kpff Consulting Engineers

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City of Mount Vernon

Master Plan

Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan Project

Master Plan

June 30, 2008

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1. Introduction

1.1. PURPOSE

The City of Mount Vernon has commenced a comprehensive redevelopment plan for its historic downtown area. The goal of this planning effort is to guide the investment of public and private resources in the downtown area over the next 20 years. The City intends to increase the density of downtown, building on and enhancing existing retail activity along First Street to create a vibrant, attractive, and safe waterfront and downtown, with enhanced public access to the shoreline and river, new and improved public amenities, and mixed-use redevelopment that will generate new jobs and create housing that preserves the character of downtown Mount Vernon.

To improve the economic viability of commercial development, the City has completed an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for new flood control measure that will remove downtown from the 100-year flood plain as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). There was no opposition to the EIS and the City is moving ahead with the design and construction of the flood control measures identified as the Preferred Alternative in the EIS.

This master plan is organized in four sections: the master planning process (Chapters 1 and 2); current conditions in downtown Mount Vernon (Chapter 3), master planned future conditions in downtown Mount Vernon (Chapters 4 through 9), and a recommended implementation process (Chapter 10). These sections are intended to answer the questions “What are we doing?”, “Where are we now?”, “Where do we want to go?”, and “How do we get there?”. Each section addresses the major issues facing downtown Mount Vernon, including the following:

- Land use and development
- Traffic and parking
- Streetscape, open space, public amenities, and character
- Infrastructure
- Economics

The Master Plan study area is shown in Figure 1-1 along with the area defined as the downtown core. Elements of the plan, such as the traffic and parking studies, used different specific boundaries to simplify their respective analyses. As Mount Vernon grows, the principles and recommendations of this Master Plan can be applied to the areas surrounding the current downtown to the north and south.

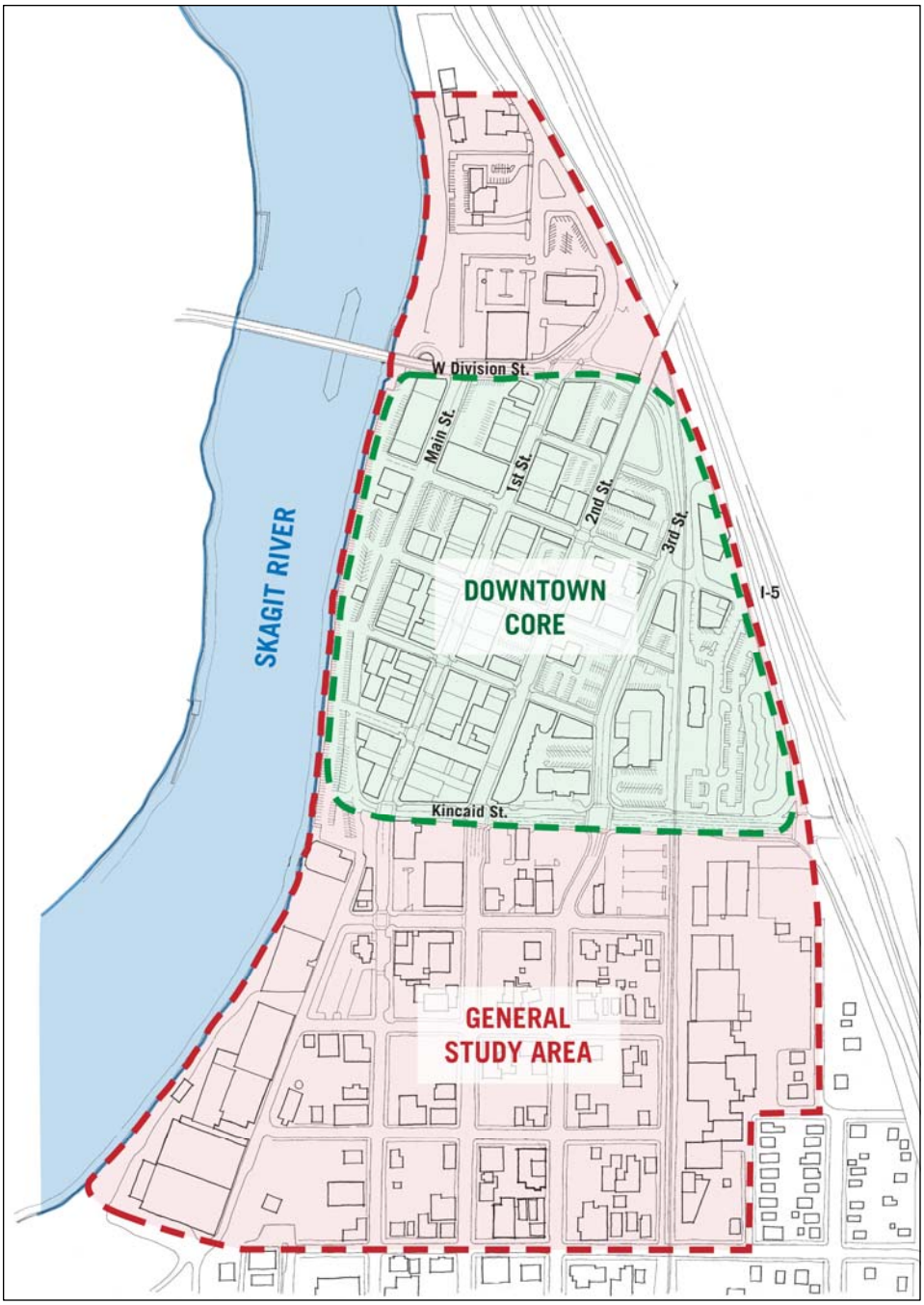

Figure 1-1: Study Area and Downtown Core

1.2. BACKGROUND

The threat of flooding on the Skagit River and location of downtown within the FEMA 100-year floodplain poses a major barrier to investment in downtown Mount Vernon and limits the City's ability to develop a comprehensive redevelopment plan for its historic downtown area. Once the threat of flooding and the associated floodplain designation are eliminated, significant investment in downtown Mount Vernon is expected and the City has a responsibility to ensure that development occurs in a manner that enhances the economy and quality of life for the City's residents.

Typically, when flooding on the Skagit River threatens downtown Mount Vernon, over 2,000 volunteers are mobilized to fill 150,000 sandbags, creating a temporary floodwall along the top of the existing levee, which runs down Main Street in the downtown area. While this system has been successful in protecting downtown in the past, it is difficult to manage and comes with risks of both levee failures and personal injury to volunteers and City employees. As an interim mitigation strategy, the City of Mount Vernon has purchased a temporary flood wall that can be installed by City crews in a matter of hours to replace the need for a massive volunteer call-up. Even with this new flood wall, downtown will remain in the floodplain on the FEMA flood maps, thus the barrier to reinvestment remains. Revised FEMA base flood elevation maps, expected to be released in the near future, will further restrict redevelopment and new development

To remove the downtown from the designated floodplain, the City is moving forward with plans to create a new flood protection system designed to provide protection from the worst case scenario 100-year flood. This system will consist of a combination of higher levees and flood walls extending from Lions Park at the system's north end to the sewage treatment plant at the south end. Between Division Street and Kincaid Street in downtown, flood protection will be provided by a flood wall running along the existing revetment west of Main Street, capped by a 24-foot wide promenade providing public access to the Skagit River. This promenade is one of the key projects intended to spur redevelopment in downtown Mount Vernon. South of Kincaid Street, a flood wall will be constructed on the Commercial Cold Storage property. The flood control project and master plan development are two parts of a unified plan to revitalize downtown Mount Vernon.

The Skagit River has the potential to be downtown Mount Vernon's greatest asset, since it sets Mount Vernon apart from other small cities in the region and state. Currently, the riverfront area is primarily used as a parking lot, not the valuable amenity it could be. Although there is a boardwalk along the river side of the parking lots, it and the other waterfront properties are underutilized and undervalued. The combination of unresolved flood issues and inadequate civic infrastructure has led to declining investment in downtown and difficulty in attracting new businesses to the area.

1.3. PROCESS

The development of this master plan is the third phase of a three-phase process started in August 2005 with a preliminary master planning process, followed by the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the flood control measures that would remove downtown Mount Vernon from the 100-year floodplain as defined by FEMA. Once the EIS was completed and flood control measures defined, the master planning process was restarted.

A key element of the process was creation of a Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) comprised of downtown business leaders, property owners, and other local stakeholders, such as the Farmer's Market and the Lincoln Theater. The purpose of the CAG is two-fold: members provide feedback and ideas to City staff and consultants on issues related to the master plan and flood control project, and they act as citizen ambassadors to the rest of the community. In their ambassador role, members both disseminate information provided by the City and collect comments and ideas from their respective interest group and community members. The CAG was initially convened during the Preliminary Master Plan process, and has met on an as-needed basis since then as new material has been prepared and new concepts developed.

In addition to CAG meetings, the public involvement process included four public meeting/open houses and seven City Council briefings.

The process for each phase of the project is shown in Figure 1-2 through Figure 1-5. A visual survey of the study area was conducted early in the Preliminary Master Plan process (Phase I) and an inventory of all downtown businesses taken. Additional information on the demographic and economics was also collected at this time. This background information was used as the basis for development of each subsequent phase and the alternatives presented in Section 4.6.

Several members of the CAG suggested that the Master Plan include developments on and connections to the west side of the Skagit River, including both remote parking and/or a pedestrian bridge. These are not addressed in the current Master Plan as the need for such development is not anticipated within the 20 year time frame of the study. However, this Master Plan will likely be updated in the future and inclusion of the west side at that time may be appropriate.

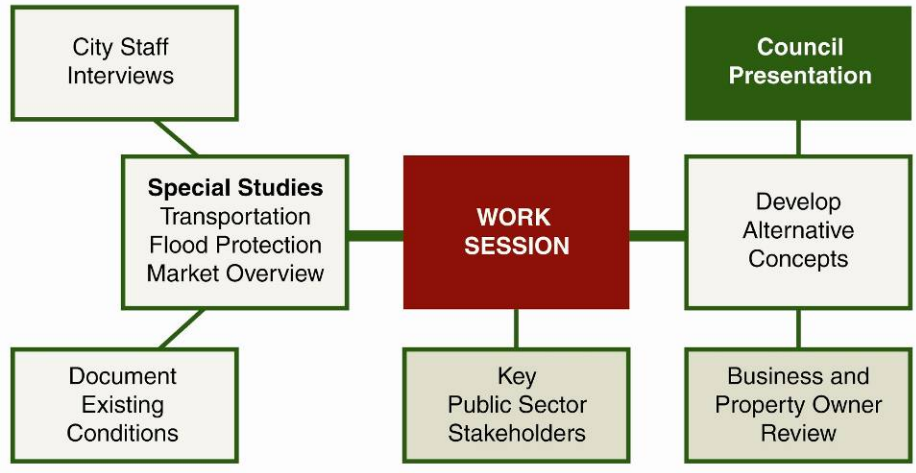

Figure 1-2: Phase I, Preliminary Master Plan Process

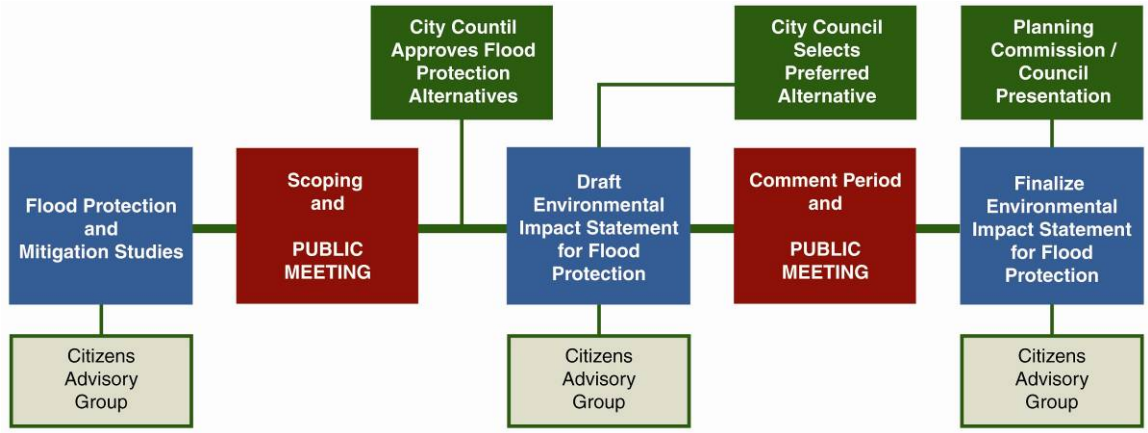

Figure 1-3: Phase II, Flood Control EIS Process

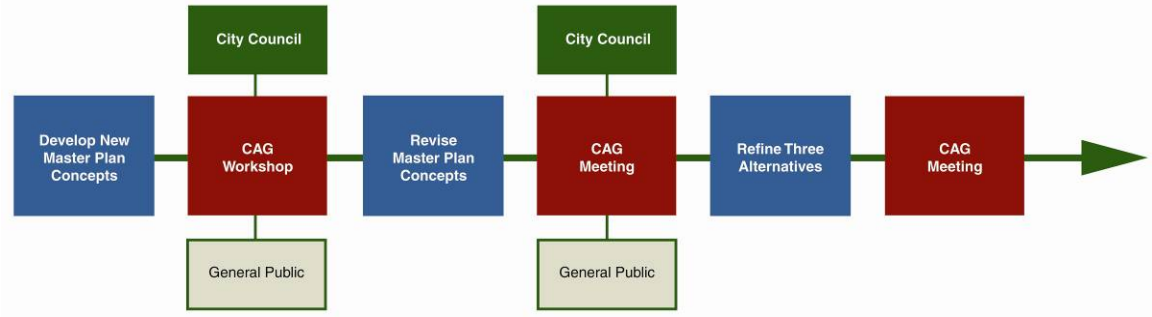

Figure 1-4: Phase III, Final Master Plan Process, Part 1

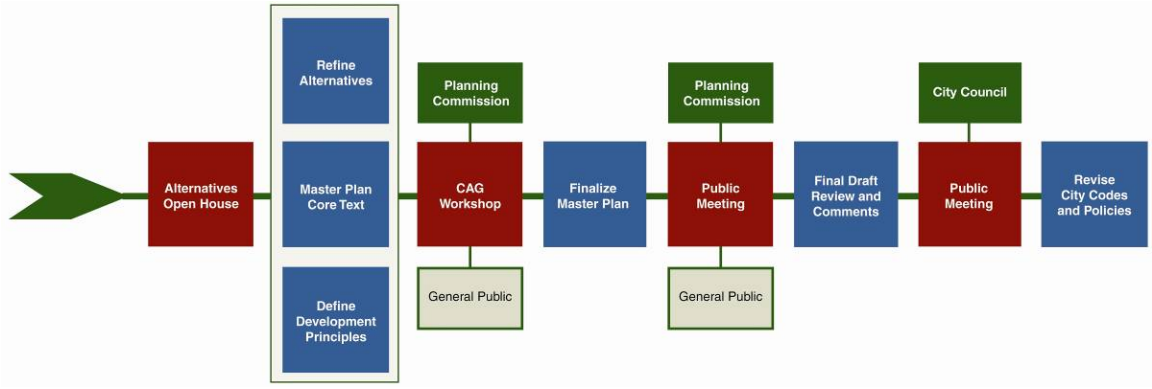

Figure 1-5: Phase III, Final Master Plan Process, Part 2

2. Vision, Goals, and Objectives

2.1. VISION

"Downtown Mount Vernon is the vibrant heart of Skagit County. It is a place where people come to live, work, and play, enjoying the riverfront promenade, boutique shopping, fine dining, and entertainment of all sorts. Its public spaces are enlivened by a farmer's market and live music. People come for its fairs, festivals, and riverfront setting. They come back for its small town character and the ease with which they can park their car and walk wherever they want to go. Downtown Mount Vernon is thriving because it is where people want to be."

Figure 2-1: Future Development Sketch

This is the vision proposed by the City staff and consultant team based on discussions with elected officials, members of the CAG, and other citizens and stakeholders. It attempts to capture the spirit and intention that inspired the master planning effort. It is achievable, and with community support, the City is well on its way to making it happen.

Larry Hartford, a CAG member and downtown merchant, provided another vision for downtown Mount Vernon. Some excerpts from his vision are provided below:

"*Mount Vernon and its place alongside the mighty Skagit River is an important way station between Seattle and Bellingham and between Seattle and the San Juan Islands and between Seattle and Vancouver or Sydney British Columbia. Mount Vernon is the launching place to access the great cross Cascade highway with its access to the North Cascade National Park, one more magnificent world attraction we have to offer.*

"*First Street is a pedestrian promenade with benches, sidewalk cafés, trees, and flowers. … First Street is for people and promenading shoppers and evening entertainment seekers.*

"*On the outside of the museum are street front businesses providing original arts and crafts created by local artisans.*

"*Next is an open park-like area for strolling, sitting and viewing and enjoying the river view.*

"*North of the museum and park area in the existing Main Street Plaza building we come to the greatest draw for Mount Vernon rivaling only the famous Lincoln Theater as a reason for people to come and shop in downtown Mount Vernon. This is the covered Marketplace, the Gateway to the Skagit Farmland … a covered outdoor farmer's market.*

"*Mount Vernon is the Riverfront town. It is also the connection on your way to the world renowned San Juan Islands or Deception Pass. A stop over in Mount Vernon prepares you for an early morning departure on the Washington State ferries to San Juan, Orcas, Lopez, or Shaw Island. Or a great place to spend a day or two enjoying the fun and activities of our riverfront community and the surrounding amenities.*

Figure 2-2: Future Riverfront Development Sketch

"Revitalizing the downtown Mount Vernon area should be based on people's activities, movement, and interests. An important key to this is to allow the Skagit River to be accessible to people both visually and physically, thus allowing the river to be a part of their activities.

"I choose to live and work in Mount Vernon because it is centrally located to so many world class natural and human made wonders; and because of the great potential it has to become a city of vitality and creativity through human endeavor."

Each of downtown Mount Vernon's stakeholders has his or her own vision for the waterfront and downtown. Although each vision is unique, many of them share common themes that are critical to the success of this master plan and the Community Marketing Plan being developed separately. Based on the initial interviews conducted for the Community Marketing Plan, a common vision for Mount Vernon as it applies to downtown includes the following:

- Small city character and attributes
- Amenities such as:
  - Adequate parking
  - Streetscape and sidewalk improvements
  - Art and water features
  - Permanent Farmer's Market
  - Children's museum
  - Art and history museum
  - Outdoor cinema
  - Public art
  - River activities
  - Public dock
  - Public restrooms
- Economic vitality
- Businesses such as:
  - Boutique retail
  - Professional offices
  - Restaurants
  - Hotel
  - Cinema
  - Full store fronts
- Housing

The vision for downtown Mount Vernon should describe what it looks and feels like in twenty years, the planning horizon for this master plan, and it should complement the greater vision for the City.

2.2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the Master Plan is to guide the investment of public and private resources in the downtown area over the next 20 years. The Master Plan has been developed to guide anticipated redevelopment once the flood protection measures identified in the recent Flood Protection Alternatives Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are implemented. In general, the goals of the Master Plan and their associated objectives are:

- Provide permanent certified flood protection for downtown to make investing in downtown Mount Vernon economically viable.
  - Build a combination of flood walls and levees per the Mount Vernon Downtown Flood Protection Alternatives FEIS.
  - Include design features such as grand stairs, ramps, and removable sections to prevent the flood control measures from creating a barrier between the downtown and the Skagit River.
- Develop a pedestrian-oriented downtown where people are encouraged to circulate on foot.
  - Improve the connection between Skagit Station and downtown.
  - Install streetscape improvements, wider sidewalks, and other sidewalk amenities.
  - Encourage retail and hospitality businesses at street level and office and residential development above.
- Encourage a mixture of land uses, including public open space, shoreline recreational, cultural, and institutional uses integrated with revenue producing uses that may include office, retail, restaurant, hotel, entertainment, and residential uses.
  - Create public-private partnerships for redevelopment of property acquired for flood control.
  - Provide incentives for commercial redevelopment of underdeveloped properties over time.
  - Increase intensity of commercial and retail activity.
- Accommodate an overall increase in residential density to provide a greater level of around-the-clock activity, support existing businesses, and improve the general economic vitality of downtown.
  - Modify zoning codes to allow higher density and encourage mixed-use, market rate and upscale development in the downtown core.
- Provide sufficient and conveniently located parking without compromising the overall pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Accommodate vehicular circulation while providing pedestrian-friendly streets.
  - Improve the intersection of First Street and Division Street.
- Preserve and build upon the existing historic character of downtown.
  - Adopt design guidelines to ensure redevelopment and new development complement the City's vision for downtown.
  - Identify potential locations for historic exhibits.
- Provide more open space and public amenities downtown.
  - Build a pedestrian promenade along the river in conjunction with the new flood control systems.

  - Build a new public plaza for the Farmer's Market, outdoor performances, and other special events.
  - Connect First Street to the promenade with streetscape improvements and water features that draw people to the river.
  - Install public artwork throughout downtown.
  - Pursue state and federal grant opportunities to fund civic improvements.
- Encourage multi-modal transportation by developing improved connections across the river, to regional trails, and to Skagit Station.
  - Construct an improved walkway on the Division Street Bridge.
  - Construct a skybridge connection from Skagit Station to the west side of the railroad tracks.
  - Construct a waterfront promenade connecting to the regional trail system north and south of downtown.
- Encourage the use of sustainable design principles in both public and private developments.

Figure 2-3: Future Promenade Sketch

3. Existing Conditions

3.1. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Existing land use in the downtown core is a mixture of retail, commercial, government, and office uses, primarily in single use structures. Institutional uses, which are primarily government, are sprinkled in, with County government facilities concentrated in the southeast corner of downtown around Third Street and Kincaid Street. Pedestrian-oriented retail is concentrated along First Street, with primarily auto-oriented commercial uses along Second Street and Third Street. Almost all parking downtown is surface parking, with on-street parking on most streets, several surface parking lots within the downtown area and approximately 350 stalls along the revetment on the east bank of the river between Division Street and Kincaid Street.

East of the core, between the freeway and the railroad, there is a warehouse, a self-contained retail complex, and a bus and rail transportation center called Skagit Station.

Immediately north of Division Street there is a mixture of auto-oriented retail and office uses with on-site surface parking. Between these businesses and Lions Park are auto-oriented businesses with surface parking adjacent to the river.

Immediately south of Kincaid Street is a mixture of auto-oriented commercial uses, surface parking, and government buildings, including City Hall. South of this area to Section Street is a neighborhood area in transition, containing a mixture of auto-oriented commercial uses, institutions, residences converted to businesses, vacant land, surface parking, government uses, apartments, and single-family residences. Two large industrial land uses exist south of Kincaid Street: a cold storage facility along the river and a seed plant adjacent to the railroad tracks on the east.

The Mount Vernon Municipal Code, Title 17, Zoning, is “intended to promote the most appropriate and compatible uses of the land within the city“ and controls land uses and development. Most of the downtown core is defined as Category C-1, Central Business District, and the remainder of the study area is either C-1, C-2, General Commercial District, P, Public, or M-1, Light Manufacturing and Commercial District.

Existing central business district (CBD) zoning (category C-1) places emphasis on pedestrian-oriented retail on the ground floor. Uses not permitted in the C-1 zone include laundry/dry cleaning, parking lots and garages, auto service and repair, drive-in banks, and drive-in retail or service businesses. Multi-family development with over 16 units is permitted only as a conditional use. Parking lots, garages, and offices over 2,000 square feet on the first floor are permitted as administrative conditional uses. There are no limits on lot area, lot width, setbacks, or building height. All development is subject to site plan review.

Category C-2 emphasizes general commercial areas having a variety of uses and accessible primarily by automobile. In areas zoned C-2, there are no limits on lot area, width, or building height but there are minimum setback requirements. Within the study area, the Christianson Seed Company and the Key Bank sites are the only properties zoned C-2.

Category M-1 defines areas for businesses which require limited retail contact and incidental shop work, storage, or light manufacturing. There are both building height limits and minimum setback requirements in areas zoned M-1. The Valley RV/Valley Farm Center site, Skagit Station, part of the Commercial Cold Storage site, and several properties south of Kincaid between South Third Street and the railroad tracks are zoned M-1 as well as some of the surface parking lots near the intersection of Freeway Drive, South Third Street, and Division Street.

Development along the Skagit River is also regulated by the Skagit County Shoreline Management Master Program, which has been adopted by the City as its Shoreline Master Program (SMP). The SMP is designed to provide long range, comprehensive policies and effective, reasonable regulations for development and use of Skagit County shorelines. The shoreline in the vicinity of downtown Mount Vernon is designated as "urban." The urban shoreline area is intended for intensive development, including but not limited to residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The SMP sets building height limits and maximum coverage limits for development within the shoreline zone. The SMP will undergo a mandatory update in the near future which will include a dedicated public involvement process.

3.2. TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

Street Classifications

The streets of Mount Vernon are classified based on the function they provide. Identification of roadway function is the basis for evaluating roadway improvements and ensures appropriate design standards are applied to each roadway facility. Mount Vernon's street classification system is based on a method used by the State of Washington and the federal government to categorize and describe roadways. Four roadway classifications are identified and described in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element:

- Principal Arterials: have the primary function of moving traffic to and from major traffic generators within the community. Through traffic is given higher priority and local access is limited.
- Minor Arterials: serve as connections between neighborhoods and community centers, serve some through trips, and provide more local access compared to principal arterials. Minor arterials also provide access to major community-wide traffic generators, such as hospitals and high schools.
- Urban Collectors: primarily move neighborhood traffic and serve as connecters to the higher level (i.e. principal and minor arterials) arterial street system.
- Neighborhood Streets: provide direct access to adjacent properties with limited priority for through traffic.

In addition to being described by function, Mount Vernon's arterial street system can also be described by the general operational and geometric characteristics shown in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1: Typical Roadway Characteristics by Functional Classification

Functional Classification	Average Daily Traffic	Right of Way (feet)	Number of Lanes	Speed (mph)
Principal Arterial	> 17,500	60 - 80	2 - 5	35 – 45
Minor Arterial	10,000 - 22,950	60 - 80	2 - 4	25 - 35
Collector Street	2,500 - 15,870	60	2	25 - 35
Neighborhood Street	< 2,500	50 - 60	2	20 - 30

Streets

The primary transportation routes in downtown Mount Vernon are Kincaid Street, Division Street, Freeway Drive, South Second Street, and South Third Street.

- Kincaid Street is the primary gateway from the east and also provides vehicular access to the I-5 corridor.
- The Division Street (SR-536) bridge is the primary gateway from the west connecting downtown Mount Vernon with West Mount Vernon, Anacortes, and La Conner.
- Freeway Drive and South Second Street provide access to areas north of the Mount Vernon downtown.
- Main Street serves primarily as access to the parking areas along the top of the existing Skagit River revetment.

These major roadways and the study area are shown on Figure 3-1.

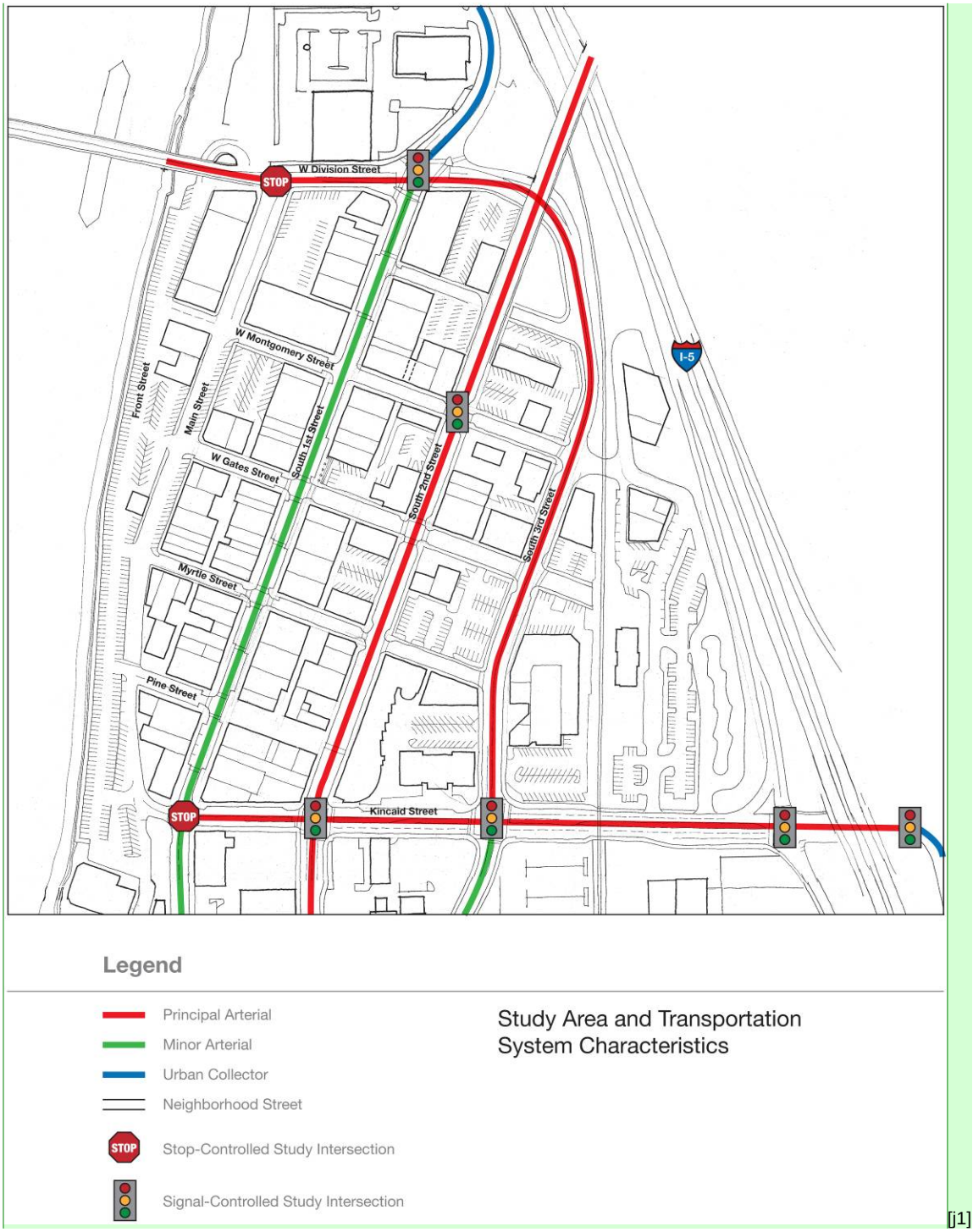

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Figure 3-1: Study Area Transportation System Characteristics

The arterial street system within the study area includes all four roadway classifications: principal arterials, minor arterials, urban collectors, and neighborhood streets. Table 3-2 describes the roadway classifications of the streets within the study area and Figure 3-1 displays this information graphically.

Table 3-2: Functional Classifications of Roadways in the Study Area

Roadway Name	Functional Classification	Travel Direction	Bounds
Division Street	Principal Arterial	east-west	between the Skagit River and South First Street
Kincaid Street	Principal Arterial	east-west	between South First Street and I-5
South Second Street	Principal Arterial	north-south	between Kincaid Street and I-5 overpass
South Third Street	Principal Arterial	north-south	between Kincaid Street and Division Street
Freeway Drive	Minor Arterial	north-south	north of Division Street
Kincaid Street	Minor Arterial	east-west	east of I-5
South First Street	Urban Collector	north-south	between Kincaid Street and Division Street
Main Street	Neighborhood Street	north-south	between Kincaid Street and Division Street
West Montgomery Street	Neighborhood Street	east-west	between Main Street and South Third Street
West Gates Street	Neighborhood Street	east-west	between Main Street and South Third Street
Myrtle Street	Neighborhood Street	east-west	between Main Street and South Third Street

Intersection Level of Service

Level of service (LOS) is a qualitative measure describing operational conditions for a traffic stream along a roadway or at an intersection. Roadway LOS is based on measures such as capacity, speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort, and convenience. Intersection LOS is based on the average delay per vehicle and provides information on queue lengths, volume to capacity ratios, and signal efficiency for all through and turning movements.

One industry standard for evaluating intersection LOS is based on the Transportation Research Board's methodology outlined in the *Highway Capacity Manual (HCM), Special Report 209* (TRB 2000). Using this methodology, traffic conditions are assessed with respect to the average intersection delay (seconds/vehicle) and uses the letter "A" to describe the least amount of congestion and best operations and the letter "F" for the highest amount of congestion and worst operations. The 2000 HCM LOS ratings and criteria for signalized and unsignalized intersections are shown in Table 3-3.

Table 3-3: Level of Service Criteria for Signalized and Unsignalized Intersections

LOS Rating	Average Delay for Signalized Intersections (seconds/vehicle)	Average Delay for Unsignalized Intersections (seconds/vehicle)[1]
A	0 – 10	0 – 10
B	> 10 – 20	> 10 – 15
C	> 20 – 35	> 15 – 25
D	> 35 – 55	> 25 – 35
E	> 55 – 80	> 35 – 50
F	> 80	> 50

Source: HCM 2000, aggregated from Exhibits 16-2 and 17-2

[1] LOS ratings for all-way stop-controlled intersections are defined by the intersection operations as a whole; LOS ratings for two-way stop-controlled intersections are defined by the worst lane group.

PM Peak Hour Traffic Volumes

Existing traffic volume data in the study area were provided by Traffic Count Consultants. These data were collected at the study intersections in 2008 when traffic volumes are generally the highest; mid-week between 4:00 PM and 6:00 PM. The individual intersection peak hours varied slightly, but the system-wide peak hour was observed to occur between 4:30 PM and 5:30 PM. Figure 3-2 shows the existing PM peak hour turning movement volumes at the study intersections.

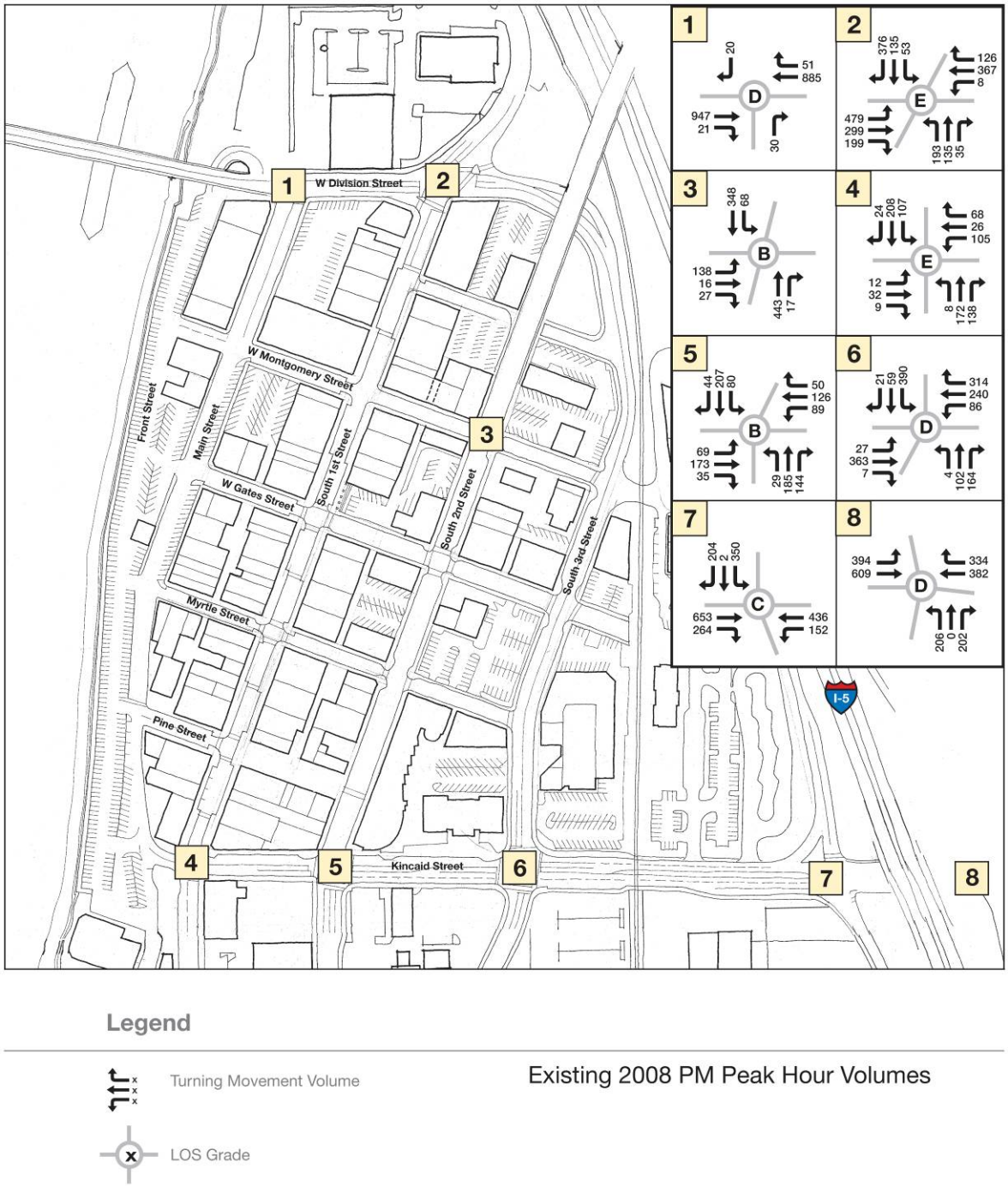

Figure 3-2: Existing 2008 PM Peak Hour Volumes

An intersection LOS analysis was conducted for eight intersections in the study area to determine existing operating conditions. These intersections are the locations where additional traffic volume increases from new development would have the most substantial effect:

- Division Street (SR-536)/Main Street
- Division Street (SR-536)/South First Street/Freeway Drive
- South Second Street/Montgomery Street
- Kincaid Street/South First Street
- Kincaid Street/South Second Street
- Kincaid Street/South Third Street
- I-5 Southbound Ramps/Kincaid Street
- I-5 Northbound Ramps/Kincaid Street

The City of Mount Vernon identifies LOS C or better as acceptable for urban collectors and neighborhood streets and LOS D or better for principal and minor arterials. However, the 2005 Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element identifies a few locations where lower LOS standards and operating conditions are permissible including:

- Division Street (SR-536) bridge approaches
- South Second Street/Montgomery Street
- Kincaid Street/South Third Street
- I-5 Southbound Ramps/Kincaid Street
- I-5 Northbound Ramps/Kincaid Street

The eight study intersections were analyzed using Trafficware's software program Synchro 7 (build 761). Synchro is a software application ideal for optimizing traffic signal splits, offsets, and cycle lengths for individual intersections or systems of coordinated intersections. This application is capable of estimating LOS based on either the intersection capacity utilization (ICU) method or the HCM method. Traffic volumes collected by Traffic Count Consultants in 2008 were input into the Synchro model to determine the existing traffic operations at the study intersections, which are summarized in Table 3-4 and graphically shown on Figure 3-2.

Table 3-4: Existing 2008 PM Peak Hour Traffic Operations

Intersection	LOS Standard	LOS	Delay (sec/veh)
Division Street/Main Street[1]	(modified)[2]	C	18.6
Division Street/South First Street	D	D	53.1
South Second Street/Montgomery Street	(modified)[2]	A	10.0
Kincaid Street/South First Street	D	B	12.3
Kincaid Street/South Second Street	D	B	13.2
Kincaid Street/South Third Street	(modified)[2]	C	25.2
I-5 Southbound Ramps/Kincaid Street	(modified)[2]	C	32.0
I-5 Northbound Ramps/Kincaid Street	(modified)[2]	C	27.4

[1] The LOS for this two-way stop-controlled intersection is defined by the worst lane group.

[2] The 2005 Transportation Element allows these locations to operate worse than the general LOS standards.

As shown in Table 3-4, all of the study intersections currently operate at or better than their respective LOS standards.

Public Transit

Skagit Transit (SKAT) serves the City of Mount Vernon by providing fixed-route bus, Dial-a-Ride, and vanpool services. Skagit Station is a multi-modal transportation facility located on East Kincaid Street providing transfer opportunities between SKAT, Greyhound, Amtrak, and local taxi service. Skagit Station also serves as the hub for the County Connector, which provides bus service between Skagit, Whatcom, and Snohomish Counties.

SKAT operates seven fixed bus routes, most of which access the downtown area via Kincaid Street, South Second Street, and Freeway Drive. There is no transit service along Main Street or First Street. Table 3-5 summarizes SKAT operations through the downtown area.

Table 3-5: SKAT Service Areas and Hours of Service

Bus Route	Route Description	Weekday Hours of Service (headways)	Saturday Hours of Service (headways)
204	Skagit Station/Skagit Valley College/Skagit Valley Hospital	7:00 AM to 8:30 PM (one hour)	None
205	Skagit Station/Skagit Valley College/Skagit Valley Hospital	7:30 AM to 9:00 PM (one hour)	8:30 AM to 6:00 PM (one hour)
207	Skagit Station/LaVenture Road	7:00 AM to 6:00 PM (half hour)	8:00 AM to 5:30 PM (half hour)
208 North	Skagit Station/Jefferson School/Wal-Mart/Cascade Mall	7:15 AM to 9:00 PM (half hour)	8:15 AM to 6:15 PM (half hour)
208 South	Cascade Mall/Skagit Station	6:45 AM to 8:45 PM (half hour)	8:15 AM to 6:15 PM (half hour)
513	Skagit Station/Cascade Mall/Anacortes	7:00 AM to 6:00 PM (4 times/day)	None
615	Mount Vernon/La Conner	6:30 AM to 7:00 PM (5 times/day)	None

Non-Motorized Facilities

The 2005 Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element identifies non-motorized systems as facilities that weave communities together, enliven neighborhoods, and enrich lives. To that end, the City of Mount Vernon is collaborating with Skagit County to create an integrated and comprehensive non-motorized network consisting of connected bicycle routes, pathways, and trails.

The downtown non-motorized system consists of a network of raised sidewalks lining both sides of the streets to accommodate non-motorized travel throughout the study area. Main Street, which is primarily used for on-street parking, is the only street within the study area without sidewalks; however, an off-street non-motorized facility exists along the Skagit River shoreline. Striped bike lanes do not currently exist within the downtown area; however, Division Street and South Second Street are designated bicycle routes.

Parking

Business and residential developments in the study area are required by the City's Municipal Code to provide a specified number of off-street parking spaces for employees, customers, and residents. Property zoned C-1 does not have to provide these spaces on-site and the Code provides for the cooperative use of off-street parking facilities. The Code also defines parking space dimensions, the minimum number of accessible parking spaces that must be provided, and other.

Downtown Mount Vernon has an existing parking inventory of approximately 1,840 on- and off-street parking spaces. Of this total, 974 (53 percent) are open to the general public with 532 spaces located in public lots and 442 on-street parking spaces. Roughly 350 of the 974 public parking stalls are located west of Main Street between Division Street and Kincaid Street. On-street parking is typically limited to two hours, but the public lots have no time limits.

The remaining 866 (47 percent) parking spaces are privately owned and restricted for general public use. Business parking lots, which are reserved for employees and/or patrons, provide 420 parking spaces. County-owned parking spaces, which are either primarily reserved for employees or are open to the public for County-related business, offer a combined total of 446 parking spaces and generally have a one-hour time limit.

A 2005 weekday parking utilization survey determined that occupancy is around 84 percent for County public parking spaces, 78 percent for public lots, and 66 percent for on-street parking (E.D. Hovee et al. 2005). Parking utilization on private business lots averaged 64 percent, followed by restricted County lots at 60 percent. Overall, downtown Mount Vernon's on- and off-street parking inventory is well utilized, but there is limited available parking to accommodate additional demand. Table 3-6 summarizes the downtown parking supply and utilization by type and identifies the typical time limits.

Table 3-6: Downtown Parking Supply and Utilization

Parking Type	Typical Time Limits	Number of Spaces	Proportion of Total Parking Inventory	Utilization
Public lots	None (short & long-term)	532	29%	78%
On-Street	2 hour, minimal number at 15 minutes	442	24%	66%
Business lots	None (short & long-term)	420	23%	64%
County restricted	None (primarily employee)	318	17%	60%
County public	1 hour, minimal number at 15 minutes	128	7%	84%
Total		**1840**		**69%**

Source: Mount Vernon Parking Garage Feasibility Study (E.D. Hovee et al. 2005).

General industry standards for parking utilization identify "trigger points" for more aggressive parking management, development of additional parking supply, or other measures. For short-term parking, 85 percent is a typical standard, as the availability of parking appears more constrained to a shopper or visitor when the 85 percent level is exceeded.

Existing Deficiencies

Existing Level of Service Deficiencies

The 2005 Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element identifies Division Street from Ball Street to Freeway Drive as deficient, operating at arterial LOS E. The Division Street/South First Street/Freeway Drive intersection currently operates at the City's LOS D standard; however, the delay (53.1 seconds of delay/vehicle) is approaching LOS E (55.0 seconds of delay/vehicle) and the City has identified this corridor as an area of substantial congestion during peak hours and special events, such as the annual Tulip Festival. At this intersection, high delays are primarily due to high volumes of conflicting movements with limited potential capacity improvements due to downstream capacity constraints (two existing lanes on the Division Street bridge).

Existing Non-Motorized System Deficiencies

The downtown area of Mount Vernon provides a grid system of sidewalks that accommodate non-motorized travel throughout the study area. However, other amenities, such as landscaping, benches, lighting, and striped bicycle lanes, are generally absent. Additionally, many sidewalks in the downtown core area are relatively narrow and not wide enough to allow two couples to pass each other without moving (i.e. wide enough for four people). This sidewalk width is typically considered to be ideal for a pedestrian-oriented CBD district.

The City of Mount Vernon also identifies the Division Street/South First Street/Freeway Drive intersection as potentially challenging from the non-motorized travel perspective due to wide intersection legs formed from a skewed angle intersection orientation. Additionally, pedestrians are required to make a two-stage crossing across the east leg and a three-stage crossing across the west and north legs as a result of channelized southbound-right and westbound-right lanes. Three small islands provide refuge during crossings but are too small to accommodate queues that form while waiting for the light and may increase pedestrian crossing time and lower the desirability as a walking route. Impatient pedestrians may also accept greater risk crossing single lanes from the pork chop islands, which could increase the potential for vehicle-pedestrian conflicts.

Existing Parking Deficiencies

The overall parking utilization for the downtown area is around 69 percent, which is lower that the typical 85 percent trigger point for the development of additional parking supply. However, there are parking shortages in two specific locations: the two-block area in the southern downtown core between Main/First/Pine/Gates Streets and another two-block area to the north bounded by First/Second/Division/Montgomery Streets. Additionally, both County public lots and portions of South First Street exceed the 85 percent threshold during peak-use periods. In a survey of downtown businesses, the majority of respondents expressed some level of dissatisfaction with the current parking system. (E.D. Hovee et al. 2005).

3.3. STREETSCAPE, OPEN SPACE, PUBLIC AMENITIES, AND CHARACTER

Streetscape

There are sidewalks on most streets throughout downtown, except in some places along the revetment. Sidewalks are relatively narrow, except for First Street, and few amenities exist to enhance the pedestrian experience.

First Street is the primary pedestrian and retail district in the downtown core. To improve the pedestrian experience on First Street, on-street parking has been eliminated for a half block on alternating sides of the street to provide wider sidewalks and amenities such as street trees, benches, landscaping, and pedestrian lighting. There is one traffic lane in each direction and traffic is relatively slow moving, with stop signs and signals at nearly every intersection. Contiguous building facades and storefronts line both sides of the street between Division Street and Kincaid Street, and First Street serves as the main spine of the pedestrian-oriented core.

Both Second Street and Third Street carry more traffic than First Street, and accommodate faster-moving through traffic in two directions. Many buildings along these streets are freestanding and have on-site surface parking. Uses tend to be auto-oriented, and sidewalks are utilitarian.

Main Street is one-way northbound north of Kincaid Street, except in the block just south of Division Street. The street is used primarily for access to parking and, with minimal accommodation for pedestrians, is very auto-oriented.

Division Street is dominated by vehicular traffic, providing the only cross-river access in downtown. Sidewalks are narrow and the absence of on-street parking together with the volume and speed of traffic make them uninviting to pedestrians. The traffic volume and crosswalk configuration at the intersection of Division Street and First Street are an impediment to pedestrian movement. The fact that the streets do not intersect at a right angle results in long crosswalks, poor visibility, and a confusing non-grid pattern that limits the northern extension of the pedestrian-oriented area north of Division Street.

Kincaid Street provides direct access to Interstate 5, and as a consequence carries a high volume of traffic in and out of downtown. At its intersection with Third Street it provides a direct route to Division Street and the SR-536 bridge over the Skagit River. At Second Street it provides a direct route to a bridge over the freeway to the north. At both Second Street and Third Street, Kincaid Street also provides access to the south. With narrow sidewalks and a high volume of traffic in both directions, Kincaid Street is very auto-oriented. The width of the street east of First Street makes for long pedestrian crossings, and the lack of pedestrian-oriented uses and activities discourages foot traffic from venturing south of the core.

Streetscape improvements in the areas surrounding the core are minimal. North of Division Street, sidewalks are sporadic and discontinuous. East of the railroad there are few sidewalks and only two places to cross the tracks on foot: at Kincaid Street and Montgomery Street. South of Kincaid Street there are sidewalks on most streets, but few streetscape improvements.

Open Space

The largest open space downtown is the Skagit River, but views of the river and access to it are limited. Views to the river from downtown streets are blocked by the revetment along the river edge, which is four to six feet above the elevation of First Street. There is a narrow wooden walkway on the revetment along the river edge, but it is separated from downtown sidewalks by parking.

One block of Pine Street between First Street and Second Street has been closed and landscaped to create a pedestrian plaza. It provides one of the few places in the core where people can enjoy relaxing or eating outside on a nice day.

The forecourt of the old Courthouse on the north side of Kincaid Street is another open space that provides an attractive setting for the historic building and an attractive landscape amenity along this entrance to downtown. At the west end of Kincaid Street is another open space that provides a patch of green, and there are several similar open spaces scattered in the neighborhood south of Kincaid Street. North and south of the core there is an unimproved trail and vegetation on the dike along the river.

Public Amenities

Public amenities within downtown include the pedestrian improvements on First Street discussed under Streetscape, and the riverside walkway and the closed block of Pine Street discussed under Open Space. Another public amenity is a freestanding colonnade and seating area between the sidewalk and an adjacent surface parking lot on the northeast corner of First Street and Gates Street. Public facilities downtown include City Hall and the Skagit County Courthouse, offices, and jail. Benches are provided on sidewalks on First Street and in all public plazas.

There are currently no public spaces downtown dedicated for outdoor performances or the Mount Vernon Farmer's Market, which is currently held on the weekends in the parking areas on the revetment west of Main Street. The Pine Street pedestrian plaza has a limited area for this sort of activity.

Character

The character of downtown is heavily influenced by its location between the Skagit River and the interstate freeway and hill to the east. The development pattern is dictated by a rectangular grid of streets roughly parallel to the river. The core of downtown, where the densest development is located, is contained on the east by railroad tracks and on the north and south by arterial streets. The major vehicular entrances to downtown are indirect, skirting the edges of the core rather than focusing on it directly. As a consequence, the core is not highly visible from adjacent roadways or other parts of the city. Downtown expansion is constrained by the river and freeway, so horizontal growth can only occur to the north or south.

South First Street between Division Street and Kincaid Street is a traditional small-town retail district, with contiguous storefronts and other pedestrian-friendly amenities as described above. The rest of the downtown core is more pedestrian-oriented than any other part of town, but non-vehicular connections to areas outside the core are constrained by perimeter high-traffic-volume streets. As a result, most people drive to the downtown core but once there, they can get around fairly well on foot, which is an important part of the unique character of downtown.

The river is not visible from street level throughout downtown. Downtown is separated from the river by the revetment, which currently consists of an expanse of surface parking that further separates downtown from the river.

Buildings in downtown are mostly one to two stories, with a few taller than that. The presence of many older, historic structures is also unique to downtown. There are a number of landmarks which contribute to the unique character of downtown. In addition to the river, downtown landmarks include:

- Division Street Bridge
- Old smokestack north of Division Street
- Historic County Courthouse
- Old granary
- Lincoln Theater
- President Hotel
- Old Post Office building
- Mount Vernon water tower

3.4. INFRASTRUCTURE

Flood Control

Downtown Mount Vernon is currently protected from flooding by a levee on an alignment that runs along Main Street from Division Street south to Kincaid Street and then runs along First Street South. When predicted river stages exceed the height of the existing levee, a temporary floodwall is constructed along the top of the existing levee. Historically, the temporary flood wall was built of sandbags by volunteers, coordinated by the City's Public Works and Fire Departments. In 2007, the City purchased a portable flood wall that provides an additional four feet of protection and can be erected by City crews. The City has successfully erected this flood wall but it has not yet been tested by actual flood waters.

Although recent flood fights have been successful, downtown Mount Vernon is within the current 100-year floodplain as designated by FEMA and shown in Figure 3-3.

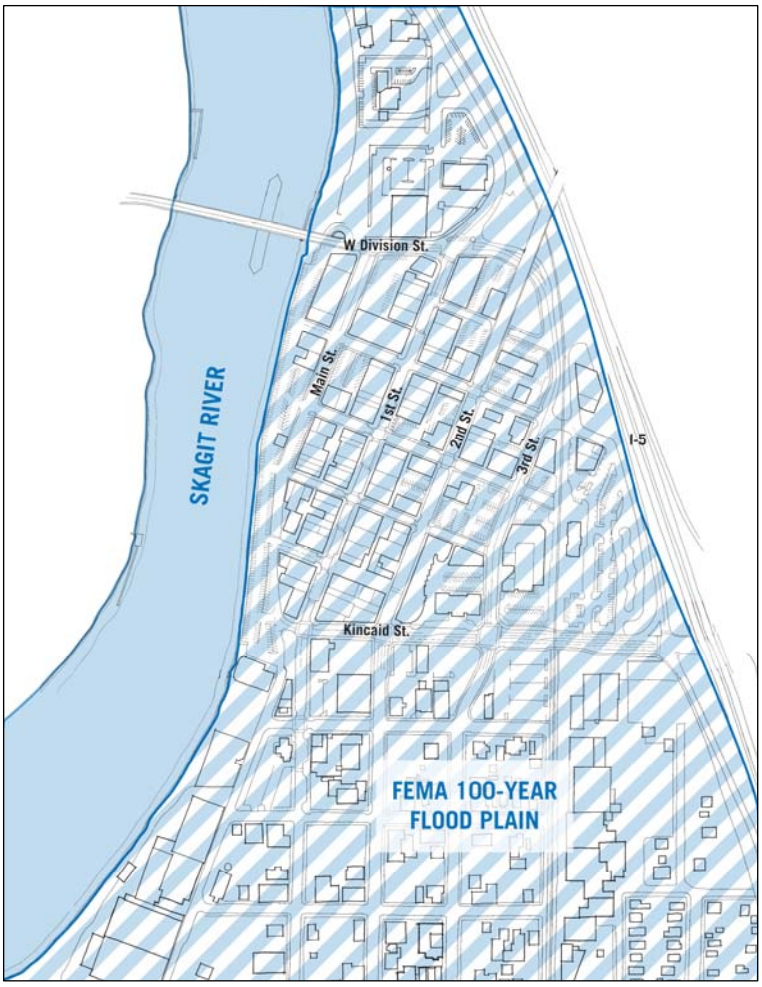

Figure 3-3: Current FEMA 100 Year Flood Plan

Utilities

Utilities serving downtown Mount Vernon include municipal water, electricity, natural gas, stormwater management, and waste water.

Municipal Water

Public Utility District #1 of Skagit County supplies water to residents, businesses, and industries throughout most areas of the city and county. The District's water filtration plant draws water from Judy Reservoir, which is supplied by streams in the Cultus Mountains east of Mount Vernon.

Water service for the downtown core area of Mount Vernon is comprised of mostly 8-inch looped mains, which are connected to 6-inch, 12-inch, 16-inch, and 18-inch mains within the study area. Larger 18-inch mains exist within Freeway Drive, North First Street, and Main Street and typically run north-south within the downtown area. There are no known deficiencies with the existing distribution and storage system.

Wastewater

The Wastewater Division of the Mount Vernon Public Works Department is responsible for wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal, with a service district that encompasses the City's Urban Growth Area. The Division operates 12 sanitary pumps stations and maintains approximately 108 miles of sanitary sewer line. The City's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) processes an average of four million gallons of wastewater a day. Treatment plant effluent is discharged through an outfall pipe to the Skagit River. Solids from the treatment process that meet regulatory limits for metals and toxics are certified as Class B biosolids and then transported to eastern Washington for application on dryland grain crops.

Currently, the City is working on upgrading and expansion of the WWTP. The work will provide capacity to treat wet weather flows for control of Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO) and to meet demand from expected population growth over the next 20 years.

Most of the downtown Mount Vernon area is served by a combined sewer system, which collects and conveys both sanitary and storm sewer flows. Flows from the system are routed to the WWTP for treatment during normal flow conditions. During high-flow events that are typically associated with periods of heavy rainfall, the capacity of the system is exceeded and wastewater is directly discharged to the Skagit River through one of two overflow structures located within the study area. These overflow structures commonly referred to as combined sewer overflows (CSO) are connected into the Division Street Pump Station and are located at First Street and Freeway Drive and Division Street under the Second Street Overpass.

In 1997, the Central CSO Regulator went on-line as part of the City's on-going efforts to minimize CSO events. Installation of the Central CSO Regulator was the first of a three-phase approach to reduce overflow events as originally outlined in the City's CSO Reduction Plan. The Central CSO Regulator is a 60-inch pipe that provides both conveyance and storage capacity with a volume close to 1 million gallons and a storage capacity, which ranges from 0.6 to 0.8 million gallons depending on the storm event. Installation of the Central CSO Regulator was projected to reduce overflow events to 12 events per year; however, the number of events has averaged 12 from 1998 to 2007.

The next phase of the City's CSO reduction plan to be completed by 2015 consists of upgrades to the WWTP to accommodate a combined maximum conveyance capacity of 25.8 mgd. These upgrades are aimed at reducing the City's overflow events to less than 1 per year. Monitoring the performance of the Central CSO Regulator system through 2010 will provide additional system data and flow characteristics to be used in the analysis and design of the WWTP upgrades.

Stormwater and Drainage

The City's Stormwater Management Division manages the Surface Water Utility, which installs and maintains a network of surface water facilities including storm drains, culverts, catch basins, and detention ponds. Stormwater runoff within the study area generally discharges into the CSO system described above. There are few dedicated storm drain lines identified by City GIS data, which are located along North First, Division, and West Section Streets. It is understood that these storm drain lines discharge to the Skagit River. In most of Mount Vernon, storm drains discharge directly to the Skagit River or tributary streams.

Electrical Power

Electrical energy is provided to Mount Vernon and surrounding areas by Puget Sound Energy (PSE), which has authority to provide electric and natural gas service within its 6,000 square mile service area. In addition to local distribution lines, there is a high voltage transmission line that runs along the Main Street right-of-way.

Natural Gas

Mount Vernon is located within the service areas of both Cascade Natural Gas and PSE. Natural gas is transported into the providers' service areas through interstate pipelines owned and operated by Williams Northwest Pipeline (Puget Sound Energy 2006; Cascade Natural Gas 2006). Once the utility takes possession of the product, it is distributed to customers through utility-owned lines.

Telecommunications

Telephone service is provided by Verizon and cable television service is provided by Comcast.

3.5. DEMOGRAPHICS AND ECONOMICS

The concepts and strategies for the Mount Vernon Waterfront Area and Downtown Master Plan are based on a realistic assessment of the economic potential for the area. Such an assessment provides a starting point for identifying the physical improvements, implementation strategies, and financial programs in the plan. Physical improvements will enhance the attractiveness and desirability of all of downtown. These improvements include a promenade on top of the dike along the river, streetscape improvements throughout downtown and connecting to the river, traffic improvements to enhance the downtown experience, and increases to the parking supply. In total, the plan and associated improvements will increase the attractiveness of downtown as a place to live, shop, work, or visit.

A market analysis was prepared for downtown to consider the potential demand for development of additional retail, office, residential, and lodging. The analysis of each use considers the potential competitive position of downtown and its ability to capture additional development. The results of the analysis are projections of potential development for the next 20 years.

This section of the Master Plan summarizes the results of the market analysis.

Demographic and Economic Conditions

Mount Vernon is the largest city in Skagit County with a population of 28,710 in 2006. The population of the city's urban growth area is projected to grow to 47,000 by 2025. The city has a lower median age and higher household size than the county as a whole.

Government is the largest employment sector, with the County being the largest single employer. Both County and City facilities are located in downtown. Skagit County and Mount Vernon are popular visitor attractions with estimated visitor-related employment in the County almost as great as the construction sector.

Retail Demand

Mount Vernon's neighbor to the north, the City of Burlington, dominates the local retail market with several regional scale retail centers. However, Mount Vernon still captures retail sales well in excess of estimated spending by city residents, making it a net attractor of retail activity.

Downtown Mount Vernon captures approximately 7.5 percent of taxable sales for retail trade and selected service sectors city-wide. The 116 retail and related businesses include a grocery store, food co-op, furniture store, antique stores, pharmacy, theater, restaurants, and specialty gift shops.

Projected retail demand for the city, based on an assumption of constant capture rate for resident spending, is projected to increase by 3.4 percent per year in real (uninflated) terms, supporting an increase of two million square feet of new development by 2025. Downtown Mount Vernon could capture a portion of that demand through city-wide growth, spending by new downtown residents, and increased visitor activity. The downtown projected share is 280,000 square feet, 14 percent of the projected city-wide demand.

Office Demand

Downtown Mount Vernon is the center of government for the County and a preferred location for many financial and professional service businesses. County-wide office demand is projected to grow 32,500 square feet per year over a ten year period, and Downtown could capture 20 percent of that amount. Downtown could attract a signature office building and continue to serve as the premier office location for financial and professional services firms. Existing downtown private office employment is approximately 15 percent of city-wide employment in those sectors.

Residential Demand

Mount Vernon had an estimated 10,972 housing units in 2007, of which approximately 31 percent were multifamily units. However, only 161 new multifamily units have received building permits since 2000. Almost one-third of the multifamily units are classified by the City as serving low-income households (those with income levels at or below 80 percent of the median for the county).

There are 179 housing units in downtown Mount Vernon. 127 of those units are multifamily, and 73 percent or 93 units of those are low-income. There are few market-rate housing units available downtown. This condition contrasts with other waterfront communities such as Fairhaven, Edmonds, and Bremerton in the Puget Sound area where residential development has been strong; resulting from both changes in consumer preferences and City investment in infrastructure and development incentives such and tax exemptions.

There are few high quality market-rate apartment units in Mount Vernon. Condominium activity has been strong with almost 300 units sold since 2003. Most of these units are located on a golf course or on the foothills to the east of downtown.

The strongest potential market segment for multifamily residential development downtown in the near term is empty nesters, followed by the young singles and couples segment. There are approximately 1,220 households in Mount Vernon with at least one member over 55 years of age and a household income over $50,000. Realistically, 150 of those households could be attracted to downtown condominiums over the next ten years. Similar levels of development could be supported in subsequent years. In addition, 50 apartment units could be supported in the next ten years, growing to 100 units in the subsequent ten years.

Lodging Demand

With two new lodging properties developed in the area in the past eighteen months, there is limited support for new lodging in Mount Vernon in the next five years. (The Winter Olympics in Vancouver in 2010 will benefit existing properties and provide tax revenues to the City, but the short duration of the event will not support new construction.) Opportunities for new development should emerge after this period.

There are no hotels in downtown at the present time, but the employment center in downtown will attract commercial travelers. Downtown is conveniently located with good visibility off I-5. Mount Vernon and the Skagit Valley are popular tourist destinations, with visitors attracted to hiking, wildlife viewing, shopping, and festivals. A site on the river as part of a mixed-use development would be attractive for tourist and commercial travelers, and a site with excellent highway access and visibility, such as the site of the Christianson Seed Company, would also be well suited for redevelopment as a hotel.

Summary of Downtown Economic Opportunity

The demand for retail space, office space, residences, and lodging is summarized in Table 3-7.

Table 3-7: Summary of Demand

	Next 10 Years	Subsequent 10 Years
Retail	125,000 square feet	155,000 square feet
Office	55,000 square feet	65,000 square feet
Residential	200 units	250 units
Lodging	100 rooms	100 rooms

4. Urban Design Framework Plan

Downtown Mount Vernon should retain its role as the center of city and county government, pedestrian-oriented retail, commercial services, professional offices, arts and cultural facilities, entertainment, and support services. Additional residential and hospitality uses should be added to this mix to create the most dense and diverse center of urban activity in Skagit County. While the focus for this concentration should continue to be the traditional downtown core (bounded by the river on the west, Interstate 5 on the east, Division Street on the north, and Kincaid Street on the south), the areas north of Division Street to Lions Park and south of Kincaid Street to Section Street should be developed to accommodate downtown support services, future expansion of the core, and the addition of more housing. The core should be linked to these areas not only by vehicular routes, but also by landscaped streets, open spaces, pedestrian and bicycle routes, and transit. The Urban Concept Diagram (Figure 4-1) and the Urban Framework Plan (Figure 4-2) illustrate in diagrammatic form the basic geography of downtown and the location and extent of recommended improvements to downtown Mount Vernon. Both illustrations are described below.

4.1. URBAN CONCEPT DIAGRAM

The Urban Concept Diagram (Figure 4-1) shows the fundamental physical structure of downtown. It shows the fundamental features of the Framework Plan (Figure 4-2), which together provide organization and structure to downtown. These features consist of:

- The Skagit River
- The railroad
- Interstate 5
- Arterial streets and secondary streets
- A north-south pedestrian spine along First Street extending the length of downtown (dashed line and tan cross-hatched background)
- Reconfiguration and improvement of the intersection of Division Street and First Street to extend the pedestrian-orientation north on First Street and to clarify circulation and improve safety (orange dashed circle)
- An improved riverfront promenade (Wavy line on a blue background)
- An improved pedestrian connection along Gates Street between Skagit Station and a new public plaza along the riverfront promenade (dashed line on green cross-hatched background)
- Improved gateways to downtown at the north end of First Street, the east end of Kincaid Street, and the east end of the Division Street bridge (Yellow arrows)
- Improvements to Kincaid Street to celebrate its role as the primary entrance to downtown from the freeway (green cross-hatching)

- Improvements to the intersection of Kincaid Street and First Street to extend the pedestrian-orientation south on First Street and to accent the termination of Kincaid Street at the river (orange dashed circle)

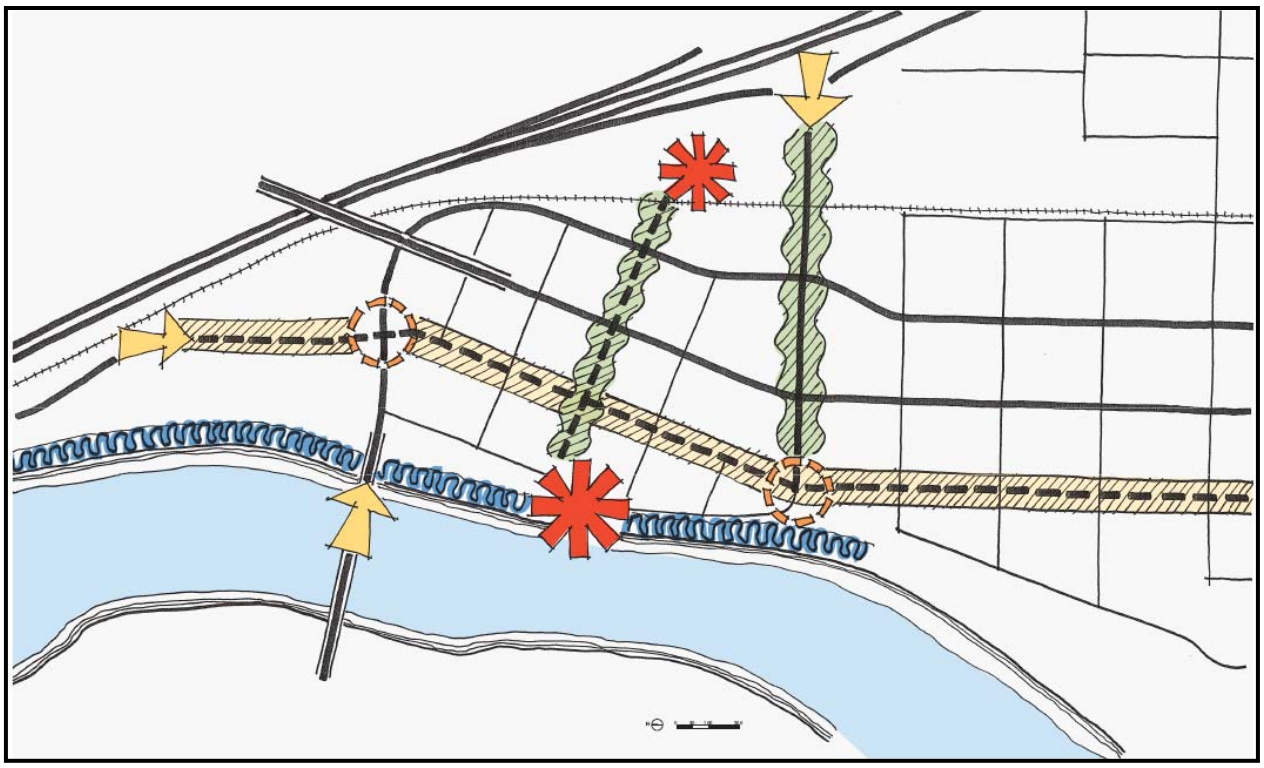

Figure 4-1: Urban Concept Diagram

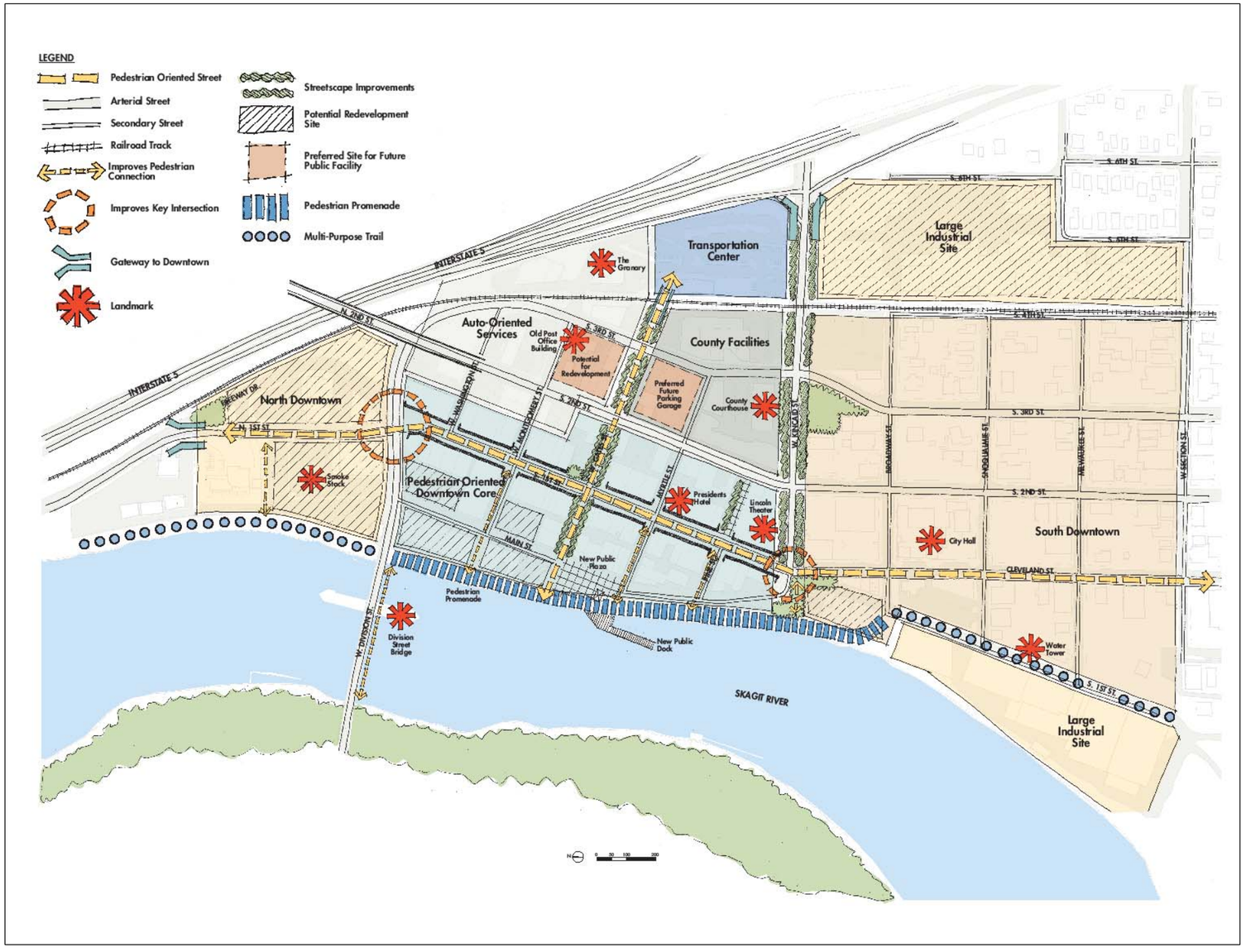

Figure 4-2: Urban Framework Plan

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4.2. URBAN FRAMEWORK PLAN

The Urban Design Framework Plan (Figure 4-2) shows the location and extent of recommended improvements to downtown Mount Vernon, which are described below. The plan divides the downtown into seven sub-areas, each characterized with a different quality and potential for improvement and development opportunities.

Pedestrian-Oriented Downtown Core

The greatest impact on the revitalization and redevelopment direction for Mount Vernon is the implementation of the flood control project. As part of this project a new pedestrian promenade along the river will be constructed offering views of the river. The Framework shows development opportunities on the east side of the promenade at the north and south ends. These would strengthen the existing retail core along First Street and introduce the opportunity for downtown housing.

Improved pedestrian connections along existing east-west streets are shown, to provide clear, safe and attractive pedestrian connections between the river and the downtown core. The west ends of these streets will include access points to the riverfront promenade.

A new multi- purpose public plaza is to be created as part of the flood control project. The plaza should be large enough to accommodate outdoor performances and events as well as a farmers market. The space has the potential to become the focal point for civic and community gatherings and events. The plaza is located at the western terminus of Gates Street.

Gates Street is delineated as a major pedestrian-oriented street linking the downtown core and the transportation center. As such, it should be improved with additional street trees, information kiosks for the posting of event flyers and other community information, public art and/or a water feature to enhance the pedestrian experience and provide a natural draw to the core from the transportation center.

An important principle guiding the development of the core area is improved access to the Skagit River. Its riverfront location is what makes downtown Mount Vernon unique among similar size cities in Washington and the importance of the river to downtown should be reflected in the civic improvements made in the pedestrian core. In order to provide a more direct experience with the river, a public dock to provide temporary moorage in the heart of downtown is identified in the framework plan.

First Street remains the heart of the retail district and is to retain its pedestrian friendly character. New development should take full advantage of adjacency to the river. Any redevelopment should require public access to the riverfront and provide connections to the multi-purpose trail and pedestrian promenade along the river in the downtown core.

South Downtown

This neighborhood south of Kincaid Street and north of Section Street is in transition. Potential development opportunities include services and facilities that support the downtown retail core and opportunities to increase residential density within close proximity to the retail core. The preferred site for the County Jail expansion is located in the south downtown sub-area.

Large Industrial Sites

Two large industrial areas flank the south downtown sub-area. The cold storage west of south downtown and along the riverfront will remain. Improvements to the pedestrian walk/path on top of the dike/levee are suggested to enrich the river experience.

Over time the industrial site east of south downtown is likely to be redeveloped. The north edge of the site fronts on Kincaid Street. Future development should take this into account, since it will contribute to the gateway experience into downtown.

County Facilities

This area is comprised of the historic County Courthouse, current County Jail, and administrative offices. The courthouse that fronts on Kincaid Street is a principal landmark of Mount Vernon enriching the entry experience into downtown. A new courtyard opposite the courthouse, across Kincaid Street, is recommended to enhance the entry experience. The preferred site for the future parking garage is located in this sub-area. It would replace the parking on the revetment displaced when the flood control measures and new pedestrian promenade are constructed

Skagit Station

The Skagit Station intermodal transit center and park and ride will remain in this sub-area. It will become more active and vital as the downtown increases in density and becomes more pedestrian oriented. Connections to and from the central retail core will be important. A new pedestrian bridge over the tracks linking Skagit Station to downtown and the waterfront is recommended to provide a safer and more convenient connection.

Auto-Oriented Services

Streetscape improvements, primarily street tree plantings along Second Street and Third Street would help calm traffic and integrate the area into the adjacent pedestrian-oriented downtown core. Streetscape improvements on Gates Street should continue through the sub-area, providing continuity and connectivity from the downtown core to the transportation center. One of the potential sites for the future parking garage are in this sub-area.

North Downtown

Similar to south downtown, this area provides opportunities for development of support services. Significant potential redevelopment sites allow for a seamless expansion of the retail core to the north along First Street. An improved and safer pedestrian crossing at the intersection of First Street and Division Street would help promote development north along the main retail corridor.

4.3. STREETS

The Framework Plan identifies a hierarchy of streets and streetscapes within the study area. The general attitude toward streets is to enhance walkability, improving the pedestrian character of downtown and better connecting the downtown to its riverfront.

- Kincaid Street, the primary entrance to downtown from the south, is shown as a tree-lined boulevard to provide an attractive and calming invitation into the downtown core. Kincaid Street is a high volume street that serves as a primary gateway into Mount Vernon, so it needs to reflect the character of the city.
- South First Street connects three sub-areas and is designated as a pedestrian-oriented street. Pedestrian improvements on South First Street should be extended north of Division Street and south of Kincaid Street to reinforce the role this street currently plays as the central spine of pedestrian activity through downtown.
- South Second Street and Third Street are the principal north-south arterials. Although they are heavily auto-oriented, the character of the streets should reinforce the overall character of a pedestrian-friendly downtown.
- Gates Street is shown on the Framework Plan as a pedestrian-oriented street becoming the primary east-west connection through downtown, linking the riverfront/pedestrian promenade, the new parking garage, and the existing transportation center to the east.
- The Framework Plan recommends improved pedestrian connections along other east/west streets (Montgomery, Myrtle, and Pine Streets) within the downtown core. The plan also identifies a new and safer sidewalk on the Division Street Bridge.
- The construction of the flood control project will affect Main Street. Main Street is shown on the plan as potentially being closed at the proposed public plaza with the exception of access for delivery and emergency vehicles.

The potential remains for a future bridge across the river at, or south of, Kincaid Street. Since a decision regarding the location of a new bridge has not been made, this plan does not show it, but can accommodate it in the future.

4.4. KEY INTERSECTIONS

Two key intersections on South First Street are highlighted for potential improvements:

- Currently the Division Street/First Street/Freeway Drive intersection is very difficult for pedestrians to cross. As development extends the retail corridor to the north, a new configuration at the intersection is suggested that will provide a clear and safe means of crossing for pedestrians.
- At the intersection of South First Street and Kincaid Street there is an opportunity to provide an attractive terminus to the entry experience down Kincaid Street, and to provide an inviting connection to the riverside pedestrian promenade. Improvements could include landscaping, public art, a water features or landmark; and they should be visible from a distance and inviting to pedestrians.

4.5. LANDMARKS

A number of landmark structures have been identified on the plan. The term “landmark” is used to describe the physical features of an urban landscape which people use to orient themselves and which contribute in a significant way to their image of the place. They are features that almost everybody who lives or works in Mount Vernon knows and might refer to in telling someone how to get around. These structures should be regarded as assets reflecting the character and history of the city:

- Division Street Bridge
- Old smokestack north of Division Street
- Historic County Courthouse
- Old granary
- Lincoln Theater
- President Hotel
- Old post office building
- Mount Vernon water tower

4.6. ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

During the public involvement process, alternative development scenarios were prepared, both during the preliminary master plan phase (Phase I) and at the start of the final master plan (Phase III). These alternatives were prepared to illustrate some options for future development. The three options prepared during Phase III are shown in Figure 4-3 through Figure 4-5. Each alternative includes different options for the areas west of Main Street, north of Division Street, and at the west end of Kincaid Street (the current site of the Moose Lodge), as well as alternative sites for the new parking garage and new traffic circulation patterns. These different elements are illustrative only and are not to be considered specific "packages" of options. The alternatives were developed to generate feedback from the community to help guide the development of the final master plan. They are included here to illustrate the fact that future improvements can take a variety of forms while remaining true to the fundamental principles contained in the Framework Plan.

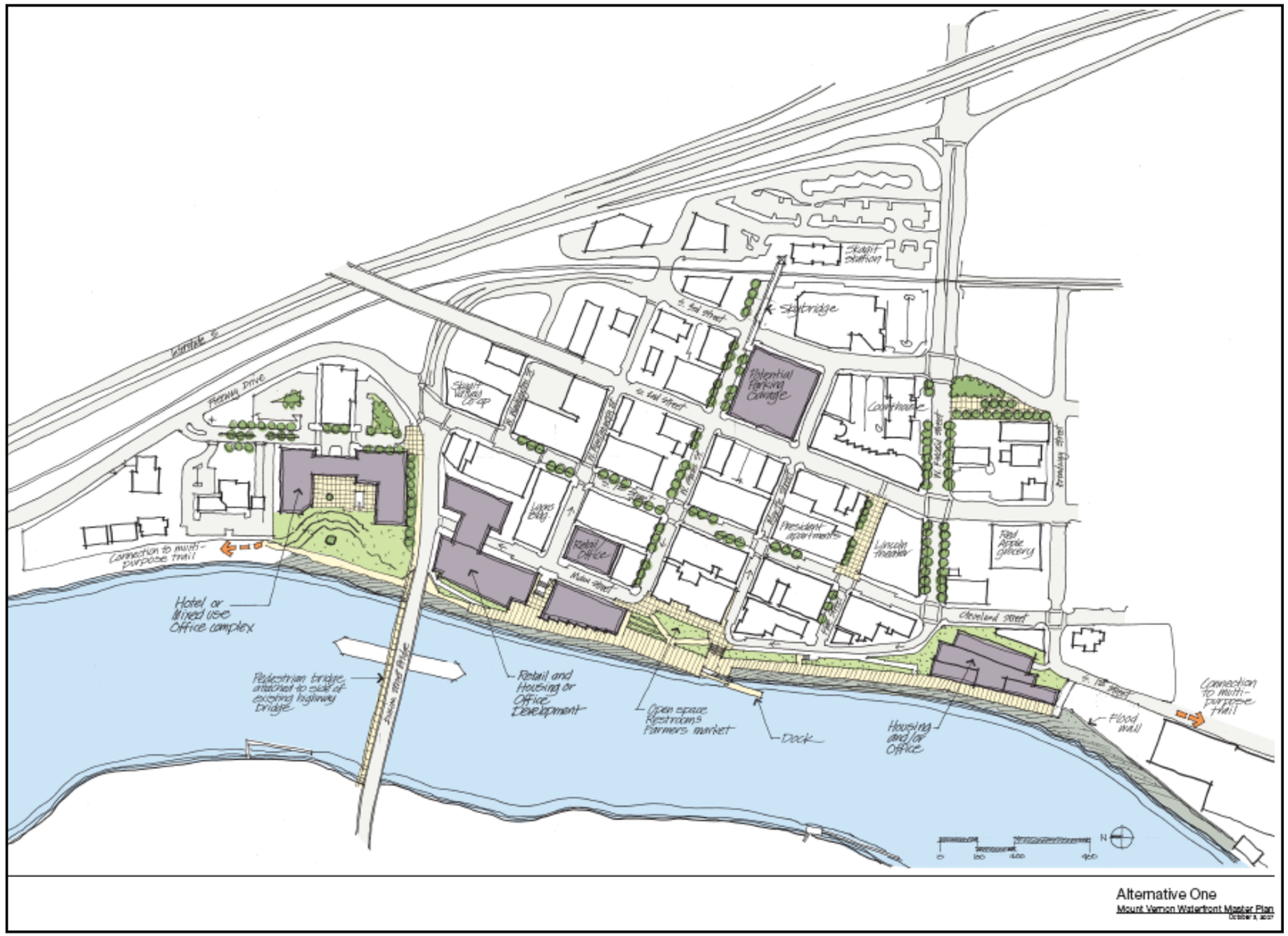

Figure 4-3: Master Plan Concepts, Alternative 1

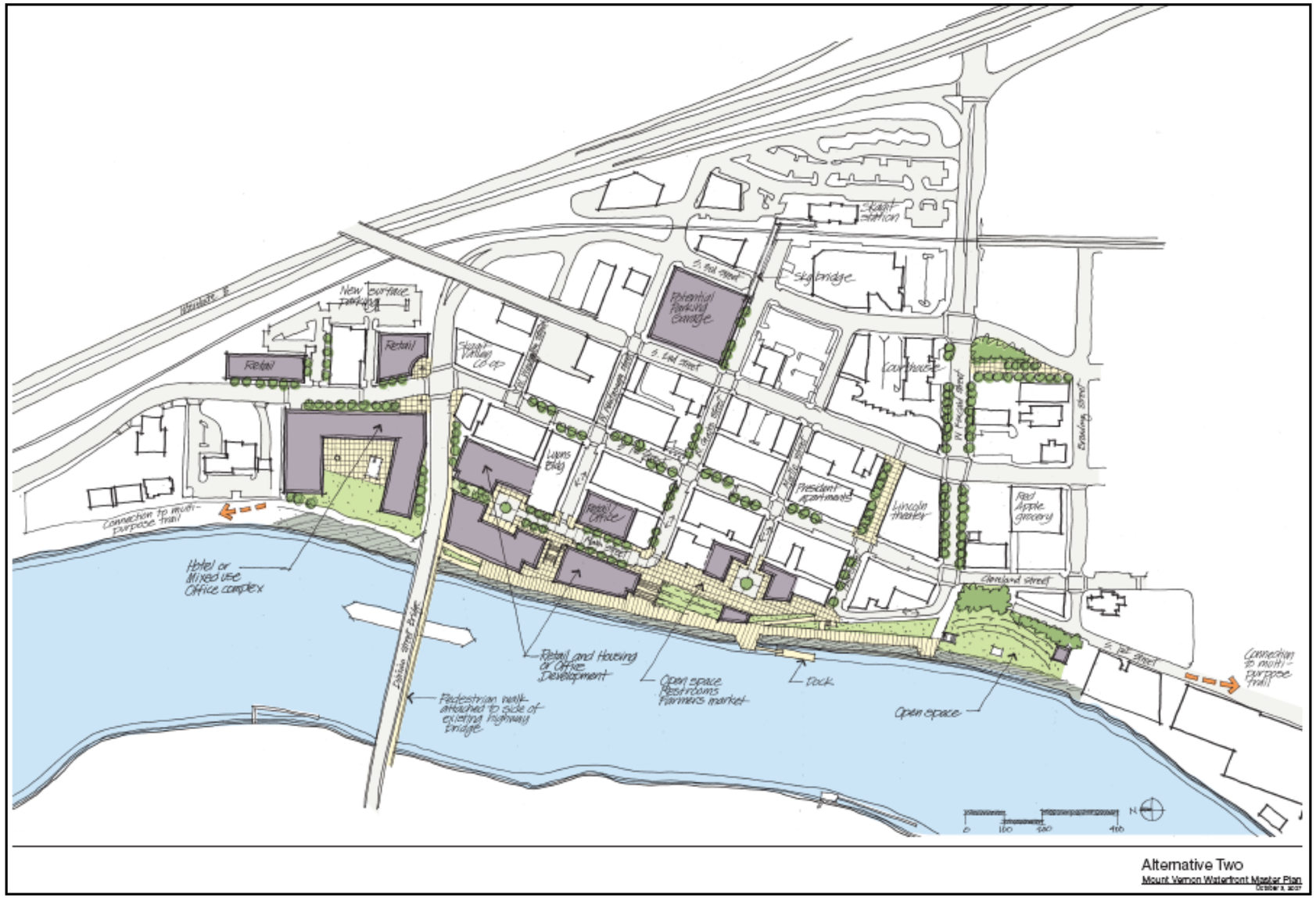

Figure 4-4: Master Plan Concepts, Alternative 2

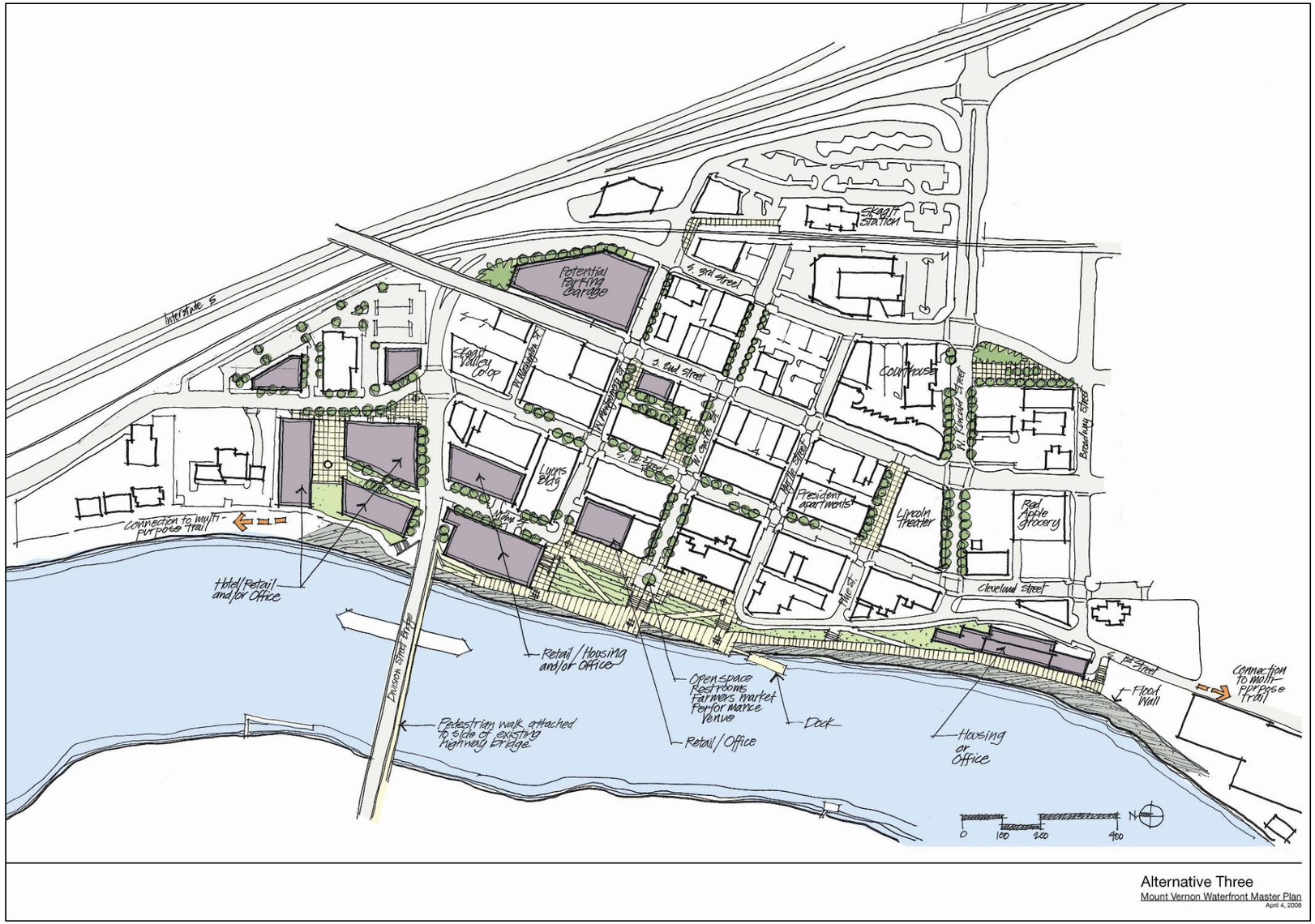

Figure 4-5: Master Plan Concepts, Alternative 3

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4.7. OPPORTUNITY SITES

Throughout downtown there are a number of sites that provide opportunity for redevelopment. Among them are the following:

1. Current site of the Moose Lodge
2. Revetment between Gates Street and Montgomery Street
3. Revetment between Montgomery Street and Division Street
4. Former Carnation Plant site
5. City owned parking lot on Main Street between Gates Street and Montgomery Street
6. Parking lot behind Lyons Furniture at the corner of Main Street and Division Street
7. North Downtown east of First Street (includes Scott's Bookstore)
8. Block surrounded by Second, Third, Gates, and Myrtle Streets (preferred new parking garage site)
9. Block surrounded by Second, Third, Montgomery, and Gates Streets (alternate new parking garage site)
10. Three blocks surrounded by Milwaukee, Third, and Kincaid Streets and the railroad tracks (preferred new jail site)
11. Christianson Seed Company

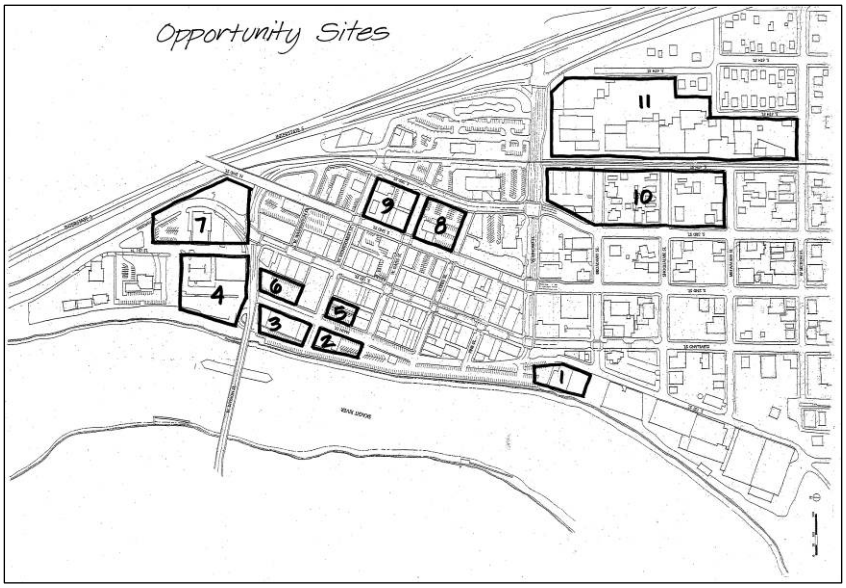


Figure 4-6: Opportunity Sites

Details of these sites, including potential uses and development constraints, are included in Appendix A.

5. Land Use and Development

5.1. INCREASED DENSITY AND INTENSITY

Downtown should contain buildings having sufficient height to provide urban residential density, a high concentration of employment, and intense commercial and retail use. By increasing the density and diversity of uses and activities in the core, downtown could become an exciting place distinct from other regional locales and a popular destination for visitors. A diverse mixture of uses juxtaposed within a pedestrian-friendly environment would result in a walkable urban character that is attractive to residents, employees, and visitors, and strengthens the economic vitality of downtown.

5.2. MIXTURE OF LAND USES

Mixed-use development is a viable tool for stimulating economic diversity, and should be encouraged downtown, particularly in the core. A typical mixed-use project has retail businesses and pedestrian-oriented activities at street level, commercial or office uses above that, and housing on the upper levels. The horizontal mixture of uses along the street is also encouraged.

5.3. MORE HOUSING DOWNTOWN

While the commercial core may have primarily office, retail, entertainment, and cultural uses, residential development should also be encouraged to provide a population that brings vitality and security into the evening hours. With a variety of services and amenities within walking distance, the downtown area should become an increasingly attractive place to live, and the additional residents will strengthen the market for new and existing downtown businesses.

5.4. REDEVELOPMENT OF PROPERTIES ACQUIRED FOR FLOOD CONTROL

All property west of Main Street between Division Street and Kincaid Street will be purchased from willing sellers by the City of Mount Vernon for the flood control project. Once the flood control project is constructed, the remaining area under the City's ownership, along with the existing parking areas owned by the City, will be available for redevelopment. The conversion of the downtown riverfront into an amenity rather than a surface parking lot would make these properties attractive for redevelopment oriented to the river and to the new pedestrian promenade. Uses at the promenade level should be pedestrian-oriented retail, restaurants, and services, with housing or office uses above. Parking should be located within structures. Structures should be terraced down toward the river to maximize views, and view corridors along the east-west streets should be preserved.

5.5. REDEVELOPMENT OF UNDERDEVELOPED PROPERTIES

Over time, many currently underdeveloped properties downtown will be redeveloped, particularly after completion of the flood control project. The City should employ a variety of techniques to encourage desired development, including upgraded and expanded infrastructure, public/private partnerships, the development and management of parking, and the acquisition and disposition of public property. New development should reinforce pedestrian activity at street level and contribute to the desired character of downtown.

6. Transportation and Parking

6.1. STREETS

Under the Framework Plan, the primary vehicular routes in downtown Mount Vernon would continue as they are today. Functional classifications would not change and roadway characteristics would generally be similar except along roadways slated for improvements to create more pedestrian-oriented corridors. Intersection channelization would also be similar, except at locations where operational or safety improvements are identified.

Travel patterns may change due to potential circulation changes along Montgomery, Gates, Myrtle, and Pine Streets between Main Street and South First Street where two-way streets may be converted to one-way streets. However, these localized changes in travel patterns are not expected to substantially affect the regional distribution of traffic into and out of the downtown area. Potential changes to roadway circulation are identified in the three Alternative Development Scenarios shown in Figure 4-3 through Figure 4-5. These three Alternative Development Scenarios are included in this Framework Plan as background information on the master planning process and to illustrate how future improvements can take a variety of forms; they are illustrative only and are not to be considered specific "packages" of options.

Based on expected operational deficiencies and pedestrian safety concerns, channelization improvements to the Division Street/South First Street/Freeway Drive intersection should be explored. One potential improvement includes re-orienting the intersection legs to 90 degree angles, which would create a more pedestrian-friendly crossing by shortening the crosswalks and improving lines of sight for both pedestrians and drivers. Another potential improvement is to extend South Third Street as a northbound one-way road connecting to Freeway Drive further north of Division Street. This would divert traffic volumes and improve operating conditions at the Division Street/South First Street/Freeway Drive intersection.

6.2. PM PEAK HOUR VOLUMES

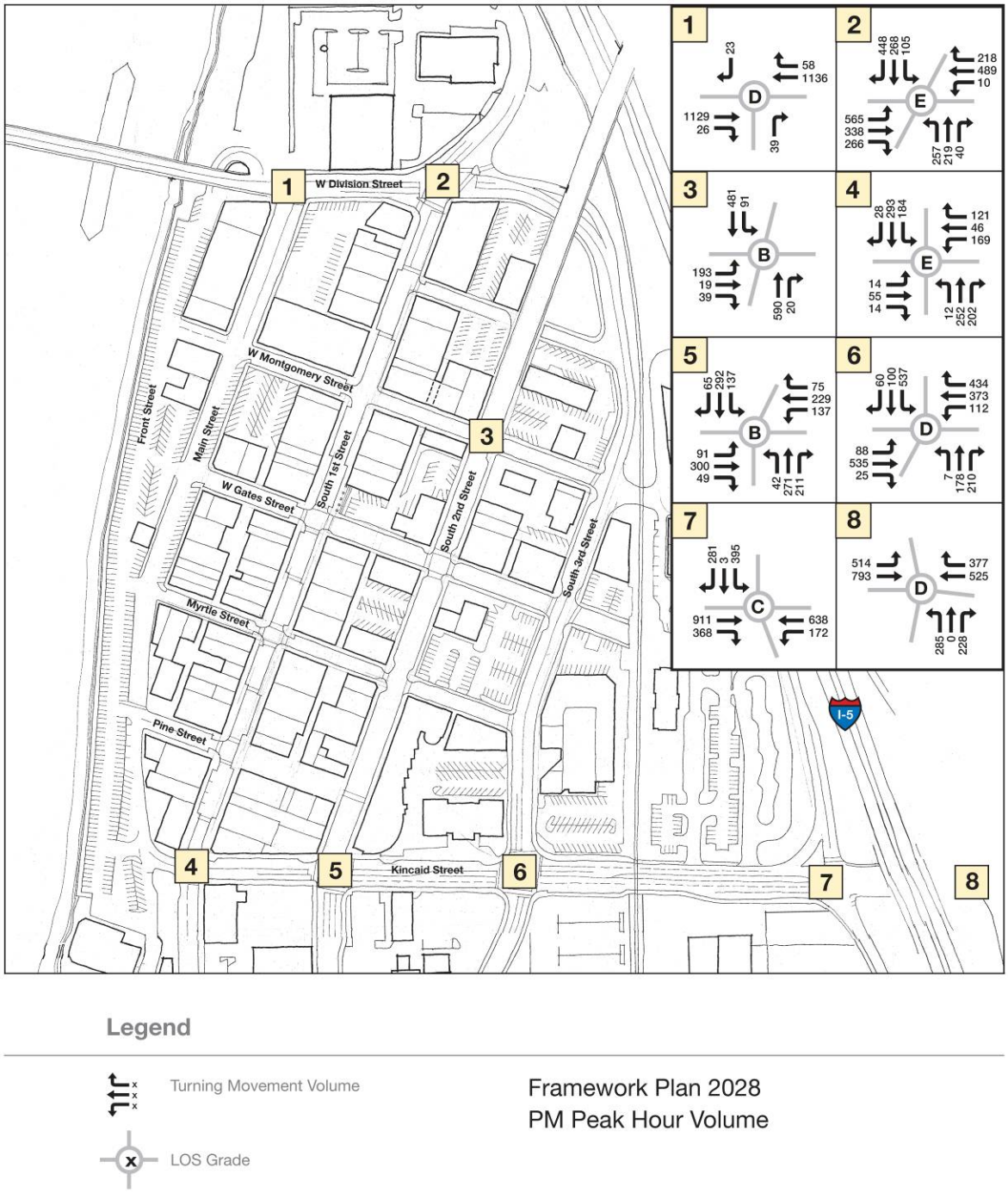
Forecasted year 2028 PM peak hour volumes accounted for background growth in traffic volumes as well as additional traffic generated by the redevelopment potential in the Mount Vernon CBD. The background growth rate was calculated using historical 2005 count data collected by Skagit County Public Works. Comparing the 2005 count data to the 2008 count data showed a system-wide annual growth rate of 0.6 percent. This background growth rate was applied to the existing 2008 traffic volumes and forecasted out to the year 2028.

Based on the economic analysis conducted for the Master Plan and data provided in the Institute of Transportation Engineers' (ITE) *Trip Generation, 7th Edition* (2003), additional traffic generated by the redevelopment potential was calculated and distributed throughout the downtown area according to the existing distribution patterns. Table 6-1 summarizes the daily and PM peak hour trips generated according to the economic analysis.

Table 6-1: Daily and PM Peak Hour Redevelopment Trip Generation

Land Use	Variable		ITE Land Use Code	Daily Trips			PM Peak Hour Trips		
				Total	In	Out	Total	In	Out
Retail	280	K ft²	814	12,410	6205	6,205	759	334	425
Office	120	K ft²	710	1,536	768	768	214	36	178
Residential	450	Units	230	2,306	1153	1,153	207	139	68
Hotel/Lodging	200	Rooms	310	1,634	817	817	118	63	55
Net Traffic Increase				17,886	8,943	8,943	1,298	572	726

As shown in Table 6-1, the redevelopment potential would generate approximately 1,300 additional PM peak hour trips through the downtown area. These additional trips generated were added to the year 2028 forecasted traffic volumes. It is possible that capturing the trips generated by the redevelopment potential is also inclusive of increases in background growth; however, including the 0.6 percent rate provided a conservatively high estimate of possible future traffic volumes. Figure 6-1 shows the forecasted traffic volumes expected under the Framework Plan for the year 2028.



Legend

Turning Movement Volume

LOS Grade

Framework Plan 2028
PM Peak Hour Volume

Figure 6-1: Framework Plan 2028 PM Peak Hour Volumes

6.3. INTERSECTION LEVEL OF SERVICE

Similar to the existing conditions LOS analysis, the 2028 Framework Plan analysis used Synchro 7 (build 761) to estimate future intersection operating conditions. The Framework Plan is aimed at capturing the essence of the long-range vision for the downtown area while maintaining flexibility on the location and type of future development. Therefore the intersection channelization and signal timing plans were assumed to be the same as existing conditions; however, the green time for each signal phase was optimized. Table 6-2 compares the existing and Framework Plan PM peak hour intersection LOS and delay.

Table 6-2: Existing 2008 and Framework Plan 2028 PM Peak Hour Traffic Operations

Intersection	LOS Standard	2008 Existing		2028 Framework Plan	
		LOS	Delay (sec/veh)	LOS	Delay (sec/veh)
Division Street/Main Street[1]	(modified)[2]	C	18.6	D	27.6
Division Street/South First Street	D	D	53.1	E	71.7
South Second Street/Montgomery Street	(modified)[2]	A	10.0	B	13.0
Kincaid Street/South First Street	D	B	12.3	E	48.5
Kincaid Street/South Second Street	D	B	13.2	B	17.0
Kincaid Street/South Third Street	(modified)[2]	C	25.2	D	40.1
I-5 Southbound Ramps/Kincaid Street	(modified)[2]	C	32.0	C	35.0
I-5 Northbound Ramps/Kincaid Street	(modified)[2]	C	27.4	D	42.4

[1] The LOS for this two-way stop-controlled intersection is defined by the worst lane group.

[2] The 2005 Transportation Element allows these locations to operate worse than the general LOS standards.

As a result of increased traffic volumes due to background growth and additional traffic generated by the redevelopment potential, average vehicle delays are expected to increase. At some locations, the increase in delay would result in a worse LOS grade. At two of the eight locations, Division Street/South First Street/Freeway Drive and Kincaid Street/South First Street, the increase in delays is expected to degrade intersection operations to LOS E, which is worse than the City's adopted LOS D standard. Additional discussion on these two intersections is provided in Chapter 10.

6.4. PUBLIC TRANSIT

Two of the seven SKAT fixed routes travel through one (Division Street/South First Street/Freeway Drive) of the eight study intersections. Route 207 (Skagit Station to Skagit Valley Hospital) travels north along South Third Street and makes a westbound right-turn onto Freeway Drive. If the Division Street/South First Street/Freeway Drive intersection is realigned, Route 207 operations would not be

affected. If a one-way connection between South Third Street and Freeway Drive is constructed, this route would be able to bypass congestion at the Division Street/South First Street/Freeway Drive intersection and the operational effects on this route would be beneficial, though minor.

Route 615 (Mount Vernon to La Conner) travels north along South Third Street and continues west along Division Street. Operational or safety improvements under the Framework Plan to the Division Street/South First Street/Freeway Drive would be negligible, if any. Additional discussion is provided in Chapter 10.

6.5. NON-MOTORIZED FACILITIES

The Framework Plan includes several improvements to the non-motorized system that would enhance the pedestrian experience and walkability of the downtown area. Major improvements include a riverfront promenade, landscaping, lighting, redevelopment of Gates Street as a pedestrian-oriented corridor linking the riverfront/promenade, improvements to the downtown core, and a new parking garage and transit center (see Section 4).

Several streets between Main Street and South First Street could be converted from two-way to one-way streets, including Montgomery, Gates, Myrtle, and Pine Streets. Conversion to one-way streets would accommodate wider sidewalks, which would also enhance the non-motorized experience and promote a more pedestrian-oriented environment.

Realignment of the Division Street/South First Street/Freeway Drive intersection would create shorter crosswalks and improve the lines of sight from both the pedestrian and driver perspective, which would improve safety. If a direct connection between South Third Street and Freeway Drive is constructed, removal of the channelized westbound right-turn lane would reduce the number of pedestrian crossing stages across the east leg, which would also improve safety.

6.6. PARKING

Redevelopment of the downtown area under the Framework Plan is expected to generate additional traffic, which can be correlated to an increase in parking demand. Most of the new parking demand generated by the redevelopment of residential and hotel land uses would be accommodated by the developer as required by current zoning regulations. Parking demand generated by the redevelopment of retail and office land uses (603 PM peak hour trips) would require public and/or private business parking. The 2005 parking study provided peak parking utilization rates for public lots (78 percent) and public on-street parking (66 percent), and identified approximately 270 unoccupied parking spaces. Although there is a correlation between travel demand and parking demand, estimating the correlation is difficult to quantify due to the lack of data and number of variables.

To accommodate a portion of the anticipated increase in parking demand, the capacity of the parking garage identified in the Framework Plan should be as large as practical. Most of the garage capacity will be used to replace parking displaced by construction of the flood control measures and the garage itself but the site identified could accommodate nearly 600 stalls, which is more than the number of stalls displaced. The exact location of the parking garage and a recommendation for garage capacity is being analyzed in an independent study currently underway. Additional detail is provided in Chapter 10. The parking on the revetment displaced by the flood control project should be replaced prior to the start of construction.

7. Streetscape, Open Space, Public Amenities, and Character

7.1. STREETSCAPE

The streets in downtown Mount Vernon establish an overall development and circulation pattern. They are the most visible and pervasive aspects of the public realm, contributing significantly to the overall character and image of downtown. In addition to efficiently conveying vehicular traffic, they must safely and conveniently accommodate the activities of people on foot and on bicycles. Creating and maintaining streets that are clean, safe, well-lit, and attractive for pedestrians is essential to the distinctive character and unique role of downtown within the city and region.

Certain streets within the downtown should be particularly pedestrian-oriented, with wider sidewalks, street furnishings, and on-street parking. Streetscape enhancements, street-level uses, and architectural features should make walking safe, comfortable, and appealing throughout downtown. Design standards should ensure the continuity of storefronts and a pedestrian-oriented scale and features along all streets within the core.

Streetscape enhancements in downtown Mount Vernon should include:

- Extension of streetscape improvements north and south on First Street. The streetscape improvements existing on First Street have helped to reinforce this street's role as a north-south spine of pedestrian activity downtown. Similar streetscape improvements should be extended on First Street north of Division Street and south of Kincaid Street, along with people-friendly intersection and crosswalk improvements across both arterials.
- An improved pedestrian connection between Skagit Station and downtown along Gates Street. Gates Street should become a pedestrian-oriented street with a widened sidewalk on at least one side and streetscape improvements that might include pedestrian-scaled lighting, seating areas, landscaping, and overhead weather protection. Crosswalk improvements at Second Street and Third Street should also be included. A new pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks should be considered an essential part of this connection. The bridge might be extended west across Third Street with an elevator incorporated into the design of a new parking structure on either side of Gates Street between Second Street and Third Street.
- Clear and attractive pedestrian connections between the riverfront and the downtown core. All of the east-west streets between Division Street and Broadway Street should be improved west of First Street and include access points to the riverfront promenade. This would include Montgomery, Gates, Myrtle, Pine, and Kincaid Streets. Each should have a widened sidewalk on at least one side of the street, with streetscape improvements and interesting building facades or storefronts. Each should also connect directly to the riverfront promenade.
- Improvements along Kincaid Street. East of First Street, Kincaid Street should be landscaped to provide an attractive entry to downtown and to the riverside promenade. Because of the traffic

volume, not much additional space can be allocated for pedestrians east of Second Street, but west of Second Street, the intersection of Kincaid Street and First Street should receive special attention. The pedestrian crossing of Kincaid Street at First Street and Cleveland Street should be convenient and inviting. A special landscape or art feature on the west side of the intersection could provide a visual focal point on axis with Kincaid Street and accommodate the transition between the surface streets and the riverside promenade.

- An improved pedestrian walkway on the Division Street Bridge. The existing sidewalk on the bridge is uncomfortably narrow. The feasibility of adding a wider sidewalk on either or both sides of the existing structure should be studied. The addition should be wide enough to accommodate both foot traffic and bicycles, and should be connected to the riverside trail on the east end.
- Inviting alleys and pathways. To enhance the walkability of downtown, every opportunity should be taken to provide inviting pathways and short-cuts through the middle of blocks, down alleys or between buildings, without limiting necessary service access. These can add variety and interest to the experience of downtown.
- Safe and attractive transit accommodations. Transit stops downtown should have lighted waiting areas, user-friendly information on routes, destinations, and fares, and sidewalk connections that are landscaped to encourage the use of transit. Shelters are also recommended where they do not interfere with other sidewalk activities.
- Pedestrian-friendly parking. Parking facilities should be designed to contribute to an attractive streetscape and be consistent with the image of downtown as a pedestrian-friendly place. The availability of parking should be evident without having parking structures interrupt the continuity of street-level uses or overwhelm the scale of their surroundings.

7.2. OPEN SPACE

As the density of downtown increases, and in particular as more people come to live downtown, it will be increasingly important to provide a variety of outdoor public spaces. Open space improvements that should be undertaken in downtown include:

- The development of a pedestrian promenade along the river. As part of the flood control project, a new riverside promenade will be created for the length of the downtown riverfront. It will be at least 24 feet wide, with expansive views of the river on one side and shops and pedestrian attractions on the other. At the north and south ends it will connect to a multi-purpose trail continuing north and south along the east side of the river. The new promenade will be higher than the adjacent streets downtown, so where it is not immediately abutted by buildings, the east face will be sloped or terraced and landscaped. Vertical access to the promenade from street level will be provided at the end of each east-west street via stairs and/or ramps that complement the surrounding buildings and provide an attractive amenity to the downtown.
- A new public plaza along the riverfront. At a central location, on the east side of the new riverside promenade in the vicinity of Gates Street, a new multi-purpose public plaza will also be created as part of the flood control project. The space should be large enough to accommodate outdoor performances and events. Permanent public restrooms should also be provided, along with facilities to accommodate a farmers market. The space should have the potential to become the focus of civic events in downtown, and can become the western terminus of an improved pedestrian route along Gates Street from Skagit Station to the river.

- Creation of a new landscaped open space across Kincaid Street from the County Courthouse. This space will maintain views of the Courthouse from the south on axis with Third Street, and along with the Courthouse forecourt will provide attractive landscape features on both sides of Kincaid Street.
- Preservation and improvement of existing yards, setbacks, and undeveloped areas throughout downtown. These include existing public spaces like the Courthouse forecourt as well as existing unimproved vacant lots, yards, or leftover areas.
- Inclusion of public spaces within new development. Wherever possible, larger development projects should be encouraged or required to provide attractive outdoor spaces accessible to the public.

7.3. PUBLIC AMENITIES

Implementation of the flood control project will include a significant investment in new public facilities and amenities. One of the first of these investments will be the acquisition of a site or sites on which to construct parking to replace that displaced by the new levee or floodwall along the river. Two full-block sites on either side of Gates Street between Second Street and Third Street have been identified as potential locations for a new public parking garage. The City is committed to replace the parking on the revetment that is displaced by the flood control project before construction begins. Development of replacement parking will be a publicly funded project.

In addition to providing flood protection for downtown, the flood control project will include opportunities for several new public amenities, including:

- A new pedestrian promenade as described above under “Open Space.”
- A new public plaza for outdoor performances and events as described under “Open Space.”
- A new public dock on the river to provide a place for small boats to tie-up temporarily, and for access to the river in the heart of downtown. The preferred location is adjacent to the new public plaza.
- New public restrooms. These would be best located within or adjacent to the new public plaza.
- Space and support facilities for the Farmer’s Market. A conveniently accessible site is needed that can accommodate the regular temporary Farmer’s Market. Space is needed for temporary market stalls with power and water available. Public restrooms in close proximity would be advantageous. The new public plaza would seem to be an ideal location.
- Public art. Wherever public facilities are built, the work of artists should be included. Public art will enrich the environment and help to establish a unique identity for downtown Mount Vernon. Art works can also help to mark special places and assist in helping people find their way around.
- A historic museum would be a major cultural asset to downtown. It could be part of a program to interpret and explain the history of the city and region. A system of signs at the location of historic buildings throughout downtown could be a part of this program.

7.4. CHARACTER

The history of downtown Mount Vernon, with its compact development pattern adjacent to the Skagit River, and its historic structures and landmarks, has resulted in a unique and cherished character. New development and renovation of existing buildings should respond to the established patterns of development. Improvements downtown should build upon the intimate scale, street grid, and historic buildings to maintain and strengthen a distinctive downtown character.

New development should respect the existing rectangular street grid downtown by building to the property line along pedestrian streets and using methods of construction and materials compatible with older existing buildings. Building density and height should be greatest along First Street and Gates Street. Structures west of First Street should comply with the maximum floor-area-ratios defined elsewhere in this plan and be terraced down toward the water in order to maximize views. Height limits in the Shoreline Master Program should be high enough to allow economically viable development along the waterfront. Throughout downtown view corridors in alignment with east/west streets should be preserved.

Historic structures are a significant contributor to the unique character of downtown. They should be treated as valuable resources reflecting the heritage of the city and the foundation of its architectural style. Their presence helps differentiate downtown as a place of special significance and community pride.

Design guidelines are included with this plan to help retain the existing historic character of downtown. To assure that these guidelines are followed, and to achieve the highest quality in the design of both public and private development, the City should establish a design review process.

8. Infrastructure

8.1. FLOOD CONTROL

The construction of the flood control measures is critical to the redevelopment of downtown Mount Vernon. In addition to removing the downtown from the FEMA 100-year floodplain, the flood control measures will include the riverfront promenade, which is a key public amenity for attracting residents, visitors, and businesses to downtown.

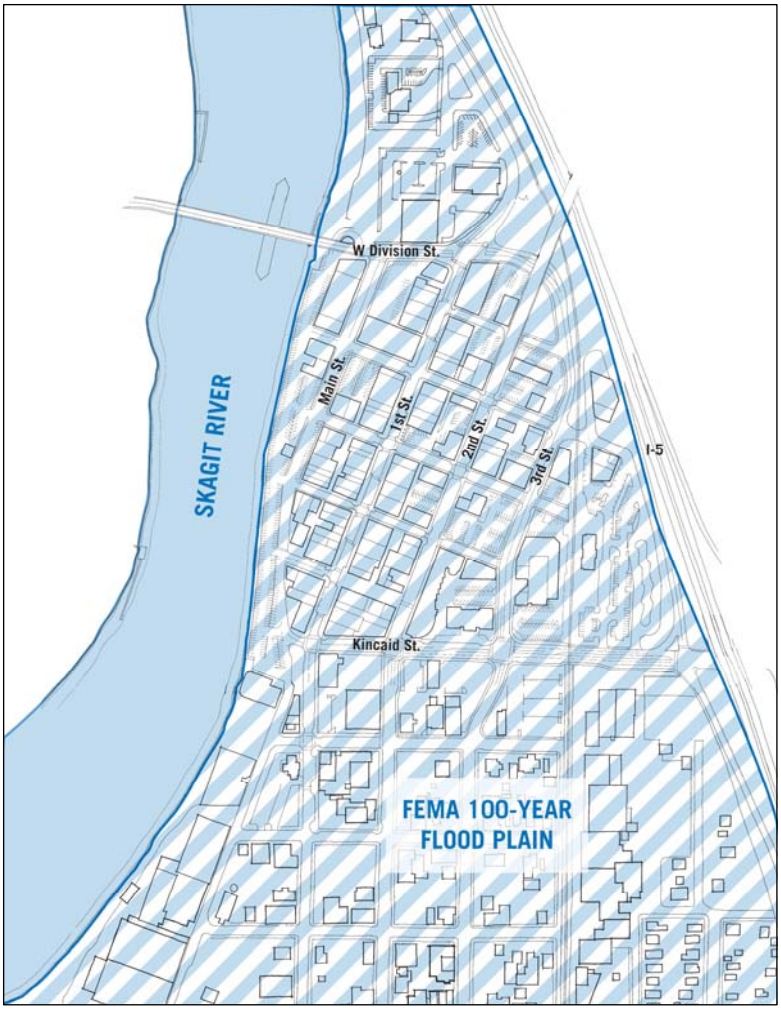


Figure 8-1: 100-Year Inundation Area with Implementation of the Preferred Flood Control Alternative

8.2. UTILITIES

Water

The capacity of the existing system should be capable of supporting the increased demand. The increase in demand for the downtown areas is expected to be 0.10 mgd for the next 10 years and 0.12 for the subsequent 10 years.

Portions of the 18-inch main within Main Street from Myrtle Street to West Kincaid Street will be impacted by construction of the flood protection system and will need to be relocated to another suitable location. Utilities within Freeway Drive to the north of Division Street may be impacted if this roadway is reconfigured. The extent of utility adjustments or relocations will be determined during final design for this portion of the project.

Sanitary Sewer

The next phase of the City's CSO reduction plan to be completed by 2015 consists of upgrades to the WWTP to accommodate a combined maximum conveyance capacity of 25.8 mgd. These upgrades are aimed at reducing the City's overflow events to less than 1 per year. Monitoring the performance of the Central CSO Regulator system through 2010 will provide additional system data and flow characteristics to be used in the analysis and design of the WWTP upgrades.

Demands on the CSO system due to expected development within the study area should be calibrated and modeled based on data currently being collected that will be used during the design process for the planned WWTP upgrades as part of the Phase 2 and 3 CSO Reduction Plan.

Individual conveyance lines within the study area may be upgraded depending on the level of development associated with properties they serve. Currently, there are no known deficiencies within the system. Requiring developments to provide stormwater detention or flow control as redevelopment occurs will help alleviate demands on individual conveyance lines and the overall CSO system by attenuating peak stormwater flows.

Stormwater

Construction of the flood protection system may impact existing outfalls and further study will need to be conducted during final design of the system to determine if these existing outfalls can be maintained. Redevelopment within the downtown Mount Vernon study area will need to provide mitigation for stormwater impacts to existing systems. Where possible, dedicated storm drain lines should be utilized if there are no capacity issues associated with them at time of redevelopment. Flow control and treatment of runoff should follow the latest code criteria at the time of redevelopment. These efforts will help to further alleviate the demand placed on the existing systems.

Overhead Power and Communication Cables

To the maximum extent practical, overhead cables should be relocated underground along principal pedestrian streets. There is a high-voltage electrical transmission line along the Main Street right-of-way that is likely to be expensive to underground and additional funding may be necessary to relocate this line.

9. Economics

9.1. FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS

Redevelopment of the riverfront parcels acquired for flood control and a public promenade is intended to serve as a catalyst for new investment throughout downtown. In order for the redevelopment to occur, it must meet the financial requirements of potential developers. Feasibility can be estimated by modeling the results of potential development scenarios. Such a pro forma feasibility analysis compares the cost of development to completed value to determine the entrepreneurial profit. The entrepreneurial profit for any development plan is compared to a target rate as a percentage of development cost to identify whether any development proposal is feasible. A 10 percent rate is considered a minimum rate at the bottom of a desired range of 10 percent to 20 percent. Such a rate can provide adequate incentive for a developer to assume the risk associated with development.

The value of the completed development is estimated as the net sales proceeds in the case of a residential condominium project, or the capitalized value of the operating income in a stabilized year for a rental project. Developer cost is calculated as the sum of land acquisition, building construction, and soft costs, including fees and carrying costs.

The key factors that will affect feasibility are discussed below, followed by a summary of conclusions regarding development opportunities in downtown.

Factors that Determine Feasibility

The factors that determine feasibility are related to development costs, operating revenue and expense, and investor expectations. These factors are described below.

Land Price

Land price is a component of overall development cost. Market land prices are usually determined at levels that allow for feasible development. Market prices may be too high to allow for feasible development when there are existing revenue-producing uses on a site. A property owner may choose to sell an improved property at a price below market value in order to stimulate development. The City will acquire improved properties as part of the flood control project, remove the improvements during construction of the flood control features, and sell vacant sites after the project is complete. Land prices are estimated at $20 per square foot, equivalent to the price for high quality commercial sites outside downtown. This assumed price is lower than what the City will pay for the properties with the existing buildings.

Allowable Density

The amount of revenue-producing uses that can be placed on a site will affect the feasibility of development. In effect, the amount of allowable development beyond a base amount can be developed without an additional cost for land. The amount of development allowed will be determined by the development regulations that the City ultimately adopts.

Prices and Rents

Prices and rents are one of the two general factors that determine the revenue for development of a site, the other being the quantity of development allowed. Rents and prices are in turn determined by supply and demand conditions in the marketplace, as well as specific conditions for a site. Those site conditions include topography, soil, access, and views, as well as proximity to amenities such as parks, transportation facilities, and public services. The City can affect prices and rents through its investment in these types of features.

Financial Market Conditions

Financial market conditions affect the value of development through investor expectations. As noted above, the value of a rental project is related to the capitalized value of its income stream. If financial market conditions are unfavorable, the required capitalization rate will be higher and the value of the income stream lower. While the City generally does not have much say over financial market conditions, it can create an environment where uncertainty is minimized, and that will affect investor expectations.

Construction Cost of Buildings

Building cost is the largest component of the capital cost of real estate development. Building costs are affected by supply and demand conditions in the construction markets as well as the type of construction required. In particular, construction costs are affected by whether construction is wood frame versus concrete and steel. Wood frame construction is generally allowed for buildings five stories or lower, subject to specifics about the uses themselves. Above that level, concrete and steel construction is required, with a cost premium of approximately 50 percent.

Cost of Parking

The cost of parking is an increasing portion of the cost of building construction. The cost of parking is determined by the amount of parking provided and the form of the parking facility. Cities typically regulate parking with minimum amounts for different types of uses. While Cities may reduce the required parking for particular uses in particular areas, this may not affect the cost of construction if consumers require a higher amount.

The cost of parking varies widely depending on whether the spaces are developed in a surface lot or provided in a structure, either above-ground or below-ground. The cost of parking could vary from $3,000 per space in a surface lot, to $15,000 per space or more in an above-ground parking structure, to as much as $30,000 per space in a below-ground structure. The cost of underground parking can be reduced if the parking can be built into a slope, with parking floors accessible at grade without interior ramps.

Soft Costs

Soft costs include all the development costs that are not hard construction or land. They include design fees, impact fees, and carrying costs. City impact fees are $7,800 per residential unit for traffic, schools, and open space and system charges.

Carrying costs are related to the time for permitting, construction, and lease-up or sell-off. Any action by the City that increases the duration of any of those periods will increase carrying costs.

Operating Costs

Operating costs are related to the time and resources required to operate a completed development. The City has a direct impact on costs such as utility costs. It also can affect costs for items such as property taxes. The City is considering use of the Multifamily Tax Exemption Program under which approved projects are exempt from property taxes for eight years, or 12 years for project including at least 20 percent affordable units. The exemption is available for both rental units and for-sale units.

Summary of Conclusions

The type of development that is illustrated in other sections of this Master Plan could meet the feasibility requirements of developers and investors under a set of assumptions that is realistic in the near-term. Development of the Main Street properties could provide a strong catalyst for development throughout downtown. The City could enhance the feasibility of development and provide a strong incentive for development in several ways.

- It could enhance the marketability of the completed development by providing additional amenities in downtown, and in adopting the Multifamily Tax Exemption Program.
- The City could directly affect feasibility through the price it charges for the properties. In fact, the market value of the properties is the price at which development is affordable to a developer/purchaser.
- The City could also affect feasibility through the impact fees it charges. For example, the City of Olympia set its impact fees for downtown projects at one-half the level of fees outside downtown, both as an incentive for development, and in recognition that downtown development may place lower demands on public infrastructure. In addition, the City could enhance the feasibility of development by reducing the time and expense of necessary approvals and permits.

9.2. ECONOMIC BENEFITS

New development in downtown Mount Vernon will create economic benefits to the City in the form of jobs, personal income (wages and salaries), business receipts, and tax revenues. These benefits could in turn be invested in further economic development. The economic benefits related to the level of development identified in the market analysis are presented in this section.

Jobs

The number of ongoing jobs related to the businesses in the new development can be estimated according to typical factors by type of business.

Table 9-1: Downtown Mount Vernon Development Projected Job Impacts

	2008-2013	2013-2018	2018-2023	2023-2028
Job Factors				
Retail (Jobs/1000SF)	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Office (Jobs/1000SF)	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Residential (Jobs/unit)				
Lodging (Jobs/room)	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Additional Jobs				
Retail	100	150	155	155
Office	100	120	120	140
Lodging	-	75	38	38
Total Over Period	**200**	**345**	**313**	**333**
Total Cumulative	**200**	**545**	**858**	**1,190**

As shown, the new development would accommodate 1,190 new ongoing jobs after 20 years. This level of new employment is approximately equal to the current employment level in downtown of 1,324. The largest category of jobs is retail, followed closely by office.

In addition to the ongoing jobs, there would be new construction jobs. The level of development activity will support approximately 750 annual full-time equivalent construction jobs.

The jobs identified above represent direct jobs in downtown. In addition, there would be indirect and induced jobs (the multiplier effect) as employers and workers spend money in the community. For every retail or office job, there would be an additional 0.4 to 0.9 indirect or induced job within the county.

Personal Income

Personal income related to the ongoing jobs can be estimated by applying average wage levels for each employment sector. The assumed wage rates and associated personal income levels are shown in Table 9-2.

Table 9-2: Downtown Mount Vernon Development Project Personal Income Impacts

	2008-2013	2013-2018	2018-2023	2023-2028
Cumulative Jobs by Sector				
Retail	67	167	270	373
Finance and Insurance	50	110	170	240
Professional and Technical	50	110	170	240
Accommodations and Food Service	33	158	248	337
Total Cumulative	200	545	858	1,190
Average Wage				
Retail	26,200	26,200	26,200	26,200
Finance and Insurance	42,900	42,900	42,900	42,900
Professional and Technical	42,100	42,100	42,100	42,100
Accommodations and Food Service	16,500	16,500	16,500	16,500
Total Personal Income				
Retail	1,746,667	4,366,667	7,074,000	9,781,333
Finance and Insurance	2,145,000	4,719,000	7,293,000	10,296,000
Professional and Technical	2,105,000	4,631,000	7,157,000	10,104,000
Accommodations and Food Service	550,000	2,612,500	4,083,750	5,555,000
Total Cumulative	**6,546,667**	**16,329,167**	**25,607,750**	**35,736,333**

The projected wages for new jobs are estimated to exceed the current average wages for finance and insurance ($42,900 versus $40,900), professional and technical ($42,100 versus $38,800), and accommodations and food service ($16,500 versus $14,000).

Whatcom County rates are assumed for the finance and insurance and professional and technical sectors, while the accommodations and food service wage is calculated on a full-time equivalent basis at the minimum wage of $7.93 per hour.

Tax Base

New economic activity would enhance the local tax base. The two major components of the tax base are assessed valuation (for property tax) and taxable retail sales (for retail sales tax). The increased tax base is estimated by applying typical factors for comparable development in Skagit County. The values shown are in constant 2006 dollars.

Table 9-3: Downtown Mount Vernon Development Projected Tax Base Increases

	2008-2013	2013-2018	2018-2023	2023-2028
Assessed Valuation Factors				
Retail ($/sf)	100	100	100	100
Office ($/sf)	120	120	120	120
Residential ($/Unit)	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Lodging ($/Room)	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
Increased Assessed Value ($2006)				
Retail	5,000,000	7,500,000	7,750,000	7,750,000
Office	3,000,000	3,600,000	3,600,000	4,200,000
Residential-Units	20,000,000	20,000,000	25,000,000	25,000,000
Lodging-Rooms	-	7,500,000	3,750,000	3,750,000
Total by Period	**28,000,000**	**38,600,000**	**40,100,000**	**40,700,000**
Total Cumulative	**28,000,000**	**66,600,000**	**106,700,000**	**147,400,000**
Taxable Sales Factors				
Retails (/sf)	200	200	200	200
Office (/sf)	-	-	-	-
Residential (/Unit)	-	-	-	-
Lodging (/Room)	18,980	18,980	18,980	18,980

(Continued)

Table 9-3: Downtown Mount Vernon Development Projected Tax Base Increases (continued)

	2008-2013	2013-2018	2018-2023	2023-2028
Increased Taxable Sales ($2006)				
Retail	10,000,000	15,000,000	15,500,000	15,500,000
Office	-	-	-	-
Residential-Units	-	-	-	-
Lodging-Rooms	-	1,898,000	949,000	949,000
Total by Period	**10,000,000**	**16,898,000**	**16,449,000**	**16,449,000**
Total Cumulative	**10,000,000**	**26,898,000**	**43,347,000**	**59,796,000**
Annual Taxable Construction	9,333,333	7,720,000	8,020,000	8,140,000
Total Annual Taxable Sales	19,333,333	34,618,000	51,367,000	67,936,000

The increased assessed value of $147 million over the 20-year period 2008-2028 greatly exceeds the current assessed value of downtown of $65 million. The projected increased annual taxable sales over the period of $68 million exceed the current taxable sales of $33 million.

Local Taxes

The projected increased tax base would provide increased tax revenues to the City and other local taxing districts. The estimated increased tax collections are shown in constant 2006 dollars in Table 9-4.

Table 9-4: Downtown Mount Vernon Development Projected Increased Tax Collections ($2006)

	2008-2013	2013-2018	2018-2023	2023-2028
Increased Tax Base				
Assessed Valuation	28,000,000	66,600,000	106,700,000	147,400,000
Taxable Retail Sales	19,333,333	34,618,000	51,367,000	67,936,000
Local Tax Rates (2006)				
Property ($/1000)				
City	2.74	2.74	2.74	2.74
Other Local Districts	7.48	7.48	7.48	7.48
Subtotal	**10.22**	**10.22**	**10.22**	**10.22**
Retail Sales				
City	0.85%	0.85%	0.85%	0.85%
Other Local Districts	0.65%	0.65%	0.65%	0.65%
Subtotal	**1.50%**	**1.50%**	**1.50%**	**1.50%**
Increased Tax Collections – End of Period Annual				
Property Tax				
City	76,720	182,484	292,358	403,876
Other Local Districts	209,440	498,168	798,116	1,102,552
Subtotal	**286,160**	**680,652**	**1,090,474**	**1,506,428**
Retail Sales Tax				
City	164,333	294,253	436,620	577,456
Other Local Districts	125,667	225,017	333,886	441,584
Subtotal	**290,000**	**519,270**	**770,505**	**1,019,040**

Table 9-4: Downtown Mount Vernon Development Projected Increased Tax Collections ($2006) (continued)

	2008-2013	2013-2018	2018-2023	2023-2028
Total Property and Retail Sales				
City	241,053	476,737	728,978	981,332
Other Local Districts	335,107	723,185	1,132,002	1,544,136
Total	**576,160**	**1,199,922**	**1,860,979**	**2,525,468**

As shown, the increased annual taxes to the City by 2028 would approach $1 million. Approximately 40 percent of that amount would result from property taxes, with 60 percent resulting from retail sales tax.

10. Implementation Strategies

10.1. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Land use and development regulations should be modified to achieve the following:

- Mix of uses – Throughout downtown, develop a diverse mix of uses that reflects the unique character of Mount Vernon and promotes a vital urban environment with lively interaction among workers, visitors, and residents, and broad use and safe enjoyment of public spaces.

  Encourage a development program for properties along the river that provides housing, office space, hotel, or restaurant uses in one or two levels above retail, with restaurant or recreational uses at the level of the waterfront promenade. Development along the riverfront and Main Street should complement the existing retail business along South First Street.

  Throughout the rest of the pedestrian-oriented downtown core, allow a wide variety of uses above street level, but require pedestrian-friendly uses at street level.

- Density – Encourage new development and redevelopment at a density sufficient to enable layering of uses in multi-story buildings, and control density with maximum floor area ratios (FAR) within the area south of Division Street, north of Kincaid Street, and west of the railroad. The floor area ratio is a multiplier of the site area, used to determine the maximum amount of building area that can be constructed on a site. The recommended FAR zones are shown in Figure 10-1.

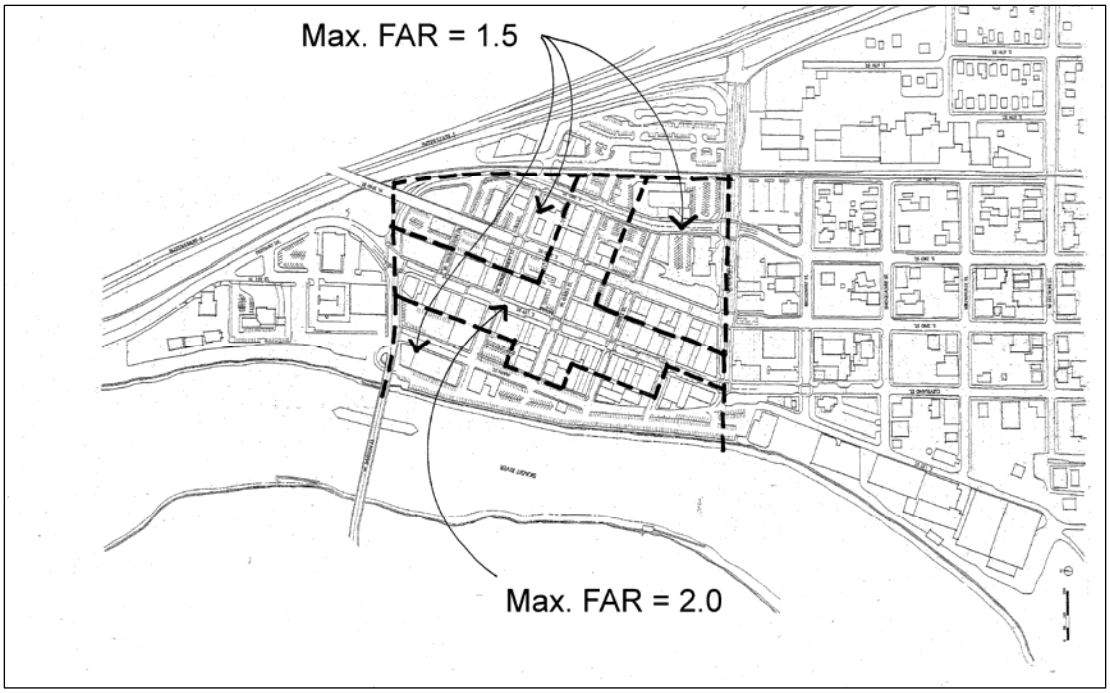


Figure 10-1: FAR Zones

For purposes of discussion, a maximum FAR of 1.5 should be considered for properties west of the alley between Main Street and First Street, and east of the alley between First Street and Second Street. To accommodate slightly greater density along the pedestrian-oriented streets, a maximum FAR of 2.0 should be established for properties on either side of First Street and on either side of Gates Street. If FAR zones are incorporated into the City's municipal code, a more detailed analysis should be conducted of the likely impact of higher and lower ratios on density and building height.

10.2. TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

Intersection Improvements

Two intersections are expected to operate unacceptably below the City's LOS D standard under the Framework Plan, including the Division Street/South First Street/Freeway Drive (LOS E) and Kincaid Street/South First Street (LOS E) intersections.

At the Division Street/South First Street/Freeway Drive intersection, realignment would improve safety and have a positive, yet negligible, effect on traffic operations since pedestrians crossing times decrease. Construction of a connection between South Third Street and Freeway Drive would divert westbound right-turn volumes; however, this movement is not obstructed in the year 2028 and the LOS grade would not change. Adding a westbound through lane and changing the signal timings would improve operations to LOS D; however, the proximity of the Division Street (SR-536) bridge, which is approximately 400 feet west of South First Street, limits roadway widening opportunities. The added westbound through lane would be more viable if the two-lane bridge (one lane in each direction) is widened to four-lanes in the future.

Expansion of the existing right-of-way in conjunction with a new bridge at this location may be required. If the intersection is realigned, demolition of the existing Carnation building may be required to provide additional turn lanes and sidewalks. Additionally, redirecting traffic from Freeway Drive to a realigned First Street may allow the Freeway Drive right-of-way to be fully or partially vacated, freeing up additional area for development or parking.

The Kincaid Street/South First Street intersection could be improved to LOS D by adding a southbound left-turn pocket or a northbound right-turn pocket. Construction of a southbound left-turn pocket would be difficult due to the limited amount of right-of-way and could require displacement and demolition of an existing building in the northwest quadrant of the intersection, or removal of a portion of a sidewalk. Construction of a northbound right-turn pocket would be substantially easier since the displacement of approximately two to three on-street parking spaces would be the only requirement. Special care should be taken if changes to this intersection are proposed since this location was identified as a key intersection that could serve as an attractive terminus and inviting connection to the riverside pedestrian promenade. Other non-operational improvements could include landscaping, public art, a water feature, or landmark.

To facilitate these intersection improvements, the City should place these projects on their Transportation Improvement Program list. City-generated funding for these projects should be allocated early to determine any short-comings. If City financial resources are not sufficient to fully fund the improvements, Federal, State, and regional funding sources should be considered to provide additional funds.

Public Transit Improvements

To maximize the utilization of the new riverfront promenade and other amenities, modifications to existing transit routes should be discussed with SKAT to provide direct service to the waterfront. As downtown density increases, it may become viable to implement a shuttle or trolley service along the riverfront, possibly connecting Lions Park with a new development at the current site of the Moose Lodge or points further south. Streetscape and signage improvements should be made along Gates Street to provide an attractive pedestrian connection between the multiple transportation modes serving Skagit Station and the riverfront promenade.

Parking Improvements

The City and Skagit County have initiated a study for construction of a new parking structure in downtown. The parking garage would be located somewhere between South Second Street and South Third Street; however, a more specific site has not yet been identified. Preliminary siting options include the area between Montgomery Street and Gates Street or between Gates Street and Myrtle Street. Location of the parking garage should consider the walking distance to Skagit Station, pedestrian-oriented corridors, such as Gates Street, proximity to other walkable downtown areas, and connectivity to County facilities. It is envisioned that a new parking structure would provide 350 to 600 spaces, with a portion designated for short-term and long-term public parking and a portion designated for County use. The capacity of the garage should be as large as practical for the selected site. The City and County will need to continue their coordination efforts to ensure that the needs of garage users will be met. The City will also replace the parking on the revetment displaced by the flood control project prior to the start of construction.

10.3. STREETSCAPE, OPEN SPACE, AND AMENITIES

Parks

Throughout downtown the design of the public realm should set a high standard. Streets, sidewalks, open spaces, parks, and public facilities should be designed to reinforce the character of downtown and to fit comfortably within their context. While consistency and compatibility are important, artificial or externally derived design themes should be avoided. The character of downtown should be authentic, derived from the uniqueness of its history, location, and place. To further reinforce the unique character of downtown, the City should ensure that the work of artists is included in the design of all new public facilities by implementing a one-percent-for-art program. Such a program requires that one percent of the construction budget for a public facility project be allocated for the design and construction of public art.

10.4. INFRASTRUCTURE

Flood Control

The design of the new flood control system is underway and the land required for construction has been purchased by the City. Additional funding to complete the design and construction is required and should be sought from both federal and state sources.

Utilities

Limited utilities will be affected by construction of the flood control system, but the capacity of utilities in the area is marginal for the increased development anticipated in the downtown area. Upgrades to power, water, and sewer systems would be required and may be funded through existing utility capital improvement budgets, but additional funding may be required from the developer.

Overhead wires providing electrical, telephone, and cable service to downtown should be relocated underground in accordance with the franchise agreements between the service providers and the City.

10.5. ECONOMICS

Financing Strategies

Successful implementation of the Master Plan will require sources of funds for each of the plan elements. The amount of money to be raised and the potential strategies are addressed in this section.

Funding Requirements

The primary elements of the downtown plan are flood control (walls and levees), the promenade along the river's edge, a 450-stall parking garage to replace parking lost on the existing revetment plus additional parking for current and potential new downtown business and visitors, and front-end planning. The cost of these elements is estimated to total $33.3 million as summarized in Table 10-1. The construction, design and permitting, and land acquisition costs shown in Table 10-1 have been estimated based on available data and will be refined as more information becomes available.

Table 10-1: Mount Vernon Waterfront Area and Downtown Master Plan Summary of Costs

	Flood Control	Promenade	Parking Garage	Other	Total
Construction	$7,007,000	$5,720,000	$12,870,000	$143,000	$25,740,000
Design & Permitting	1,005,500	780,000	1,755,000	329,500	3,870,000
Land Acquisition	2,900,000	600,000	-	-	3,500,000
Master Planning	-	-	-	200,000	200,000
Total	**$10,912,500**	**$7,100,000**	**$14,625,000**	**$672,500**	**$33,310,000**

Source: Mount Vernon Finance Department

Additional improvements would be necessary over time including streetscape improvements throughout downtown, and open space and recreational improvements along the river (e.g., a floating dock for visiting boaters).

Financial Strategies

The downtown improvements are part of an economic development initiative to stimulate growth and development downtown. A successful economic development initiative should create sufficient value to fund the necessary investment. Accordingly, the overarching financial strategy is that of "funding growth through growth."

There are two basic categories of growth-induced funding sources, incremental tax revenues and developer investment of growth-induced value.

- Incremental Tax Revenues

  New development could create a predictable stream of new tax revenues that would not be available to a taxing district in the absence of that growth. There are a variety of ways that a city can capture these incremental taxes for funding capital improvements. Tax increment financing is available to Cities, Counties, and port districts under RCW 39.89. This authority has seldom been used. The program is limited to property taxes and requires approval by the tax districts representing 75 percent of the taxes levied in the designated tax increment area.

  The Local Infrastructure Financing Tool (LIFT) was recently passed by the Legislature. LIFT addresses several of the problems with traditional tax increment financing:

  — It includes local sales taxes as well as property taxes.

  — It includes a sales tax credit against incremental state taxes for selected jurisdictions.

  — It can capture 75 percent of the local incremental property tax collections by all jurisdictions.

  The amount of total state tax credits is limited to $7.5 million per year, for all participating Cities.

  Cities can also access incremental taxes in an informal way by issuing non-voted debt backed by its general taxing authority. Further, it can enter into interlocal agreements with other jurisdictions to apply their incremental tax revenues to infrastructure improvements.

  There are other taxes that will increase with development, but are restricted to particular uses. Lodging taxes (four percent of room revenues) are available for visitor-related programs and facilities. Real estate excise taxes applied to the sale of real property are available for growth-related capital projects.

- Increased Development Value

  Downtown improvements would lead to increased value of properties in their existing use or for redevelopment. Property owners may choose to invest a portion of their increased value in the improvements. There are two broad mechanisms for capturing this value.

  A Local Improvement District (LID) can be formed to fund designated improvements. In a LID, each property is assessed an amount up to their proportionate share of the total benefit created by the improvement. While the basis for the allocation of value among properties can differ, all properties are assessed whether they realize the benefit immediately or not.

  Impact fees would be fees charged for new development. The fees would be used to fund the capital improvements necessary to accommodate the growth. A property would not be assessed for the benefit of improvements until they develop or redevelop. Impact fees could be determined

through impact fee ordinances, or mitigation fees could be applied on a project specific basis. Property owners may fund improvements that exceed the requirements of their development, with reimbursement under latecomers' agreements from future development by benefiting properties.

Matching Sources and Uses

Debt financing of the projected capital cost would require an annual debt service payment as listed in Table 10-2.

Table 10-2: Annual Debt Service Payments

	Promenade Only	Promenade and Parking	All Costs
Development Cost	$7,100,000	$21,725,000	$33,310,000
Financing Cost (@2%)	142,000	434,000	666,000
Total to be Financed	**$7,242,000**	**$22,160,000**	**$33,976,000**
Debt Service @5%, 25 years	$514,000	$1,572,000	$2,411,000

Assuming the City is successful in securing LIFT funding from the State, the City could receive a tax credit from the State of $500,000 per year, apply 75 percent of the City portion incremental tax revenues, and provide funds from other local sources necessary to match the State contribution. The City's share of incremental taxes would fall short of the necessary match for at least the first 10 years. Assuming the other funds are available, the combined State and local funds of $1 million annually would fund the promenade and a portion of the parking structure. Other sources of funding for the remaining portion of the parking structure are contributions from the County, an LID, or various grants.

Economic Development Strategies

Successful implementation of the master plan will require an overall economic development strategy to realize the opportunities identified in the market analysis. The key elements of the strategy are described below.

- Complete Riverfront Improvements

  The riverfront improvements are the impetus for the entire plan, as well as the catalyst for improvements throughout the rest of downtown. The flood control improvements provide necessary upgrades and assurances to future investors, but the promenade will be the signature improvement as it will be the means by which the downtown can reconnect to the river.

  The City has completed the environmental analysis and has initiated preliminary engineering for these elements. Funding sources have been identified for a portion of the cost of each improvement.

- Set Development Incentives for Downtown

  Providing a positive physical and regulatory environment for investment will encourage redevelopment. The physical improvements such as the flood control and promenade will

contribute to a positive environment. From a regulatory point of view, the City can do three things to enhance the development economics reflected in the earlier feasibility analysis:

- Establish a multifamily tax exemption program that will provide exemption of taxes on all property improvements for ownership and rental units for up to eight years for market rate units and 12 years for affordable units. This may reduce a source of funding in the near term, but it will stimulate development and hasten collection of revenue from other sources.
- Set impact fees for downtown that are lower than impact fees elsewhere. Since many of the new residents will be empty nesters, the burden on schools will be small, and emphasis on pedestrian activities will reduce the number of automobile trips. Again, this may reduce a source of funding in the near term, but it will stimulate development and hasten collection of revenue from other sources.
- Streamline the land use and building permit processes as much as possible to reduce uncertainty and time required for approvals. Completion of a programmatic EIS for downtown will reduce the requirements for individual development proposals.

■ Solicit Development Proposals for Riverfront Parcels

The development parcels remaining after completion of the flood control and promenade improvements provide the opportunity to attract development that will set a standard for the rest of downtown. The City could favor projects with desirable mixes of uses and design features. In order to ensure the quality of development, the City could provide incentives such as those described above, and set a purchase price for the land that will allow an adequate return on investment.

■ Solicit Appropriate New Businesses to Enhance the Local Business Climate

The City and other agencies such as the Chamber of Commerce and Skagit County Economic Development Council should work together to attract the kind of businesses that will provide the greatest impact on overall downtown business conditions. Three categories of businesses are particularly important to a vital downtown:

- Businesses that extend the hours of activity beyond 9 AM to 5 PM. Restaurants, cinemas, and other entertainment fit this requirement.
- Businesses that support downtown residential development are important to realizing the market opportunity. Grocery stores are important to establishing downtown as a place to live.
- Businesses that provide services to other businesses and reinforce downtown's position as a commercial center.

■ Complete Other Improvements Throughout Downtown

In order for the entire downtown to realize growth and development, additional improvements must be made to enhance all areas and link them to the river. Additional parking in a new structure (beyond what is built to replace parking on the revetment) is important to businesses throughout the downtown core. In addition, streetscape improvements such as improved sidewalks, lighting, and benches improve the appearance of downtown and provide links between activity centers such as the Transit Center, the Courthouse, and existing anchor businesses to the newly enhanced riverfront.

■ Promote Business Retention by Encouraging Cooperative Programs

Existing businesses can work together to attract new customers and maximize their local spending. Cooperative programs might include:

- Joint advertising
- Coordinated hours
- Regular events such as First Thursday (or Saturday, etc.) with businesses staying open late.
- Coordination with the Farmer's Market.

- Physical Improvements to Existing Buildings

  Property owners could be encouraged to invest in their buildings through loan and grant programs. The Main Street Program uses this approach as one of four key strategies.

- Programming of Special Events

  In addition to the regular events that businesses put on to attract customers, the City and the business community could put on special events that heighten the City's visibility in the region. The improvements to the riverfront could provide a venue for special events. Those improvements provide an opportunity to spread the word that downtown Mount Vernon is a great place to live, work, or visit.

- Overall Strategy for Tourism and Visitors

  All of the improvements and programs described above create a downtown that is attractive to local residents and visitors from elsewhere in the region.

10.6. REGULATORY CHANGES

Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code

The City's Comprehensive Plan (City of Mount Vernon 2005) establishes a framework for decisions on growth and land use, housing, transportation, utilities, public facilities and services, and parks and open space within the City's urban growth boundaries. The Comprehensive Plan contains a number of goals, objectives, and policies that relate directly to downtown flood protection and downtown redevelopment. Only limited changes to the Comprehensive Plan, such as the use of FARs to control density, will be required to implement this Master Plan.

Shoreline Master Program

The upcoming state-mandated update of the Skagit County Shoreline Master Program (SMP), which is also the City's SMP, will include a extensive public involvement process during which any modifications needed to implement the master plan will be addressed. The design guidelines, floor area ratios, and other elements of this Master Plan will be used to develop recommended changes to the SMP and the City of Mount Vernon will work with Skagit County and other stakeholders to ensure any changes are compatible with development and other interests.

10.7. DESIGN GUIDELINES

The following design guidelines are recommended for certain specified elements of the built environment of downtown Mount Vernon in the interest of promoting and preserving the character, qualities, and economic vitality of downtown. Compliance with these guidelines should be demonstrated through site plans, sign plans, and elevation drawings. Design review and development authorization should be required for any new structure or exterior alteration of any kind in downtown to ensure compliance with these guidelines.

Setbacks and Exceptions

All structures in the downtown area should be required to have a "zero" front setback. However, recesses in the structure are encouraged at entryways and at other strategic locations along the front of the structure such as display windows. In no event should recesses account for more than forty percent of the linear frontage of the structure. Exceptions to the "zero" front setback may be allowed when an area immediately in front of a structure is intended for an outdoor eating/drinking area, public art, a plaza or other public gathering place, or some other display or activity related directly to the occupancy of the structure. A setback to allow parking in front of a structure should be expressly prohibited.

Side setbacks should also be "zero" for mid-block structures, and the side walls of such structures should join the side wall of adjacent structures. No gaps or space of any kind between structures should be visible from the adjacent sidewalk. Rear setbacks may also be "zero," except that functional off-street loading areas of at least twenty-five feet in depth may be required for each structure, subject to review by the City engineer and the site plan review committee if the adjacent alley is to be used for maneuvering.

Building Materials and Colors

Primary facade materials should be stone, terra cotta, or brick consistent with materials historically used in the downtown area. Wood and glass doors should be allowed and wood trim permitted in moderation. Wood should also be allowed in Victorian facade treatments. Molded concrete trim consistent with historic use should also be allowed. Metal siding, corrugated fiberglass, aluminum siding, mirror or metalized reflective glass, plywood, masonite, chip board siding, exterior insulated finish system (EIFS), vinyl, cinder block, and split-faced block, and all types of plastics and imitation materials should be prohibited. Dryvit should not be used as a primary material on the street level, but it may be used on upper levels and as a decorative element. Finishes that reflect light and glare should not be permitted. A wide variety of colors is apparent throughout downtown, but traditional light or muted colors with a pastel or earth tone hue are generally acceptable. All finished natural wood tones should be permitted. Fluorescent or day-glow colors of any shade should be prohibited.

Building Height

All structures in the downtown area that front on First Street, between Division Street and Kincaid Street, should be at least two full stories above sidewalk level, and multiple stories are encouraged. The main level of a structure should generally be at sidewalk level, and split level structures or split entry malls should not be permitted. Balconies and cantilevers may be permitted subject to applicable permits to occupy right-of-way. Throughout downtown, new single story buildings should be designed and built to be structurally capable of supporting at least one additional level.

Entryways

A building's primary door and entrance should be located in the principal facade of the structure, and should be oriented toward the street. The primary entrance should be readily apparent as a prominent architectural component. Entryways should be recessed from the front property line so that patrons have a queuing area out of the pedestrian flow. The recessed area should be at a minimum one and one-half times the width of the door to avoid a corridor-like effect. Doors should be of wood and glass or glass with metal trim and should permit clear two-way visibility. Metal doors, mechanical doors of any kind (except for handicap access), and revolving doors should be prohibited.

Windows

Street level windows should be required of all structures, including the sides of structures occupying corner lots. Windows should begin at least two feet above the sidewalk and may extend vertically to the top of the first level. Street level windows should be designed to engage the pedestrian and invite visual inspection of the interior of the establishment as well as to view displays of merchandise. As such, a maximum of ten percent of the window area (each pane to be calculated individually) may be taken up by opaque signage of any kind. Stenciled signage or other signage types that allow visual penetration through the lettering is encouraged. Tinted or reflective glazing should be expressly prohibited. Windows may be recessed to allow patrons to view displays out of the pedestrian flow. Bay windows may extend into the right-of-way (sidewalk area) with the applicable revocable permit. Upper level windows should be appropriately framed by architectural features of the structure consistent with historic treatment in the downtown area. Unframed windows of any kind should not be permitted.

Modulation

Segments of plain or uniformly treated store fronts that are out of context with adjacent or nearby buildings should be prohibited. Such treatments may be avoided or mitigated through modulation. In architectural terms, modulation is a technique for visually dividing the facade so that it takes on the appearance of distinctly different structures or portions of structures. This architectural technique is used to add visual interest to long store fronts or to other structures that occupy a significant segment of a downtown block. Visual interest can also be achieved through repeating architectural features such as windows and the elements that frame them, and through recesses, offsets, and other variation in plane elevation sufficient to add shadow lines or depth to the facade.

Lighting

Outside lighting should be minimal, and downtown businesses are encouraged to rely on ambient lighting provided by street lights for the safe illumination of the sidewalk area. Low wattage lighting could be used to highlight an entryway provided no glare is cast out onto the sidewalk. Merchants should be encouraged to illuminate window displays and interior spaces provided that no glare is cast onto the sidewalk area. Flashing or strobe type lighting should be prohibited.

Fencing

Chain link fencing should not be visible from the street or sidewalk.

Signage

- Prohibited Signs

  Roof signs, projecting signs above canopy level (except for blade signs described below), pole or pylon signs, and internally illuminated signs, including internally illuminated canopies, should be prohibited in the downtown area.

- Wall Signs

  Wall signs should be either painted upon the wall, mounted flat against the building, or erected against and parallel to the wall not extending out more than twelve inches there from. Wall signs should be located no higher than thirty feet above grade, measured from grade to the top of the sign. Wall signs may be externally illuminated provided no glare is apparent from off site. Wall signs should not cover any architectural details of the building, and should not extend beyond the wall on which they are mounted. The maximum combined area of all wall signs per street frontage should not exceed twenty-five percent of the wall area. No combination of sign areas of any kind should exceed one hundred fifty square feet per street frontage, excluding multiple building complexes and multiple tenant buildings.

- Canopy Signs

  Several types of canopy signs may be permitted, including sign panels or individual letters attached to the vertical face of the canopy, freestanding letters affixed to the upper edge of a flat canopy, and panels suspended from the underside of a flat or sloped canopy. One canopy sign per street frontage may be allowed, not to exceed one square foot of signage per one linear foot of building frontage.

- Blade Signs

  These are signs usually affixed to the building front, either above or below the canopy, projecting from the wall at ninety degrees. Blade signs below the canopy are intended to be seen by pedestrians, and one per building frontage may be allowed. The bottom edge of such signs should be at least eight feet above the walking surface, should not exceed six square feet in total area, and should not extend more than five feet from the building front. Blade signs could be externally illuminated provided no glare is cast into the sidewalk area. Blade signs above the canopy are intended to be readable from the street, and one per building frontage may be allowed. They could be externally illuminated but should not exceed thirty-two square feet in total area. No dimension of the sign should exceed eight feet.

Historic Rehabilitation/Restoration Standards

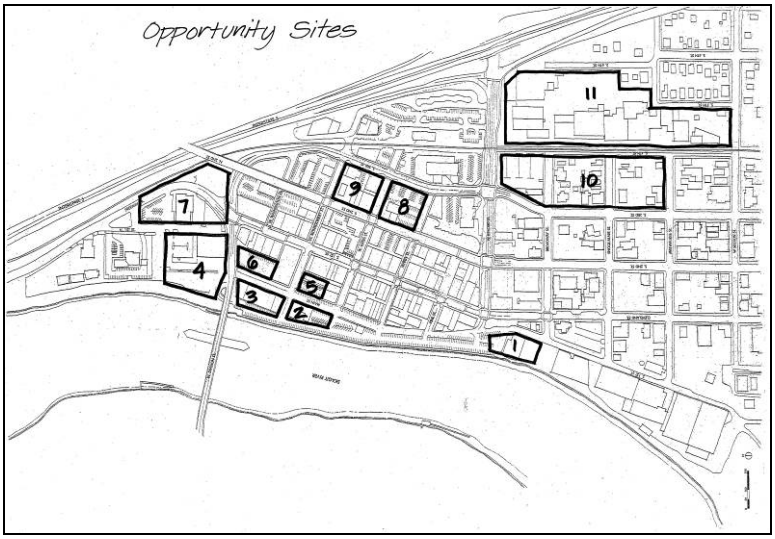
Standards contained in this section are intended to assist property owners with the preservation of a contributing or registered property's historic significance through the preservation of historic materials and features. The purpose of these standards is to allow for an efficient contemporary use of a property without destroying materials, features, or finishes that are important in defining the building's historic character.

- Distinctive features, materials, finishes, construction techniques, or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property by defining its historic significance should be preserved.
- Whenever possible, deteriorated historic features should be repaired rather than replaced. Where severity of deterioration requires replacement, the new feature should match the old in design, color, texture, materials (as possible), and other visual qualities.

- Chemical or mechanical treatments, such as sandblasting, that can cause damage to historic materials may be used on a limited basis or as a last resort.
- Significant archeological resources affected by a restoration or rehabilitation should be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures should be taken.
- Changes to properties that have taken place over time that have acquired historic significance in their own right should be retained and preserved.
- New additions, exterior alterations, or related construction should not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. New work should be distinguished from the old and should be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
- New additions and adjacent or related new construction should be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Appendix A

Opportunity Sites



Site 1

Location

At the southern end of the new Riverfront Promenade. Bounded by Broadway Street, Kincaid Street, First Street, and the Promenade. This is currently the site of the Moose Lodge.

Size

Approximately 30,000 square feet.

Constraints

Shoreline Management Master Program limits heights to 30 feet within 100 feet of OHW and to 35 feet between 100 feet and 200 feet of OHW, and limits lot coverage to 70 percent.

Site immediately abuts the pedestrian promenade on the west.

Potential Uses

Two levels of residential or office over parking. This is also a possible location for a promenade-related restaurant or river-related facility.

Approximately 30 to 40 residential units or 35,000 to 50,000 square feet of office space are possible.

Other Considerations

Design must be pedestrian-friendly facing the promenade. Design should relate to a public amenity/visual feature with public access to the promenade, on axis with Kincaid Street.

Building height should step down slightly toward the river.

Site 2

Location

On the new Riverfront Promenade between Montgomery Street and Gates Street. Bounded by Gates Street, Montgomery Street, Main Street, and the Promenade.

Size

Approximately 21,000 square feet.

Constraints

Shoreline Management Master Program limits heights to 30 feet within 100 feet of OHW and to 35 feet between 100 feet and 200 feet of OHW, and limits lot coverage to 70 percent.

Site immediately abuts the pedestrian promenade on the west.

Potential Uses

Two levels of residences or office space over parking. Approximately 20 to 30 residential units or 10,000 to 20,000 square feet of office space are possible. This is also a good location for a promenade-related retail, restaurant or river-related facility. Approximately 4,000 to 5,000 square feet of retail is possible at the level of Main Street, and 1,000 to 2,000 square feet of retail is possible at the promenade level. This site is also a potential location for a new public plaza along the riverfront.

Other Considerations

Design must be pedestrian-friendly facing the promenade. It must also accommodate public access to the promenade and a view corridor to the river on axis with both Montgomery Street and Gates Street. Building height should step down slightly toward the river.

Site 3

Location

On the new Riverfront Promenade between Division Street and Montgomery Street. Bounded by Division Street, Montgomery Street, Main Street, and the Promenade.

Size

Approximately 31,000 square feet.

Constraints

Shoreline Management Master Program limits heights to 30 feet within 100 feet of OHW and to 35 feet between 100 feet and 200 feet of OHW, and limits lot coverage to 70 percent. Site immediately abuts the pedestrian promenade on the west, and the approach to the Division Street Bridge on the north.

Potential Uses

Two levels of residential or office over parking. Approximately 30 to 36 residential units or 15,000 to 30,000 square feet of office space are possible. This is also a good location for promenade-related retail, a restaurant or a river-related facility. Approximately 5,000 to 6,000 square feet of retail is

possible at the level of Main Street, and 1,800 to 3,600 square feet of retail is possible at the promenade level.

Other Considerations

Design must be pedestrian-friendly facing the promenade. It must also accommodate public access to the promenade along Montgomery Street and Gates Street, and a view corridor to the river on axis with Montgomery Street. Building height should step down slightly toward the river. Potential for development linked to Site 6 with partial closure of Main Street.

Site 4

Location

Along the river just north of the Division Street Bridge. Bounded by Division Street, First Street, and the river, with commercial development adjacent to the north.

Size

Approximately 100,000 square feet.

Constraints

Shoreline Management Master Program limits heights to 30 feet within 100 feet of OHW and to 35 feet between 100 feet and 200 feet of OHW, and limits lot coverage to 70 percent. Site immediately abuts the approach to the Division Street Bridge on the south, and the multi-purpose trail along the river to the west. The former Carnation dairy site contains an existing two-storey building in office and retail use, surface parking and an existing landmark smokestack. Access from the south is compromised by the complex intersection of Freeway Drive and Division Street.

Potential Uses

The site is large enough to accommodate a variety of uses, including a mixture of uses.

It would be a good location for a hotel/retail complex. The project could also include office space. If the intersection of Freeway Drive and Division Street is reconfigured to become a pedestrian-friendly intersection of First Street and Division Street, there would be an opportunity to extend pedestrian-oriented uses at street level on both sides of First Street north of Division Street.

Other Considerations

There is an opportunity to better link the site with the pedestrian-oriented core, if the intersection of Freeway Drive and Division Street is reconfigured and made more pedestrian-friendly. Development should take advantage of the river amenity, connecting to the multi-purpose trail, and perhaps including a publicly-accessible open space adjacent to the trail. The landmark smokestack should be preserved, if possible.

Site 5

Location

An existing surface parking lot on the southeast corner of Montgomery Street and Main Street. Bounded by Montgomery Street, Main Street, an alley and commercial development immediately adjacent to the south.

Size

Approximately 13,000 square feet.

Constraints

Site abuts an existing building to the south. Site is too narrow to accommodate an efficient parking structure without including the adjacent alley and/or part of Main Street.

Potential Uses

One or two levels of office space over retail. Approximately 5,000 to 9,000 square feet of retail possible at street level, with 12,000 to 20,000 square feet of office space possible above.

Other Considerations

Development must accommodate public access to the promenade and a view corridor along Montgomery Street. Potential for development linked to Site 2 with closure of Main Street.

Site 6

Location

An existing surface parking lot on the east side of Main Street just south of Division Street. Bounded by Main Street, Division Street, an alley, and the Lyon's Furniture building immediately adjacent to the south.

Size

Approximately 19,000 square feet.

Constraints

Site immediately abuts the Lyon's Furniture building loading dock to the south, and will have to accommodate access to the loading dock unless that site use changes. Access from Division Street is limited. Alley must remain open to provide service access to properties on the east side.

Potential Uses

Two levels of residential or office over retail and parking. Approximately 6,000 to 8,000 square feet of retail is possible at street level along Main Street, with approximately 24 to 30 residential units or 18,000 to 36,000 square feet of office space possible above.

Other Considerations

Potential for development linked to Site 3 with partial closure of Main Street. Site potential would be enhanced if consolidated with redevelopment of Lyon's Furniture site.

Site 7

Location

North of Division Street between First Street and the freeway.

Size

The size of this site could vary depending upon the potential reconfiguration of the intersection of Freeway Drive and Division Street, and whether or not a portion of Freeway Drive is closed. If Freeway Drive remains as presently configured, there is a site of about 48,000 square feet between First Street and Freeway Drive that could be redeveloped. If the southern portion of Freeway Drive were closed and rerouted in alignment with First Street, a contiguous site of about 108,000 square feet could be assembled.

Constraints

Potentially this site has many constraints, depending on the configuration of the roadways. It could be immediately adjacent to the freeway on the east, and to the traffic on Division Street on the south. Existing uses and surface parking would be displaced and some public right-of-way vacated.

Potential Uses

If the intersection of Freeway Drive and Division Street is reconfigured to become a pedestrian-friendly intersection of First Street and Division Street, there would be an opportunity to extend pedestrian-oriented uses at street level on both sides of First Street north of Division Street. In addition to retail, the site could accommodate office space as well as a parking structure. The east side of the site adjacent to the freeway would be a good location for parking.

Other Considerations

There is an opportunity to better link the site with the pedestrian-oriented core, if the intersection of Freeway Drive and Division Street is reconfigured and made more pedestrian-friendly.

Site 8

Location

The entire block is bounded by Second, Gates, Third, and Myrtle Streets.

Size

Approximately 39,000 square feet.

Constraints

Existing County-owned surface parking and two commercial uses would be displaced.

Potential Uses

This site is a preferred location for a multi-level public parking garage, with parking for 350 to 500 cars. Retail or other pedestrian-friendly uses should be located at street level along Gates Street.

Other Considerations

There is potential to extend an elevated pedestrian crossing of the railroad tracks west on the south side of Gates Street over Third Street to an elevator in a garage on this site.

Site 9

Location

The entire block bounded by Second, Montgomery, Third, and Gates Streets.

Size

Approximately 41,000 square feet.

Constraints

Several existing commercial uses and surface parking would be displaced.

Potential Uses

This site is an alternate location for a multi-level public parking garage, with parking for 350 to 500 cars. Retail or other pedestrian-friendly uses should be located at street level along Gates Street.

Other Considerations

There is potential to extend an elevated pedestrian crossing of the railroad tracks west on the north side of Gates Street over Third Street to an elevator in a garage on this site.

Site 10

Location

Three entire city blocks, plus the intervening street rights-of-way, south of Kincaid Street just west of the railroad tracks. Bounded by Milwaukee, Third and Kincaid Streets, and the railroad on the east

Size

Approximately 240,000 square feet.

Constraints

Requires displacement of several existing residential, commercial and institutional uses, and surface parking.

Potential Uses

This is the preferred site for expansion of the County Jail.

Other Considerations

The portion of the site along Kincaid Street should be designed to provide an attractive entry experience to downtown, and should be coordinated with streetscape improvements on both sides of Kincaid Street.

Site 11

Location

A large former industrial site just east of the railroad tracks south of Kincaid Street. Bounded by the railroad tracks, Kincaid, Fifth and Sixth and Section streets.

Size

Approximately 380,000 square feet.

Constraints

Vehicular access is constrained by the railroad tracks on the west, freeway access on Kincaid Street and the freeway on-ramp to the east. Pedestrian access from the rest of downtown is poor.

Potential Uses

The largest contiguous site in downtown, it is a good location for the development of a large use, like a hotel or a campus for a single user or a complex of uses.

Other Considerations

The site has good visibility from the freeway and from Kincaid Street. The portion of the site along Kincaid Street should be designed to provide an attractive entry experience to downtown, and should be coordinated with streetscape improvements on both sides of Kincaid Street.

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