Reclaiming Public Land for Equitable Development

Cultivate south park

The Idea:

Remove the segment of **Highway 99** that cuts through the middle of South Park.

Then use the freed up land to in **invest in community well-being and prosperity.**

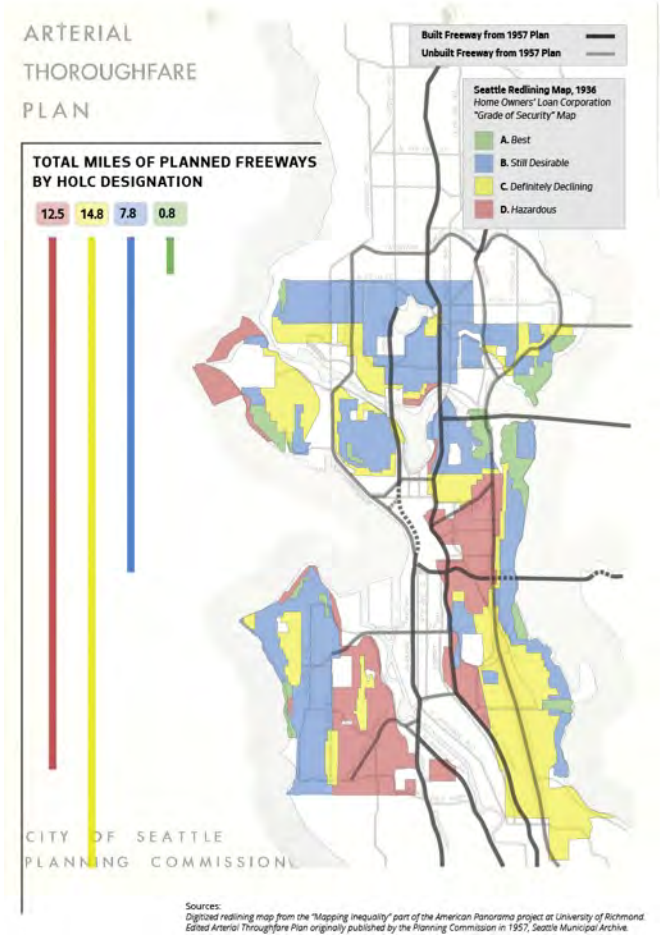
WHY

Resolves issues caused by air & noise pollution by reducing them.

Resolves safety issues.

Increases walkability and livability.

Presents a once in a generation opportunity to address displacement of communities of color.



About Cultivate South Park

We are:

Neighbor-Led

Place-based

Asset-based

Power-aware

Our Programs:

Urban Fresh Food Collective: El Mercadito

Arts & Culture Collective

The Barrio Trust

Business District

Reconnect South Park

South Park Context

South Park
BRIDGE
GRAND
OPENING

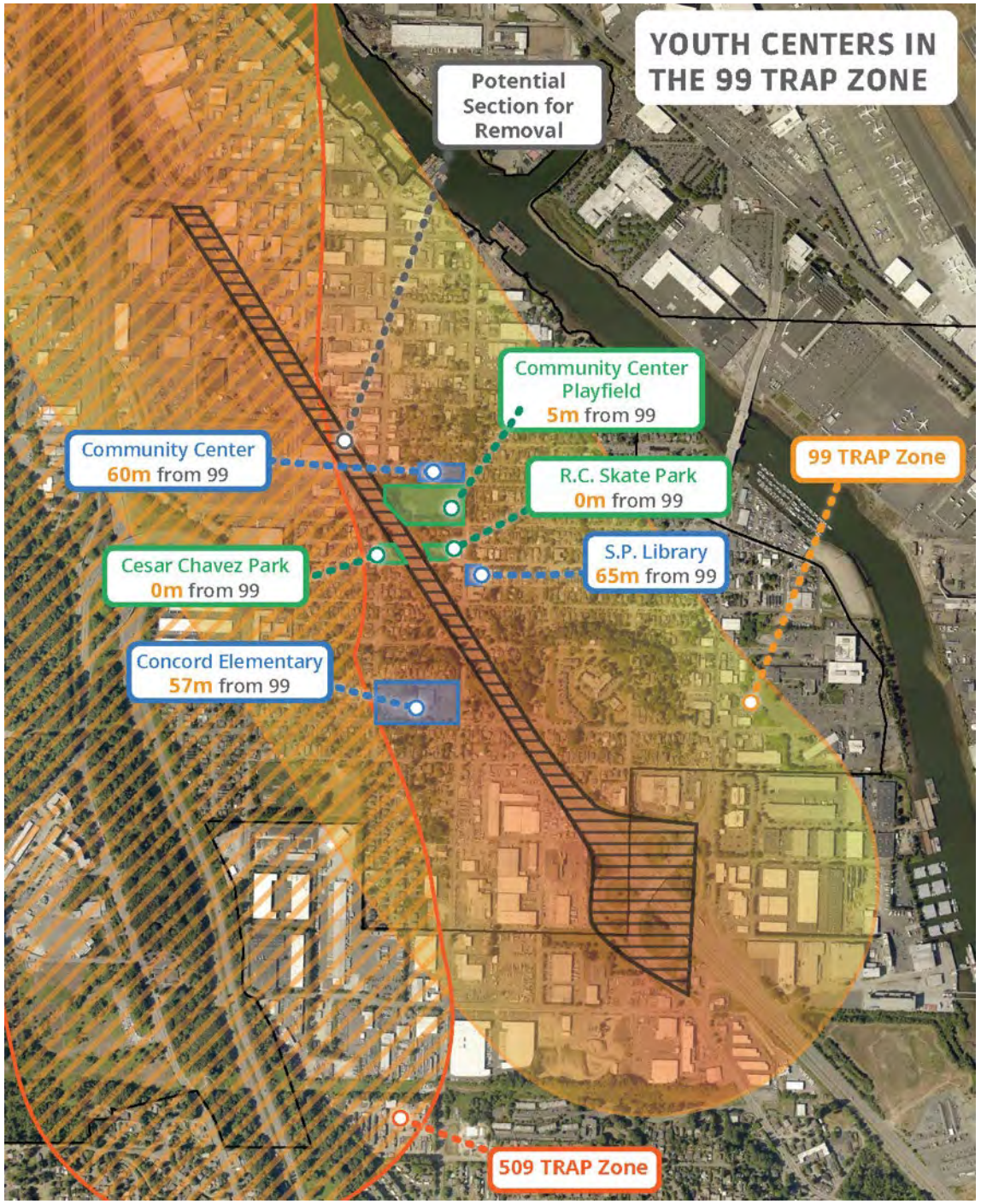
The Seattle Public Library
South Park Branch

The cumulative impacts of these environmental burdens result in a **13 year** lower life expectancy for South Park residents compared with other Seattle neighborhoods.

Traffic-Related Air Pollution (TRAP) is shown to cause health problems for those living within 500 meters of a highway.

Most places where South Park youth gather and spend their time, such as the elementary school, library, and community center **are directly adjacent to Highway 99.**

Most South Park residences are within the Highway 99 TRAP zone, and many people are impacted by the SR 509 TRAP zone as well.



Living next to highways has been shown to cause many adverse health outcomes, particularly for youth and the elderly.

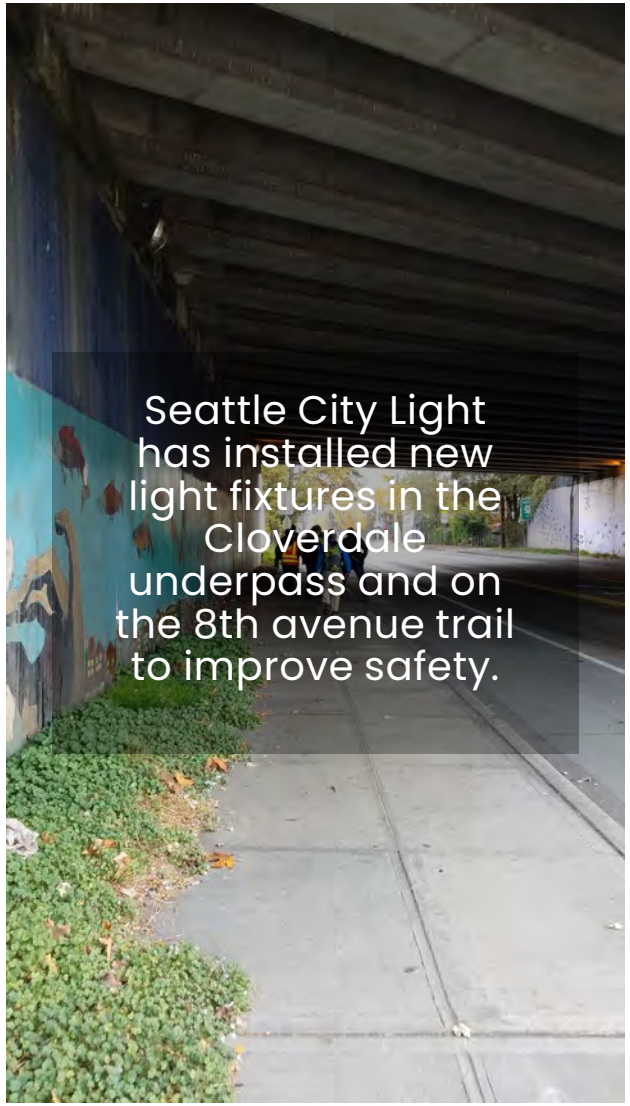
These include:

- Asthma
- Decreased lung function
- Cardiovascular disease
- Adverse birth outcomes
- Childhood cancer
- Depression

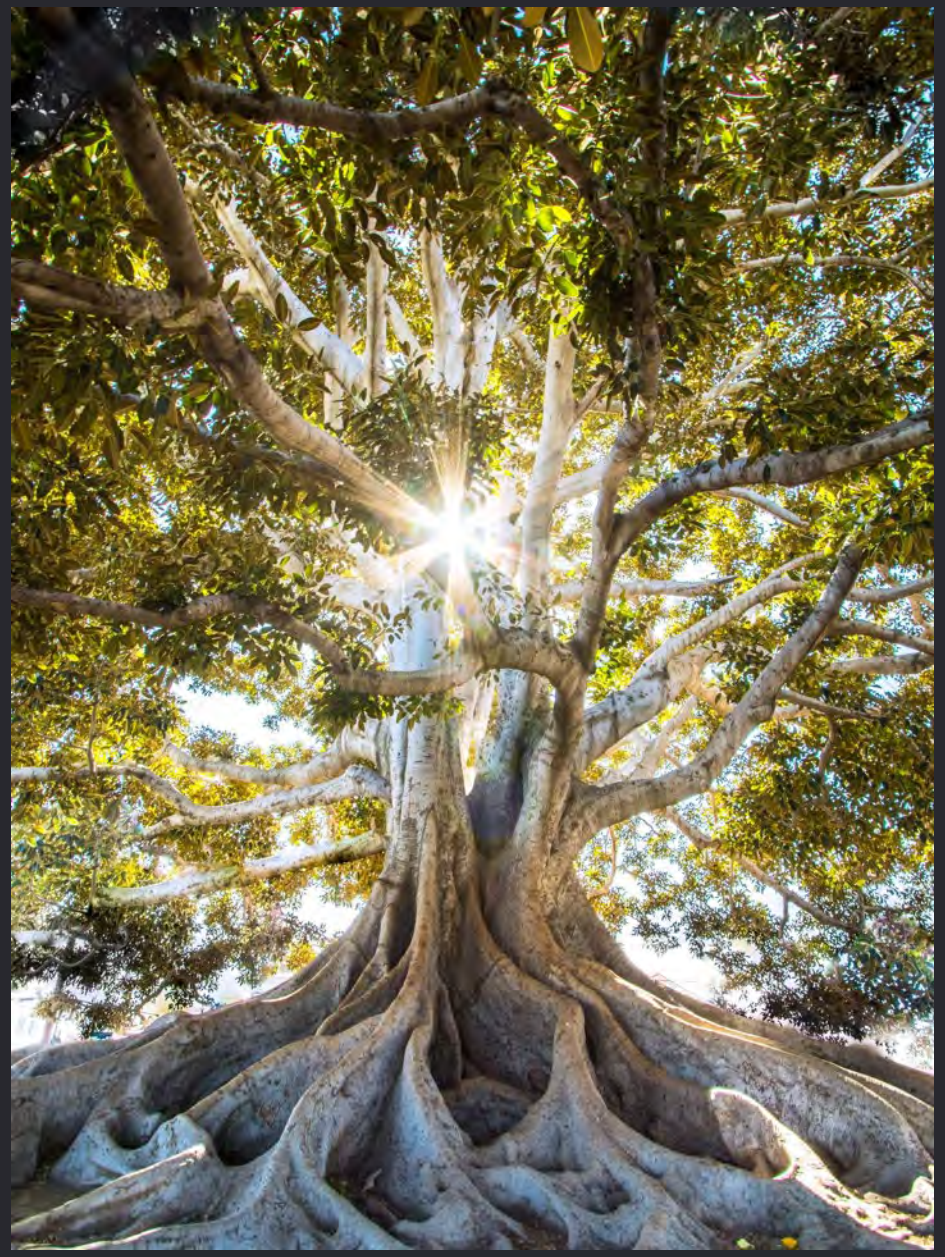
Getting across the highway is also dangerous, and causes many safety concerns.

Youth can often be seen running across the highway to avoid the “scary” trail.

Recently, the City of Seattle has been responding to community concerns about these health and safety issues. Several recent and planned City investments have aimed to mitigate these problems.



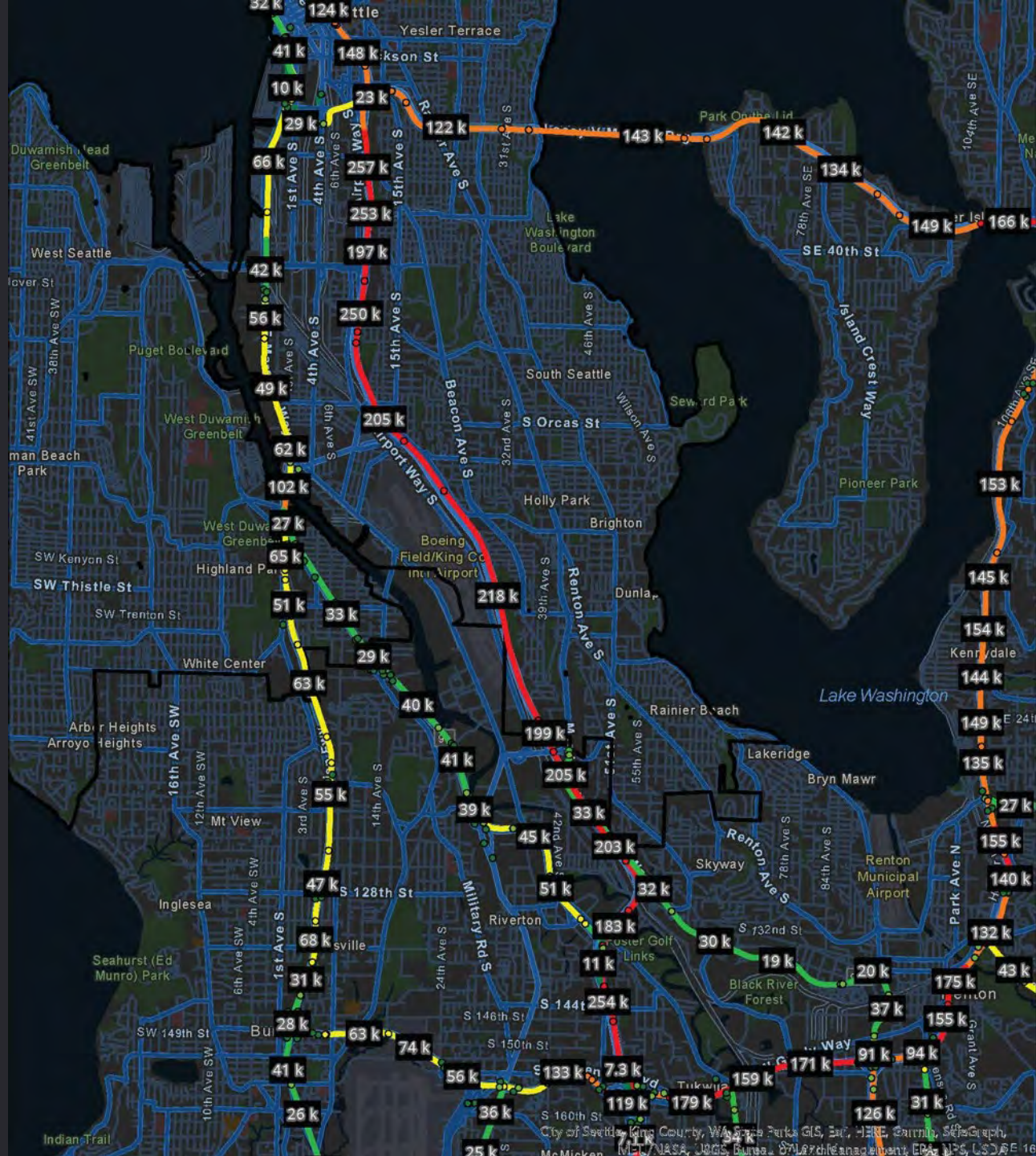
Proposal

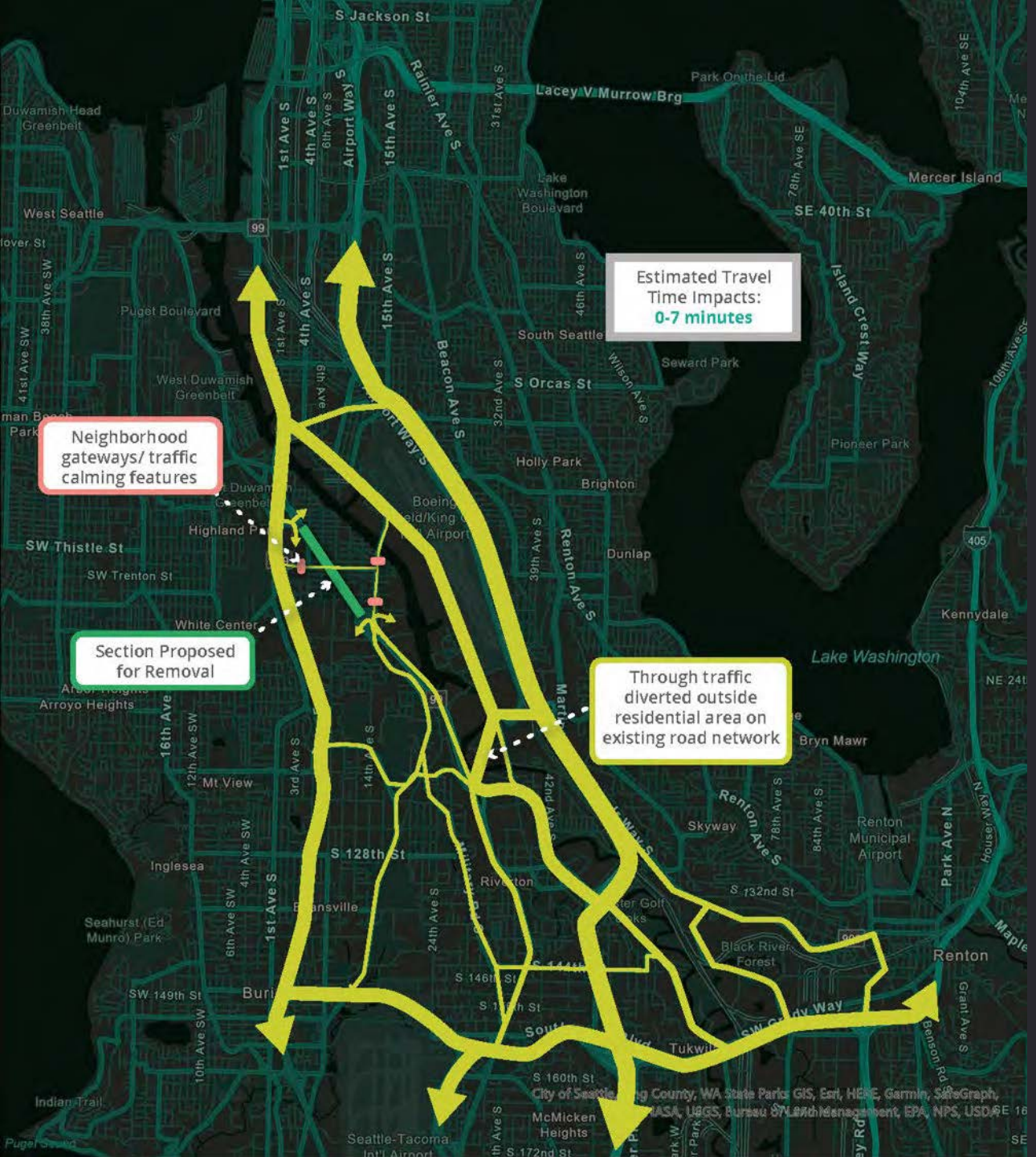


Removing this segment of 99 would free up over 40 acres of land for affordable housing, local mobility, community owned businesses, parks, and amenities that serve the people of South Park.

Feasibility

Traffic counts for this segment of the highway are relatively low.



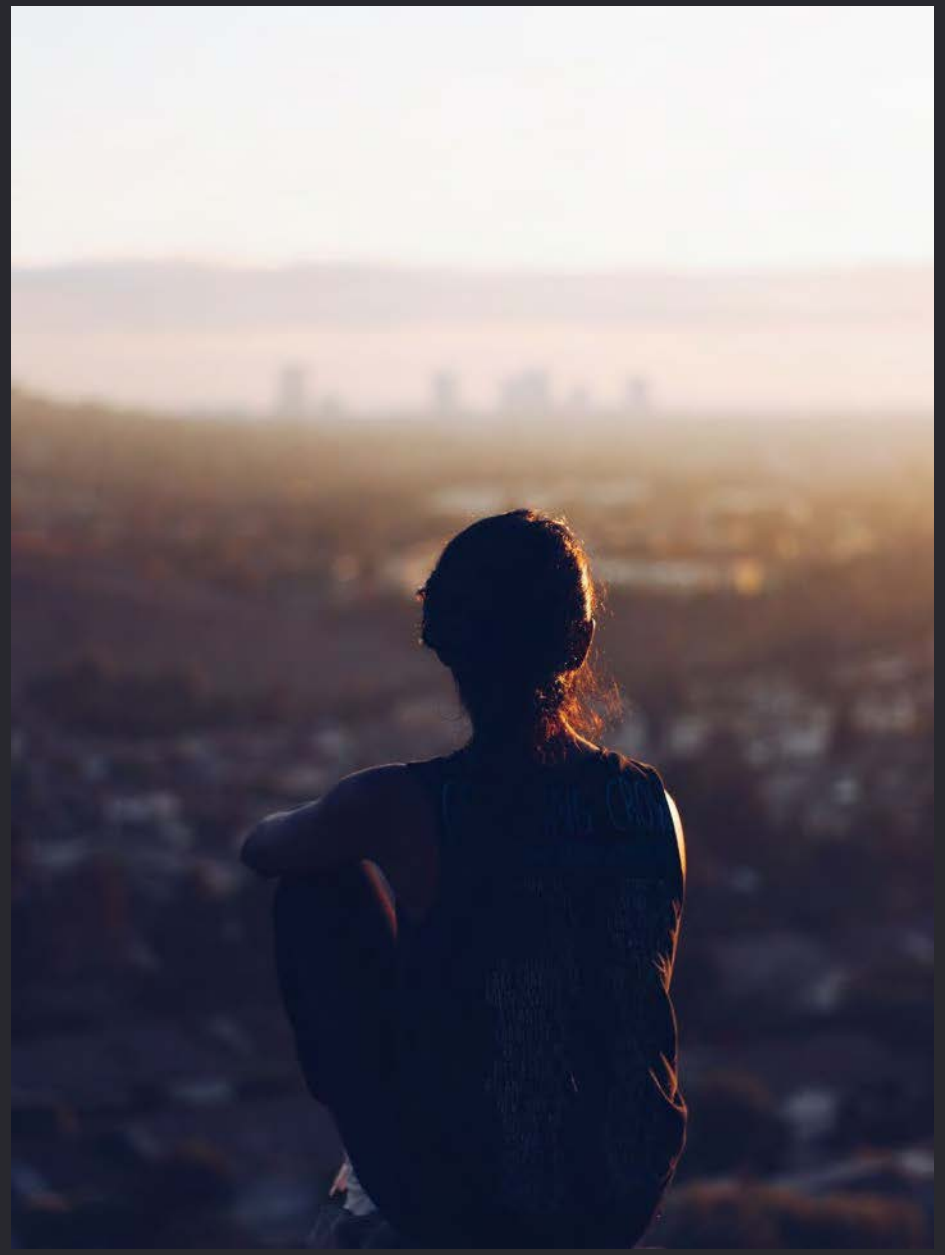


It would be possible to remove this portion of the highway and divert traffic away from residential areas using **existing** road networks.

Process

Our team recently completed a scale model of the 99 corridor through South Park. Using the model, people can lift off the highway, and imagine what their neighborhood could look like without it.

Thoughts? **Questions?**

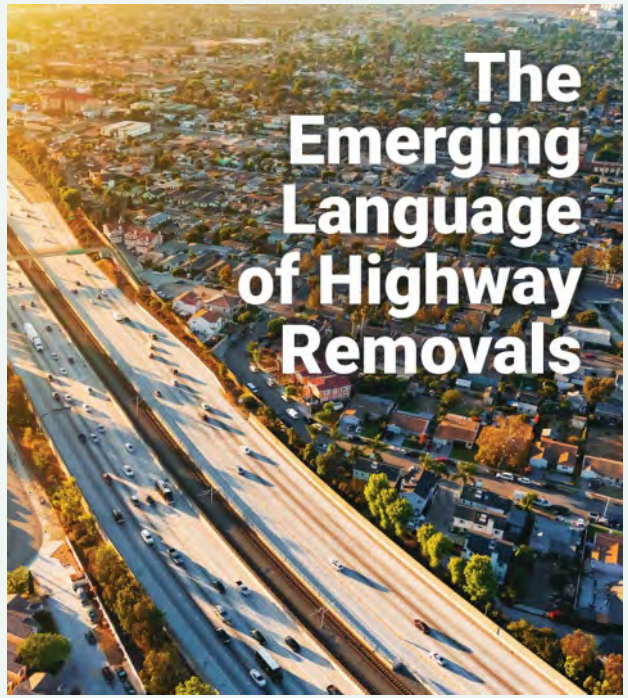


National Context

There's a growing movement to undo the damage of urban highways.

Many organized efforts are underway across the U.S. advocating for highway removal.

THIS MOVEMENT HAS BEEN GETTING INCREASED ATTENTION FROM THE PRESS AND ELECTED LEADERS.



From Urban Renewal to Highway Removal

Advocates — and planners — are pushing to tear down the freeways that divided and bulldozed neighborhoods.

The six-lane Inner Loop highway that had for decades divided the eastern part of Rochester, New York, was removed and replaced in 2018 with new complete streets. Wikimedia photo by AIP3745.

Can Removing Highways Fix America's Cities?

By Nadja Popovich, Josh Williams and Denise Lu May 27, 2021

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — Built in the 1950s to speed suburban commuters to and from downtown, Rochester's Inner Loop destroyed hundreds of homes and businesses, replacing them with a broad, concrete trench that separated downtown from the rest of the city.

Now, the city is looking to repair the damage. It started by filling in a nearly-mile-long section of the sunken road, slowly stitching a neighborhood back together. Today, visitors of the Inner Loop's eastern segment would hardly know a highway once ran beneath their feet.

As midcentury highways reach the end of their life spans, cities across the country are having to choose whether to rebuild or reconsider them. And a growing number, like Rochester, are choosing to take them down.

In order to accommodate cars and commuters, many cities "basically destroyed themselves," said Norman Garrick, a

Bring 'em Down

Cities around the country explore removing elevated highways with federal funding

By Edward Ganis • June 1, 2021 • Editor's Picks, Feature, National, Transportation, Urbanism

Can Biden's Plan to Remove Urban Highways Improve the Health of American Cities?

President Joe Biden's infrastructure plan aims to tear down urban freeways that bisect cities and displace non-white residents, but reversing the damage done by such projects can be complicated, advocates say.

By Kaiser Health News | July 14, 2021, at 12:08 p.m.

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How Highway Removal Can Benefit Cities

Cities across the country are reevaluating the impacts of major highway on neighborhoods and looking for ways to revitalize and reconnect communities.

June 1, 2021, 7:00 AM PDT

By Diana Ionescu @aworkoffiction

If They Can Tear Down This Highway in Texas... Yes, Texas!

Texas planned to spend $25 billion widening highways to relieve congestion. But a movement to tear them down instead is growing in influence—even here in the Lone Star State.

By Megan Kimble