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Evolution of an Academic Village: Vision for Inner South Portland

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EVOLUTION OF AN ACADEMIC VILLAGE



Vision for Inner South Portland

2007 Urban Design Workshop
Portland State University



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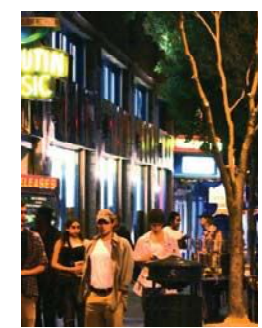
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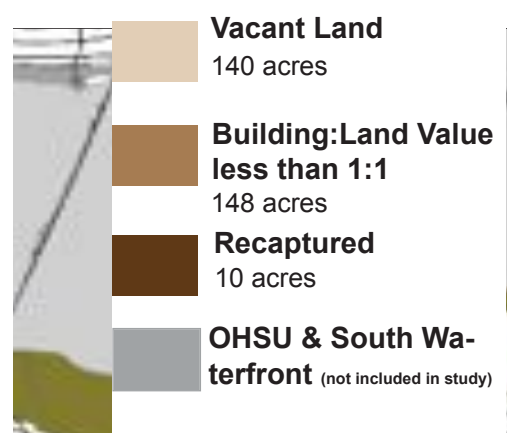
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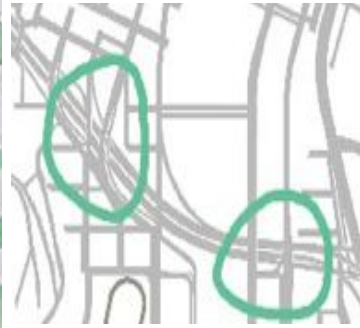
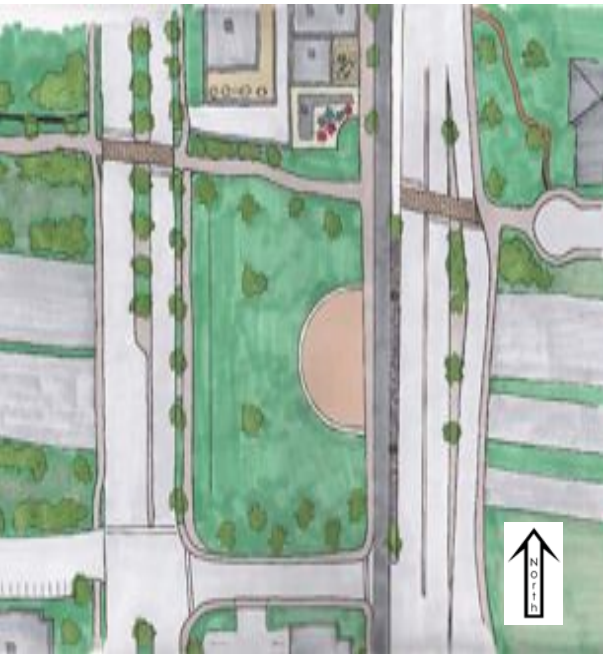


The Academic Village plan establishes the vision for the emerging education center. The plan calls for a vibrant, sustainable mix of commercial and institutional projects, housing, and public amenities. Guiding principles focus on sustainable, walkable communities and high-density transit oriented development with 24 hour activity. Key goals of the plan are:

- Economic Development** 9,700 jobs in 3.4 million sf of commercial/office space
- 1,500 jobs in 511,000 sf of mixed use retail service
- Housing** 12,000 housing units, including 3,000 affordable housing units
- Parks & Open Space** creation of 10 acres of park & open space by capping I-405

Activation of Barbur Blvd/Duniway Plaza areas including streetscape improvements & mixed use retail/institutional; University Place mixed-use redevelopment with ground floor grocery/multi-story residential; Activation of underused properties in the Fountain District and Naito Blvd improvements; rerouting of Ross Island bridgehead





•Two sections of I-405 to be “capped”, facilitating key north-south flows.

1. 1st/Naito Cap or “Green Cap”
Act as central open space for surrounding mixed-use development.
Transit-oriented (located along suggested Orange Line route)
Excellent views of Mt. Hood to be emphasized
Softscape: grassy, meadow like surface

2. 5th/6th Cap or “Promontory Plaza”
Located at southern terminus of Downtown Transit Mall
Facilitate PSU extension south to north Barbur area
Hardscape, plaza like landscaping

freeway caps (5 & 6)

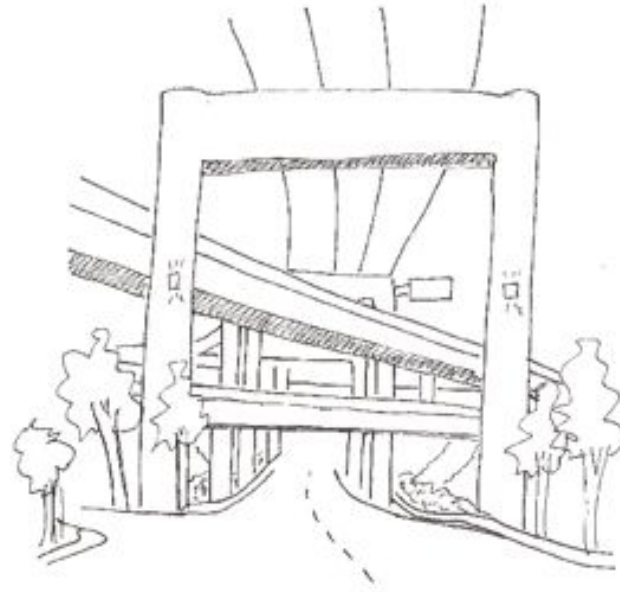


•Vital link from International School and Village Center to South Waterfront.

•Potential for ecological urban design: storm water swales as sidewalk buffer, pervious surfaces, and waterfall features.

•Enormousness of freeway underpasses should be embraced in design considerations.

•Adequate lighting as essential for safety and place making.



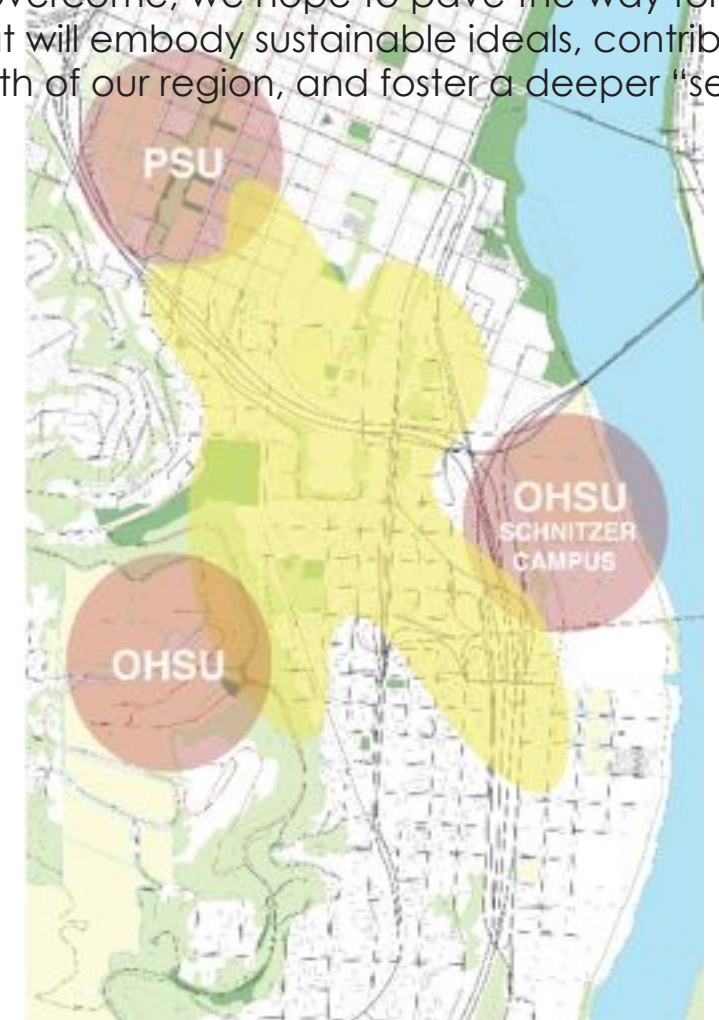
sheridan underpass (7)



MISSION

This vision of an Academic Village is a culmination of three months of work by 12 students in the Spring 2007 Urban Design Workshop at Portland State University. Our understanding of the Academic Village arose out of an exploration of connections between neighboring academic institutions – Portland State University, Oregon Health and Sciences University on Marquam Hill, and OHSU's emerging campus on the South Waterfront – and the Corbett and Lair Hill neighborhoods. We discovered that people from these institutions and communities live, work, study, and play in a shared urban space, but that the potential for creating an Academic Village is bounded by the history and physical characteristics of that urban space.

We would like to illustrate how an Academic Village can be a major asset to the city of Portland and its residents. By combining the resources and ideals of our academic institutions with the vitality of our urban and community institutions, our vision seeks to bring our academic and community nodes closer together at many different levels. By highlighting how barriers to interaction and connectivity can be overcome, we hope to pave the way for an Academic Village that will embody sustainable ideals, contribute to the economic health of our region, and foster a deeper “sense of place.”



SoWa

The South Waterfront functioned as a major port for the Northwest for over a hundred years. The Zidell family operates the remaining active shipyard in the area. A short-lived Hooverville and stevedores looking for a place to crash for the night had been the most recent residential activity. Today the South Waterfront, known as SoWa, is anticipating an estimated 10,000 residential units, many in high-rise condos, and 3,000 jobs. The plan for the district seeks to encourage a mix of uses and a highly urban character. The Tram connects to OHSU's Marquam Hill campus and the Portland Streetcar connects to downtown. There are plans for a pedestrian bridge across I-5 and an extension of the Willamette Greenway.



• Currently considered Locally Preferred Alternative would be a missed opportunity. Orange Line should run south to Kelly Blvd before crossing the Willamette River, providing light rail access to the business district just south of I-405, the South Portland neighborhood and proposed Village Center.

OHSU

Oregon Health and Science University, on Marquam Hill, is Oregon's largest medical school, known for its focus on research and technology. Formed in Portland in 1974, OHSU is an important employment base for the region. The Tram came about in an attempt to provide easier and faster access to the hospital, for employees, students, and patients. OHSU hopes to foster biotech industry in the South Waterfront and plans to develop a new campus on land donated by the Schnitzer family.



• Construction of new multi-modal Porter-Division Bridge would provide MAX access to upcoming OHSU Schnitzer campus in the South Waterfront District and alleviate vehicular traffic pressure on the Ross Island Bridge.

PSU

Portland State University is considered an urban university; until recently it was primarily a commuter campus and many students work while attending classes. It has the highest enrollment and offers more graduate programs than any other school in the state. PSU has a program for pre-med and nursing students, who often go on to attend OHSU. The school at one point made a decision not to expand south of I-405, however a record enrollment and interest in the university has it searching for new buildings and student resources, including affordable student housing.



• Possible west-side stops: PSU, Lincoln/Naito area, Kelly Blvd, and South Waterfront.

• Would serve to connect East Side residents to the Academic Village.

Lair Hill, Corbett and Terwilliger Neighborhoods

The Lair Hill, Corbett, and Terwilliger neighborhoods are tight-knit communities centrally located between OHSU, PSU, the South Waterfront and Johns Landing. The South Portland Historic District protects parts of Lair Hill and Corbett. An urban renewal project demolished part of the historically Italian, Irish, and Jewish immigrant Lair Hill neighborhood in the 1950s. The Corbett and Lair Hill Neighborhoods are divided by busy Naito Blvd and cut off from the river by I-5. In opposition to the Aerial Tram, some neighbors pegged signs in their yards reading, "No Aerial Tram!" These neighborhoods have a rich history, thriving communities, and a numerous cultural assets.



• Extend Lincoln east to Naito, extend Sherman west to Naito. Create East/West pedestrian pathways between 1st and Naito, and to International School Blocks. Provide much needed sidewalk and safe crosswalks along Naito.

• Potential MAX Orange Line route = activation through transit-orientation.

• Encourage mixed-use development with storefronts on Naito, with underground parking on Water St., where asphalt should be removed to reveal cobblestone.



• Embrace academic character offered by the International School.

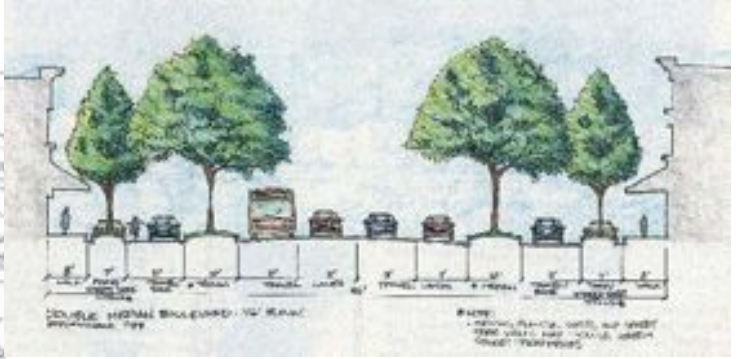
• Common greenspace with Streetcar access at Harrison/Naito "triangle".



naito blvd and village center(1)



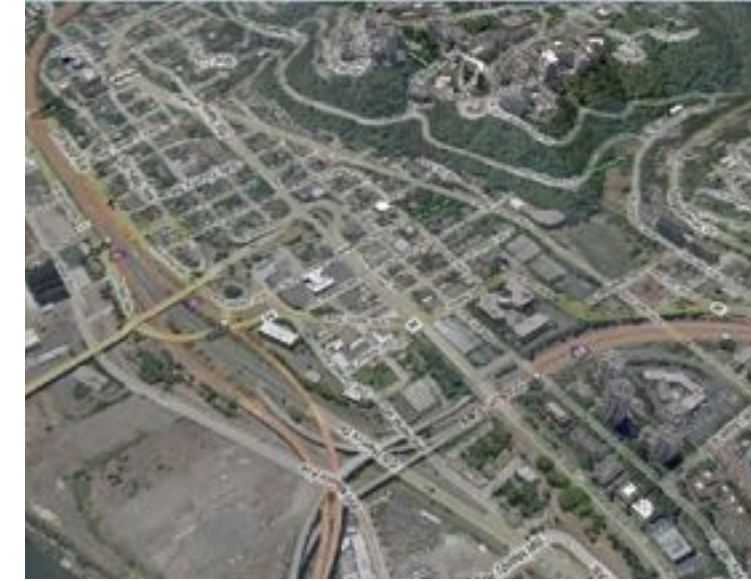
- Renovation and relocation of Ross Island bridgehead could add up to 6 new developable blocks, ideal for a transit-oriented Village Center, and would remove heavy vehicular traffic currently plaguing the Corbett neighborhood.
- Transition of Naito Parkway to a Community Boulevard. Tree-lined medians and sidewalk buffers, re-connection of the historic grid, and creation of a pedestrian realm.
- Revitalization of currently undervalued district; consistent urban fabric connecting and re-uniting surrounding neighborhoods.



barbur blvd improvements (2)



- “Easy fixes” in pedestrian connectivity and place-making: addition of sidewalks, tree-lined median in place of unnecessarily long turn lane, textured cross walks and signals. Resulting in connections to Lair Hill, Duniway Plaza, and Portland State University.
- Encourage medium density, mixed-use development with street-level commercial activity. Development should take advantage of eastern views.
- Potential redevelopment of YMCA site, extension of grid in place of track.
- Make connections to Marquam Hill Trails network safe, accessible, and apparent to the community, encouraging use for recreational and physical fitness activities.



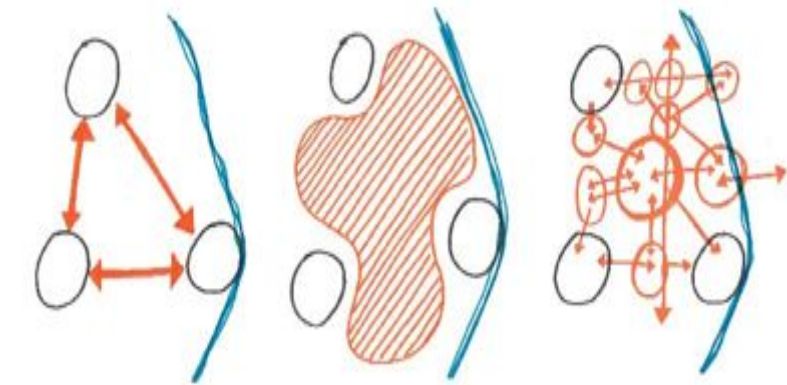
an academic village:

a confluence of academic institutions knitted together through supporting and complementary neighborhoods with a strong sense of connectivity: social, functional, economic and cultural.

Initially, the Urban Design Workshop focused on various relationships among three key academic campuses: PSU, OHSU, and South Waterfront. Upon further examination, we began to see unique potential of a continuous, sensible urban fabric between these primary nodes. The vision was thus expanded to involve additional unbound academic assets, for example the Northwest College of Natural Medicine, the area's existing vibrant communities, and a street network that facilitates walking, cycling, and transit ridership.

The workshop identified the following key principles as the framework for its vision:

- The Academic Village should evolve as a distinct and unique place, with connections between it and adjacent neighborhoods, thereby promoting physical, social and functional integration.
- Facilitates active learning for people of all ages.
- Linkages between and within various neighborhoods that make up the Academic Village.
- Safe, well-lit bicycle and pedestrian connections to enhance and improve connectivity and safety.
- Innovative buildings that are environmentally sustainable.
- The river, trails, streets and the other open spaces throughout the Academic Village should be considered as a complete open space system in which individual parts unite to contribute as a whole.
- Enhances the economic viability of the region by building upon existing assets.
- Encourage an environment with a mix of uses so as to invite activity throughout the day.



“Consider the common plan followed in this country, but not in others, of making one large and expensive building, as unfortunately erroneous. It is infinitely better to erect a small and separate lodge for each separate professorship...joining these lodges by barracks for a certain portion of the students, opening into a covered way to give a dry communication between all the schools. The whole of these arranged around an open square of grass and trees, would make it, what it should be in fact, an academical village...”
- Thomas Jefferson

Zone A: Fountain District and International School. I-405 and Naito Parkway create barriers for pedestrian passage between activity nodes.

FOUNTAIN DISTRICT

Emphasize cultural/historical monuments – Keller Fountain, Pettygrove Park, and Lovejoy Fountain.

Redeveloped mixed-use areas around Lovejoy Fountain would generate activity from students and the community.

Gateways and signage would distinguish entry points into the fountain district. Improved landscaping and lighting would encourage use after business hours.

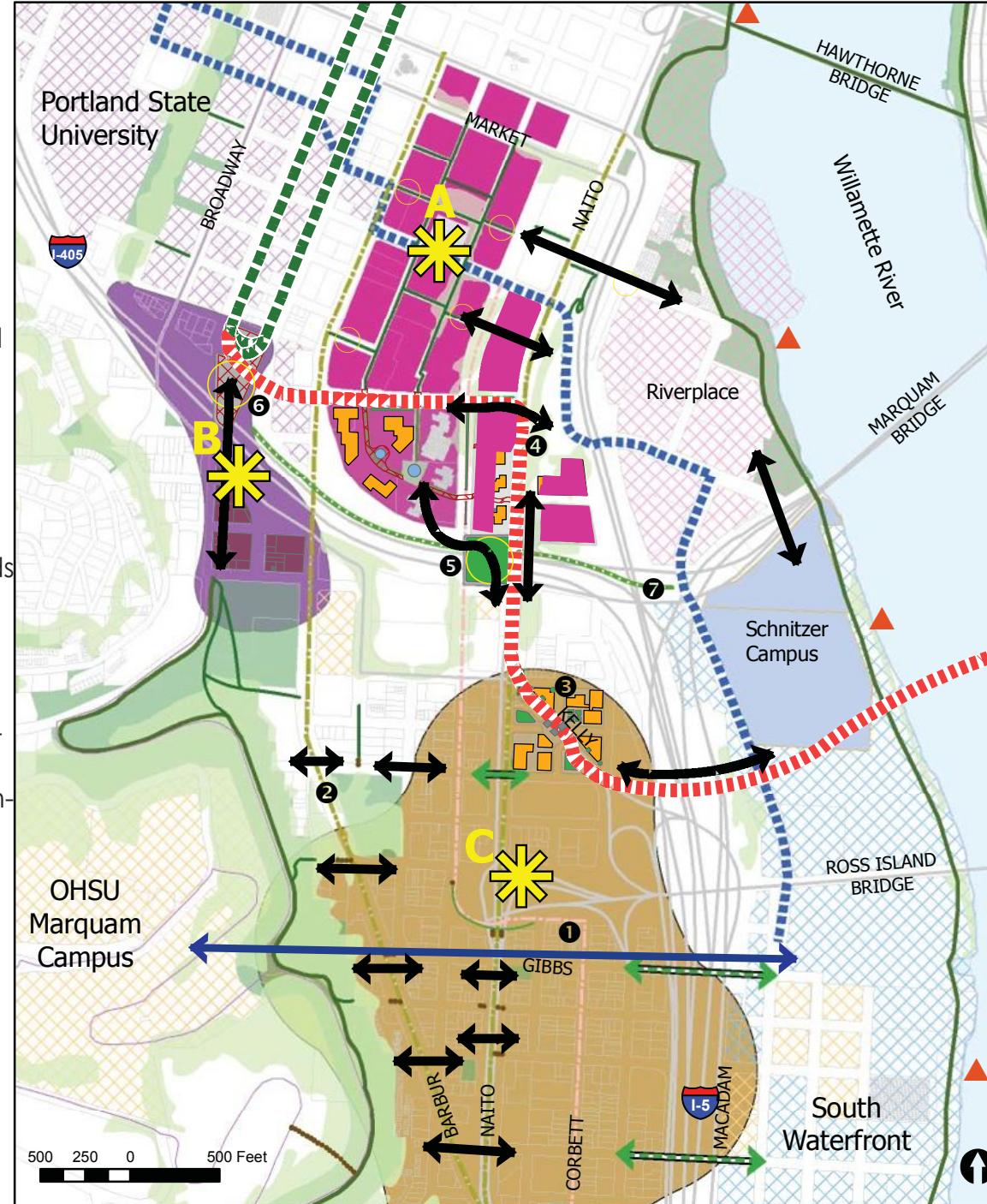
Extend east-west pedestrian paths across 1st and Naito towards Riverplace, the International School, and the Willamette River.

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

The International School fits within a broad concept of an academic village. It attracts people from diverse backgrounds, fits into PSU's international emphasis, and attracts families to downtown and the South Waterfront.

Underutilized green space between the International School, Naito Parkway, and the streetcar can provide needed open and recreational space.

A cap across I-405 between 1st and Naito would create pedestrian connectivity, provide a connection to South Portland neighborhoods, and mark an entrance to downtown.



Zone B: PSU/Duniway. PSU is evolving from a commuter to a residential campus and I-405 divides the historic Duniway neighborhood from the central city.

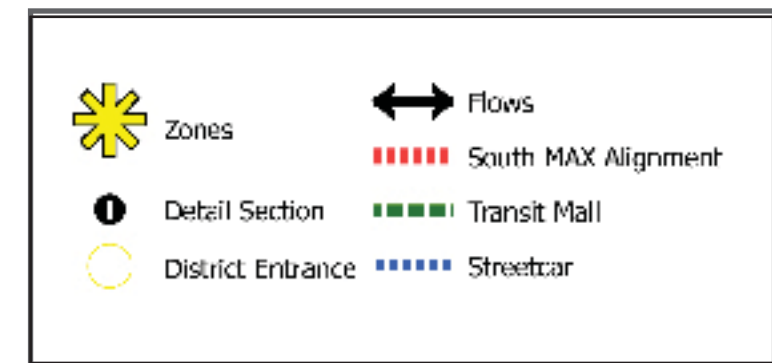
Affordable housing and community-oriented retail south of the PSU campus would serve students and others.

A cap across I-405 at 5th/6th Ave would improve pedestrian connectivity and create an entrance to the PSU campus and downtown.

East-west green streets would connect the pedestrian paths of the Park Blocks to those of the Fountain District and provide access to the river.

A bike path along I-405 and the proposed caps would establish a continuous path connecting PSU, the neighborhoods, and the river.

Improved pedestrian connectivity between the Park Blocks, Terwilliger and Marquam trail systems, and Duniway Park would weave these natural areas into the urban fabric.



Zone C: Historic South Portland neighborhoods. I-5, Naito Pkwy, and Barbours Blvd. divide the neighborhoods, provide inadequate pedestrian crossings, and impede access to the central city and the waterfront.

Reintegrate the community with the rapidly changing central city: manage the way change affects the historic neighborhood, respect the past with a view to the future.

Provide multiple connections from the neighborhood to the river, starting with the planned pedestrian bridge across I-5 at Gibbs St.

Move regional traffic off of neighborhood streets, using previous studies as a starting point: provide direct arterial and freeway connections to the Ross Island bridge.

Create a "village center" around existing neighborhood institutions, providing a space for residents of the historic and evolving neighborhoods to come together, with Corbett as a "Main Street."

Dynamic lines of movement with active edges: traffic calming, pedestrian crossings, and mixed uses on Naito Parkway and Barbours Blvd will provide a more human scale. Using streets not to travel "through" but for traveling "to" the academic village.

A transit hub on the Kelly diagonal can provide a regional connection point, bringing together buses and possible future light rail to Milwaukie.