



[4th and 5th Avenues]

Community Open Space Initiatives

Community Design Studio Report 2005

Department of Landscape Architecture / University of Washington





Executive Summary

The overarching theme of our work in this part of the neighborhood is to build East - West Connections both literally and figuratively through design style. The goals included:

- improve actual safety and the perception, or feeling, of safety through prioritizing the pedestrian and visibility.
- assign identity to this edge and entry to the neighborhood.
- develop public and private open-space including particularly the use of streets and transportation infrastructure.
- create east-west pedestrian scale connections and corridors.

In our designs and planning we assumed intense development in this part of the neighborhood, increasing density and building height and putting more people closer to the amenities available. We assumed the area would grow as a multi-modal transit hub with associated development and perceive our study area as a new front door to Seattle.

Our design interventions focused on developing public/private spaces, using eco-revelatory design and infrastructure to create public spaces, and creating open space as part of transportation.

General recommendations for the area include:

- improving circulation patterns
- claiming open space before development
- negotiating for publicly available open space within private development, and
- layering publicly available open space with other functions (infrastructure, transportation, etc)

1. Overview of Site/Study Area

The study area is bounded by Main Street to the north, 2nd Avenue South to the west, Dearborn Avenue to the south and 6th Avenue South to the east (See map on facing page). This is a dynamic area receiving substantial traffic from city buses, Amtrak passenger trains, freight rail, commuting and industrial sized automobiles, and in the near future, light rail. It has recently become host to major developments such as the Uwajimaya project and the Union Station development hosting several large office buildings. The plaza among these buildings is a vital area, particularly during lunch and rush hour, but little activity crosses 5th to bring more business into the core Chinatown/International District neighborhood. 4th Avenue South currently serves largely as a barrier to greater integration of the district into the rest of Seattle, particularly Pioneer Square. Future potential high-rise projects that might be constructed on a lid over the train tracks along 4th could contribute further to this sense of isolation unless greater pedestrian connectivity is addressed. Continued major private projects in this area seem likely and perhaps inevitable. Within this context, public-private partnerships will be necessary to carve out public space in these developments and contribute



Pedestrians, buses and cyclists converge on the plaza at 5th and Weller, a central point in the study area.

to an overall coherence of the area.

2. Neighborhood Assets and Issues

Assets

- Close to downtown Seattle
- Site of Seattle's developing Multi-Modal Transportation Hub
- Heavy private investment that could be leveraged for community benefit
- Distinct neighborhood character

Issues

- Convergence of uncoordinated, disconnected multi-modal transportation systems
- Indistinct neighborhood edges
- Pulses of activity correspond to workday schedule only
- Stadiums
- Future development on the western edge along 4th Avenue will dramatically increase residential density
- Cut off from rest of city

King Street Station

King Street Station is part of Seattle's developing multi-modal transportation hub, itself housing the Amtrak passenger train station, as well as actively used rail lines for freight use. This site is at the center of this developing transportation web, as well as proposed future development. Major areas being sought for substantial densification include the north parking lot at Quest Field, the 'railroad track gaps' along 4th Avenue South, and the surface parking lots in Nihonmachi. Also, it is currently being proposed to raise the building height limit in this area from 120' for 240'. The projected rise in local residents and use of mass transit systems means that King Street Station will soon become lively center of movement and activity, as well as a new 'front door' for many who visit Seattle.

- Center of Seattle's Multi-Modal Transportation Hub
- Lack of distinct character or identity with any of surrounding neighborhoods (Downtown, Pioneer Square, Chinatown/International District, Stadium District)
- Issues of perceived and actual safety
- Issues of perceived and actual access
- Though a hub of transportation modes, is difficult to navigate between modes
- Dominated by heavy automobile traffic
- Threatening area to pedestrian travel

Weller Street & 4th Ave. S.

4th and 5th Avenues currently frame an indistinct edge and entry to the neighborhood. The traffic

and size of 4th Avenue and the tall backs of the Union Station buildings are a barrier to both recognizing and entering the neighborhood. The pedestrian bridge, Union Station plaza, and Uwajimaya form a loose connection across this semi-permeable neighborhood boundary. The renovated International District station will bring large numbers of people to this edge of the neighborhood while plans for new development in the neighborhood and over the railroad tracks will significantly boost the local population and bring new amenities. In this place and time there is an opportunity to create an enlivened, urbane, destination that bridges between neighborhoods.

Uwajimaya Block 1

The developers of this project are interested in generating a neighborhood asset, with an outward focus and a busy and unprogrammed feel. The existing Publix Hotel is an historic asset to the block, that can be re-modeled and help tie new development into the neighborhood. Additionally, this block is in a good position to help establish a better link to the center of the Chinatown/International District at Hing Hay Park.

- Previous successful development
- On the way to central ID in high traffic area
- Visual link to downtown.
- Visual link to central Chinatown/ID
- Parking can be handled underground
- Most pedestrian movement tends to move North/South along 5th rather than moving farther into the Chinatown/ID.
- Tall residential character already existing, view impacts should be limited.

4th and 5th avenues: east-west connections

King Street Station Vicinity

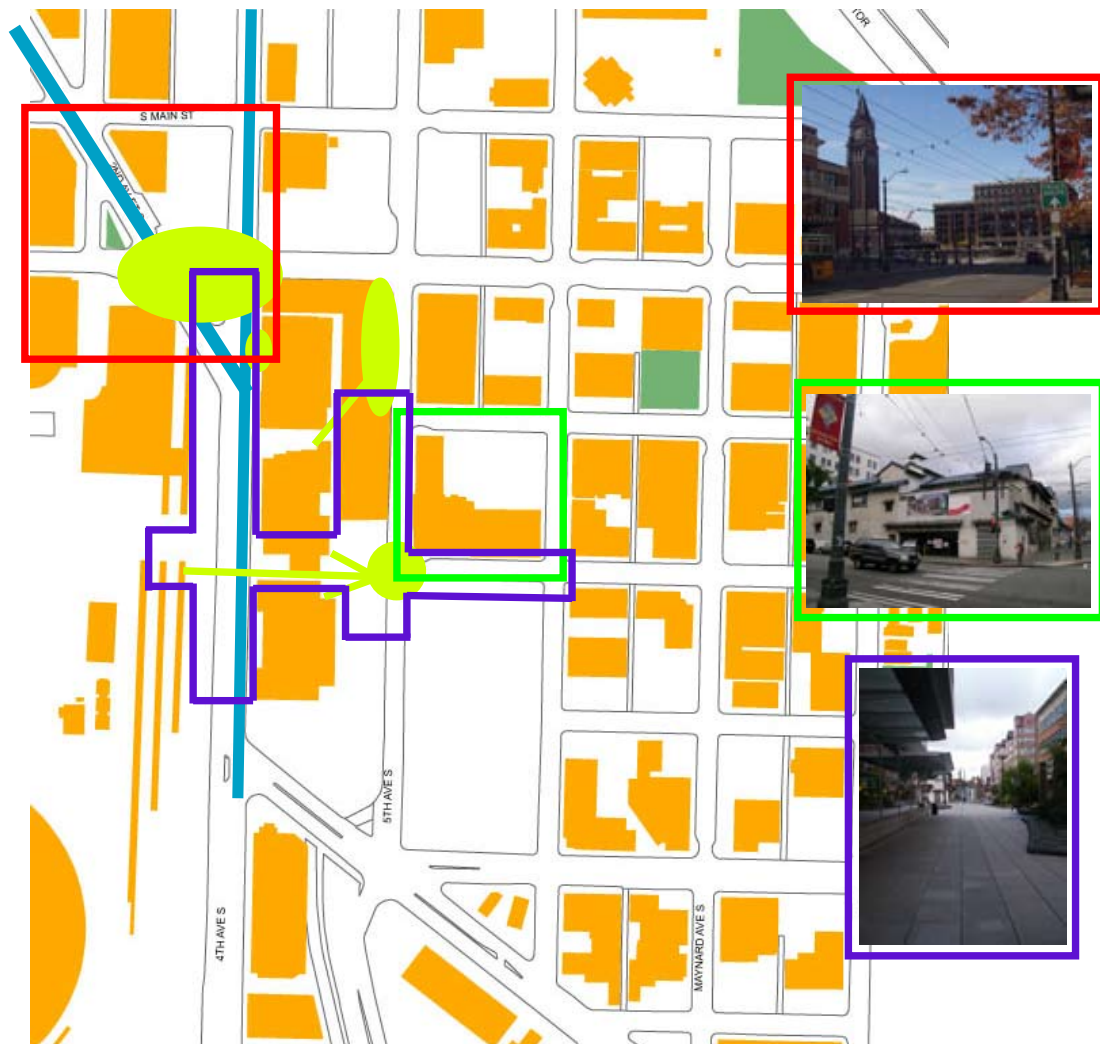
site of developing intermodal transportation hub / no current coordinated design to coordinated movement between modes
currently dominated by high volume automobile traffic

Uwajima: Block I

planned re-development to include hotel and mixed-use buildings as part of 3-block complex
potential to claim public space and pedestrian through-way on block interior

Weller Street/4th Ave S

transition zone between Chinatown/International District and Pioneer Square/Stadium district
generate sense of arrival and neighborhood identity



ISSUES and OPPORTUNITIES of concern

planned development will dramatically increase residential density / leverage limited open space to address multiple needs

convergence of uncoordinated, disconnected multi-modal transportation systems / improve linkages and legibility as a hub and gateway to the neighborhoods

indistinct neighborhood edge / create a distinct character complementary to neighborhood

pulses of activity correspond to workday schedule / expand patterns of use spatially and temporally

3. Planning and Design Strategies

Planning and design strategies address four core areas: limited open space, connectivity, character and patterns of use.

Working with Limited Open Space

In this area and particularly throughout the neighborhood, open space devoted solely to the public is sparse. Creative means to generate a sense of public space within right of ways and on private property may be necessary.

- Limited open space should be leveraged to address open space needs.
 - Density bonuses might be used to create public open space on private property.
 - Streets should be considered usable open space and be made to function as a conveyance, for stopping and hanging out, and for ecological purposes such as storm water management.
- Other public infrastructure, such as that related to mass transit, may double as civic space.

Connectivity

It is recognized in the neighborhood plan and other planning documents that generating better east/west connections is a priority.

- Linkages and legibility should be improved as a hub and gateway to the neighborhood.
- This area is the primary face of the Chinatown/International District neighborhood to the rest of Seattle. Distinct forms should be used here and design should help generate a transition from a more cosmopolitan to neighborhood feel.
- The group considered ways to increase permeability for pedestrians and generate arrival and departure points, such as creating a plaza to connect different transportation modes through a central public space.

Character

Another focus was to create a distinct character, complimentary to the neighborhood without trying to duplicate traditional design in Asian countries such as Japan and China.

- Because of the commercial, transportation and shopping character of this zone, improvements should have a cosmopolitan feel.
- The designs might reference traditional design through the use of water, wood and tile, but set these traditional elements on a more modern framework by using hard lines to form squares and boxes.
- Light should also play an important part to

help generate the sense of this area as an arrival and departure point.

Patterns of Use: Spatial and Temporal

Use patterns largely correspond to a workday schedule in this area. Promoting it as a destination area could help make it an active space throughout most of the day, helping improve business and safety.

- Patterns of use should expand spatially and temporally.
- Designs should be inviting to encourage greater movement between areas by diverse users.
- The use of spaces should be flexible to change over the day and throughout the year.
- The use of water and light helps highlight these changes in addition to spaces with a loose structure that are defined by the people who use them.

4. Design Projects

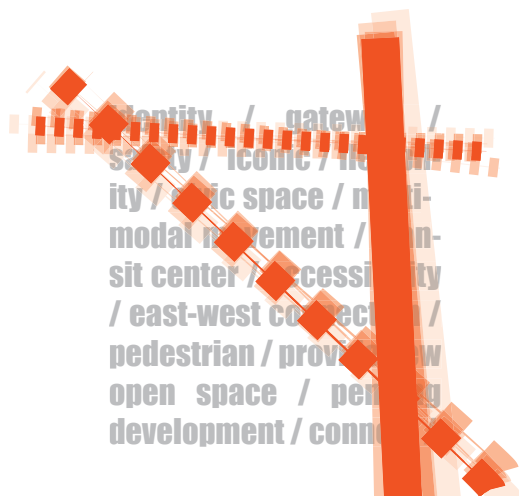
King Street Station

Lauren Acheson

as part of Seattle's Multi-Modal Transportation Hub and developing south downtown neighborhood

This project seeks to reflect the movement and energy at this confluence of transportation modes while also facilitating better legibility of and connection to the surrounding neighborhoods. As this site is found at the center of the Multi-Modal Transportation Hub, at the center of Seattle's developing downtown (south of Downtown, north of the Stadium District, east of Pioneer Square, and west of Chinatown/International District), and the center of potential large-scale residential development, this site must coordinate and facilitate movement. It must serve as a multi-scale transportation hub and corridor, while also providing civic space in an area already under served by publicly accessible open space.

The concept for this proposed set of interventions stems from acknowledgement of this area as a place of mobility, and an observation of existing movements through this site. Large scale, monolithic movement (passenger trains, freight rail, and automobile traffic) moves in a primarily north-south direction; mid-sized and modular movement (buses and light rail) moves in a northwest-southeast direction (via the bus tunnel); small-scale individually determined movement (pedestrians, bicycles, streetcar) moves in a primarily east-west direction. As such, this is recognized and intended to be designed as a place for mobility and for facilitating movement, rather than approached as a contemplative or reflective space; this place is intended to move people and promote activity.



The interventions proposed begin with a re-assignment of a few traffic patterns to assign distinct priority

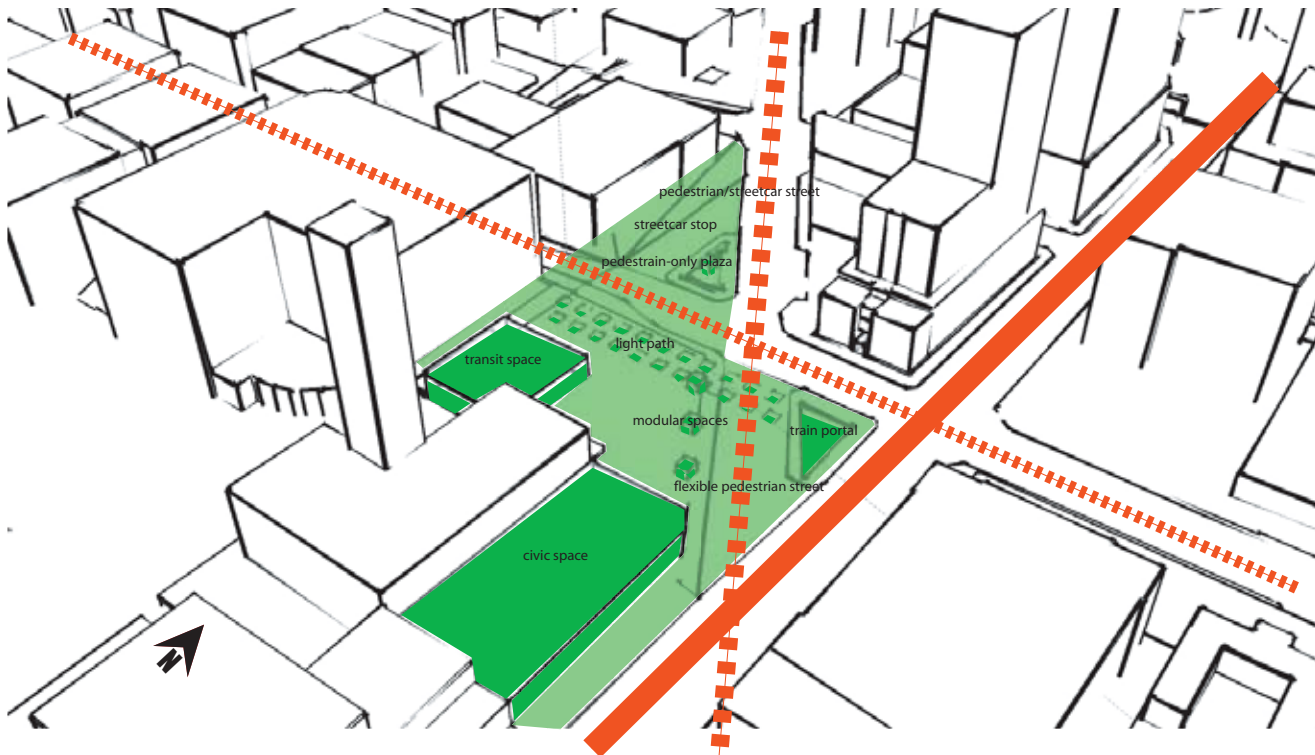
of 3rd Ave South and 2nd Ave South Extension directly adjacent to King Street Station are here closed to automobile traffic. As currently exist, these short roadways provide many options to automobile traffic, thus allowing them domination over all other movement in the vicinity. By closing these segments to this large, monolithic transportation scale, this priority is reinforced as strictly north-south, and the east-west direction is made more accessible by pedestrian-scale movement as many barriers are removed. Quite notably, this closure would prevent pedestrians at the triangular traffic island at the corner of Jackson and 4th Ave South from being surrounded by automobile traffic, instead reclaiming that area as part of a pedestrian plaza. Also, the streetcar is in this proposal re-routed to move (from the west) south on 3rd Avenue South and east on South Jackson Street. This change would provide a more distinct and formal movement between the Pioneer Square neighborhood and Chinatown/International District neighborhood, and would bring streetcar users into direct contact with the transportation hub.

The second part of these proposed interventions involves reflecting the varied movement through the area in forms that are transparent (to promote safety by providing public honesty about one's activities) and responsive (to reflect the dynamic energy).

To acknowledge the monolithic north-south movement, a large indoor civic space is proposed adjacent to King Street Station. This space would contain a large volume of people for purposes such as a market. Additionally, the viewing portal at 4th and Jackson would be preserved (as all other railroad viewing portals are assumed to be capped by development) and equipped with lights. This would allow pedestrians to physically view the movement of trains through the area, and the lights would broadcast that movement to the landscape (as trains arrive, lights flash; while trains are at the station, a steady light; while the station is empty, no light).

To acknowledge the modular northwest-southeast movement, a series of smaller, modular structures are proposed along the 2nd Ave South Extension. These structures could contain a few people for more intimate gatherings, such as a bus shelter or a newsstand. These structures would also reflect the intensity of use, emanating a soft glow when occupied by a few people and a bright light when occupied by many.

To acknowledge the movement of individuals in the east-west direction, the plaza created before King Street Station on South Jackson Street would be paved with motion-sensitive light panels. This would allow people to see others approaching them, as well as provide a trail behind individual travel.



give priority to large scale traffic in the NORTH-SOUTH direction-automobile traffic/freight trains/amtrak passenger trains

provide large-scale civic space, indoor and outdoor

reflect large NORTH-SOUTH movement of trains by preserving triangular viewing portal
-provide visual access from above and below
-emphasize movement of trains with lighting
-train approaching = flashing
-train at station = steady light beam
-empty station = no light

give priority to mid-sized modular traffic in the SOUTHEAST-NORTHWEST direction - lightrail/bus traffic

provide mid-sized modular structures of flexible programming (bus shelter, transit information, newsstand, etc)

illuminate modular 'jewel boxes'
-intensify light with more activity AND/OR movement in bus tunnel

give priority to small scale movement in EAST-WEST direction - pedestrians/streetcar

re-route streetcar south on 3rd avenue south and east on south jackson

close 3rd avenue south north of king street station AND close 2nd avenue south beside king street station to auto traffic

provide opportunities for pedestrian engagement

project small scale movement with motion-sensitive paving - provides a trail of each individual

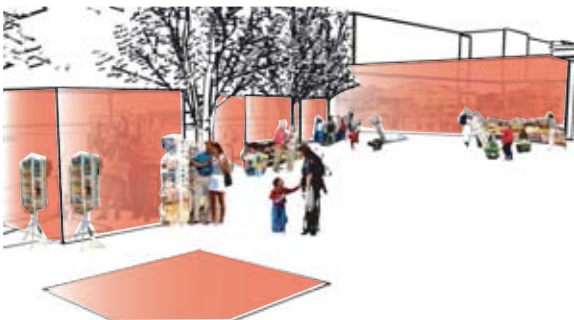
gateway



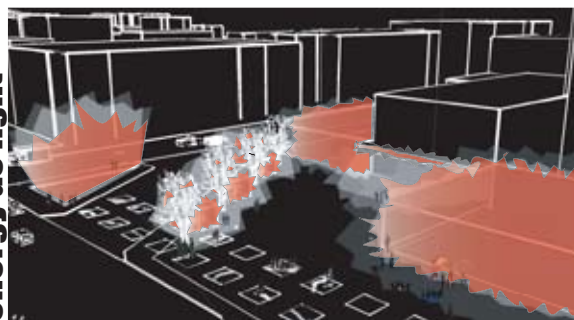
corridor



public space



energy as light



Pedestrian Bridge to Weller: An Unfolding Journey

Elizabeth Powers

This design tackles three sections along a east- west axis that have inherent properties of or potential to express three essential urban forms - the grand boulevard, a square, and a market. The concept for the design is to link and strengthen these three from with a "water street."



A Water Street

A water street is a type of green street in that it should be part of a natural drainage system for the buildings and surfaces surrounding it. In the case of this project the three sections link a proposed green street on Weller between 6th and 7th, and the original shoreline of the city which would cut just under Union Station. The Pioneer Square and Stadium Districts were once the tide lands of the city. The idea of a water street should also reveal water through vertical and linear elements that collect and convey water. These elements have smaller footprints and can be layered vertically to fit in a dense urban environment.

Weller Street - Market and Water Collection. As water falls on the proposed market street between the current Uwajimaya and the Block 1 project it will begin collection and treatment through green roofs, planted gutters, and storm-water planters on terraces. At the first floor level glass awnings will collect the water and funnel it into



street cisterns. These cisterns are not meant to store water, but to express the idea of collection, adding art and energy to the street, while funneling water into an underground collection system. The example shown on the next page would show the level of water inside through glass portals that were also lit at night. At the street level, pervious paving would mark the parking and crosswalks. Large pavers in the crosswalks with



small impressions would imply stepping stones and collect and reveal small bits of water. Through out the design impressions in the form of a stream system would line the curbs, also collecting small bits of water. The diagram at the top of the next column shows the collection system in a garage proposed under the new development for water reuse in the building.



Union Station - Square and Water Treatment. The node at the intersection of Weller and 5th and the Union Station plaza is already a very successful area. The major change then is to use the existing planting areas to create water treatment bioswales to convey unused water from the collection system as well as continue to collect water. Some of this conveyance would be revealed through design of pools and runnels along the edge of the beds.



4th Avenue - Boulevard

and Water Dispersal.

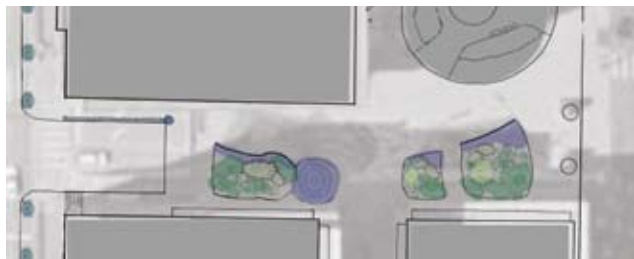
There are many great boulevards that handle large

amounts of traffic. To turn 4th Avenue to a great entry for both neighborhoods, to increase safety for bikers that now use the sidewalk, and to enhance the pedestrian environment for expect increase in residents, the design reduces the stret to one turn lane and two lanes in each direction with a bike lane on the west side. Trees will line both sides with a subsurface linear bioretention system collecting and disperse water under the sidewalk. All water would eventually be piped back into the sewer system and discharged

into the Sound, though ultimately the whole system could be infiltrated in the tidelands. Further storage and art have could be incorporated into backyard pools for the residences over the train tracks. Finally, vertical art display along the median by the bike path would reinforce neighborhood identity



Site Plan - Weller between 4th and 5th



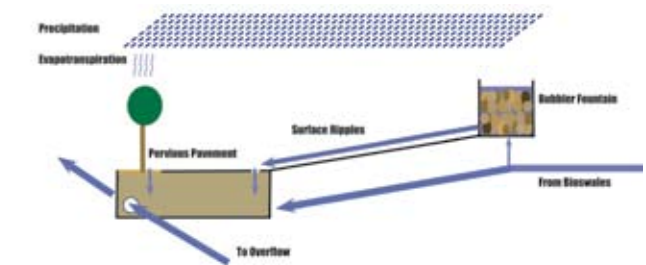
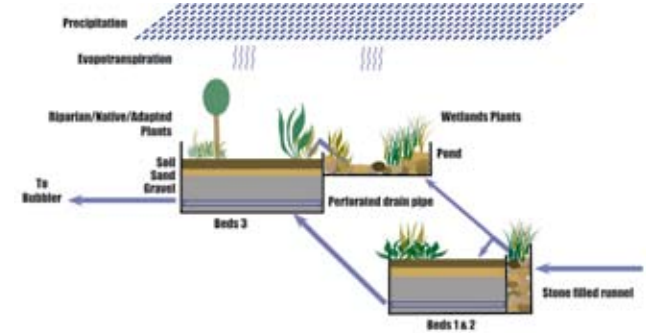
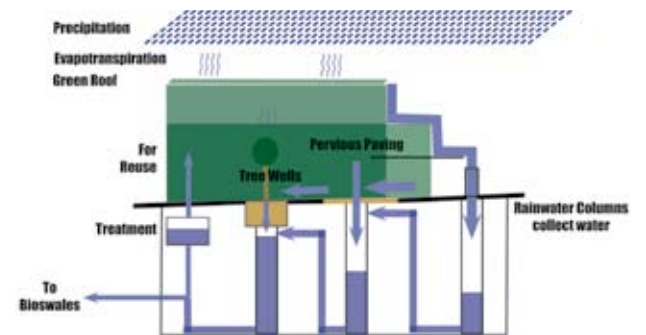
Site Plan - Union Station Square



Site Plan - Union Station Square



Weller Street "Cisterns."



4th Avenue Grand Boulevard

Uwajimaya Block 1

Nathan Brightbill

This project considered the potential to incorporate open space within a private mixed-use development, focusing on Uwajimaya Block 1 located between 5th and 6th Ave. and King and Weller Streets. It is hoped that a central plaza accessible from 5th and Weller and 6th and King can provide a link between the heart of the International District and the southern portion of the Union Station office complexes.

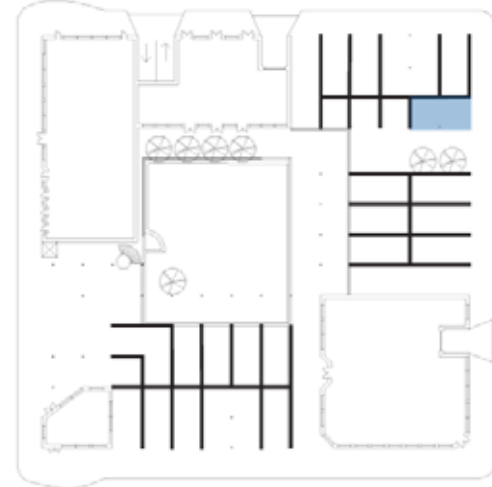
The essential concept for the project is that of a tile puzzle, where parts are moveable. On the ground floor a framework of concrete posts and wood beams allows one to hang walls in different configurations as needs change over days, weeks, months or seasons. This framework also extends into the interior plaza, bringing indoor activities outside and generating a structure upon which awnings can be attached for an outdoor market or restaurant seating area. Additionally, this frame could be used as a backdrop for community events such as a performance.



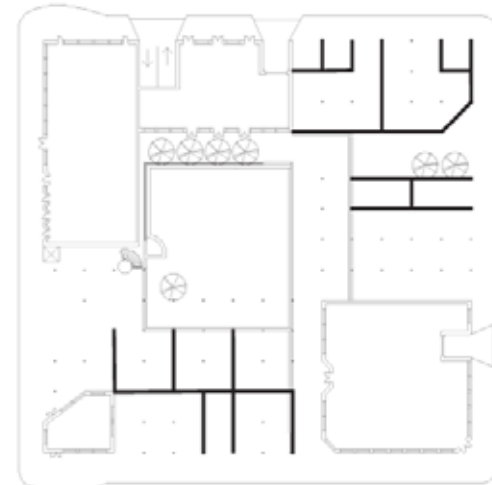
The project consists of remodeling the historic Publix Hotel, adding an additional hotel with ground floor retail space, and constructing mixed use residential/retail buildings on the southern portion of the site. Here, slight height increases can be employed to al-

as business needs change or as they come and go spaces can be reconfigured to suit small and large operations.

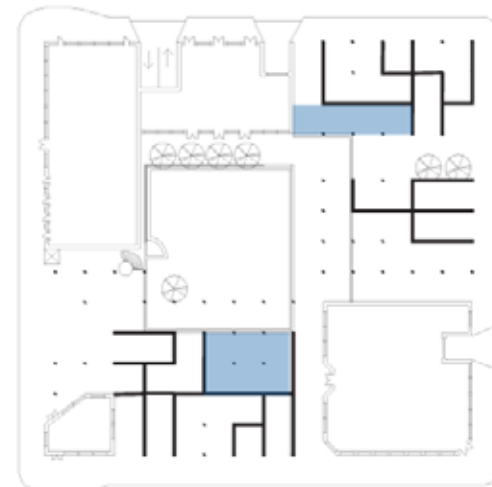
at times free areas might be used as public space.



small shops with some free space.



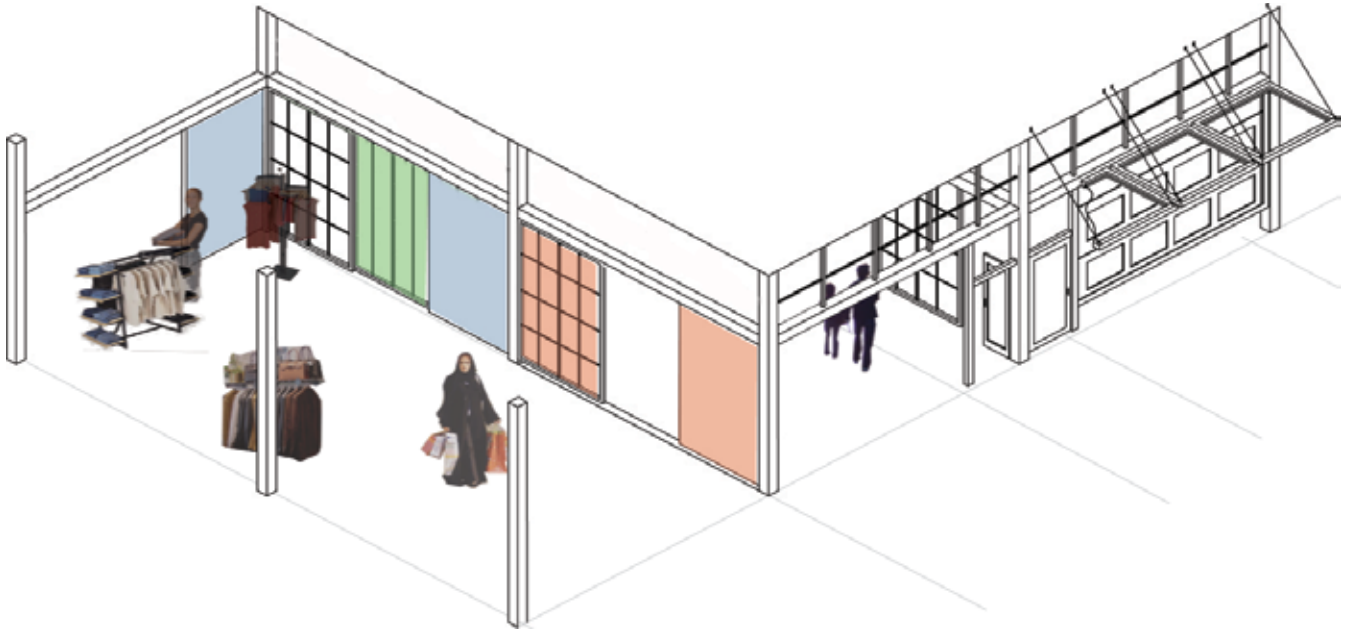
large shops with no free space available



variety of shops with free space becoming extension of courtyard.

low ground floor open space, including a covered public area on 5th, as well as allowing more sunlight into the site and limiting the disruption of views, such as for the Fujisada building. Other considerations include maintaining a site line to downtown from the interior of the site and establishing a pedestrian link to the existing Uwajimaya entrance.

Rainwater can be collected from the roofs and cycled through a water feature in the plaza and into a gray-water system. The water can also be routed to Weller street to activate the green street project. Parking will be handled by linking underground parking in block 1 to the existing parking garage in blocks 2 and 3.



Shops would be equipped with interchangeable, moveable walls. The framing above the hanging walls is open allowing sounds from shops to intermingle, generating a greater feel of activity. Retractable doors make up the majority of the street face and can be closed at night and in winter.



Looking through covered open space to courtyard at 5th and Weller. The first floor framework allows open space to shift use throughout the course of a day, week or year, depending on need. The framing extends into the courtyard allowing activity to ebb and flow in this area. Awnings could be attached to create a covered market or it could be used to create the set for a play or public event.

5. Major Recommendations

King Street Station

- close the short segments of 3rd Avenue South and 2nd Avenue South Extension directly adjacent to King Street Station to automobile traffic; reconnect the pedestrian corridor between Pioneer Square and the Chinatown/International District.
- re-route the streetcar south on 3rd Ave S and east on S Jackson to create a more formal movement between neighborhoods.
- re-open the S Jackson St entrance of King Street Station.
- make a series of flexible spaces at different scales to accommodate and reflect varied levels of activity.
- create a more cohesive 'multi-modal transportation hub' that facilitates movement at all scales AND serves as a publicly accessible and integral open space.

Pedestrian Bridge to Weller

- extend the Weller Street Green Street to 5th Avenue.
- consider water collection for the Block 1 project and turn the collection mechanisms into ways to enliven the street.
- line 4th Avenue with trees and add a bike lane. use art to increase neighborhood identity.

Uwajimaya Block 1

- consider additional height in exchange for open space on ground.
- make structure and open space flexible to accommodate different activities at different times of day, week and seasons.
- make interior space flexible to accommodate activities from public performances to private events. This flexibility should accommodate activities from early morning to late evening keeping the space active and making it a destination for those visiting the neighborhood, potentially for several days.

Community Open Space Initiative:
Chinatown, Japantown, Little Saigon—
International District, Seattle

2005 Community Design Studio Report

Part 1. 4th and 5th Avenues -- Lauren Kimiko Acheson, Nathan Brightbill, Elizabeth Powers

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