4.4 Land Use

Changes in transportation systems can influence changes in nearby land uses. A project can directly affect land use through property acquisition or indirectly by influencing development or redevelopment in the area. This section evaluates potential impacts on existing and future land uses and zoning from the Center City Connector.

The study area for the land use analysis is approximately 1,000 feet around the proposed streetcar trackway, turnback tracks, OMFs and access track, and TPSS locations. It also includes the area within a 0.25 mile of the proposed stations. Given the distance between proposed station locations, the study area along the LPA forms a 0.25 mile zone or swath along the proposed project corridor (see Figure 4.4-1).

The study area includes the area designated in the City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan as the “Downtown Urban Center” (City of Seattle, 2005). This is a heavily developed, high-density area, with a mix of commercial, office, residential, and retail uses. Existing uses within the Downtown Urban Center include office buildings, parking lots, retail stores/services, hotels/motels, government services, multifamily residential (including affordable housing), warehouses, vacant land, parks, art galleries, auditoriums, religious services, and sports facilities.

The Seattle Comprehensive Plan (City of Seattle, 2005) has designated urban villages that comprise the Downtown Urban Center, as shown on Figure 4.4-1 and briefly described:

- **South Lake Union** is transitioning from low to moderate residential, office and light industrial to higher density housing, with research and development office buildings. The City’s goal for this village is of a livable, walkable community that is well served by transit and easy to get around by foot, bike, or transit.

- **The Denny Triangle** is a mixed-use neighborhood that combines commercial office space, retail sales and services, social and public services, and a residential population. The City’s goal for the Denny Triangle is to reduce the impacts from through transportation while improving internal access and circulation.

- **Belltown** is a mixed-use neighborhood with an emphasis on a residential population and small business activity. The City’s goal for Belltown Village is to provide an area where people can live, work, shop, and play in both Belltown and all of the downtown area without a car.

- **The Commercial Core** is a major employment center, tourist and convention attraction, shopping magnet, residential neighborhood, and regional hub of cultural and entertainment activities. A City’s primary goal for the Commercial Core is to work with transit providers to promote convenient transit and public access to and through the Commercial Core.
- **Pioneer Square** is a diverse community with a significant residential population and an eclectic mix of businesses and major community facilities. The City’s goal for Pioneer Square is to promote a community with an efficient transportation system that provides efficient access to sites inside and outside neighborhood boundaries.

- **The Chinatown-International District** includes thriving businesses, organizations, and cultural institutions. The City’s goal is to create an accessible neighborhood, with access within and to the neighborhood, for all transportation modes, while encouraging less dependence on cars and greater use of transit, bikes, and walking.

- **The Duwamish Manufacturing Industrial Center** is located south of Pioneer Square and the Chinatown-International District and, while it consists mainly of industrial-related uses, it does include the headquarters for Starbucks, the Port of Seattle, and Safeco Field. The City’s goal for the area to retain and expand manufacturing and industrial activity.

Seattle’s Comprehensive Plan (City of Seattle, 2005) for the Downtown Urban Center encourages development activities to maintain downtown Seattle as the most important of the region’s urban centers. Future planned mixed-use land uses include multiple zoning categories, at densities catering to each urban village’s unique characteristics.

Zoning for the study area, shown on Figure 4.4-2, primarily consists of mixed uses. Of the zoning categories in the study area boundaries, about 89 percent is related to some type of mixed use with the remaining 10 percent divided between industrial (about 9 percent) and residential (about 2 percent). In the areas adjacent to the alignment, higher densities are allowed, consistent with the Seattle Downtown Core zoning. Most of the areas east of the alignment are zoned for a higher density of office and commercial uses, and they include Downtown Office Core and Downtown Retail Core. The areas to the west of the alignment have a mixture of zoning categories that allows a higher density of housing. This area includes the Pike Market Mixed, where the Pike Market Historical Commission has review authority over land use decisions in the interest of maintaining the Pike Place Market character. The southern portion of the alignment is located in the Pioneer Square Mixed zone, which is similar to the Pike Market Mixed zone in that the Pioneer Square Historical Commission reviews and may disallow uses not aligned with the neighborhood’s historic character. Further west in the study area, the Downtown Harborfront zone allows primarily commercial development at a smaller scale. There are also areas zoned for industrial-related uses in southernmost portion of the study area.

The area to the north associated with the proposed OMF expansion in South Lake Union includes zoning that allows for a range of uses and encourages a dense, mixed-use neighborhood. The area around the Chinatown-International District OMF is zoned for industrial-related uses to the south and a mixture of uses including the International District Mixed to the north. Finally, the area associated with the single track on Republican Street is zoned to allow a mixture of commercial and residential uses.

### 4.4.1 Impacts

#### 4.4.1.1 No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative would not result in changes to current or planned land uses. The majority of the study area is lined with high-density development and several more high-density
Figure 4.4-1 Urban Villages in Downtown Urban Center and the Center City Connector Study Area
Figure 4.4-2 Zoning in the Center City Connector Study Area
projects are currently under construction along and beyond the study area. Seattle’s Center City neighborhoods have a significant concentration of households and employment. These neighborhoods are forecast to see employment growth of 63 percent and residential population growth of 44 percent by 2030 (SDOT, 2012). The No Build Alternative is inconsistent with Seattle’s Transit Master Plan (TMP; SDOT, 2012), which identified the Center City Connector project as a top priority for transit investment.

4.4.1.2 Locally Preferred Alternatives

Operational Impacts

Consistent with the City’s comprehensive plan, the Center City Connector would provide a convenient, reliable and frequent transit service that connects the neighborhoods in the study area with the neighborhoods currently served by the South Lake Union and First Hill streetcar lines. In the Seattle Comprehensive Plan, the Center City Connector is intended to support development of transit connections between urban villages. This concept, referred to as the Urban Village Transit Network, encourages concentration of high-quality transit service to support future development along travel corridors.

The Center City Connector would improve linkages with other transit services, neighborhoods, and commercial centers in the study area and beyond, as well as improve pedestrian access, which would benefit people who live, work, or visit the study area and the neighborhoods beyond. It would also assist in accommodating travel needs for the projected economic and residential growth. The Center City Connector is consistent with the goals and policies identified in the City’s comprehensive plan, as well as other regional, state, and local plans. Many of these plans include goals and policies to improve transit accessibility and support greater densities and mixtures of land uses. Appendix D4.4 provides details about relevant plans, goals, and policies, as well as information about how the Center City Connector would consistent with these plans.

Property Acquisitions. The proposed trackway for the LPA would be constructed in existing City of Seattle right-of-way; therefore, no conversions of existing or planned land uses would be necessary for the track alignment. However, easements or long-term leases of less than 0.1 acre may be required for up to two TPSS structures that would be located in existing parking garages (Sites 2, 4, 5, and/or 6) (see Figure 4.4-2). Also, TPSS #1 may require a portion of Westlake Square, which is owned by the Seattle Parks’ Department; however, most of the TPSS would be within public right-of-way, and because the use and function of the square (pedestrian triangle) would not change, the TPSS would not require a conversion from park to transportation use.

Storage for the additional streetcar vehicles would require expansion at one or both the South Lake Union and Chinatown-International District OMFs on lands currently owned by the city.

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1 The 2012 TMP supplanted Seattle Transit Plan (2005). Multiple studies support the TMP. The Center City Circulation Study, completed in 2003, considered several independent transportation projects that affect the Center City. A central recommendation of the study was to create a fast, frequent, reliable, and legible transit network that connects the City’s urban centers and urban villages to each other and to the Center City. It also recommended upgraded connections that facilitate connectivity and circulation within the Center City itself. The Center City Access Strategy, initiated in 2004, promoted the recommendations of the Center City Circulation Study. The Seattle Streetcar Network Development Report (SDOT, 2008) evaluated route options for the most promising potential streetcar corridors and routes in the Seattle Streetcar Network Concept that was approved by the City Council in February 2008 (City of Seattle, City Council Resolution Number 31042, http://bit.ly/UHldGQ). For more information, see the Center City Connector Transit Study, Purpose and Need (SDOT, 2013).
and zoned appropriately (mixed and commercial/industrial, respectively) for public facilities (including transportation uses). Expansion on these sites would not change development patterns or land uses on adjacent properties because the use of the facilities would be consistent with the existing and planned uses.

**Changes to Land Use Patterns.** The Center City Connector is not expected to change land use patterns as a result of operations. As stated under the No Build Alternative, infill development is occurring regardless of the project and is consistent with the City of Seattle’s Comprehensive Plan (City of Seattle, 2005). Although the Denny Triangle has some vacant and underutilized lands zoned for higher-density and the South Lake Union urban village has infill opportunities, growth in these areas is occurring regardless of the project and would be consistent with the City of Seattle’s comprehensive plan (City of Seattle, 2005). Streetcar stations have been identified to serve the existing and forecasted need for enhanced accessibility to established destinations. Therefore, stations are not anticipated to be a catalyst of more growth but rather are located to serve dense areas where mobility options are needed.

The expansion of one or both OMFs would not affect land use patterns, because they are already within zones that permit such uses and have not affected land use thus far. The added track on Republican Street between Westlake and Terry Avenues would add another transportation function on the existing roadway, which is an allowed use.

**Construction Impacts**

Construction of the LPA would have temporary visual and noise impacts on adjacent land uses but would not result in permanent changes. Construction activities would include the presence and movement of equipment and materials, introduction of lights for night-time work, storage of construction materials, and general visual changes in the viewed landscape during construction (see Section 3.4.2.5, Construction, for a more detailed construction description). Measures to minimize noise and visual impacts are identified in Sections 4.3 and 4.7, respectively. Impacts associated with the approximately 2-year construction period would end once construction is complete. Impacts would be less than 8 months for any particular neighborhood along the route. The exception to this would be Segment 4 (Westlake), where the construction duration may be longer but would be limited to evenings and weekends. This would extend the construction period for Segment 4 compared to the other segments but would reduce conflicts with peak daily commute periods and with the commercial activities that dominate Stewart Street. Therefore, no impact on land uses is anticipated to occur from construction.

SDOT would avoid or minimize construction-related access and parking impacts on office and commercial uses through measures developed as part of a construction management plan (such as maintaining through-traffic on two lanes, signage, construction updates, and a promotion and marketing plan to assist businesses in maintaining their customer base). Refer to Section 4.1, Transportation, and Section 4.5, Economics, for more information on construction impacts and mitigation measures related to loss of parking and businesses. These short-term impacts (under 8 months in any construction segment) would not result in changes to land uses.

**4.4.2 Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation specific to land use will be required.