4.6 Social and Community Effects

Transportation projects have the potential to affect the communities they travel through by adding or changing travel patterns, accessibility to services, and sometimes disrupting community cohesion. The local environment as experienced by the people who work and live in a neighborhood can also be affected by changes in noise, views, and walking environments. This section examines potential social and community impacts from the construction and operation of the Center City Connector.

Applicable Regulations

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, and national origin.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Presidential Executive Order 13166 directs agencies to ensure LEP populations have fair and equal access to services.

The study area for the social and community effects analysis is 0.25 mile around the centerline of the alignment, 1,000 feet around the existing South Lake Union and Chinatown-International District First Hill Street Car OMFs, and 1,000 feet around proposed turnback tracks along Republican Street (see Figure 4.6-1). This study area was used in the analysis because it encompass the areas where project impacts on social and community resources are most likely to occur.

4.6.1 Neighborhood Characteristics

In the study area, there are seven neighborhoods defined in the City of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan (City of Seattle, 2005). They contain a mixture of employment, residential, and retail uses, as well as locations for gathering such as restaurants, bars, coffee shops, and community facilities (see Figure 4.6-1 for location of community facilities). The neighborhoods are urban in scale and nature; they are communities that combine residents, service providers, and business employees and patrons. There are sidewalks on both sides of the streets and pedestrian crossings at each intersection. Many streets in the project corridor include street trees along the sidewalks and occasionally in the median. The neighborhoods enjoy connections to many local and regional transit services, such as the Seattle Streetcar system (First Hill and South Lake Union); Sound Transit Link light rail, Sounder commuter rail, and express buses; King County Metro and RapidRide bus service; Community Transit express bus service; the Seattle Monorail; the King County Water Taxi; and Washington State Ferries. The seven neighborhoods (referred to as 'urban villages' by City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan) are described below. For more information, see Section 4.4, Land Use.

- **Denny Triangle.** This highly urbanized area includes the Westlake Shopping Center and Pacific Place mall, as well as many other retail businesses. It has experienced recent growth in residential and commercial developments.
- **Belltown**. This dense, mostly residential neighborhood has multifamily residential developments and a mixture of commercial and office land uses. It also includes restaurants and evening entertainment locations.
- **Commercial Core**. This major employment center, tourist and convention attraction, shopping magnet, and regional hub of cultural and entertainment activities contains the

Central Business District, made up of high-rise and midrise office, government, and commercial mall buildings; many hotels; the Washington State Trade and Convention Center; and the Pike Place Public Market. To the west, the Central Waterfront area includes the Seattle Aquarium, Seattle Great Wheel, and Colman Dock, which attract visitors to the area. The Seattle Art Museum and Benaroya Hall are also in the Commercial Core. Most of the residential development is located close to the Pike Place Public Market.

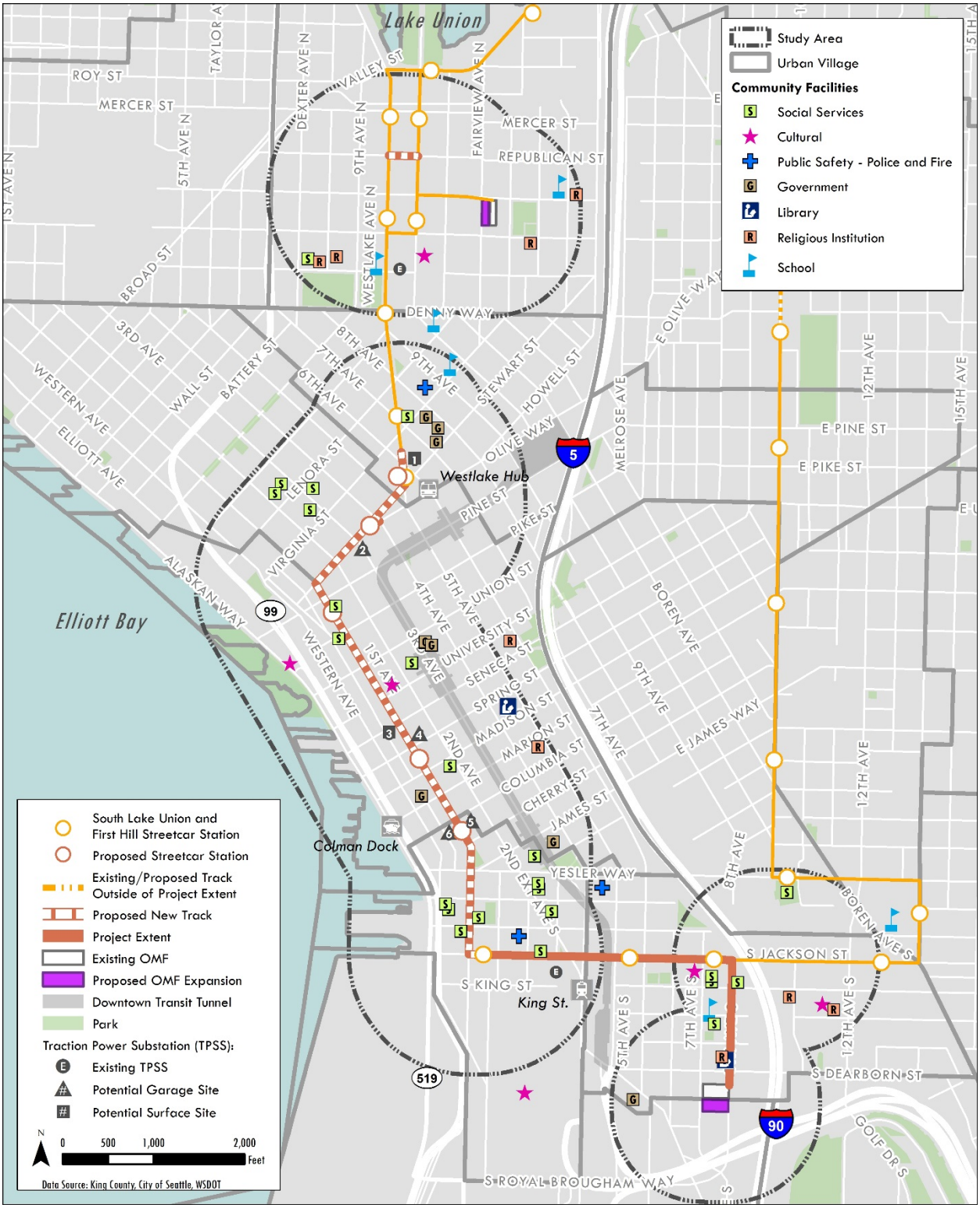
- **Pioneer Square**. The original downtown Seattle, this neighborhood includes historic and architecturally unique buildings that house retail shops, restaurants, and bars, as well as a mixture of multifamily residential and office buildings.
- **South Lake Union.** This neighborhood is in the midst of large-scale redevelopment. It includes a mixture of large, new, mixed-use residential and office developments, including the Amazon campus and biotech facilities.
- **Chinatown-International District**. This district includes businesses, local organizations, cultural institutions and multifamily residential and office buildings. It is one of Seattle's oldest neighborhoods and offers a diverse mixture of Asian culture with many restaurants and shops.
- **SoDo**. This neighborhood is primarily associated with commercial and industrial uses and includes the Starbucks headquarters, an active industrial waterfront, and Safeco Field, home to the Seattle Mariners.

4.6.2 Community Facilities

There are 52 community facilities in the study area, including social services, cultural institutions (such as libraries, museums, theaters, and landmarks), religious institutions, and government offices. There are also eight park facilities in the study area which consist of small open plazas. They are described in Section 4.13, Parks and Recreational Resources, of this EA. Figure 4.6-1 shows the locations of all community facilities in the study area, and the following is a list of those community facilities that are adjacent to the project elements:

- **Social Services:**
  - Bread of Life Mission
  - Yesler Community Center
  - Plymouth Housing Group Rental Office
- **Cultural**
  - Seattle Art Museum
  - Schools
  - Academy of Languages Translation and Interpretation Services
- **Governments**
  - U.S. Post Office
  - U.S. Federal Building

Figure 4.6-1 Community Facilities in the Study Area



4.6.3 Demographics

Study area demographics were compiled from U.S. Census 2010 data and from the American Community Survey data. Data on total population, age, and minority population characteristics was collected at the Census block level. Other data such as income level and household information was collected at the Census block group level. Demographic characteristics of the study area are summarized in Table 4.6-1. When compared to the larger Seattle area, the population in the study area is older, has smaller households, consists largely of renters, and is more dependent on transit than the City of Seattle as a whole[1]. Also, the study area has a higher concentration of minority and low-income populations compared with the City as a whole.

A **Census Block** is the smallest geographic unit used by the U.S. Census Bureau for tabulation of 100% data (data collected from all houses, rather than a sample of houses).

Census Block Group is between the Census Tract and the Census Block. It is the smallest geographic unit for which the bureau publishes sample data (data that is collected from a fraction of all households).

Recent rapid growth is attracting more jobs throughout the City of Seattle. The study area's total population increased by 30 percent from 2000 to 2010 and is forecasted to increase by more than 40 percent from 2010 to 2030, compared to an approximate 20 percent increase for the whole city (PSRC, 2014).

Table 4.6-1 Demographic Characteristics

	Study Area	Seattle
Total Population	20,842	608,660
18 Years and Under (%)	5.8	15.4
Over 65 Years of Age (%)	14.6	10.8
Median Age	41.1	36.1
Average Household Size	1.47	2.06
Owner-Occupied Housing Units (%)	13.7	48.1
Renter-Occupied Housing Units (%)	86.3	51.9
Median Household Income	$36,890	$63,470
Households with No Vehicle (%)	47.2	16.0
Persons with Disability	16.7	8.9
People Whose Income in the Past 12 Months is Below the Poverty Level (%)	28.5	13.2
Minority (%)	44.2	33.7
Households with Limited English Proficiency (%)	27.4	9.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 and 2008-2012 5 Year American Community Survey, 2012

[1] Households with no vehicle are considered to be transit dependent, although other groups often qualify, such as young, elderly, and disabled persons. These persons are not counted in this analysis.

4.6.4 Impacts

4.6.4.1 No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative would not directly affect neighborhoods or community facilities. Persons living and working in Seattle would not enjoy the improved access and connectivity within Seattle.

4.6.4.2 Locally Preferred Alternative

Operational Impacts

The Center City Connector would provide a convenient, reliable, and frequent transit service to easily and directly connect the neighborhoods in the study area with the neighborhoods currently served by the South Lake Union and First Hill Streetcar lines. Connections would also improve access to community facilities, employment opportunities, and education in other neighborhoods in Seattle through easier regional and local transit connections, such as Sound Transit Link, Sounder, express buses, Washington State Ferries, monorail, and King County Metro. The quality of life for persons who live and work in, and visit, the City Center would benefit from increased transit access and opportunities for social interaction. The increased transit access would be especially beneficial to transit-dependent households, which is about 47 percent of the study area population.

No property acquisition would occur because the project remains within public right-of-way or on publicly owned lands. Conversion of existing general purpose travel lanes to transit-only lanes would result in traffic diversion to adjacent streets and the project would also require some turning restrictions for general purpose vehicles. These changes would cause some increase in traffic delays as traffic disperses among adjacent roadways; however, they would not adversely affect travel through and across the neighborhoods or materially impair business access. The loss of on-street parking would affect some study area residents; however, these parking locations are predominantly time-restricted parking stalls, and as described Section 4.1.6, Parking, adequate alternative locations and supply exists nearby. The project would replace bus line (99) on First Avenue, but bus 99 is likely to return to its original route on Alaskan Way, and others (12, 16, and 66) would be rerouted.

The project would maintain sidewalks in the study area and upgrade crosswalk locations to meet ADA guidelines. In addition, the introduction of streetcars would not result in negative impacts on pedestrian movement because the streetcar vehicles would be within the existing right-of-way and existing crosswalks would remain. No impacts on non-motorized travel are anticipated beyond relocation of one bicycle sharrow (a lane shared by bicycles and vehicles) along Stewart Street between Fourth Avenue and Second Avenue one block to the east to minimize conflicts.

Operation of the project would not result in noise and vibration impacts on sensitive receptors such as residences, churches, or concert halls, or other sensitive community facilities. It would not require the acquisition of property or alter the function or use of park facilities. (See Section 4.3, Noise and Vibration, and Section 4.13, and Parks and Recreational Resources, for additional information.)

The Center City Connector would change the visual setting in neighborhoods, including historic Pioneer Square. However, these changes would be minimal because project design would incorporate neighborhood design guidelines to integrate with the surrounding context and character (See Section 4.7, Visual and Aesthetic Resources) of the neighborhood.

The LPA would not result in negative changes in neighborhood quality, cause to barriers to social interaction, nor adversely affect community facilities because the project would be located within the existing roadway right-of-way, would maintain building access (including enhanced access to community facilities and parks), and would improve pedestrian facilities. In addition, the project would increase connectivity to other regional transit connections throughout the greater Puget Sound region by providing links to transit hubs in the downtown area.

Construction Impacts

Construction impacts associated with the Center City Connector would be minor and temporary and would include the presence and movement of equipment and materials, lighting for nighttime work, storage of construction materials, and general visual nuisance around staging and construction areas. The project would be staged over a 2-year period along work areas of two to eight block segments. Work would occur within 8 months or less within each segment, typically during weekday construction hours; however, some nighttime work may occur. Construction activities, sequencing, and phasing are described in Section 3.4.2.5. Residents and community facilities would experience short-term impacts associated with construction, including the following:

- Temporary increases in noise and vibration
- Temporary increases in fugitive dust levels and other emissions
- Temporary traffic impacts, including changes in travel patterns, accessibility, and the loss of on-street parking and loading and unloading access
- Temporary changes in visual settings due to presence of construction equipment and activities
- Potential temporary avoidance of the area by pedestrians

See the following sections for more detail on impacts and mitigation measures during construction: 4.1, Transportation; 4.2, Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases; 4.3, Noise; 4.5, Economics; and 4.7, Visual and Aesthetic Resources. Along the Stewart Street alignment (the Westlake Segment), construction impacts may occur over a longer period (up to 8 months) but would be limited to weekends and evenings to minimize disruption of weekday traffic.

By sequencing construction, impacts on neighborhoods would be shorter in duration. During construction, one lane (with sidewalks) would remain open in either direction, and vehicle detours would not be required except in Pioneer Square. During construction, only one direction would be open; traffic going the other direction would be redirected onto nearby roadways. No access would be impeded during this rerouting period. On-street parking would be removed along the alignment, and closures of intersections along the route would be limited to evenings and weekends to minimize impacts on circulation during business hours. See Section 4.5 for business impacts and relevant mitigation measures during construction.

Despite some negative impacts near construction activities, the overall neighborhood quality for residents would be affected for relatively short periods. Other than infrequent occasions of pre-

arranged and off-business hours, building access would be maintained throughout construction, including at community facilities along the alignment. Despite best management practices to minimize construction impacts, community and businesses can become frustrated with construction, especially if they are not kept apprised of construction activities.

Construction at the South Lake Union OMF may result in short-term noise, dust, and vibration, which would be limited to the expansion site. The turnback tracks on Republican Street and Westlake Avenue would be installed during non-service periods for the South Lake Union Streetcar and result in temporary noise and vibration impacts and minor traffic closures during off-peak peak periods.

4.6.5 Mitigation Measures

No adverse social, community facilities, and neighborhoods operational impacts have been identified, and no mitigation is proposed.

During construction, SDOT will develop and implement a public information plan, which will include the following elements:

- Build routine communication programs with community organizations and service providers in the project area to apprise them of construction activities that may affect the community and service providers.
- Provide targeted outreach to businesses and individuals directly affected (fronting construction areas) by the project.
- Hold regular coordination meetings with project team and public outreach staff so that public messages are current, timely, and, to the extent possible, provide advanced warning of construction activities that may affect routine daily activities.