



Puget Sound Regional Council

Funding Application

Competition	Regional FHWA
Application Type	Designated Growth Centers
Status	submitted
Submitted:	April 8th, 2024 7:35 AM
Prepopulated with screening form?	No

Project Information

- Project Title**
Harrison & Mercer Transit Access Project
- Regional Transportation Plan ID**
5801
- Sponsoring Agency**
Seattle
- Cosponsors**
N/A
- Does the sponsoring agency have "Certification Acceptance" status from WSDOT?**
Yes
- If not, which agency will serve as your CA sponsor?**
N/A

Contact Information

- Contact name**
Jim Storment
- Contact phone**
12066845013
- Contact email**
jim.storment@seattle.gov

Project Description

- Project Scope**
The Harrison & Mercer Transit Access Project (HMTAP) will design and implement a new transit corridor that will be reliable for future transit service along Mercer St, Harrison St, and several connecting corridors within and between the Uptown and South Lake Union (SLU) Regional Growth Centers. The corridor will provide direct transit access to the future SLU Light Rail Station. The HMTAP will construct a wide variety of improvements to support transit service, which may include trolley wire infrastructure, bus lanes, lane markings, pavement restoration, signal optimization for transit, bus stops and bus stop amenities, and improvements to the public realm that will facilitate a transit- and pedestrian prioritized street.

2. Project Justification, Need, or Purpose

There is high demand for east-west bus service in the project area as illustrated by Metro's Route 8 all day, frequent, high-ridership service on Queen Anne Ave N, 1st Ave N, and Denny Way. Existing transit corridors are often congested, and transit riders regularly experience delays, especially along Denny Way during peak periods. This extremely congested corridor creates hundreds of hours of delay for transit riders each day, and significantly reduces the attractiveness of transit in this area. However, the level of development in this area has precluded road widening and ensured that buses must inch along in peak period congestion - which typically lasts many hours each day. With the removal of the Battery St Tunnel and the Alaskan Way Viaduct, we are finally able to create a new east-west transit connection through South Lake Union and across the former SR-99 roadway. A Harrison St transit corridor would provide an additional east-west pathway for buses to travel reliably across South Lake Union (SLU) - connecting to the new South Lake Union light rail station, which will serve approximately 10,500 riders per day, as well as key employment and cultural destinations in the area.

Several existing and potential peak-period regional routes could use this corridor in the future for local access into SLU from destinations across the county and the region. Metro has planned a future RapidRide line that would run along this corridor and extend east-west across Seattle, but RapidRide service and other transit routes for this area would depend on an additional pathway other than heavily congested adjacent corridors. The segment between 5th Ave N and Dexter Ave N would connect directly to the SLU Link Station as part of Sound Transit light rail expansion, further increasing the connectivity, efficiency, and reliability of transit through this area.

Project Location

1. Project Location

Harrison St, Mercer St, and connecting corridors as depicted by the "limit of work" shown on the attached map

2. Please identify the county(ies) in which the project is located. (Select all that apply.)

King

3. Crossroad/landmark nearest the beginning of the project

NA

4. Crossroad/landmark nearest the end of the project

NA

5. Map and project graphics

HarrisonTransit_PSRC.pdf

Local Plan Consistency

1. Is the project specifically identified in a local comprehensive plan?

No

2. If yes, please indicate the (1) plan name(s), (2) relevant section(s), and (3) page number(s) where the relevant information can be found.

N/A

3. If no, please describe how the project is consistent with the applicable local comprehensive plan(s), including specific local policies and provisions the project supports. In addition, for a transit project please describe how the project is consistent with a transit agency plan or state plan.

Seattle's Comprehensive Plan speaks extensively to the need for attractive, high-quality transit services to meet the city's goals - especially within our dense and fast-growing urban centers. The following excerpts demonstrate this commitment to transit to improve mobility, air quality, equity, and the overall livability of our city and region.

Seattle's strategy for accommodating future growth and creating a sustainable and equitable city builds on the foundation of its many diverse neighborhoods and aims to create a better city by providing

- a variety of housing options,
- locations for employment growth,
- walkable communities with good transit access (page 21)

GS 1.7 Promote levels of density, mixed-uses, and transit improvements in urban centers and

villages that will support walking, biking, and use of public transportation. (page 24)

T 1.2 Improve transportation connections to urban centers and villages from all Seattle neighborhoods, particularly by providing a variety of affordable travel options (pedestrian, transit, and bicycle facilities) and by being attentive to the needs of vulnerable and marginalized communities. (page 74)

T 2.15 Create vibrant public spaces in and near the right-of-way that foster social interaction, promote access to walking, bicycling, and transit options, and enhance the public realm. (page 78)

Transit, bicycling, walking, and shared transportation services reduce collisions, stress, noise, and air pollution, while increasing social contact, economic vitality, affordability, and overall health. They also help use right-of-way space more efficiently and at lower costs. The best way to get Seattleites to take advantage of these options is to make them easy choices for people of all ages and abilities. (page 78)

Some people in the city have fewer options for travel. For instance, we know from the American Community Survey that roughly a quarter of all households of color in Seattle, including a third of black households, do not have a motor vehicle at home. Research by King County found that people in households with incomes under \$35,000 are much more likely than others to rely on transit for all their transportation needs. Providing more transit options for these communities is one way the City can use its transportation planning to improve race and social equity in the city. (page 79)

T 3.10 Provide high-quality pedestrian, bicycle, and bus transit access to high-capacity transit stations, in order to support transit ridership and reduce single-occupant vehicle trips. (page 84)

QA-G8 Queen Anne is a community that encourages access to a wide range of transportation modes. (page 371, please note that the Uptown Regional Growth Center is typically referred to as the Queen Anne neighborhood within our Comprehensive Plan)

QA-P7 Seek to establish high-capacity transit/multimodal node(s) in the urban center that will be centrally located and convenient to residents, businesses, and Seattle Center. (page 372)

QA-P29 Strive to diversify transportation modes and emphasize non-SOV travel within the Queen Anne neighborhood. (page 373)

SLU-G6 A livable, walkable community that is well served by transit and easy to get around by foot, bike, or transit.

SLU-G7 A transportation system that provides safe, convenient access to businesses, residences, and other activities in the neighborhood. (page 391)

SLU-P17 Work with transit agencies to provide transit service to and through South Lake Union to meet growing demand and changing markets. (page 391)

SLU-P18 Promote a system of safe pedestrian and bicycle connections linking key activity areas and destinations, such as open spaces, schools, and arts facilities. (page 391)

SLU-P19 Collaborate with businesses, developers, housing providers, and transit providers to reduce demand for automobile trips by making transit and other alternative modes attractive choices for residents and commuters. (page 391)

In addition to our Comprehensive Plan, our adopted Transit Master Plan specifically describes the need for improvements on Harrison St: "Figure 3-12 illustrates key surface transit service improvements in the Center City, including... New service operating east-west between Uptown and South Lake Union on Harrison Street to be implemented once the SR 99 Tunnel is operational and the grid is restored." (page 3-75)

Federal Functional Classification

1. **Functional class name**

00 Not applicable (transit, enhancements, Etc.)

Support for Centers

1. **Describe the relationship of the project to the center(s) it is intended to support. Identify the designated regional growth or manufacturing/industrial center(s) and whether or not the project is located within the center or along a corridor connecting to the center(s).**

The HMTAP is located within the Uptown and South Lake Union Regional Growth Centers. It also supports growth and development in various other nearby regional centers via direct and frequent bus connections (including the adjacent Downtown Seattle and Capitol Hill Regional Growth Centers) and via improved light rail connections to centers throughout the region (including the Lynnwood, Northgate, Duwamish, North Tukwila, and Seatac regional centers).

Identification of Population Groups

1. **Using the resources provided in the Call for Projects, identify the equity populations (i.e. Equity Focus Areas (EFAs)) to be served by the project with**

supportive data. PSRC's defined equity populations are: people of color, people with low incomes, older adults, youth, people with disabilities, and people with Limited English Proficiency.

The census tracts surrounding this corridor are primarily non-residential, and the project's greatest benefit is to people who travel to this neighborhood from throughout the region and converge at the destinations within the transit corridor's walkshed or bikeshed: destinations such as employers, schools, events, and services. The relatively small residential population along the corridor is highly varied in regard to Equity Focus Areas (EFAs). Some EFAs are in line with regional averages (including people with disabilities, people with limited English proficiency, and people with low incomes). Some are below regional averages (including youth and older adults); the residential population is predominantly working age. However, people of color are considerably above regional averages: 41% to 50% in the three surrounding census tracts, compared to our regional average of 35.9%. In addition, the communities nearer the east end of the project site are also identified as an Intersectional Equity Focus Area due to its high rankings for both people of color and low-income populations. These residents in particular are considerably more likely to be transit-dependent and to rely heavily on the project's benefits for transit travel time and reliability, safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and personal safety improvements such as roadway lighting and transit stop amenities.

However, the populations that directly benefit from this project are certainly not confined to the surrounding communities. King County Metro Route 8 currently carries workers from throughout Seattle and the region - including nearby communities in Madison Valley, the Central District, and Judkins Park - to jobs in the Uptown and South Lake Union areas. Long term, light rail will increasingly fill the same role for this RGC. Uptown hosts approximately 14,000 jobs according to PSRC's Regional Centers Monitoring Report, including more than 7,000 service jobs: frequently lower-paying jobs in the restaurant, retail, and hospitality industries. The adjacent South Lake Union RGC, which shares many of the same transit connections, hosts 15,000 service jobs. Many of the nearby residential communities that support the lower-paying jobs in these centers show much higher proportions of our region's EFAs, including 64% to 79% people of color in the Central District (approximately a mile away), 54% lower income in the Yesler Terrace area (1.3 miles), and 41% limited English proficiency in the Chinatown International District (1.5 miles).

2. **Further identify the MOST impacted or marginalized populations within the project area. For example, areas with a higher percentage of both people of color and people with low incomes, and/or other areas of intersectionality across equity populations. These intersections with equity populations may also include areas with low access to opportunity, areas disproportionately impacted by pollution, etc.**

The lower-income populations that fill the 22,000 service-oriented jobs along this corridor are our primary Equity Focus Area. Regardless of whether they live along the corridor, or they're forced to commute from remote neighborhoods to find more affordable housing options, these workers are expected to benefit the most from the project's enhancements to transit efficiency, comfort, and safety. More specifically, these employees are far more likely to perform shift work and to depend on transit services regardless of when their shift may start or end. Their ability to access quick and reliable bus connections, as well as safe ways to walk to a bus stop and wait there, are substantial improvements to their daily commute trips and their other necessary trips in this area.

Criteria: Development of Regional Growth Center

1. **Describe how the project will support the existing and planned housing/employment densities in the regional growth center.**

Seattle's 2021 Urban Center / Village Housing Unit Growth Report forecasts that the Uptown and South Lake Union Regional Growth Centers (RGCs) will grow by approximately 3,000 units and 7,500 units respectively by 2035. The projected increase in housing units for South Lake Union is the largest increase of any of the City's Urban Centers or Urban Villages. The Uptown RGC is also one of the top projected growth centers for the city. The City's Comprehensive Plan Employment Growth Report forecasts equally robust growth in employment, with 17,500 additional jobs anticipated in these two RGCs combined by 2035. These jobs will be filled by not only the populations living in these two RGCs, but also by employees from throughout the region who will commute into the employment centers. These RGCs are unique within the City of Seattle in that they both include "one of a kind" activity generators. Uptown is home to the Seattle Center with a newly completed Climate Pledge Arena, which hosts over 200 major events per year, in addition to events hosted at other Seattle Center venues. As a national and international tourist destination, Seattle Center receives well over 10 million visitors per year. South Lake Union has become a hub for new industries, particularly the technology and biotechnology industries.

Denny Way currently experiences very high levels of congestion and travel delay during peak commute times. With the removal of the Battery St Tunnel, in conjunction with the removal of the Alaskan Way Viaduct, Seattle and King County Metro see an opportunity to create a new east-west connection through South Lake Union and across the former SR 99 roadway. A Harrison St transit corridor would allow buses to travel a more reliable path across South Lake Union and along Fairview Ave N, running closer to more of the key employment and cultural destinations in the area as well as the new light rail station. Improvements along Harrison St and Mercer Ave could help address challenges with existing routes, and would better situate our urban centers to accommodate forecasted population and job growth.

2. Describe how the project will support the development/redevelopment plans and activities of the center.

As described above, this area is expected to see rapid growth by 2035: approximately 17,000 new jobs and a similar number of new residents. To accommodate this growth while preserving our region's vision of compact communities and improved air quality, King County Metro and PSRC's Regional Transportation Plan identify the project segments as a future RapidRide line connecting Interbay to Madison Park via Capitol Hill. This project would improve the attractiveness of transit to regional growth centers along this corridor, including the Uptown and South Lake Union RGCs.

Seattle's Comprehensive Plan speaks extensively to transportation development in the city and outlines steps to move us closer to our goals. For example, policy T 1.2 identifies the need to "Improve transportation connections to urban centers and villages from all Seattle neighborhoods, particularly by providing a variety of affordable travel options (pedestrian, transit, and bicycle facilities) and by being attentive to the needs of vulnerable and marginalized communities." The 2035 work trip mode share target (percentage of work trips made by travel modes other than driving alone) for the Uptown and South Lake Union centers are 60% and 80% respectively. The 2035 non-work trip mode share target is 85% for both Uptown and for South Lake Union. By improving transit access, and making upgrades to the pedestrian realm, we are able to make substantial progress on these mode share targets.

Transit, bicycling, walking, and shared transportation services reduce collisions, stress, noise, and air pollution, while increasing social contact, economic vitality, affordability, and overall health. They also help us use right-of-way space more efficiently and at lower costs. Our Comprehensive Plan describes that the best way to get Seattleites to take advantage of these travel options is to make them easy choices for people of all ages and abilities. The Seattle Comprehensive Plan also includes Neighborhood Plans that prioritize transit and other low-impact travel modes. The Queen Anne (Uptown) neighborhood plan and the South Lake Union neighborhood plan outline goals and policies to help implement each neighborhood's goals. Transportation-related goals and policies include these:

Uptown (identified as the Queen Anne center in our Comprehensive Plan)

- QA-P7 Seek to establish high-capacity transit/multimodal node(s) in the urban center that will be centrally located and convenient to residents, businesses, and Seattle Center.
- QA-P29 Strive to diversify transportation modes and emphasize non-SOV travel within the Queen Anne neighborhood.

South Lake Union

- SLU-G6 A livable, walkable community that is well served by transit and easy to get around by foot, bike, or transit.
- SLU-G7 A transportation system that provides safe, convenient access to businesses, residences, and other activities in the neighborhood.
- SLU-P17 Work with transit agencies to provide transit service to and through South Lake Union to meet growing demand and changing markets
- SLU-P18 Promote a system of safe pedestrian and bicycle connections linking key activity areas and destinations, such as open spaces, schools, and arts facilities.
- SLU-P19 Collaborate with businesses, developers, housing providers, and transit providers to reduce demand for automobile trips by making transit and other alternative modes attractive choices for residents and commuters.

The Harrison and Mercer corridor is also considered a transit priority in the North Downtown Mobility Action Plan (NODO MAP). The purpose of the NODO MAP is to support access and livability in North Downtown, which includes the Uptown, Belltown, and South Lake Union neighborhoods. The plan builds on existing community planning efforts, and it identifies and prioritizes transportation improvements for all modes. Within this plan, "Harrison St is envisioned as a transit pathway providing new east-west transit connections and a mobility hub at the intersection of high-capacity transit lines at the future north portal." A key transit-related theme from the NODO MAP's outreach process is to "Improve east-west transit service and reliability between Uptown, SLU and Capitol Hill." In our outreach, community members often expressed frustration with delays on Route 8 along Denny Way. With completion of the SR 99 tunnel, Harrison St can function as a new transitway that alleviates these issues, provides desirable east-west transit connections, and also allows seamless connections to north-south light rail service. The Sound Transit Ballard Extension, which is currently in the planning phase, includes stops in South Lake Union and at Seattle Center. Station location options for the South Lake Union station are on Harrison St Mercer St;

Harrison St is the current preferred option but the HMTAP corridor would provide excellent connections to either site. Prioritizing Harrison St and Mercer St for transit would allow better connections within the RGCs to connect to the larger light rail regional transportation system.

3. Describe how the project will support the establishment of new jobs/businesses or the retention of existing jobs/businesses including those in the industry clusters identified in the adopted regional economic strategy. In addition, describe how the project supports a diversity of business types and sizes within the community.

The project location supports many of the region's economically critical "industry clusters," as defined by the Regional Economic Strategy. Business Services, Information Technology, Life Sciences and Global Health, Philanthropies, and Tourism and Visitors clusters are all served by Mercer St and Harrison St and the key connections from this corridor. A Harrison St transit corridor would allow buses to travel a more reliable path across South Lake Union and along Fairview Ave N, running closer to more of the key employment and cultural destinations in the area. Several existing and potential peak-period regional routes from destinations including Northeast Seattle, SR 522 corridor, I-405 North corridor, and Renton could also use this corridor for local access into SLU from destinations across the county. By improving east-west reliability for transit and providing connections to other key corridors in Seattle, residents from across the city will have increased access to existing and emerging jobs and businesses in these two RGCs.

One key employer in the project vicinity is Amazon, which has more than 60,000 employees in the region. Amazon provides free transit passes to all employees and 50% of its employees use public transportation or carpooling options. Additionally, more than 20% of its employees walk or bike to work, with Amazon offering \$170 a month to help offset costs related to cycling to work. Additionally, Climate Pledge Arena and its event hosts encourage event attendees to consider their transportation choices to and from the arena. The arena has partnered with local transportation providers, such as the Seattle Monorail, to encourage alternative transportation options. It's clear that employers in the area, as well as other major trip generators and economic income generators, are thinking about how to incorporate transit, walking, and biking as viable transportation options and to make their business more attractive to employees and patrons.

4. Describe how the project will benefit a variety of user groups, including commuters, residents, and/or commercial users and the movement of freight.

Population and employment in South Lake Union and the Denny Triangle have recently been growing at an exponential rate. The two census tracts that cover this neighborhood took in nearly 10 percent of Seattle's total population growth in the 2010s, more than doubling the number of residents here. Jobs in the area are also growing quickly. Some of the largest employers in the area include Facebook, Google, Amazon, and Fred Hutchinson. Amazon alone employs 45,000 people in the greater downtown area, most centered within their South Lake Union campus. Meanwhile, Facebook is occupying a 1 million square foot development at Dexter and Harrison. Per data from the Puget Sound Regional Council, employment in South Lake Union has been growing at a rate of over 12% per year since 2010. It was already one of the largest employment hubs in our region, and if this trend continued, South Lake Union would soon rival the downtown core and far surpass all of our region's other employment hubs. Finally, motorists and freight operators along the highly congested Denny Way corridor will benefit from improved operations along this Principal Arterial Corridor. Denny Way normally serves up to 38,000 ADT (pre-pandemic data), and it's classified as a T-3 freight route. The project's multimodal emphasis, as well as its location within our region's densest and fastest-growing centers, ensure that it will serve local residents and short-range commuters, visitors and long-range commuters, and critical freight movements that support the homes and businesses along the corridor.

5. Describe how project expands job access

For many lower-income workers and families, transit access is a lifeline. Affordable commute options are critical, and transit in this area is available for a fraction of the cost of owning and operating a private vehicle. For example, a monthly ORCA pass (with unlimited access to Sound Transit and King County Metro) costs less than the typical monthly cost of parking near the HMTAP corridor. The monthly ORCA pass can cost up to \$189, although lower rates are available for many users, while parking costs average \$300 to \$350 per month. Of course, parking costs are only one small element of drive-alone expenses, along with vehicle purchase, required maintenance, fuel, insurance, and much more. The ability to use safe and reliable transit options in these communities drops the average annual commute cost from around \$11,000 to \$1,300, a remarkable savings. But transit options are only possible for many commuters if buses are frequent, reliable, and safe. The HMTAP significantly advances each of these goals by improving the travel time and reliability of existing routes, creating better connections to light rail, enabling a future RapidRide line that would use the corridor, and allowing safe and comfortable to transit services via walk, bike, scooter, wheelchair, or other similar modes.

Criteria: Mobility and Accessibility

- 1. Describe how the project improves access to major destinations within the center, such as by completing a physical gap or providing an essential link in the transportation network for people and/or goods, or providing a range of travel modes or a missing mode.**

For King County Metro Route 8, which currently operates on Denny Way between Fairview Ave N and Queen Anne Ave N, passengers experience an average of 825 hours of delay per weekday. By converting Harrison St into a roadway that can support transit, there will be an additional east-west corridor to improve transit reliability. This corridor could serve existing routes such as the Route 8, as well as other future routes highlighted in Metro Connects, and it can offer transit riders a significant reduction in travel time as well as provide new connections through South Lake Union. This new transit pathway will provide direct connections to light rail stations in the area and provide safer and more attractive first/last mile connections for transit riders on light rail and bus services.

- 2. Describe how the project will improve mobility within the center and enhance opportunities for active transportation that can provide public health benefits. For example, through providing or improving: walkability; public transit access, speed and reliability; bicycle mobility; streetscapes; traffic calming; TDM; ITS and other efficiencies, etc.**

In addition to its direct benefits to the bus riders along the corridor, this project would also present an opportunity to incorporate Seattle Streetcar operations and future regional light rail services, improve pedestrian mobility and the urban realm, and support recent and potential development in the area. The design of the corridor will take into account SDOT initiatives such as Green & Healthy Streets (making our roads more accessible and inviting to active transportation), The Seamless Seattle project (a citywide and regional pedestrian wayfinding system), and Seattle's Clean Transportation Electrification Blueprint. Each of these initiatives give our transportation systems a strong nudge toward safer, more efficient, and more appealing active transportation modes. Transit, bicycling, walking, and shared transportation services reduce collisions as well as stress, noise, and air pollution, while increasing the co-benefits of our transportation systems including social contact, economic vitality, affordability, and overall health. The transit operational improvements, public space improvements, and employer incentives and programs will work together to make these RGCs attractive employment locations, which in turn will spark new job and business opportunities.

- 3. Describe how the project remedies a current or anticipated problem (e.g., addressing incomplete networks, inadequate transit service/facilities, modal conflicts, the preservation of essential freight movement, addressing bottlenecks, removal of barriers, addressing redundancies in the system, and/or improving individual resilience and adaptability to changes or issues with the transportation system).**

The planned improvements to Harrison St and its connecting corridors would allow transit to travel a much faster and more reliable path across South Lake Union (SLU), while also running closer to transit connections, employers, and other destinations in the area. Several existing and potential peak-period regional routes could also use this corridor for local access into SLU from destinations across the county and the region. Metro has planned a future RapidRide line along this corridor, and extending across Seattle to the east, but RapidRide service for this area would depend on finding a solution for this heavily congested segment of the route. The segment between 5th Ave N and Dexter Ave N would connect to the planned site for the SLU Link Station as part of Sound Transit light rail expansion, further increasing the connectivity, efficiency, and reliability of transit through this area.

- 4. Identify existing gaps**

Due to the slow, unreliable, and uninviting transit services currently operating along Denny Way, lower income populations that rely on buses are forced to accept substandard travel options. Compared to their higher-income neighbors, many lower-income commuters must settle for travel modes that are much slower, less reliable, less direct, and generally less appealing. The HMTAP seeks to remedy each of these disparities: running transit services with similar or even superior travel times, consistent arrivals and headways between buses, more direct connections to the area's major destinations, and a welcoming environment for first-mile or last-mile connections on foot. This environment includes lighting, greenery, and frequent awnings or other rain shelters along the corridor, as well as bus shelters with benches, real-time arrival information, high-quality boarding facilities, and other amenities. These improvements can fundamentally change the rider experience and convert buses from a "last resort" travel option to a "first choice" experience. While these improvements to the roadway offer notable benefits to all users, they're especially impactful for lower-income populations who are more often transit-dependent, more likely to work off-peak hours, and

are more often forced to commute long distances to find affordable family housing.

Criteria: Outreach and Displacement

1. Describe the public outreach process that led to the development of the project.

Since the conception of the HMTAP with King County and the City of Seattle, we've met with a variety of community organizations. Since starting 10% design, we've actively engaged groups like these:

- Seattle Center October 24, 2023
- Uptown Alliance November 14, 2023
- Seattle Transit Advisory Board December 20, 2024
- South Lake Union Community Council January 9, 2024
- Community Coordination Committee February 1, 2024
- Seattle Center Resident Organizations Briefing March 1, 2024
- Early Bike Planning Considerations March 1, 2024

Briefings are also planned with the following stakeholders:

- Queen Anne Community Council April 3, 2024
- Denny Triangle Neighborhood Association April 23, 2024
- Seattle Transit Riders Union April 23, 2024
- Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board May 8, 2024

The Harrison Street corridor was a key transit component of SDOT's North Downtown Mobility Action Plan (NODO MAP), conducted in 2017-19. The plan sought to support access and livability in North Downtown, building on existing community planning efforts. It identifies and prioritizes transportation improvements for all modes. The plan was shared with the Seattle Center as well as the South Lake Union, Denny Triangle, and Belltown communities multiple times during the course of its development, and the Harrison St Corridor was rated one of the Tier 1 transit priority projects in that plan. The Harrison St corridor had also been identified as a potential corridor as part of the Landscape Conservation and Local Infrastructure Program Infrastructure Funding Plan (LCLIP) program work in 2012-13. This project remains an important priority for local stakeholders such as the South Lake Union Community Council.

2. Describe how this outreach influenced the development of the project.

During NODO MAP, the transportation challenges facing North Downtown, as well as potential projects to alleviate these challenges, were shared during multiple rounds of outreach. Respondents repeatedly shared how Denny Way provides the only east-west transit connection between North Downtown and destinations east of I-5, and it often experiences delay caused by congestion. The Harrison Street project also achieves some of the plan's major transit priorities, which include improving east/west transit service and reliability between Uptown, South Lake Union, and Capitol Hill, creating new transit connections serving North Downtown neighborhoods, and improving the passenger experience at transit stops and stations. The project team has coordinated with Seattle Center, Sound Transit, King County Metro, local businesses, and other organizations to identify potential concerns and recommendations as we advance the design. This may include bus stop placements, residential and business access concerns, and bus only lane locations. Overall, we have received positive input from stakeholders.

3. Identify topology of location

The project is located in an area categorized as a Transform & Diversify opportunity. To maximize these opportunities as land develops, typical strategies include promoting transit-oriented development, encouraging middle-density housing, and re-evaluating parking requirements. Each of these tools has been used extensively within the SLU and Uptown communities, including substantial investment from the City of Seattle (both financial investment and policy support).

In 2018, our mayor established the Affordable Middle-Income Housing Advisory Council, to address the growing need of housing options for middle-income wage earners. In 2019, our city council adopted a "community preference" policy. Under this policy, when affordable housing is built in an area of high displacement risk, developers will give applicants a better chance of securing a spot in the new development (usually based on whether they live or work in the same neighborhood). Finally, Seattle has established an Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) to fund projects that address displacement and lack of access to opportunity for historically marginalized communities. The EDI offers grants to community-based organizations that perform outreach, education, and community development work within at-risk communities.

These recent investments are part of a long track record and a deep commitment to address displacement. Since 1981, the Seattle Housing Levy and the Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) program have supported the production, preservation, and acquisition of over 13,000 affordable rental and for-sale homes throughout the city and provided emergency rental assistance and other housing stability services to over 6,500 low-income households at risk of eviction and homelessness. In addition, MHA appears on track with the goal to produce

6,000 affordable homes over ten years after the program's expansion in 2019.

Criteria: Safety and Security

- 1. Describe how the project addresses safety and security. Identify if the project incorporates one or more of [FHWA's Proven Safety Countermeasures](#), and specifically address the following:**

The HMTAP will build a wide variety of proven safety countermeasures, primarily oriented toward our most vulnerable users: those who choose active transportation, and more specifically, those who are transit-dependent due to low incomes, limited mobility, or other causes. With this project there is the potential to improve not only transit operation on this corridor but also make safety and security improvements by:

- Improving lighting – this would be possible particularly with coordination with King County Metro's effort to operate electric trolley buses on this corridor in terms of joint-use pole opportunities.
- Adding crosswalks and standardized ADA ramps – we would emphasize such improvements throughout the corridor, particularly where traffic signals in place of stop-controlled intersections are recommended.
- Pedestals for future real time information signs (RTIS) at bus stops – RTIS offers transit riders confidence in the approximate arrival time of their bus, which can also reduce the wait time that riders may experience at the bus stops. This is particularly important for some riders, especially at night.

- 2. Specific to the Equity Focus Areas (EFAs) identified above, describe how the project will improve safety and/or address safety issues currently being experienced by these communities.**

Our lower-income populations who work in the restaurant, retail, hospitality, and services sectors are far more likely to do shift work and they access buses at less common times. They don't consistently arrive at bus stops, or make their way to their bus stop, at traditional commute times. For these riders, it's far more important to expect lighting, curb ramps, smooth sidewalks without tripping hazards, predictable wait times at their bus stop, and RTIS to confirm their bus arrival time. In recent public outreach, one of the major themes we've heard is that safety encompasses much more than crash avoidance. Personal safety, especially when traveling without a car, is a significant factor in many people's mode choices. However, for many lower-income commuters, traveling by bus may be a necessity rather than a choice. Finally, while lower-income commuters are the project's most affected EFA, it also holds many benefits for people with disabilities. Well-marked and well-lit crossings, curb ramps, smooth sidewalks, leading pedestrian intervals, and accessible pedestrian signals all contribute to a much safer experience for people with limited mobility – not to mention simply having the ability to use a bus if a private vehicle is not a viable option.

- 3. Does your agency have an adopted safety policy? How did the policy/policies inform the development of the project?**

Yes, SDOT has been a national leader in adopting and implementing Vision Zero policies. We adopted a Vision Zero Action Plan nearly a decade ago. In regard to our Local Centers and Countywide Centers, the plan describes our efforts as bringing "a higher level of safety to Seattle's Urban Centers, where high volumes of vehicular traffic, transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists merge. Data-driven improvements may include modified signal phasing, traffic calming, protected turn phases and leading or lagging pedestrian intervals." In regard to transit riders, the plan states that we will "improve safety and access for transit, through signal timing and lane allocation improvements. Make transit spot improvements that increase pedestrian safety and access to transit stops and stations." Each of these elements of our Vision Zero plan has informed the scope of this project, and our design phase will continue to prioritize safety improvements.

- 4. (not scored) USDOT is developing a framework for assessing how projects align with the Safe System Approach, and PSRC is developing a Regional Safety Action Plan due in early 2025. Does your agency commit to adhering to the forthcoming guidance and continuing to work towards planning and implementation actions under a Safe System Approach to reduce fatalities and serious injuries?**

SDOT is fully committed to aligning with forthcoming guidance and regional planning efforts around the Safe System Approach. In advance of this guidance, the department is in the process of developing an update to its Vision Zero Action Plan, which adopts the Safe System Approach as its guiding framework for achieving Vision Zero goals and reducing fatalities and serious injuries on its streets. As part of the department's commitment to Safe System principles, SDOT is undertaking a broad range of strategies and actions that are organized around each of the five elements of the Safe System Approach (Safer Speeds, Safer Streets, Safer People, Safer Vehicles, and Post-Crash Care). These include operationalizing the Safe System Approach throughout the department's projects and

practices and approaching safety both responsively and proactively. The updated Vision Zero Action Plan also includes a toolkit of 29 safety treatments the department is using on its roadways, which are ranked and prioritized with respect to the USDOT's Safe System Roadway Design Hierarchy.

Each of SDOT's projects is required to undergo a safety evaluation during its early planning phase as part of the department's Complete Street Checklist. This evaluation assesses each project's alignment with the Safe System Approach and explores opportunities for adding proactive safety treatments, speed reduction measures, and improvements to address past crash history.

Criteria: Air Quality and Climate Change

- Please select one or more elements in the list below that are included in the project's scope of work, and provide the requested information in the pages to follow.**

Roadway / Intersection / ITS, Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Air Quality and Climate Change: Roadway / Intersection / ITS

- What is the length of the project?**
1.3 miles
- What is the average daily traffic before the project?**
Along the new bus route alignment, segments of Harrison St have traffic volumes typical of a local access road: approximately 1,000 to 7,000. Mercer St has volumes up to approximately 21,000 in the affected sections, while volumes on Fairview Ave are approximately 17,000 and volumes on 5th Ave are approximately 10,000.
- What is the average daily traffic after the project?**
We don't expect any notable changes to traffic volumes.
- What is the average speed before the project?**
The average bus speed for Route 8 along Denny Way ranges between 5 to 10 mph, typically close to 5 mph during peak periods and 10 mph off-peak. These speeds are comparable to general-purpose traffic, as congestion is the primary constraint for travel speeds along this corridor.
- What is the average speed after the project?**
We don't expect any notable changes to traffic speeds.
- What is the level of service before the project?**
Unknown. Current levels of service at key intersections are being assessed during the planning phase.
- What is the level of service after the project?**
We don't expect level of service to vary after the project.
- What are the existing number of lanes (total, both directions)?**
The cross-section varies along the route. For example, Harrison St has one travel lane in each direction with intermittent parking lanes and turn lanes. Mercer St has three travel lanes in each direction with intermittent parking lanes and turn lanes. The north-south connecting corridors, Fairview Ave and 5th Ave, have two travel lanes in each direction. Fairview Ave has parking lanes and turn lanes, while 5th Ave has turn lanes.
- How many lanes are being added (total, both directions)?**
No general-purpose lanes will be added, but parking lanes and turn lanes will be converted to transit lanes along the route. The exact location of these conversions is being confirmed during the Design phase.
- How many intersections are along the length of the project?**
The route has 18 signalized intersections and 9 unsignalized intersections or crossings, including alleys as well as minor unsignalized roadways.
- How many intersections are being improved?**
Each of these intersections is expected to receive some improvement, including at a minimum some smaller-scale improvements like curb ramps, leading pedestrian intervals, and signal retiming. Others will receive more extensive improvements such as adaptive signals, transit signal priority, and other similar treatments.

12. What is the percentage of freight truck traffic on the facility?

Our traffic counts show that large freight vehicles make up 0.3% of the traffic on Harrison St, while small trucks like local delivery trucks and utility trucks make up 10.5%.

13. Will the project result in shorter trips and reduced VMT? If so, please explain.

Yes, the project is not expected to affect trip lengths but we do expect a substantial decrease in VMT due to mode shift. A shift to non-SOV modes will be produced by many elements of this project including decreased transit travel times, more reliable and attractive transit service, and safer, more attractive pedestrian facilities.

14. Please describe the source of the project data provided above (e.g., Environmental Impact Statement, EPA/DOE data, traffic study, survey, previous projects, etc.).

NA

15. What is the average daily transit ridership along the corridor?

The project will create a new transit corridor, but Route 8 along Denny Way illustrates the strong demand for east-west transit in the project area. For Route 8, the total weekday average ridership in fall 2019 was 8,772. In 2021, during the pandemic, ridership had dropped to 4,294. Since then, ridership has increased to more normal levels but hasn't fully recovered yet.

16. How many daily peak period transit trips service the corridor?

Metro Connects 2050 identifies the following routes that could use the Harrison-Mercer Corridor.

1061 - Madrona to Interbay (Route 8)
 2003 - Westwood Village to SLU
 2516 - Kirkland to Interbay
 3025 - Discovery Park to SLU
 3028 - Queen Anne to Madison Valley
 3104 - Magnolia to North Capitol Hill

For the 10% design, Metro and SDOT assumed a near-term volume of 6-10 buses per hour. Long term capacity for Harrison Street needs further analysis. Metro Connects 2050 network shows upwards of 40 buses per hour at peak on Harrison and Mercer Streets.

17. What is the expected increase in transit speed due to the BAT/HOV lanes?

Based on the current 10% design that includes BAT lanes, transit only lanes, signal optimization, bus bulbs, and other transit improvements, we anticipate east-west transit reliability during the PM peak to greatly improve and expect to see reduced travel times across all time periods. During the PM peak travel period, it is estimated that improvements along the corridor would reduce bus travel time by about 3 minutes (19%) westbound and 2 minutes (13%) eastbound.

18. What is the expected increase in transit ridership due to the BAT/HOV lanes?

Improved transit service, particularly faster service, has been shown to directly lead to increased ridership. A conservative estimated elasticity between speed and ridership is 1:1, meaning that a 1% speed improvement would lead to a 1% long-term ridership increase. Applying this methodology to a project that would serve 8,000 riders per day and improve their travel times by an average of 16%, we estimate that approximately 1,280 new transit trips would be generated by the project. This does not account for the improved connections to the new light rail station or any future routes that would use this transit pathway. It's based entirely on existing ridership along Denny Way.

19. Please describe the source of the project data provided above (e.g., Environmental Impact Statement, EPA/DOE data, traffic study, survey, previous projects, etc.).

Travel time savings were estimated by KCM based on planning level traffic analysis report. Estimates regarding the relationship between travel time savings and increases in ridership were derived based on analysis in the Victoria Transport Policy Institute study "Understanding Transport Demands and Elasticities How Prices and Other Factors Affect Travel Behavior" March 2019 (<http://www.vtpi.org/elasticities.pdf>). Transit speed improvement estimates are based on TCRP Report 118, Exhibit 5-8 (https://nacto.org/docs/usdg/tcrp118brt_practitioners_kittleson.pdf)

20. What are the ITS improvements being provided?

Planned ITS upgrades include signal retiming and coordination, signal modernization (potentially including adaptive signals), transit signal priority, leading pedestrian intervals, and accessible pedestrian signals.

21. What is the expected improvement to average vehicle delay?

Unknown

22. **Please describe the source of the project data provided above (e.g., Environmental Impact Statement, EPA/DOE data, traffic study, survey, previous projects, etc.)**

NA

Air Quality and Climate Change: Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

1. **Describe the facilities being added or improved**

At intersections and on blocks to be identified, this project will make improvements for people walking and rolling. This could include treatments like wider sidewalks, curb extensions, crosswalks, and signals as well as street trees and lighting.

2. **What is the length of the proposed facility?**

1.3 miles

3. **Describe the connections to existing bicycle/pedestrian facilities and transit.**

High-capacity transit, including Metro RapidRide, operates north-south on Eastlake, Fairview, Westlake, Dexter, Aurora, and 5th Ave N. By developing Harrison St as a transit corridor, this project will connect to bus service on these existing transit corridors as well as the Seattle Streetcar and the future South Lake Union Link station.

4. **Describe the current bicycle/pedestrian usage in the project area. If known, provide information on the shift from single occupancy vehicles.**

Unknown

5. **What is the expected increase in bicycle/pedestrian usage from the project? If known, provide information on the shift from single occupancy vehicles**

We expect that improvements to the pedestrian realm will induce mode shift toward non-motorized modes, but we do not have a reliable method to quantify this shift.

6. **What is the average bicycle trip length?**

Seattle's Center City Commute Mode Split Survey found that the average bike commute trip to downtown Seattle is 5.6 miles.

7. **What is the average pedestrian trip length?**

Seattle Center City Commute Mode Split Survey found that the average pedestrian commute trip to downtown Seattle is 1.8 miles.

8. **Please describe the source of the project data provided above (e.g., Environmental Impact Statement, EPA/DOE data, traffic study, survey, previous projects, etc.)**

Seattle Department of 2019 Seattle Center City Commute Mode Split Survey

Total Estimated Project Cost and Schedule

1. **Estimated project completion date**

12/2027

2. **Total project cost**

\$24,700,000.00

Funding Documentation

1. **Documents**

STM_CIP.pdf

2. **Please enter your description of your financial documentation in the text box below.**

Secured local revenues for this project are programmed in Seattle's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) within the budget for Seattle Transportation Benefit District - Transit Improvements. An excerpt from our CIP is attached to this application. This budget contains more than adequate funds for the project's local match, and although our local funds in this budget also need to support many other similar projects, we're allocating approximately \$10,300,000 from this account to ensure a full funding plan. The required funds are currently

programmed across several years, but may be reprogrammed to align with the availability of PSRC funds.

Phase	Year	Alternate Year	Amount
construction	2027		\$8,200,000.00

Total Request: \$8,200,000.00

Project Readiness: PE

PE

Funding Source	Secured/Unsecured	Amount
STBG(PSRC)	Secured	\$4,200,000.00
Local	Secured	\$2,000,000.00
		\$6,200,000.00

Expected year of completion for this phase: 2025

Construction

Funding Source	Secured/Unsecured	Amount
CMAQ	Unsecured	\$8,200,000.00
Local	Secured	\$10,300,000.00
		\$18,500,000.00

Expected year of completion for this phase: 2027

Summary

1. **Are you requesting funds for ONLY a planning study or preliminary engineering?**
No
2. **What is the actual or estimated start date for preliminary engineering/design?**
6/1/24
3. **Is preliminary engineering complete?**
No
4. **What was the date of completion (month and year)?**
N/A
5. **Have preliminary plans been submitted to WSDOT for approval?**
No
6. **Are there any other PE/Design milestones associated with the project? Please identify and provide dates of completion. You may also use this space to explain any dates above.**
NA
7. **When are preliminary plans expected to be complete?**
4/1/25

Project Readiness: NEPA

1. **Documents**
STM_CIP.pdf
2. **Please enter your description of your financial documentation in the text box**

below.

Secured local revenues for this project are programmed in Seattle's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) within the budget for Seattle Transportation Benefit District - Transit Improvements. An excerpt from our CIP is attached to this application. This budget contains more than adequate funds for the project's local match, and although our local funds in this budget also need to support many other similar projects, we're allocating approximately \$10,300,000 from this account to ensure a full funding plan. The required funds are currently programmed across several years, but may be reprogrammed to align with the availability of PSRC funds.

Project Readiness: Right of Way

1. **Will Right of Way be required for this project?**
No
2. **What is the actual or estimated start date for right of way?**
N/A
3. **What is the estimated (or achieved) completion date for the right of way plan and funding estimate (month and year)?**
N/A
4. **Please describe the right of way needs of the project, including property acquisitions, temporary construction easements, and/or permits.**
N/A
5. **What is the zoning in the project area?**
N/A
6. **Discuss the extent to which your schedule reflects the possibility of condemnation and the actions needed to pursue this.**
N/A
7. **Does your agency have experience in conducting right of way acquisitions of similar size and complexity?**
N/A
8. **If not, when do you expect a consultant to be selected, under contract, and ready to start (month and year)?**
N/A
9. **In the box below, please identify all relevant right of way milestones, including the current status and estimated completion date of each.**
N/A

Project Readiness: NEPA

1. **What is the current or anticipated level of environmental documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for this project?**
Documented Categorical Exclusion (DCE)
2. **Has the NEPA documentation been approved?**
No
3. **Please provide the date of NEPA approval, or the anticipated date of completion (month and year).**
7/1/25

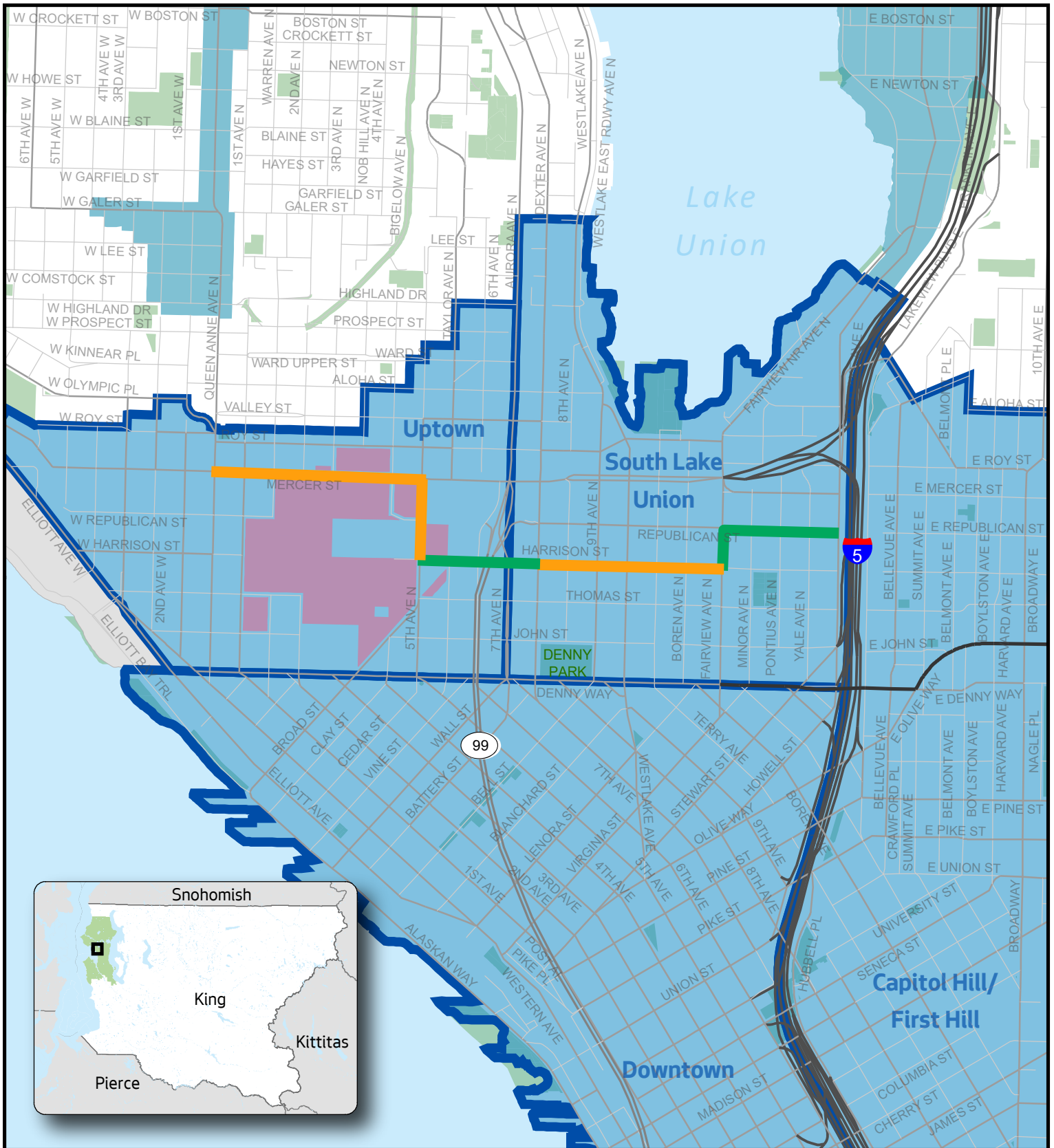
Project Readiness: Right of Way

1. **Will Right of Way be required for this project?**
No
2. **What is the actual or estimated start date for right of way?**
N/A

3. **What is the estimated (or achieved) completion date for the right of way plan and funding estimate (month and year)?**
N/A
4. **Please describe the right of way needs of the project, including property acquisitions, temporary construction easements, and/or permits.**
N/A
5. **What is the zoning in the project area?**
N/A
6. **Discuss the extent to which your schedule reflects the possibility of condemnation and the actions needed to pursue this.**
N/A
7. **Does your agency have experience in conducting right of way acquisitions of similar size and complexity?**
N/A
8. **If not, when do you expect a consultant to be selected, under contract, and ready to start (month and year)?**
N/A
9. **In the box below, please identify all relevant right of way milestones, including the current status and estimated completion date of each.**
N/A

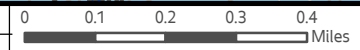
Project Readiness: Construction

1. **Are funds being requested for construction?**
Yes
2. **Do you have an engineer's estimate?**
No
3. **Engineers estimate document**
N/A
4. **Identify the environmental permits needed for the project and when they are scheduled to be acquired.**
NEPA
5. **Are Plans, Specifications & Estimates (PS&E) approved?**
No
6. **Please provide the date of approval, or the date when PS&E is scheduled to be submitted for approval (month and year).**
7/1/25
7. **When is the project scheduled to go to ad (month and year)?**
2/1/26



Legend

- Limit of work
- Future phase of work
- Seattle Center
- Urban Center
- Urban Village



©2022, THE CITY OF SEATTLE.
 All rights reserved. Produced by the Seattle Department of Transportation.
 No warranties of any sort, including accuracy, fitness or merchantability, accompany this product.
 Coordinate System: State Plane,
 NAD83-91, Washington, North Zone
 PLOT DATE: 4/13/2022
 AUTHOR: P&P GIS
 V:/GIS/GIS Projects/Grants

Harrison & Mercer Transit Access Project

Seattle Transportation Benefit District - Transit Improvements

Project No:	MC-TR-C108	BSL Code:	BC-TR-19003
Project Type:	Ongoing	BSL Name:	Mobility-Capital
Project Category:	Improved Facility	Location:	Multiple
Current Project Stage:	N/A	Council District:	Multiple
Start/End Date:	N/A	Neighborhood District:	Multiple
Total Project Cost:	N/A	Urban Village:	Multiple

This program funds infrastructure maintenance and capital improvements to maximize the efficiency of transit operations, including enhancements to transit reliability, passenger amenities, transit street pavement maintenance, and reliability of transit service operated by King County Metro within the City of Seattle.

Resources	LTD Actuals	2022 Revised	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total
Transportation Sales Tax	3,048	2,952	13,640	15,000	8,500	9,500	-	-	52,640
Total:	3,048	2,952	13,640	15,000	8,500	9,500	-	-	52,640
Fund Appropriations / Allocations *	LTD Actuals	2022 Revised	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total
Transportation Benefit District Fund	3,048	2,952	13,640	15,000	8,500	9,500	-	-	52,640
Total:	3,048	2,952	13,640	15,000	8,500	9,500	-	-	52,640

O&M Impacts: SDOT has individual project budgets for the maintenance of painted markings, signage, bridges and roadway structures, urban forestry, sidewalks and pavement; these budgets are constrained by the availability of transportation specific and general funds. The SDOT Asset Management website (<https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/about-sdot/asset-management>) provides unconstrained operational cost forecasting by asset type, typical lifecycle and average maintenance cost ranges.

* Funds are appropriated through the Adopted Budget at the Budget Summary Level. All Amounts shown above are in thousands of dollars