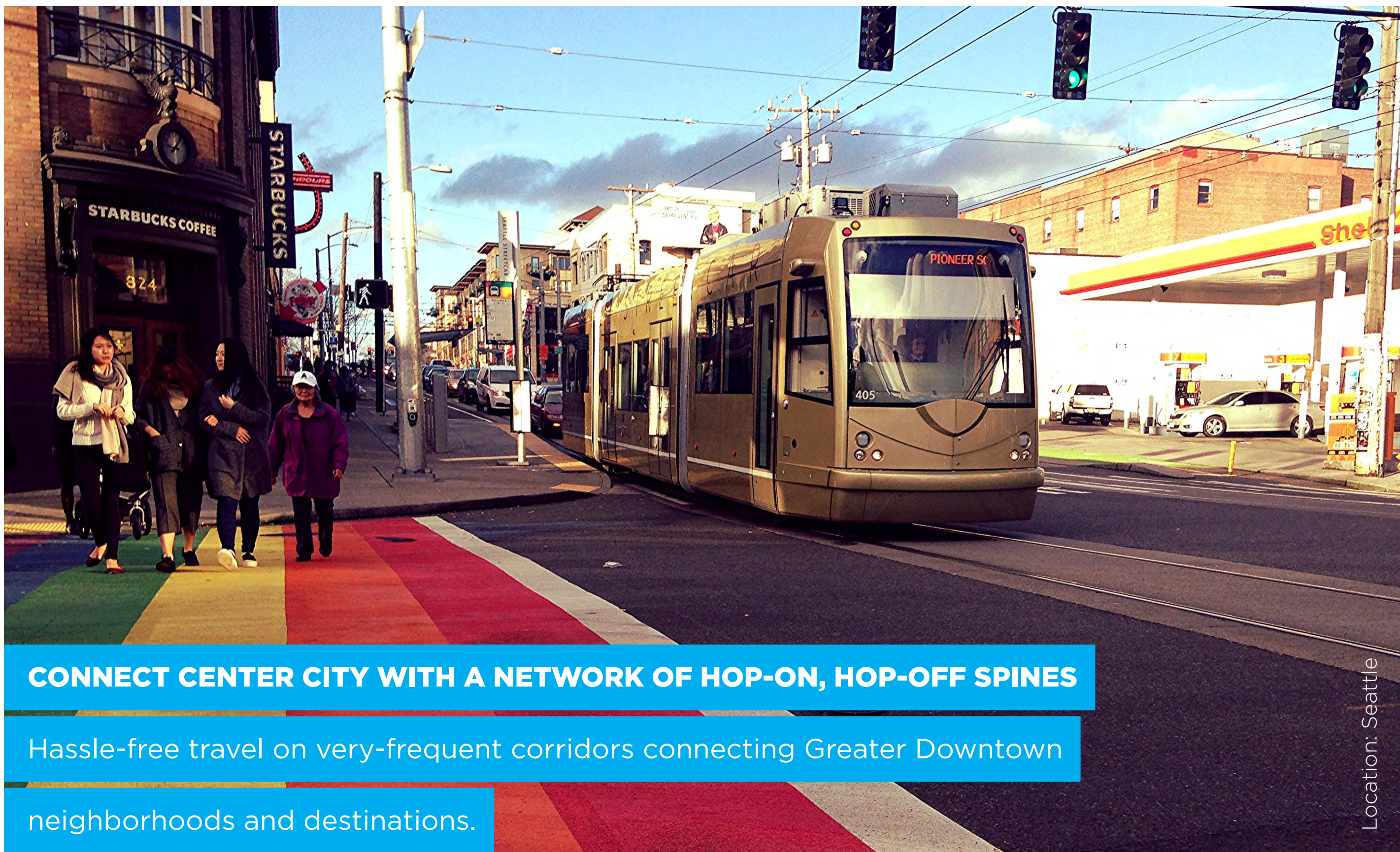


EXCELLENT TRANSIT EXPERIENCE

THE ELEMENTS



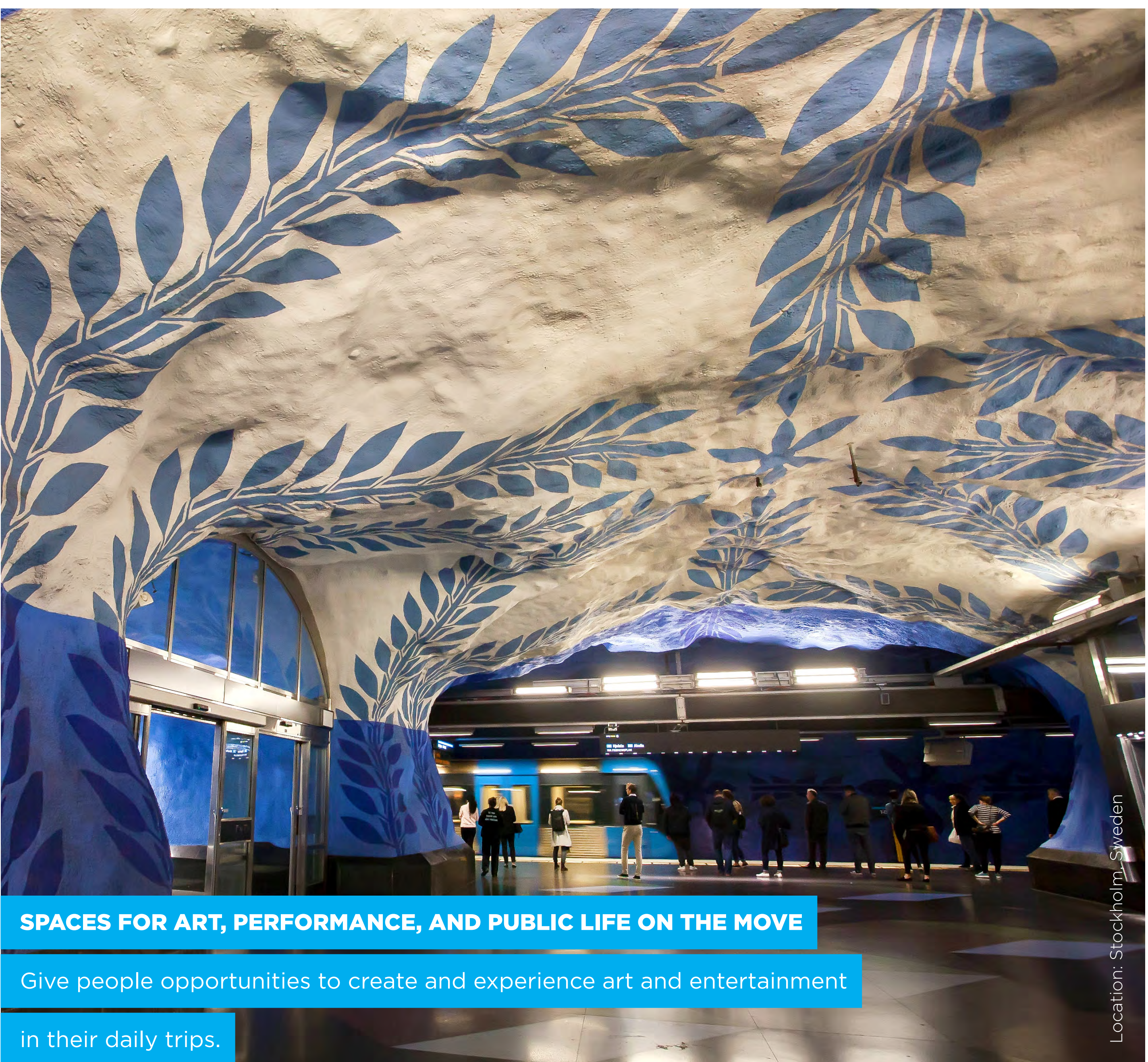
1 FOUNDATION: FREQUENT, RELIABLE TRANSIT



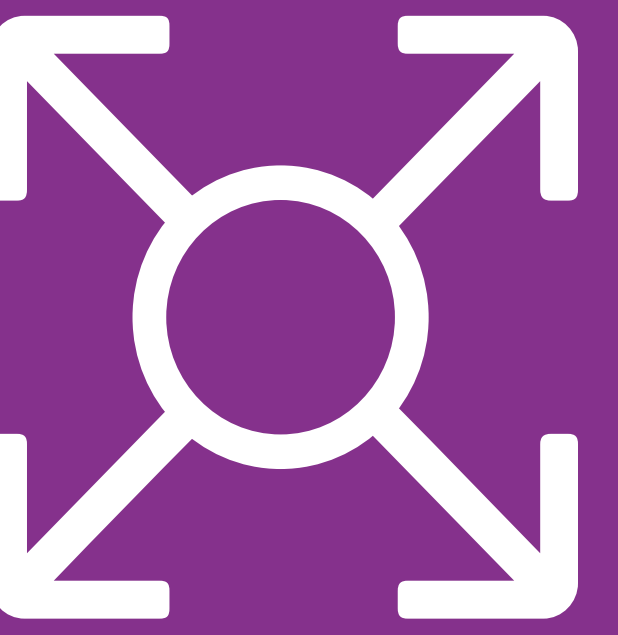
2 FUNDAMENTALS: PEOPLE CENTERED TRANSIT



3 FINISHES: EXCEPTIONAL TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS



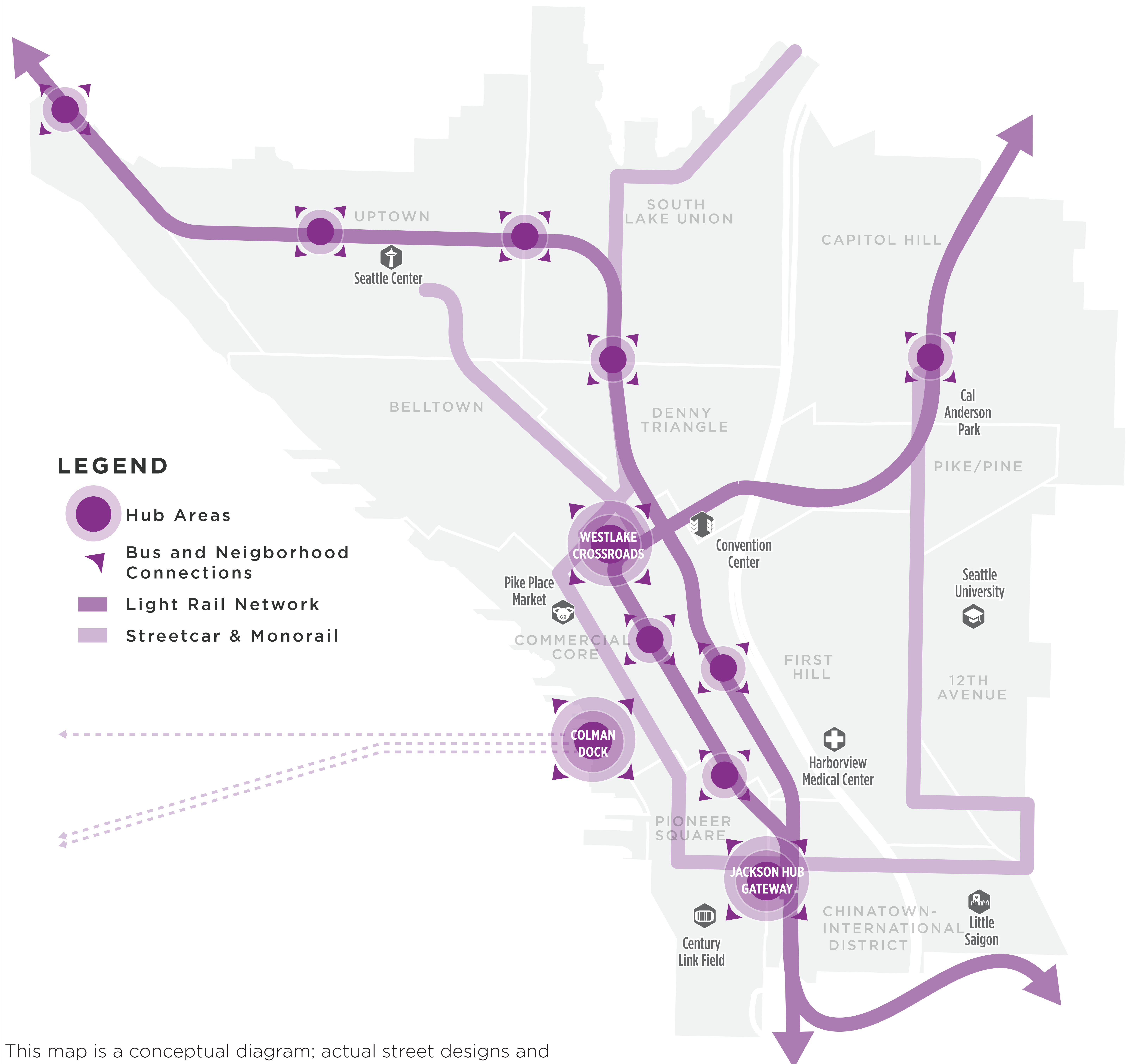
MAJOR HUBS, GREAT PLACES



Celebrate culture and arrival, create seamless mobility connections, and reinforce the gateway portals to Greater Downtown

VISION

- Our hubs are celebrated places of arrival, equal in experience for people staying and passing through.
- Every major hub offers people-centered amenities and services for local neighbors as well as visitors and transit users.
- Each major hub has intuitive connections among every mode of travel.
- Hubs are welcoming, communal places that celebrate everyone regardless of their language, means, or familiarity with Greater Downtown.

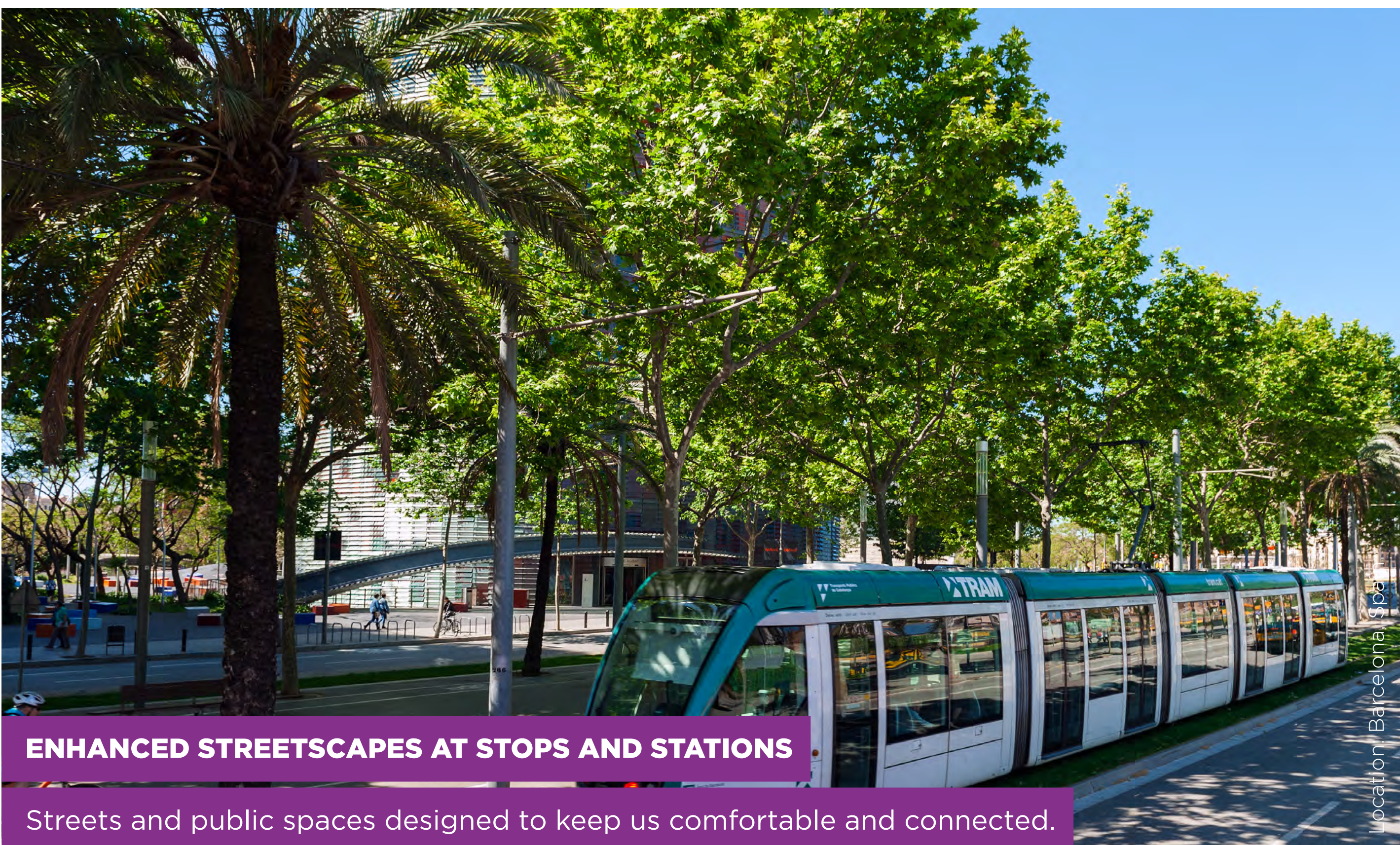


This map is a conceptual diagram; actual street designs and locations are pending future detailed analysis

MAJOR HUBS, GREAT PLACES

THE ELEMENTS

1 INTEGRATED NETWORK OF HUBS



2 JACKSON HUB GATEWAY



3 WESTLAKE CROSSROADS

