

# PIONEER SQUARE 2015

A Strategy for Seattle's First Neighborhood



All photos in this report are courtesy of Christopher Nelson and the Alliance for Pioneer Square

# Overview

The Pioneer Square Commercial District Revitalization Project is an initiative to improve the overall business health of Pioneer Square.

The project began in December 2009 with an analysis of Pioneer Square's Economy and the neighborhood's major business needs and opportunities. Over the next six months, members of the Pioneer Square business community met to discuss these priorities and the actions needed to create a vibrant and robust commercial business district.

The outcome was a set of actionable Community and City strategies to address key issues around business retention and growth, retail mix, and business capacity in Pioneer Square, released June 2010 as *Pioneer Square 2015, A Strategy for Seattle's First Neighborhood*.

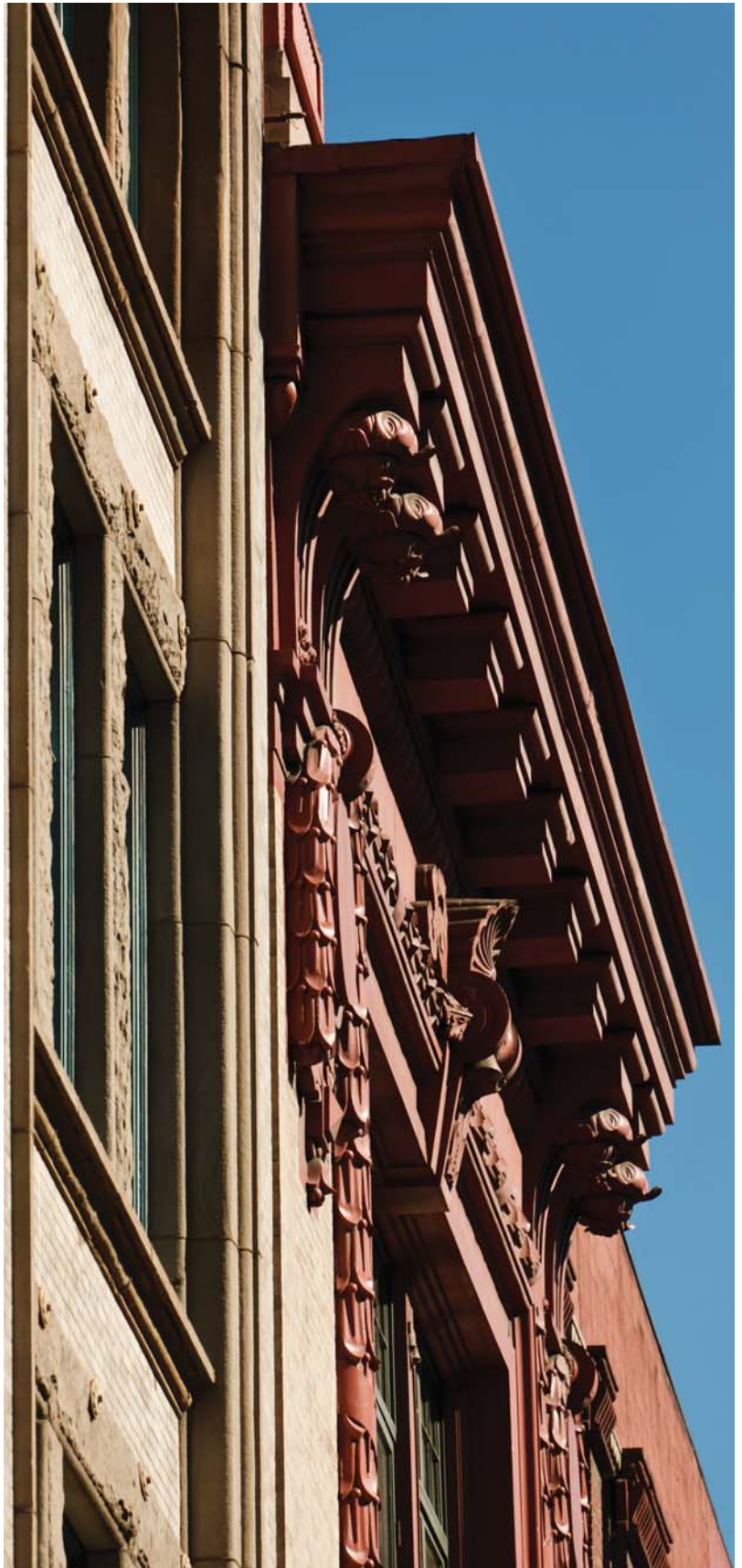
This is a highlight of the 2012 Progress to date by both the Community and City in the following goal areas:

## **Community Actions:**

1. Actively engage businesses in supporting economic growth
2. Build the neighborhood's organizational development and advocacy capacity
3. Focus on the district's historic building assets and enhance the built environment
4. Effectively market, brand and promote Pioneer Square

## **City Actions:**

1. Support Pioneer Square's historic buildings and a positive development environment
2. Provide economic development support and investment
3. Provide supportive utility, parking, and transportation infrastructure
4. Ensure an environment of public safety and civility



# 1

## Actively Engage Businesses in Supporting Economic Growth

### A. Support Existing and Emerging Economic Clusters

- Increased communication and outreach to businesses and residents
- Increased use of social media and advertising
- Increased marketing, advertising and First Thursday art walk promotion
- Phase 2 of Retail Recruitment project launched May 2012; as of March 2013, 14 new retail leases have been signed
- Viaduct mitigation money used to subsidize parking

### B. Research and Inventory the Businesses and Nonprofit Organizations to Understand “Who is in Pioneer Square” and Accurately Characterize the Economy

- Comprehensive business inventory completed annually
- Building robust internal systems for tracking neighborhood businesses

### C. Meet with Businesses Individually and in Groups to Engage Them, Solicit Their Needs for Business Retention and Expansion

- Alliance and Pioneer Square BIA hosted quarterly business mixers
- Alliance staff and volunteers meet regularly with new and existing businesses
- More frequent and formal neighborhood updates continued



# 2

## Build the Neighborhood's Organizational Development and Advocacy Capacity

### A. Support Public Civility Improvement Efforts

- Alliance worked with Center City Initiative to address issues of street civility and public safety
- Civility steering committee worked on siting of public restroom facilities for the neighborhood.

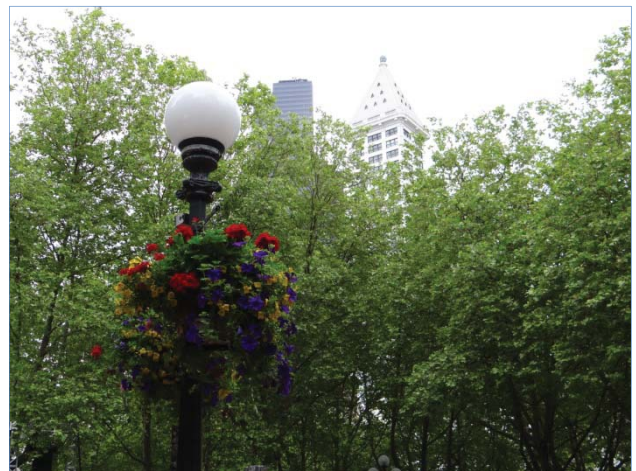


### B. Address Mismatched Boundaries

- Background work completed; outreach currently underway to expand boundary and new assessment methodology for BIA

### C. Host Forums and Events to Hear Ideas and Generate Discussion in Support of Economic Development

- Business and Tech mixers held
- Alliance hosted neighborhood forums including construction impacts, streetcar, tunnel boring machine, unreinforced masonry, and waterfront design
- Web site technical assistance provided in collaboration with Google



### D. Develop Relationships with the Nightclubs

- Nightclubs represented on Pioneer Square BIA board

# 3

## Focus on the District's Historic Building Assets and Enhance the Built Environment

### A. Increase Residential Development and Density in Pioneer Square

- North Lot Development (Stadium Place) leasing to begin later in 2013
- Alliance provided support to 200 Occidental development
- On-going support and collaboration with Pioneer Square Residents Council

### B. Address Vacant, Dilapidated, and Underused Buildings

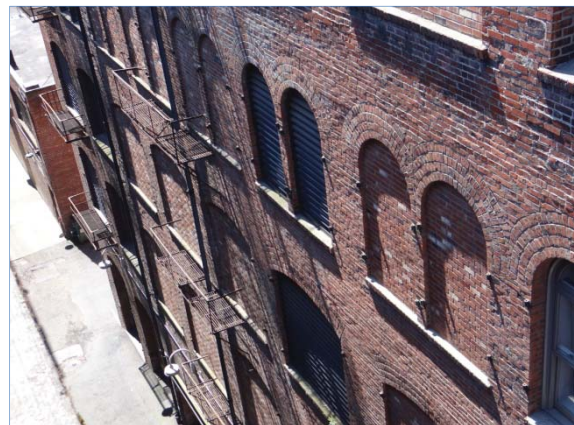
- Completed inventory and map of dilapidated and neglected buildings; outreach to owners on-going
- Graffiti audit conducted and reported to City December 2012

### C. Support Implementation of the Livable South Downtown Plan

- Livable South Downtown Plan passed

### D. Advocate for the Maintenance, Improvement, and Activation of Public Spaces

- Partnered with Center City Parks for Occidental Square Park activation and staffing
- Partnered with DSA/MID on neighborhood clean and safe activities
- Partnered with Alley Network for creating more pedestrian friendly, usable green ways in the neighborhood
- Alliance obtained 4Culture funding for a shovel-ready model of repair and maintenance of sidewalk prism glass
- Coordinated with SDOT regarding construction



# 4

## Community Actions

# Effectively Market, Brand, and Promote Pioneer Square



### A. Develop a Comprehensive PR, Marketing and Branding Strategy for Pioneer Square

- Streamlined social media program
- Advertising campaign targeted for summer and fall 2013, paid for with viaduct mitigation money
- Holiday events and promotions in collaboration with Downtown Seattle Association (DSA) and the International Sustainability Institute (ISI)

### B. Develop a Communications Plan that Builds on the Square's Unique Mix of Assets

- Continued to increase positive relationships with the media; telling a new story about Pioneer Square
- Promoted subsidized parking availability in the neighborhood with DowntownSeattleParking.com in collaboration with waterfront stakeholders, DSA, SDOT, and WSDOT
- Developed First Thursday Art Walk free parking program in collaboration with SDOT and WSDOT, using viaduct mitigation money

### C. Support the Trail to Treasure Program

- Trail to Treasure guided walking tours during summer 2012
- Trail to Treasure waysides for neighborhood delivered and ready for installation
- Second round of waysides under development as well as planned new website with support from viaduct mitigation money

# 1

## Support Pioneer Square's Historic Buildings and a Positive Development Environment

### A. Facilitate Development and Adaptive Reuse Incentives

- The 619 Western building is applying for Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits through the National Parks Service and the local Special Tax Valuation for Historic Properties. The Department of Neighborhoods (DON) was able to advocate for building code relief.
- The proposed 200 Occidental Ave project (next to Occidental Park) is under review by the Pioneer Square Preservation Board and a code amendment is being proposed to allow for an alternative public benefit – public bathrooms, to gain increased height. Code amendment was supported by the Pioneer Square Preservation Board (PSPB).
- In 2012 seventeen projects were able to be streamlined by going through administrative review.



### B. Address Vacant and Blighted Buildings (lots)

- North Lot west block podium and west and south tower were approved by the PSPB and the project is now under construction. The east block is under review by the PSPB.
- The 619 Western building rehabilitation was approved by the PSPB and is now under construction.
- Johnson Plumbing building (Stadium Terrace) project is under review by the PSPB.
- Plans for restoration of the Washington Street Boat Landing are under review by the PSPB.
- Worked with nine businesses or building owners to address compliance issues.

### C. Implement Supportive Building and Energy Code Provisions

- Pioneer Building installed interior storm windows and has been recognized as a great example of increasing energy efficiency while maintaining historic character.

# 2

## Provide Economic Development Support and Investment

### A. Identify New and Emerging Clusters; Recruit Complementary Businesses

- The Office of Economic Development (OED) awarded *Only in Seattle* Initiative grants to the Alliance for Pioneer Square (the Alliance) to fund implementation of all elements in this Action Plan. The Alliance received \$100,000 in 2011, \$120,000 in 2012 and will receive \$100,000 in 2013.
- Using OED's funding, the Alliance has developed and executed an aggressive retail attraction strategy, which helped to attract and support development of a number of new businesses and restaurants to Pioneer Square, including Matt Dillon's Bar Sajor, London Plane and Indigene; E. Smith Mercantile; Gaba Sushi; Il Corvo Pasta; Rain Shadow Meats Squared; Tinello; and The Lodge.
- OED provided consulting support in 2012 and 2013 for the Alliance to evaluate its Business Improvement Area assessment and boundaries to increase the sustainability of the Action Plan work.



### B. Align the City's Business and Economic Development Activities to Support Pioneer Square's Business Climate and Activity

- The OED's *Only in Seattle* grant to the Alliance supports all elements in the Action Plan, including organizational development, marketing and promotion, appearance and pedestrian environment, business and retail development and safety and civility.
- In 2013, the Alliance is also receiving an *Only in Seattle* "City Infrastructure" award that will provide \$80,000 in improvements to the pedestrian environment including: expand holiday lighting south of King Street, restripe crosswalks, trim 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue median trees, and install signature bike racks.

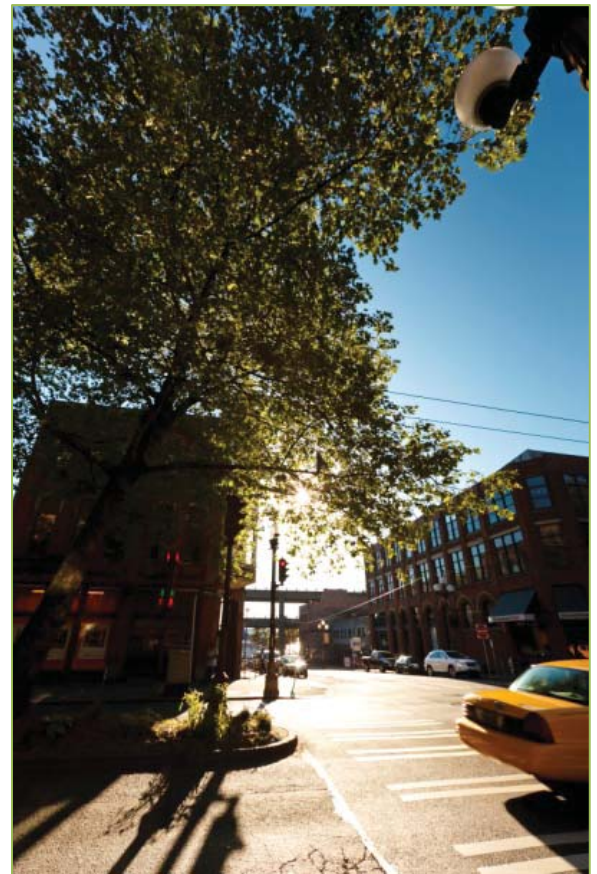


# 3

## Provide Supportive Utility, Parking and Transportation Infrastructure

### A. Support Transportation Improvements and Mitigation

- The City acquired King Street Station in 2008 and has been making continuous improvements. The current phase of construction consists of building and clock tower seismic retrofit, mechanical/electrical/plumbing systems distribution, and select interior and exterior restoration, including restoration of the main waiting room. Construction began in March 2011 and will be completed in 2Q 2013.
- Construction continues on the First Hill Streetcar, with its western terminus station to be constructed in Pioneer Square at S Jackson St & Occidental Ave S. Utility work along S Jackson St which must be completed before the rails can be installed is nearing its completion. Construction is scheduled to continue into early 2014.
- Alleys- the neighborhood's Alley Corridor Project was awarded a \$91,775 Neighborhood Matching Fund grant. Nord Alley was designated as a "Festival Street" in February 2012. Events are now held at least monthly, as part of Pioneer Square's First Thursdays.
- Pioneer Square is participating in the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) Public Space Management Program and Task Force that will make recommendations for ways to activate the public realm.



## B. Effectively Manage Parking Supply and Demand

The Deep Bore Tunnel project has significant impacts on neighborhood parking resources. WSDOT and SDOT are working with the Alliance and other neighborhood stakeholders to implement parking strategies to mitigate these impacts, such as short-term parking on Pier 48 and in the garage at 1st and Columbia; marketing to promote that businesses are open during construction; and vehicle way-finding along Alaskan Way to aid motorists looking for parking and other waterfront/Pioneer Square destinations.

Mitigation strategies being implemented in the neighborhood include:

- Coordination with contractors and others working in the neighborhood to limit parking impacts to the extent possible.
- Parking validation event on First Thursdays. Visitors of the gallery event can get up to four hours of free parking at any one of three participating parking garages. Support from WSDOT and SDOT includes staffing, funding support for marketing and collateral materials, and reimbursing facilities for validated parking.
- Low-rate parking available at private garages. Both the 1<sup>st</sup> and Columbia Garage and the Merrill Place garage offer parking at \$3 per hour for stays of up to four hours. This effort highlights available and affordable parking in the Pioneer Square neighborhood. The program also includes new signs and physical improvements.
- In early summer, SDOT, in partnership with WSDOT and the Alliance, will launch the Community Parking Program in the Pioneer Square neighborhood to engage businesses and residents in studying on-street parking conditions and generating recommendations to improve customer access to on-street parking spaces.
- Vehicle way-finding to the Pioneer Square neighborhood will be improved this March through the installation of neighborhood way-finding signs. Vehicle way-finding to parking within the neighborhood will also be improved this summer through the installation of dynamic e-Park signs in the right-of-way and at participating garages.



# 4

## Ensure an Environment of Public Safety Experience and Perceptions

### A. Improve Public Safety Experience and Perceptions

- The Seattle Police Department (SPD) has analyzed crime and calls for service data to determine crime concentrations based on time of day. Officers are assigned to these “hot spots” using directed patrol 24 hours per day which involves short duration foot beats. The outcome of this tactic has significantly reduced criminal activity and calls for service at these “hot spots” and throughout Pioneer Square.
- SPD has effectively used the newly revised Parks Trespass Warning and Exclusion program to target disorderly and anti-social behavior
- A dedicated squad of bicycle and foot beat officers has focused work during daytime hours to address criminal and anti-civil behavior. Early morning and night shift officers also regularly patrol problem areas on foot.
- The West Precinct Anti-Crime Team has conducted multiple buy-bust and buy-and-slide operations to combat open-air drug use and drug dealing.
- The SPD Crisis Intervention Team focused its efforts on individuals who commit frequent crimes in Pioneer Square, and who have underlying mental health issues to find a pathway to treatment utilizing resources such as the Crisis Solutions Center.
- The West Precinct is working closely with the Human Services Department to find effective and holistic solutions for individuals with mental health, substance abuse, and chronic homeless issues. An outreach pilot model has been partially funded with work beginning late 1Q 2013.
- Two new members from Pioneer Square have been recently added to the West Precinct Advisory Council.



## B. Improve Human Services Programs and Strategies

Center City Initiative- Pioneer Square has been an active participant in the Mayor's Center City Initiative that has brought together a broad range of interests across downtown to address street environment disorder and incivility.



The following projects are underway:

- Criminal justice system enhancement- SPD, the City Attorney and Seattle Municipal Court are collaborating in finding more effective strategies to address civility problems and criminal behavior and infractions. The goal is to provide diversion services for those who need treatment and better accountability for others.
- Effective outreach and engagement with street populations
- Moving people from shelter to stable housing
- Legislative advocacy to increase resources for those in need who are impacting the street environment
- Addressing unpermitted public food distribution
- City staff is working with a neighborhood steering committee on finding a site for a public restroom facility in Pioneer Square.



## Other Initiatives

### Central Waterfront Development Planning



The concept plan includes upgrades to the Coleman Dock ferry terminal and the development of a Festival Pier concept on Pier 48. Significant improvements are planned to make South Main and South Washington Streets strong connectors between Pioneer Square and the redeveloped waterfront. The design concept for Railroad Avenue that will connect the waterfront to the Stadium District is complete.

### Stadium District Planning

The Department of Planning and Development has launched a planning process to consider changes to the Stadium District. An Advisory Committee has been convened that includes important stakeholders including representative from Pioneer Square. The planning process will look at ways to encourage the transition of the Stadium District into a more complete neighborhood, including strengthening connections with Pioneer Square. One work product will be the completion of street concept plans for Occidental Avenue South and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South. Occidental Avenue South has great potential to be developed as a “festival street” with a high quality pedestrian character.