

# 106 SUCCESS STORY

## Landmark Train Station Ready for a Second Century of Service

Seattle, Washington



“And today—as rail once again emerges as the mode of opportunity—\$30.1 million in federal funding has fully prepared King Street Station for its second century of service. The station’s historic features have been refurbished. Its walls and clock tower have been fortified, prolonging its lifespan. The overall customer experience has been dramatically improved. And perhaps most critically, King Street Station has been transformed into a modern, multi-modal transportation hub... that will anchor economic development.”

—KEVIN THOMPSON

*Former Associate Administrator for Communications & Legislative Affairs, Federal Railroad Administration, Remarks at King Street Station Grand Reopening Press Event, April 2013*

Photos: Above, King Street Station today; Right, historic photos of parcel room and passengers in waiting area (photos courtesy Seattle Department of Transportation) For many more illustrative photos of this project, see [https://www.flickr.com/photos/sdot\\_photos/collections/72157622013356192/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/sdot_photos/collections/72157622013356192/)



### THE STORY

In 1887 James J. Hill, the “Empire Builder,” began to push his new transcontinental line, the Great Northern Railway, westward across Montana and Idaho to reach Puget Sound and the Pacific trade and beyond. After a bidding war among Puget Sound cities, Seattle won the honor of serving as the Great Northern’s terminus. The company joined with the Northern Pacific Railway to dig a mile-long railroad tunnel beneath downtown Seattle with its southern portal opening onto the Great Northern and Northern Pacific’s new “Union Depot”—now King Street Station. The station was designed by Reed and Stem with a 242-foot-tall clock tower modeled after the Campanile di San Marco in Venice. It opened to great acclaim in 1906, but as train travel dwindled in the late 20th century, the station fell into disrepair. Located in the Pioneer Square-Skid Road Historic District, the station was individually listed in the National Register in 1973.

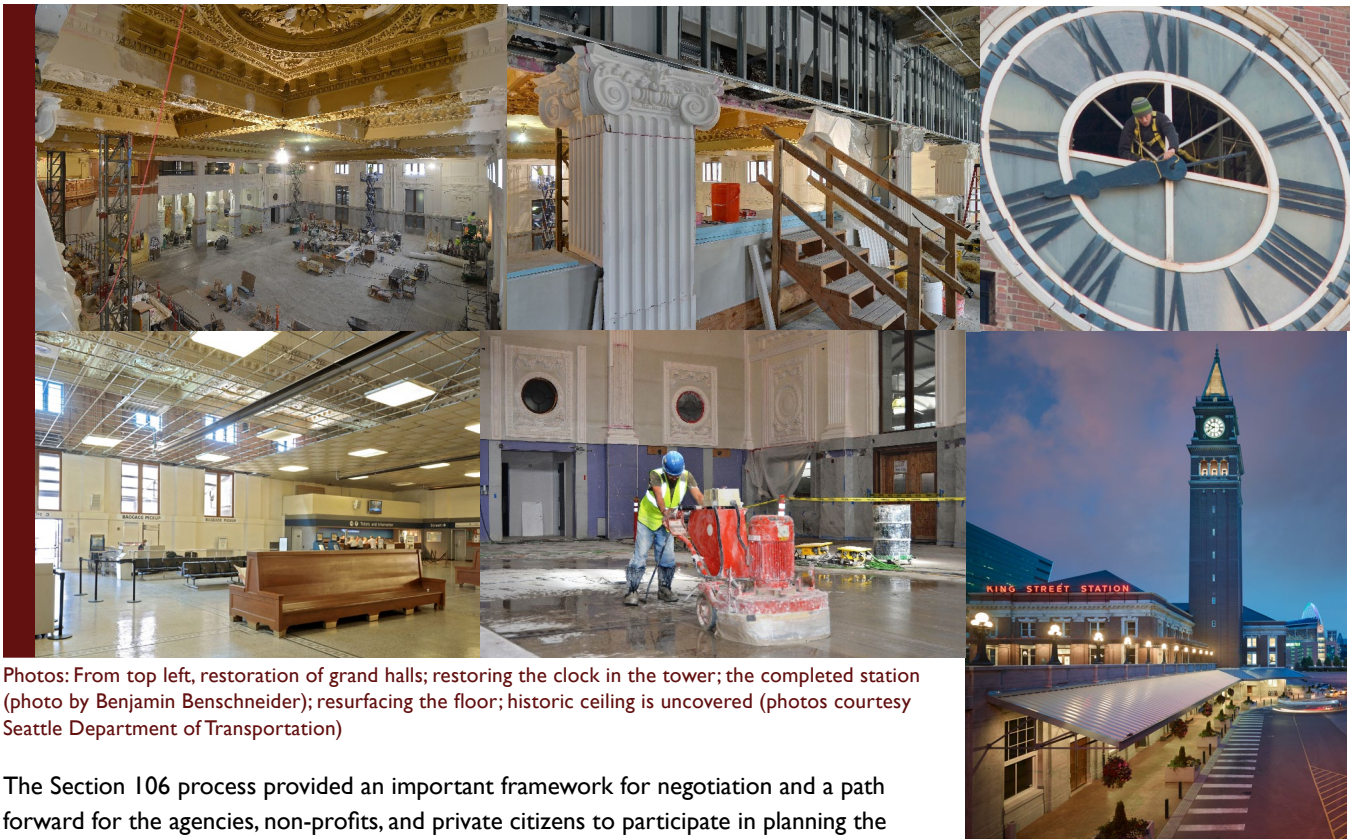
### THE PROJECT

In 2006, the Seattle City Council formalized an agreement to acquire the station from the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway and re-purpose it as a multi-modal transportation hub, and two years later purchased the building for \$10. The city devised a four phase rehabilitation plan that cost approximately \$56 million with most of the funding from federal transportation grants obtained by the Washington State Department of Transportation. The city provided voter-approved funds to match federal and state monies, and the Washington State Historical Society, South Downtown Foundation, National Trust for Historic Preservation, and Amtrak also contributed funds.

### THE 106 PROCESS

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) was the lead agency responsible for carrying out Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which requires federal agencies to identify historic properties and assess the effects of the projects they carry out, fund, or permit on those properties. Federal agencies also are required to consult with parties that have an interest in the historic property when adverse effects may occur.

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Photos: From top left, restoration of grand halls; restoring the clock in the tower; the completed station (photo by Benjamin Benschneider); resurfacing the floor; historic ceiling is uncovered (photos courtesy Seattle Department of Transportation)

The Section 106 process provided an important framework for negotiation and a path forward for the agencies, non-profits, and private citizens to participate in planning the redevelopment of King Street Station. FTA worked with multiple stakeholders including other federal agencies, the city, the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and multiple local groups on a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to guide the rehabilitation. The MOA was signed in 2006 and provided for oversight by the SHPO and the creation of a historic structures report that was later utilized in the restoration. The ornate features of the building, particularly the interior plaster and stone work and the need for a full seismic upgrade required detailed technical consideration in the Section 106 consultation. The multi-disciplinary approach fostered by the Section 106 process resulted in a LEED platinum rating for the project. Notable was the installation of a geothermal well field which returned the building's mechanical system to its original hot water radiators and operable windows linked by a smart computer-based control system. The project was completed in 2013.

## THE SUCCESS

The rehabilitation of this landmark train station is a study in using the Section 106 process to bring multiple parties together on a major project that meets modern environmental standards and seismic code requirements for a public building. The design team worked with the Seattle Department of Transportation, FTA, Amtrak, the SHPO, and the community, using funding from 15 different sources to restore King Street Station to its former prominence, re-establishing it as an important transportation facility. King Street Station has become an anchor for the Pioneer Square-Skid Road and International Historic Districts and serves as the key ground transportation hub for Seattle. Contributing to the bustling commercial and entertainment activity in the area, today this restored civic landmark is once more the gateway to the city and arguably the largest intermodal hub in the Northwest.

### Consulting Parties:

Federal Transit Administration  
 ACHP  
 Washington State Historic Preservation Officer  
 Washington State Department of Transportation  
 Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority  
 City of Seattle  
 Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad

For more about Section 106 and the ACHP go to [www.achp.gov](http://www.achp.gov)

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