ORDINANCE NO. 3398

AN ORDINANCE of the City Council of the City of Kent, Washington, adopting the City of Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan and Integrated Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement as a subarea plan of the Kent Comprehensive Plan to serve as a guide for public and private development and infrastructure decisions in downtown Kent.

WHEREAS, downtown Kent has served as the City's civic and commercial focus since the late 1800's when Kent was a valley agricultural community; and

WHEREAS, in recent decades the City has developed the downtown as a civic and commercial center through proactive planning and public improvements; and

WHEREAS, the City adopted the Downtown Plan in 1989 and Kent Comprehensive Plan in 1995, each of which contain goals and policies for planning and development of downtown; and

WHEREAS, in 1992, the City elected to declare downtown a Regional Urban Center, and in 1993, the King County Planning Council awarded the designation with the goal of developing an intense mix of residential and employment uses directly served by a local and regional public transportation system; and

WHEREAS, the City Council listed downtown as a priority target issue in 1996; and

Kent Downtown SAP
WHEREAS, in 1996, the State of Washington awarded the City a $150,000 Planning and Environmental Review Fund Grant which the City matched with the previously appropriated amount of $25,000 for the market analysis and in-kind services for the purpose of making a subarea plan and integrated environmental impact statement; and

WHEREAS, The mayor appointed a Downtown Stakeholders Committee composed of persons who share a common interest in a positive future for downtown; and

WHEREAS, the research, analysis, public participation, planning and design which led to the subarea plan titled "Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan and Integrated Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement" commenced in July, 1996 and resulted in a draft plan in June, 1997; and

WHEREAS, the plan contains land use, transportation, and urban design recommendations in accordance with the goals and policies of the 1989 Downtown Plan and the Kent Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the process included environmental issue scoping, issuance of draft and preliminary final environmental impact statements, public workshops, meetings and forums and two public hearings; and

WHEREAS, on June 2, 1997, the Land Use & Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend adoption of the Plan with eight amendments; and

WHEREAS, the Kent City Council considered the recommendation of the Land Use & Planning Board at a regularly scheduled meeting on March 3, 1997, as amended by the actions of the City Council Planning Committee on August 6th, August 19th, September 16th, and December 9th, 1997, and as further amended by the City
WHEREAS, pursuant to RCW 36.70A.130(2)(a)(i), a subarea plan to the Comprehensive Plan may be initially adopted without declaring an emergency to authorize the amendment of the Comprehensive Plan; NOW, THEREFORE,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KENT, WASHINGTON, DOES HEREBY ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The City of Kent Comprehensive Plan is hereby amended to include the City of Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan and Integrated Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (attached hereto as Exhibit A) as a subarea plan.

SECTION 2. Severability. If any one or more sections, subsections, or sentences of this ordinance are held to be unconstitutional or invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portion of this ordinance and the same shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 3. Effective Date. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force five (5) days from the date of its publication, as provided by law.

JIM WHITE, MAYOR

ATTEST:

BRENDA JACOBER, CITY CLERK
APPROVED AS TO FORM:

ROGER A. LUBOVICH, CITY ATTORNEY

PASSED: 7th day of April, 1998.
APPROVED: — day of ————, 1998.
PUBLISHED: 10th day of April, 1998.

I hereby certify that this is a true copy of Ordinance No. 3398, passed by the City Council of the City of Kent, Washington, and approved by the Mayor of the City of Kent as hereon indicated.

BRENDA JACOBER, CITY CLERK
Downtown Kent Action Plan

Downtown Strategic Action Plan
and
Integrated Environmental Impact Statement

Growing a Hometown For the Future
City of Kent
Downtown Strategic Action Plan

Integrated With

The Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

Prepared for the City of Kent by
Makers Architecture and Urban Design, BRW, Property Counselors,
Langlow Associates and the Kent Planning Department
With the Assistance of a Washington State Planning
And Environmental Review Fund Grant

April 7, 1998

Cover design: The stylized hop flower on the cover was chosen because in the late 1800's the hops industry was the first catalyst for prosperity and growth in the Green River Valley.
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Part I
I. Introduction
I. Introduction

Purpose

Since the days when Kent was a valley agricultural community, downtown Kent has served as the town’s civic and commercial focus. In recent decades, the City has supported the downtown through proactive planning and public improvements. Faced with the challenges of regional growth management, Kent citizens responded by requesting a regional urban center designation for downtown. The designation calls for a more intensive mix of uses and a wide spectrum of civic activities well served by the local and regional transportation system.

This Downtown Strategic Action Plan pursues Kent’s citizens’ vision for its urban center, as described in the Kent Comprehensive Plan and expressed in this document, by translating the Plan’s general objectives into a redevelopment strategy consisting of an integrated set of civic actions. This Action Plan will serve as a basis for developing the urban center and implementing the Kent Comprehensive Plan. It will provide a basis for City decisions on future public and private development proposals. Based on a thorough market analysis, environmental analysis, and community participation process, it outlines methods for encouraging infill and redevelopment compatible with the economic, environmental, and community goals of the citizens of Kent.

B. Background

Downtown Kent was established as the commercial center of Kent in the early 1900’s when it served as a market town for a thriving agricultural valley. The pattern of retail trade and office development has changed in Kent since that time, but downtown has retained its position as the center of City civic and cultural life. The City and downtown merchants have worked diligently to maintain the vitality of the historic commercial core. Prior to this plan, the City of Kent had undertaken several downtown planning efforts: the 1966 John Graham Plan for Downtown, the 1974 Central Business District Plan, the 1983 L.I.D. 313 and Urban Design Plan, the 1986 Downtown Revitalization Task Force Report, the 1989 Downtown Plan, the 1992 Downtown zoning revisions, the 1995 Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies, and the designation of downtown Kent as an urban center through the King County Countywide Planning Policies process.

Both public and private interests initiated this planning process. In 1995, the Kent Downtown Partnership and other citizens asked the City to fund a comprehensive market analysis for downtown. The City Council agreed to budget $25,000 in general funds for the market analysis. In 1995 the City Council set goals for 1996 which included “Kent: A Home Town for Families - A Friendly Small Town - A Place to Work - A Place to Live,” and “Downtown - A Community Focal Point.” Downtown goals were first priority for 1996.
In early 1996, the State of Washington awarded the City a $150,000 Planning and Environmental Review Fund (PERF) grant, which the City matched with the previously appropriated $25,000 for the market analysis and $25,000 of in-kind services. The Mayor appointed an executive staff Downtown Strategic Planning Team, which assisted the Mayor in appointing a Downtown Stakeholders Task Force. The Strategic Planning Team and the Planning Department hired an interdisciplinary consultant team to assist the City and the citizens to formulate a downtown subarea plan. The team consisted of MAKERS architecture and urban design, BRW, Inc., The Langlow Associates, Property Counselors, and Sierra Media.

C. Process

As a subarea plan and a supplement to the Kent Comprehensive Plan, the Downtown Strategic Action Plan and Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement were prepared under new State provisions in ESHB 1724, which allows the integration of State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and Growth Management Act (GMA) processes. It is a programmatic EIS and supplements the Kent Comprehensive Plan EIS issued in January 1995. It is also prepared as a "Planned Action" Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement which supplements the EIS by addressing the probable significant environmental impacts of the Comprehensive Plan in greater detail related to the specific recommended actions contained in the Downtown Strategic Action Plan. This level of detail provides predictability and may reduce or eliminate the necessity for environmental review prior to project permit submittals.

The Planned Action EIS process is a new component of environmental law in Washington State. Under the ESHB 1724 provisions, local jurisdictions with an adopted comprehensive plan can opt to develop a 20-year vision for a subarea or neighborhood and create a Subarea Plan integrated with a Planned Action EIS. The Planned Action EIS evaluates the significant adverse impacts and reasonable mitigation measures associated with the development proposed in the Subarea Plan. If a Planned Action ordinance is adopted by the jurisdiction, an agency reviewing any subsequent project proposal in the planning area must first determine that the project is consistent with the earlier Subarea Plan Planned Action EIS. The agency must also determine that the Planned Action EIS has adequately addressed the significant impacts of the development and identified mitigation measures. Consistency is determined by a review of four areas: (1) type of land use allowed, (2) level of development allowed, (3) infrastructure, and (4) character of the proposed development. The benefit of this approach is that subsequent project-level development proposals may have a reduced amount of environmental review, if the development proposal is consistent with the adopted Subarea Plan. The purpose of creating an integrated plan/environmental assessment, consistent with PERF grant requirements, was to adopt a Planned Action ordinance if such an action was appropriate.

As a result of planning analysis and environmental review, the planning team determined that, despite the recommended mitigation measures, existing City regulations may not provide sufficient environmental protection to take the place of the SEPA process at this time. As a result, the City of Kent has chosen not to propose and adopt a Planned Action...
ordinance with the approved plan. However, project-level mitigation recommendations for actions that would be subject to Environmental review under SEPA are included in section VI, Additional Environmental Information. The City may consider a Planned Action ordinance using this FSEIS integrated plan after adoption of adequate downtown street standards, revised design guidelines, and historic preservation measures. If a Planned Action ordinance is not adopted, the project-related mitigation measures offered here serve as a mitigation guide as projects are individually proposed and subjected to SEPA review.

Public participation is essential to a subarea plan/environmental review process. The first opportunity for public participation was a general public workshop and a SEIS scoping session. The City conducted six additional public workshops and seven Downtown Stakeholders Taskforce meetings. City staff responded to numerous letters, telephone calls, and Planning Department visitor's questions.

The Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) was issued on February 4, 1997. The DSEIS, containing three land use and urban design alternatives, was distributed at a workshop to gather public opinion regarding a preferred alternative. An additional environmental document, authorized by the Washington State Department of Ecology, the Draft Downtown Strategic Action Plan and Preliminary Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, was issued on May 19, 1997 to distribute additional information and allow additional time for public comment and discussion prior to integrated plan adoption. The Preliminary Final Supplemental Impact Statement contains additional impact analysis, additional mitigation recommendations, the preferred alternative, comment letters received by the City in response to the DSEIS, and the City's responses to the comments.

The Land Use and Planning Board conducted a public hearing before recommending the Plan to the City Council with revisions. The City Council Planning Committee received additional public comment within their review process and recommended further revisions. Typically, the FSEIS would be issued prior to the decision process. In this instance, the public hearings conducted by the Land Use and Planning Board and the City Council Planning Committee became part of the environmental review record. The preferred alternative was revised as a result of the recommendations of the Land Use and Planning Board and the City Council. This document presents the revised preferred alternative.

As the process chart on the next page indicates, planning, evaluation, and public involvement were coordinated throughout the project. Public involvement occurred at three key points: setting of objectives, development of alternatives, and evaluation of alternatives.
D. Organization of Report

This report is organized to aid both public and private interests in making decisions concerning development and investment in the downtown. Section I is a summary of the background, purpose and process of the project. Section II describes the vision for downtown. Section III describes the plan concept, and Section IV outlines the recommendations for achieving the community and City’s objectives. Section V is the heart of the plan. This section organizes the recommended actions by areas within the downtown, showing the interrelationships among actions. Section VI contains the State
Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) Fact Sheet and other required environmental data.

The fact that the subarea plan is integrated with the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement is consistent with Washington State Planning and Environmental Review Fund grant requirements. The process provided public participation and environmental analysis in conjunction with the planning process. As the plan evolved, Environmental mitigation was often incorporated in problem solving and design solutions. The format of the integrated plan/FSEIS is different from the typical FEIS document. The following chart summarizes where typical sections of an FSEIS are found in this document.

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<td>Executive Summary</td>
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II. Vision
II. Vision: Growing a Home Town

Prior to this plan, Kent citizens contributed to a downtown vision expressed in the 1992 Community Forum on Growth Management and Visioning, the 1989 Downtown Plan, and the Kent Comprehensive Plan goals and policies. The community expanded and reinforced the vision by participating in the public workshops, focus group discussions, and Downtown Stakeholders Task Force meetings that help to form this plan.

A Visit to the Future

If this plan is successful, what will downtown Kent be like, say, 10 or 15 years in the future? What are the character and qualities that the City envisions for its downtown?

One thing for certain is an early 21st Century visitor entering downtown Kent will be presented with a more gracious welcome mat. Not only will key entry points around the downtown perimeter be well marked with gateway landscaping, artwork, and directional signage, but the character of development on Central Avenue, James Street, and Willis Street will be more appealing for motorist and pedestrian alike. Robust automobile-oriented businesses will still find a home on Central Avenue, but recent streetscape improvements and incremental business expansions will have transformed the old strip into a more welcoming, attractive corridor. At the downtown’s southern boundary, a well-landscaped Willis Street will frame a rehabilitated single-family neighborhood to the south and the emerging mixed-use residential neighborhood to the north. An underpass will provide passage under the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe railroad right-of-way, and a trail along Willis will provide local residents safe bicycle access to the Interurban Trail, the park-and-ride, and Commons Park.

The west section of the downtown, between the Union Pacific Railroad and SR 167, will have seen major changes. Better street access will have spurred new commercial development between Smith and Willis Streets. There may be well-landscaped clusters of residential development as well.

A newly refurbished Commons Park, the Commons Recreation Center—not to mention the Regional Justice Center—will form a civic anchor at the downtown’s northwest corner. The Justice Center, by then about 15 years old, will be a still-imposing but more familiar fixture. Justice Center activities will have increased service businesses in the core, but vigilant work by the City will have kept undesirable businesses from proliferating in Kent.

James Street will be the downtown’s busiest east-west traffic corridor, and the grade-separated railroad crossing will eliminate what would otherwise have been a serious blockage at the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe railroad crossing.
But, while the future visitor will notice many changes to the downtown’s perimeter, the most striking transformation will have occurred south of Gowe Street. The Regional Transit Authority commuter rail station will be an important transit hub, with local feeder buses meeting the trains and regional buses for transfer to locations throughout the Sound. Although commuter rail service was limited at first, congestion on the freeways will have led to all-day rail service, making the train the preferred transportation option for commuters to Tacoma or baseball fans heading for a Mariners game.

The importance of this transportation connection will have given downtown Kent greater prominence in the region and spurred development. Smith Street will be one of the downtown’s most attractive corridors, with a new hotel, office, and retail complex on the north. In particular, the Civic and Performing Arts Center will be a hub of daytime and evening activity downtown. Walking through the historic Meeker Street core to the commuter rail station will be a pleasure because of the street trees and pedestrian-oriented buildings. The first phase of the Borden site redevelopment will be under way, with an integrated mix of uses and open spaces supported by a street grid and structured parking.

To the east of the BN&SF tracks, the Public Market and Sister Cities Parks will anchor another cluster of shops and commercial activities. This Railroad Avenue district will offer a valuable addition to the unique historic retail core of Downtown Kent. With the Sister Cities Parks providing an attractive backdrop, the emerging Railroad Avenue activity center will have joined Meeker Street and First Avenue as places where citizens from all over Kent can come to spend some time. They will browse in specialty shops, share a cup of coffee, or enjoy an evening meal.

The South Core area between Titus Street and Willis Street, while not having experienced the dramatic transformation of the North Core, will have seen slower, incremental changes. New midrise mixed-use/residential complexes and townhouses will have created one of south King County’s most attractive in-town neighborhoods for those who want the convenience of local services, easy access to transportation, and a stable, pedestrian-oriented setting. The commuter rail station will be located on both sides of the railroad, just south of Gowe Street.

Our visitor will be comforted by the fact that, except for some key infill and building renovation, the Historic Core, centered along Meeker Street and First Avenue, will remain much as it did in the late 1990s. The key to the success of the Historic Core will have been the connections that the City made to the north and south, which added supporting activity from nearby residents and workers.

From the Present to the Future

From the perspective of our visit to the future, it is clear how the downtown will reach its goals. By enhancing the historic character of its core, the City will retain its culture and link to the past—its roots.
By emphasizing its pedestrian qualities with gracious sidewalks, pedestrian-oriented businesses and a variety of parks, the downtown will remain a comfortable, friendly place for people to meet and enjoy themselves.

By encouraging a wide mix of commercial, residential, and public uses, the downtown will generate the activity necessary for a successful urban center.

By fostering high-quality redevelopment through public works improvements and design guidelines, the downtown will become a source of civic pride for the whole city.

By integrating emerging transportation systems, the downtown will regain its role as a regional crossroads.

And, through the continued efforts and care of its citizens, the town will continue to be a "home town for the future."
Downtown Kent Strategic Action Plan Vision

This graphic is a visualization of types of commercial, office, and residential infill and redevelopment as they could conceptually develop during the twenty year span of the Plan. It is intended as a visual aid for discussion purposes. It does not represent specific development plans for any particular property.

Figure II-2 Downtown Kent 20 Year Vision
III. Planning Concept
III. Planning Concept

A. Market Analysis

The foundation of a successful downtown plan must be an understanding of the realities of the real estate market. Consequently, the planning team conducted a market analysis during the first stages of planning in order to determine the potential for growth and the conditions necessary to foster positive redevelopment. The market area from which downtown Kent draws 80% to 90% of its sales extends west to Interstate 5, north to the Kent city limits at 180th, south to 277th, and east and south toward the Cascade foothills. This area recognizes the existing concentrations of retail development in Tukwila and Auburn, the natural boundaries of the plateau to the west, and the existing transportation network extending to the east and south.

Market Opportunities and Development Potential

The market analysis determined that there are several specific opportunities in downtown Kent.

— Office

Office development is the strongest immediate opportunity. Continuation of historic levels of office absorption of 16,000 to 18,000 square feet per year in addition to law offices associated with the Regional Justice Center (RJC) would result in potential office demand of:

- 1996-2000: 92,000-112,000 square feet
- 2000-2010: 260,000-270,000 square feet
- 2010-2020: 180,000 square feet

— Retail

Projected retail development estimates are based on maintaining downtown’s share of market area spending with increases in shares for specialty food, apparel, eating/drinking, and miscellaneous retail sales.

- 1995-2000: 46,000-49,000 square feet (including RJC impact)
- 2000-2010: 100,000 square feet
- 2010-2020: 79,000 square feet

In addition, the area could support a multiscreen theater.

— Civic and Performing Arts Center

A Civic and Performing Arts Center has been proposed for downtown Kent. Attendees at performances at such a facility would also patronize surrounding businesses. While the level of spending in itself would only support a few thousand square feet of development, it would contribute toward extending the hours of the district into the evening. The committee for the project has investigated the
feasibility of raising the necessary funds through grants and private contributions. The result of that study will affect whether the proposal will be pursued in the immediate future.

Figure III-1: Market area for downtown Kent.

— Market Rate Residential
One-third of the residential capacity for the City is in the downtown area. In order for the downtown to approach this capacity over the next 20 years there must be successful projects that can demonstrate to the development community that there is demand for market rate housing. The best opportunities are single-use residential
units on the edge of the core, where land costs are lower, and small condominium projects at high-amenity locations in the core.

— **Hotel/Convention Center**

A full service hotel with 150 rooms, meeting facilities sized to accommodate groups of approximately 250, and restaurant could compete with hotels near the airport and Southcenter and attract over $2 million in spending to the area each year.

— **Health Care and Wellness**

Opportunities exist to increase Downtown Kent’s stature as a wellness center. Downtown Kent is the location of an established community of traditional health service providers and providers of alternative health care and natural medicine. King County has recently constructed a 17,900 square foot facility for the king County Natural Medicine Clinic at the corner of South State and E. Meeker Streets. In the future, a downtown facility of several hundred thousand square feet could provide an opportunity to consolidate various care providers.

— **Finally, additional development of all types creates demand for the others and provides an overall increase in vitality and interest.**

**Summary of Market Analysis Update – 1997**

The updated market data supports several conclusions:

- The underlying demographics of the local market area are extremely strong in terms of household and income growth.

- Overall business conditions are good, with strong growth in taxable sales for the City as a whole and Downtown.

- The downtown Kent office market is dynamic with new construction, tenant expansion and relocations, and strong rents.

- The downtown retail market is stable with net growth expected with completion of the Anderson Building at the northeast corner of Meeker Street and Fourth Avenue and renovation of the Dragness Building.

- The residential rental market is extremely tight in Kent. The recently completed Stafford Suites is performing well as a market rate assisted living project for seniors in downtown Kent.

- Land values reflect an optimistic outlook for Kent.
The development opportunities identified for downtown Kent in the previous market study continue to be realistic and achievable. In particular.

- The Regional Justice Center is already generating demand for law firms and associated service businesses.

- The Regional Transit Authority (RTA) commuter rail station in downtown Kent will reinforce the demand for downtown housing and certain types of retail.

- The medical sector continues to show potential for growth. The completion of the Community Health Center represents a major new facility in this sector.

Strategy

The major goal of the Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan (the Plan) is to encourage downtown growth and redevelopment while creating a stronger community identity and civic/commercial focus through a public and private infill and redevelopment strategy. The Plan actions are intended to implement the directions provided by the Kent Comprehensive Plan, the goals and policies of the 1989 Downtown Plan, and the goals and policies in the downtown and commercial sections of the Land Use Chapter. Consistent with the requirements of the Washington State Planning and Environmental Review Fund, the Plan integrates environmental analysis and environmental impact mitigation measures within the land use, transportation, urban design, problem solving, and implementation framework of the Plan. The Plan presents a framework that will maintain Kent’s existing physical assets, prepare for projected growth, and support future development. It recommends that public and private interests work together to achieve safe, attractive, and convenient transportation systems, improved parks and open space, and adequate public facilities.

Successful downtown redevelopment plans build on the community’s existing physical assets. Fortunately, downtown Kent contains many resources that will be a foundation for future growth and development. Vigilant City and business efforts have kept Kent’s historic, pedestrian-oriented core shopping districts along Meeker Street, First Avenue, and Railroad Avenue vital. The new Regional Justice Center is already a landmark and growing employment center. The downtown is blessed with a variety of parks, including the active Commons Park, International Parks, the Rose Garden, and Railroad Park. Kent’s City Hall, Commons Recreation Center, library, Senior Center, and Resource Center add activity and enhance the downtown’s role as the City’s focal point. Nearby residential areas add a built-in consumer and employment base.
Barriers and poor connections separate downtown activities.

Underdeveloped and unsightly areas present poor impression of downtown.

Figure III-2: Challenges facing downtown Kent.
The community’s optimism regarding future private development opportunity is well founded. The market analysis conducted early in formulating this plan projects significant development potential for the downtown based on continuing growth of the Kent downtown market area. Opportunities include additional retail development, office development, a full-service hotel, and urban-style housing. In addition, the new Public Market will bolster businesses on the core’s east side, and the new commuter rail transit station, scheduled to open in 1999, will make Kent a regional transportation hub. The presence of a commuter rail station is likely to stimulate in-town housing development and new employment opportunities. Commercial growth should occur as an indirect benefit of the commuter rail station and a direct benefit of new in-town housing.

While the downtown contains valuable assets that serve as a foundation for a strong identity and vital economy, there are obstacles to growing a better downtown. The first is that Kent’s assets are scattered and often disconnected. The second is that many of the commercial corridors and residential areas at the downtown’s periphery are underdeveloped or present a poor visual impression. Because of those assets and obstacles, the basic strategies at the root of the Downtown Plan are:

- Connect and unify important downtown features.
- Enhance the periphery of the downtown to achieve higher quality development that supports its central activities.
- Define special activity districts.
- Select “target” areas as a basis for a phased implementation program to accomplish redevelopment and/or infill consistent with the Plan.
- Enhance civic identity.

Connect and Unify Downtown’s Features

Civic improvements, including the Regional Justice Center, Kent Commons, and the Public Market, are expanding the downtown core. The core business areas along Meeker Street, First Avenue, and Railroad Avenue will continue to serve as the commercial downtown’s south anchor. To maintain and improve this role, the historic core must be linked to the northern features by a combination of park, pedestrian, and vehicle connections along First and Fourth Avenues and Smith Street. In addition, supportive redevelopment of the Smith Street corridor will strengthen the connection. Development of the new Public Market site and Burlington Green, Yangzhou, and Kaibara Parks are high priorities. The parks and the Market link the Historic Core District and the commuter rail station to the Regional Justice Center and commercial, office, and residential activities to the north.
Figure III-3: The strategic redevelopment concept.
During the planning process, several commuter rail station locations were proposed within a five-block area adjacent to the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe railroad tracks between Titus and James Streets. This Plan recommends that the new commuter rail station be located just south of Gowe Street to provide an efficient multimodal regional transportation hub. The rail station will enhance Kent’s role in the region as a “host community” and accentuate its identity. It will add significantly to the downtown if the City restores the historic train station located between Gowe and Meeker Streets, develops parking areas, vehicular circulation systems, and good pedestrian and visual connections to other downtown features. High-quality redevelopment in the surrounding areas would also enhance Kent’s role as a “host community.” For these reasons, pedestrian connections across Smith Street and traffic improvements in the vicinity are recommended in addition to the other connecting features described above.

The Borden property between Smith and James Streets represents one of the unique redevelopment opportunities in the Green River Valley, if not the whole Puget Sound Basin. The City should prepare to take advantage of this opportunity by ensuring that there is access to the site (especially along Second Avenue from the south). It should master plan the site as a whole, and create a desirable development setting around the site.

**Enhance the Periphery of Downtown**

The second downtown redevelopment strategy involves upgrading the areas directly around the expanded core. Similarly, allowing office and mixed-use development between Fourth and Fifth Avenues north of James Street will encourage investment in this highly impacted area. The single-family neighborhood east of Fourth Avenue and just north of James Street is an important housing resource.

A combination of street improvements and design guidelines will help make the Central Avenue corridor a more fitting eastern entry into the core. The areas to the south, east, and west of the core provide an ideal setting for residentially oriented mixed-use development to support core businesses and add life to the downtown as well as reinforce Kent’s identity as a “home town.”

**Define Special Activity Districts**

The plan identifies and defines existing and emerging special districts within the downtown area such as the historic business district, civic activity areas, Kent Market district, and in-town residential areas. Such definition provides the basis to direct growth in character with each district, and to establish the relationships and connections between districts. It is important to consider the existing assets of the districts, potential for improvement, redevelopment and infill, and their context or role within the downtown.

**Select Target Areas**

Priority development sites have been identified during the planning process. The commuter rail station site, the Kent Market site, and the civic and performing arts center site are driven by previously determined plans. Other projects such as priority in-town...
housing sites, essential pedestrian connections to connect existing and emerging activity districts, and public gathering spaces have emerged during the analysis and public participation elements of the Plan process. Specific implementation measures to develop target areas provide a framework for public and private action. Mitigation for environmental impacts identified during the SEPA review of the proposed plan is integrated with the implementation program.

**Enhance Civic Identity**

A major focus of this plan has been to define an identity for downtown Kent. The image that has continually reoccurred throughout the process is the downtown's role as a "home town." The intent of the plan is to "Grow a Home Town for the Future." But what does this mean? What are the characteristics of a "home town" that can be integrated into a dynamic 21st Century community? In looking at Kent's sustaining assets and the downtown's opportunities for the future, the following characteristics stand out.

---

**Variety: A Sum Greater Than Its Parts**

Hometowns are where people gather for many different functions and activities. They bring people together and focus a sense of community. The downtown is home to many civic and commercial activities and can make a vibrant residential neighborhood as well. As noted above, the key to the plan's success will be the connections between the various elements. Physical connections between transportation centers, government services, businesses, and recreational activities will strengthen the community's economic, cultural, and social connections as well.

---

**Quality: A Sense of Caring**

A hometown's value to its community is reflected in the quality of its physical setting. The actions recommended in this plan are directed at producing higher quality public improvements and private development. One index of the plan’s success will be the amount of careful, well-considered financial and human investment the recommended actions attract to the downtown. Equally important will be the design quality of development.

---

**Friendliness: A setting for personal interaction**

A good hometown is a place where people meet, where they come to enjoy themselves as individuals and to celebrate as a community. Encouraging these activities means attention to detail. Comfortable, attractive sidewalks, street trees, cafes and meeting places, bicycle paths, parks, artwork, and public amenities are important features of a successful downtown. Safety is also an important consideration. Streets and public spaces must be well lighted. In addition, they must be designed to support Police and Fire Department efforts.

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**Memory and Vision: Remembering the Past, Looking to the Future**

During the middle of the Twentieth Century, Kent transformed itself from an active farming community into a robust, industrial-based suburb. Now, with the construction of the Regional Justice Center and a new transportation hub, Kent is again transforming itself; this time into a dynamic, multi-faceted regional center. As
projected population growth occurs, and as this transformation takes place, it will be important not to lose the perspective of the past. The historic qualities of the core and small-town characteristics must be retained and reinterpreted into new development as the downtown grows to meet the future.
IV. Actions, Phasing, and Costs
IV. Summary of Recommended Actions

A. Recommended Actions

To implement the objectives and ideas presented in Section III, this plan recommends a series of actions, including regulatory measures, capital investments, and public programs. Section IV summarizes the recommended actions, describes the implementation steps, costs, and environmental impacts, and mitigation measures for actions that require environmental review.

Figure IV-1 summarizes many of these actions and indicates where each action targets improvements. Figure IV-2 lists the actions according to their major categories and outlines their timing. Figure IV-3 provides a list of preliminary capital project costs. The actions are described in detail and the manner in which they interrelate to upgrade specific districts is outlined in Section V. To prepare for possible adoption of a Planned Action Ordinance, as discussed in Section I, the actions that would require environmental analysis under SEPA regulations, with identification of probable impacts and proposed mitigating measures are included in this section. If a Planned Action Ordinance is not adopted, discussion of impacts and mitigating measures will serve as a guide for SEPA review when projects are proposed.

General actions, which relate to more than one district are discussed below:

• **Promote Infill Housing**

  To meet the Kent Comprehensive Plan goals to enhance downtown as a place to live, and to create an attractive, dense mixed-use neighborhood, the City should promote construction of condominium townhouses, stacked and attached units that resemble single family design and character, and residential mixed with commercial and office uses.

• **Promote the construction of new commercial, office, or mixed use development and redevelopment.**

  To respond to the potential for additional downtown office and commercial development identified in the market analysis provide incentives for new development. Mixed use development will provide a variety of living situations within districts that require ground floor retail uses.

• **Conduct a study of existing parking requirements related to residential density regulations downtown.**

  Revise the parking and density standards to improve the balance of on-site and off-site parking areas.
• Survey the impacts of retail uses such as pawnshops, bail bond offices, and tattoo parlors in downtown locations in other cities.

Revise the zoning code to address the results of the survey, if necessary. Certain uses, including pawn shops, bail bond offices, and tattoo parlors have been observed in other cities in the region to require an increased amount of police and social service. Developable land suitable for retail uses is limited, and some plan participants have expressed the opinion that a proliferation of such uses would not be appropriate. Land available and suitable for retail uses is limited, and some plan participants have expressed the opinion that a proliferation of such uses would not be appropriate.

• Add bicycle facilities and bicycle lanes or trails in all districts of downtown.

Work with the community and the Bicycle Advisory Board to identify and provide trails and pathways. The interurban Trail provides a regional north/south pedestrian/bicycle/equestrian connection. East/west links into downtown will attract commuters and recreational cyclists.

• Support the Performing Arts/Civic Center in a downtown location.

Insure that activities at the Center will extend into the evening hours. With facilities for conferences and other events, a civic and performing arts center can be an important attraction, extending hours of activity into the night and providing a much-needed location for meetings, events, parties, catering facilities, and educational programs.

• Ensure high-quality development on designated signature building sites.

Work with property owners and developers throughout the development.

• Enhance the City’s established public art program.

Reinforce Kent’s downtown character and unique traditions through art. Encourage private and public development interests to provide downtown public art as part of significant projects.

• Develop a downtown street tree/vegetation plan.

Provide a guide for creating an attractive pedestrian network of green spaces. Augment the Kent Street Tree Program to address the entire downtown as defined by this plan. Associate specific types of street tree plantings to specific streets throughout downtown. Identify sites for enhanced landscaping, focusing on parks, entry, and gateway features. Assign responsibilities (public and private) for street tree installation and maintenance. Integrate references to the Street Tree Program into development regulations.
• **Adopt street standards for the entire downtown study area.**

Currently street improvement requirements are often determined on a case-by-case basis. Facilitate permit review and enhance street character by matching street standards to specific areas downtown in order to accentuate the identity of each area.

• **Enhance gateways into downtown:**

Mark entrances to downtown, provide artwork and amenities, and direct visitors to special attractions. Where there is very little public land for extensive landscaping, work with property owners to develop “signature buildings” that have high quality building and site design that adds character to the streetscape. A gateway design and installation program is underway in the City following a 1997 design charette.

• **Actively promote downtown historic preservation and commemorate historic sites with interpretive signs, art, tours, and educational programs.**

To implement the program, the City should update the existing inventory of historic resources, and develop regulations for preservation. The City has made several efforts to develop historic preservation programs. The most recent effort concluded with a report, *An Historic Preservation Program: Recommendations for the Historic Preservation Committee*, December, 1990. The program should be revisited.

• **Explore specific redevelopment opportunities within target areas**

A principal objective of this plan is to attract appropriate, high-quality development downtown. The plan seeks to (1) attract positive development by creating a favorable development setting and (2) direct new development to achieve public objectives such as economic vitality and design quality as well as individual private interests. This effort is based on the fact that physical development and land uses that work together to complement one another and that are supported by appropriate facilities are much more successful than disjointed development limited by insufficient, unattractive public facilities.

The Plan focuses redevelopment in identified areas in several ways. The land use recommendations fine tune the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The transportation recommendations will upgrade circulation to and within the downtown. The public facilities improvements will enhance an already attractive setting. District-specific design guidelines will increase compatibility between uses, reinforce the design quality of the districts, and take advantage of special opportunities.
Summary of Recommended Actions

Figure IV-1: Actions recommended by the Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan are summarized above.
B. Outline of Phasing Strategy

Since the plan is based on projections and changing conditions for the next 20 years, it is clear that all of the actions will not commence immediately. In fact, civic actions ideally will be timed to take advantage of special funding opportunities to trigger or encourage desired development, to respond to emerging market trends, or to integrate related activities. The chart titled

Since many of the actions are subject to funding, coordinated with other actions, timed to emerging trends, or triggered by private investment, the periods shown are estimates only.

In general, the schedule sets priorities for action based on needs and opportunities. The chart suggests that during the next two years the City should concentrate on important new opportunities associated with current redevelopment, especially the Regional Justice Center and the RTA commuter rail transit station. Actions that directly respond to these opportunities: (B4) the pedestrian “all cross” at the James and Smith intersection; (B2.c) Smith Street improvements; (C1.b) Burlington Green, Yangzhou, and Kaibara Parks improvements; Gateways at (C2.a) Fourth and James, (C2f) Central and Meeker, and (C2e) Central and Smith; (C3.a) the civic and performing arts center; (C3.b) the Public Market; and (C3.c) the rail station structure are recommended for special attention during the next two years. Likewise, land use measures (A1 and A2) and design guidelines (D1) are given high priority because they represent low public cost activities the City can take to update zoning and design guidelines to be ready for impending private development proposals. The redevelopment programs for the Fourth Avenue, historic core, south core, and Central Avenue target areas could also be initiated during the next two years to spur redevelopment in these areas. Initiating these actions over the next two years makes for an ambitious work list and represents the current dynamic times.

The actions recommended for implementation in two to five years are generally high-priority activities, but they do not have the immediate urgency of those listed above. The actions scheduled to implement after the first five years generally depend upon decisions outside the City’s control, such as the Borden site redevelopment or the Regional Fast Corridor project.
### A. LAND USE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1. Redesignate SF-8 area between Fourth and Fifth Avenues N. to limited office/mixed use residential</td>
<td></td>
<td>City to revise zoning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2. Prepare for Borden site master plan proposal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3. Promote infill housing</td>
<td></td>
<td>As needed to promote at least 1500 units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4. Encourage mixed-use development</td>
<td></td>
<td>As needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5. Study impacts of pawn shops, bail bond offices, and tattoo parlors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### B. TRANSPORTATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1. Develop commuter rail station</td>
<td></td>
<td>RTA working with City for timely service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2. Construct street improvements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Fourth Avenue</td>
<td></td>
<td>Triggered by site development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Second Avenue</td>
<td></td>
<td>Linked to rail station connections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Smith Street</td>
<td></td>
<td>High priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Central Avenue</td>
<td></td>
<td>Triggered by private development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Saar Street</td>
<td></td>
<td>High priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Meeker Street</td>
<td></td>
<td>Property owner initiated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Seventh Avenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3. Plan for underpass at James and Willis Streets/BN&amp;SF tracks</td>
<td></td>
<td>Determined by Regional Fast Corridor project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4. Install pedestrian “all cross” at Fourth and Smith</td>
<td></td>
<td>Links RJC to core.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5. Adopt street tree standards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### C. PUBLIC FACILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1. Upgrade downtown parks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Locate a Town Square</td>
<td></td>
<td>Could be incremental effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Enhance parks along railroad</td>
<td></td>
<td>High priority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Masterplan Commons Park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Develop street tree plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2. Enhance Gateways</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Fourth and James</td>
<td></td>
<td>Supports rail station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Fourth and Smith</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Fourth and Meeker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Fourth and Willis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Fourth and Meeker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Central and Meeker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Central and Smith</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3. Add public buildings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Performing Arts Center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Public Market</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Rail station structure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4. Provide trails and Paths</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan
-963RPT5DOC-4798
### Summary of Recommended Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
<th>Column 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Links from Interurban Trail</td>
<td>![Bar Graph]</td>
<td>![Bar Graph]</td>
<td>![Bar Graph]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Path along James Street</td>
<td>![Bar Graph]</td>
<td>![Bar Graph]</td>
<td>![Bar Graph]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Mill Creek/Kennebeck</td>
<td>![Bar Graph]</td>
<td>![Bar Graph]</td>
<td>![Bar Graph]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5. Incorporate public art</td>
<td>![Continuous Effort]</td>
<td>![Continuous Effort]</td>
<td>![Continuous Effort]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### D. DESIGN GUIDELINES

D1. Refine design guidelines
   - a. Historic Core District
   - b. Central Avenue Corridor District
   - c. Smith and Fourth corridor
   - d. East and west of core
   - e. North James corridor

### E. TARGET AREAS

E1. Explore redevelopment opportunities
   - a. Obtain Smith Street right-of-way
   - b. Work with property owner on Borden site
   - c. Fourth Avenue
   - d. Central core historic streets
   - e. South Core District
   - f. Eastern core
   - g. Central Avenue Corridor District

**Figure IV-2: Phasing of Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan recommendations.**
C. PRELIMINARY CAPITAL PROJECT COSTS

The preliminary costs in Figure IV-3 provide a more realistic foundation for the vision and recommendations of the Downtown Strategic Action Plan. Although the costs were carefully prepared, they are based on preliminary concepts, intended to serve as a general guide. The plan spans a period of twenty years of potential new development, redevelopment and infill in downtown Kent. The plan, costs, and infrastructure needs may change and adjust. Each proposed project should be reevaluated in its own time based on specific plans.

Please note that the preliminary street improvement costs listed in the chart exceed the cost of plan recommendations. The cost of full street improvement is included because sidewalk improvements can most economically be accomplished as part of a regularly scheduled street overlay project.

Bicycle and pedestrian trails, lanes and paths can be accomplished in a number of different ways with widely differing costs. Further study is necessary before cost estimates can be provided.

Additional detail regarding the street improvements and gateways is available at the City of Kent Planning Department. Additional detail regarding commuter rail station is available from the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (Sound Transit) and the City of Kent Planning Department.
# Summary of Recommended Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Suggested Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. TRANSPORTATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1. Develop a commuter rail system.</td>
<td>$6,600,000.</td>
<td>Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority, Sound Transit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2. Street Improvements*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Fourth Avenue</td>
<td>$1,172,578.</td>
<td>City, federal grants, developers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Second Avenue</td>
<td>$883,256.</td>
<td>City, federal grants, developers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Smith Street</td>
<td>$1,525,461.</td>
<td>City, federal grants, developers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Central Avenue</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>City, federal grants, developers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Saar Street</td>
<td>$1,110,684.</td>
<td>City, federal grants, developers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Meeker &amp; Gowe Streets E.of First</td>
<td>$565,597.</td>
<td>City, federal grants, developers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Extend Seventh Avenue S. (Naden Avenue) north of Willis</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>Developer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Install historic street lights</td>
<td>$166,523. (Meeker St Example)</td>
<td>City, merchants, property owners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3. RR Underpass of Willis &amp; James Street</td>
<td>$13,000,000. for each underpass</td>
<td>State, Federal, City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4. Install pedestrian “all cross” at Fourth Avenue and Smith Street</td>
<td>$103,000.</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. PUBLIC FACILITIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1. Upgrade downtown parks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Town Square Park</td>
<td>$720,160</td>
<td>City, state grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Enhance railroad parks</td>
<td>$216,300.</td>
<td>City, state grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Master Plan Borden Park</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
<td>City, state grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Develop Street Tree/Veg. Plan</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
<td>City, state grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2. Enhance Gateways</td>
<td>$824,000.</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Fourth Avenue and James Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Fourth Avenue and Smith Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Fourth Avenue and Meeker Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Fourth Avenue and Willis Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Central Avenue and Smith Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Central Avenue and Meeker Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3. Three new public buildings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Civic and Performing Arts Center</td>
<td>$13,800,000.</td>
<td>Public voted bonds, donations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Public Market</td>
<td>$640,000.</td>
<td>Private/public partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Commuter Rail Station Structure</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>Federal, state, RTA, city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4. Trails and pathways</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>State, federal grants, city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. East/West links – Interurban Trail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. South side of James Street trail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Pedestrian/bicycle route from Mill Creek to Kent Memorial Park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Green River Trail to Commuter Rail Station – Central or First</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5. Public Art</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>City, annually funded program, donations, grants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure IV-3 Preliminary Capital Cost Estimate*
Summary of Recommended Actions

Downtown Kent SubArea Action Plan
Transportation Improvements

Figure IV-4 Recommended Transportation Improvements
Summary of Recommended Actions

Focus improvements on connecting downtown attractions.

Support proposed public facilities to add wide-spectrum of activity.

Upgrade special districts and target areas with redevelopment opportunities.

Legend:
- Key commercial buildings
- Improved streetscapes
- Parks and open space
- Important public attractions

Figure IV-5 Recommended Public Facilities
Summary of Recommended Actions

Downtown Kent SubArea Action Plan
Land Use Recommendations

Figure IV-6 Land Use Recommendations
V. Downtown Districts
V. Kent Downtown Districts

The planning process identified several downtown districts with distinct characteristics. It also identified how district redevelopment strategies can be integrated to benefit all districts. The following district descriptions illustrate more clearly how the recommended actions listed in Section III focus on individual districts, but also interconnect throughout downtown. The Districts include:

- North Frame District
- Central Avenue Corridor District
- East Frame District
- West Frame District
- South Core District
- North Core District
- Historic Core District

The plan’s land use recommendations are directed toward fine tuning the City’s comprehensive planning framework in response to specific redevelopment opportunities and neighborhood protection needs. The transportation recommendations will upgrade circulation to and within the downtown for additional businesses and residents. The public facilities improvements envisioned in this plan will enhance an already attractive development setting. District-specific design guidelines will increase compatibility between uses, reinforce the design quality of the various districts, and take advantage of special opportunities. Within each district there are target areas that merit special attention. It is recommended that the City work with property owners and developers to ensure that new development on these properties meets its potential.

Each district is described below with recommended actions and target areas where the City and the Kent Downtown Partnership may take a sustaining role.

A. North Frame District

Located along the north side of James Street, the North Frame District provides a transition between more intensive uses in the core and the single-family neighborhood to the north. The district includes the Commons Park, with its ball fields, and several streets lined with single-family homes. While the overall intent of the plan is to preserve the single-family character of the North Park neighborhood, east of Fourth Avenue, two busy arterial streets-N. Fourth Avenue and James Street—intrude on residential qualities to the extent that homes north James Street and west of Fourth Avenue are difficult to maintain.
Figure V-1: The Kent downtown districts.
Commons Park brings mixed blessings. While being a much-loved open space and active recreation area that enhances single-family living conditions in the vicinity, it also draws people and traffic that impact adjacent single-family uses. Therefore, the plan seeks to create a strong edge of high-quality development along the north side of James Street west of N. Fourth Avenue. The area is a designated redevelopment target area. Upgrading the streets and Commons Park to benefit the local neighborhood and the city at large are also high priority actions.

The actions presented below include public improvements, land use zoning, and design guidelines specific to the North Frame District and supportive of the overall plan. The actions are coordinated specifically to encourage target area redevelopment.

**Public Improvements**

**Upgrade Commons Park**

The Commons Park is an important resource for downtown Kent in many ways. For one thing, it is such an important attraction that shop owners have opened their stores in the evening during baseball season to take advantage of the increased traffic. However, there are numerous problems, including parking, access, drainage, and impacts to neighboring residents. A master plan should explore a variety of solutions to these problems. Participants in the Downtown Plan voiced many creative ideas for park improvement. The ideas included: (1) an on-site parking lot that could retain stormwater in the winter; (2) pedestrian overpasses; (3) use of the Regional Justice Center’s parking; (4) incorporating shared parking with redevelopment between N. Fourth and N. Fifth Avenues; and (5) the addition of a play structure.

**Improve James Street**

Ultimately, James Street will be an important pedestrian and bicycle route connecting the Commons Park and the Interurban Trail to the Borden site redevelopment, the Regional Justice Center, and schools and businesses in the Central Avenue corridor. Long-term planning should encourage bicycle and pedestrian uses. As development and redevelopment occurs, the City should require that James Street be enhanced with landscaping and sidewalks at least 12 feet wide. In addition, the City and developers should consider the possible grade separation at the BN&SF Railroad tracks when planning public improvements.
Institute Design Guidelines
For Residential and Office Areas
- Achieve high quality-smaller scale development

Master Plan and Upgrade Commons Park
- Parking & access
- Drainage
- Layout / use

Rezone To Allow Office With Mixed Use Overlay

Construct Gateway Elements
- Screen Parking Lot

Improve Local Circulation & Reduce Impacts of Through Traffic
- Open Cloudy Street
- Open E/W commercial street
- Cul de sac 1st, 2nd & 3rd

Plan for Possible Rail Grade Separation

Legend:
- Public Facilities
- Special Districts with Design Guideline
- Parks/Open Space
- Redevelopment Opportunities
- Gateway
- Bike/Ped. Links
- Transit Station

Downtown Kent SubArea Action Plan
North of James Street Area

Figure V-2: Proposed elements of the North Frame District
— Provide Gateway Improvements at Fourth Avenue and James Street.

This high traffic intersection close to the Commons and the Regional Justice Center is an important downtown entry point. The unimproved Borden-owned parking lot at the southeast corner could be greatly enhanced by a sign and landscaping that complement the architecture and plantings of the public facility. A wall could incorporate the buff color scheme of the Commons and Regional Justice Center and perhaps echo some of the building materials and detailing. A design team that included members of the business community, an architect, a landscape architect, artists and planners recommended a distinctive crosswalk pavement design and distinguished streetlights.

![Diagram of Gateway Improvements](image)

Figure V-3: The suggested concept for Fourth Avenue and James Street.

**Development Target Area Actions**

— Encourage Office/Residential Mixed-Use Development at the N. Fourth Avenue/N. Fifth Avenue Target Area

As noted above, the plan promotes the conversion of the single-family area between N. Fourth and N. Fifth Avenues to mixed-use office and multifamily residential development. These uses will benefit from proximity to the park and the visibility along Fourth Avenue. Also, they will be less adversely impacted by the park activity and traffic. Figure V-4 illustrates the type of development that is envisioned.
Finally, the City should administer district-specific design guidelines to ensure that:

- Development presents an attractive building face and/or landscaping to James and Fourth Streets.
- Site improvements do not negatively impact projects to the north in terms of noise, traffic, air quality, sun/share, or visual intrusion.
- Development does not result in houses converted to marginal offices without substantial redevelopment.

Although on the periphery of the downtown, the North Frame area merits special attention. A master plan for the Commons Park could begin to address important issues. Redevelopment of land along the N. Fourth/Fifth Avenue corridors north of James Street will provide opportunities for additional housing in a convenient downtown location near recreation resources. It will also provide opportunities for office/housing mixed use or housing near offices.

Finally, as one of the downtown’s most important entries, the Fourth and James gateway merits high priority in the proposed gateway enhancement program.
Kent Downtown Districts

Downtown Kent Strategic Action Plan

North Frame District

Please Note: This visualization is a conceptual interpretation of growth management policies and Downtown Kent Strategic Action Plan recommendations. It does not represent a specific recommendation for any one parcel. Its purpose is to provide an example of possible building infill, including height, location, use, density, and site amenities.

Figure V-5 North Frame District 20 year vision
B. Central Avenue Corridor District

Central Avenue comprises the downtown’s auto-oriented strip. As such, it provides a setting for auto-oriented businesses, convenience stores, large-lot enterprises, and fast food vendors. On the other hand, the district’s collage of billboards and under-maintained structures does not provide an attractive entrance into the downtown. For this reason, the plan identifies the entire district as a redevelopment target area although there are some solid businesses. The target area and recommendations include Railroad Avenue in relation to the proposed commuter rail station. Upgrading the corridor will require a two-pronged effort involving public streetscape improvements and incremental private investment. This type of major arterial redevelopment has proven effective in areas such as Lake City Way in Seattle and Central Way in Kirkland.

Public Improvements

— Upgrade Streetscape Along Central Avenue

The width of the street right-of-way width limits the extent of streetscape improvements on Central Avenue. Nevertheless, public and private investment could substantially improve the sidewalks and upgrade the utilities. The high-level transmission lines will undoubtedly remain, but numerous service lines and cable should be placed underground to remove visual clutter. Public and private property owners could augment existing street trees with additional plantings on both public and private property.

The intersections of Central Avenue with Smith and Meeker Streets represent important entry points into the downtown, and gateways are recommended at these locations. Public right-of-way is limited on Central Avenue. The gateways should make use of basic streetscape elements. In 1997, a design charrette resulted in a recommendation for special crosswalk designs, signs directing visitors to the Regional Justice Center, the commuter rail station, and the business core. The recommendation included special lighting to call attention to the gateways. Participants in the charrette included a landscape architect, an artist, an urban designer, downtown merchants, and City representatives.

The plan recommends upgrading the sidewalks along Meeker and Gowe Streets between First and Kennebeck Avenues with street trees and lighting. Where these streets intersect Central Avenue, the City should emphasize improvements to integrate the corridor with the downtown core and the commuter rail station.
Possible Rail Grade Separation

Kent Downtown Districts

Improve Smith Street At Railroad

Improve Parks To Provide Key North/South Connection

Create a Trail Along Mill Creek, Linking Mill Creek Park w/ Kent Memorial Park

Support Market

Refine Design Guidelines To Build Quality Residential Neighborhoods And Ensure Compatibility With Commercial & Public Uses

Extend Meeker & Gowe Street Improvements To The East

New Parking Garage Between Titus & Gowe Streets

Improve Central Avenue Streetscape

Refine Design Guidelines To Upgrade Commercial Corridor

Legend:

- Public Facilities
- Redevelopment Opportunities
- Special Districts with Design Guidelines
- Parks/Open Space
- Street Improvements
- Gateways
- Special Intersections
- Transit Stations

Downtown Kent SubArea Action Plan

Central Avenue Corridor District

Figure V-6: Central Avenue Corridor and West Frame Districts are illustrated above.
Design Guidelines

The City should add specific standards to the Downtown Design Guidelines to direct development toward higher quality building and site design. The design guidelines should complement streetscape improvements. For example, while it is desirable to place buildings near the public right-of-way, it may be preferable to set buildings back a few feet to allow wider sidewalks and utility placement. The following issues that the guidelines should address.

- Designate Central Avenue as a Class B pedestrian street from Willis to James Streets to provide a better setting for new development arising from the commuter rail station and core area investment.

- Screen parking areas adjacent to the street right-of-way with low shrubs or walls and trees.

- When development occurs, set back buildings to allow for at least a 12-foot-wide sidewalk.

- Provide a pedestrian link between the public sidewalk and all business entrances, even if parking is in front of the building.

- Control existing signs and remove existing billboards over time.

- Provide pedestrian-oriented building facades and integrate signs into the architecture.
Figure V-7 Design Issues That New Development Should Address in the Central Avenue District.
Figure V-8: Design Issues That Existing Development in the Central Avenue district Should Address.

Because Central Avenue is many people's first impression of downtown appearance and development quality, the corridor is important to the whole downtown image. For this reason, corridor improvements should be given priority. Successful arterial improvements in other cities in the region have demonstrated that upgrading Central Avenue is possible if the City and property owners work together.
Figure V-9: Central Avenue as it exists today.

Figure V-10: A Visualization of How Central Avenue could look.
Kent Downtown Districts

Grade-separated railroad crossing

Redevelopment on Central Ave. supporting Commuter Rail Station

Public Market

Gateways on Smith and Meeker Streets

Intersection and east/west sidewalk improvements at Meeker and Gowe Streets

Incremental redevelopment according to Central Avenue Corridor guidelines

Street trees where space permits

Downtown Kent Strategic Action Plan

Central Avenue Corridor District

Please Note: This visualization is a conceptual interpretation of growth management policies and Downtown Kent Strategic Action Plan recommendations. It does not represent a specific recommendation for any one parcel. Its purpose is to provide an example of possible building infill, including height, location, use, density, and site amenities.

Figure V-11 Central Avenue Corridor 20 Year Vision
C. East Frame District

Lying immediately east of the Central Avenue corridor, the East Frame District includes a diverse mix of commercial activities interspersed among single and multiple-family residences. Participants at a summer 1996 workshop to identify issues in this district emphasized the need for a more stable residential neighborhood, with access to services and relief from traffic and other impacts. Since the City Resource Center, Senior Center, and Kent Junior High School are located in the district, it is rich in public services. However, better connections to the downtown core would improve access to shopping, professional services, restaurants, and City and County offices. The actions recommended for the East Frame District focus on urban design improvements which could, over time, upgrade the area's livability. The planning team explored traffic revision proposals to reduce through traffic in the district, but no workable options were identified.

Public Improvements

- Construct a Pedestrian Trail Along Mill Creek
  The proposed trail and landscaping connecting Mill Creek Park and Memorial Park will improve access to open space.

- Improve Meeker and Gowe Streetscapes
  Upgrading sidewalks with lighting and landscaping on Meeker and Gowe Streets from First Avenue to Kennebeck Avenue would improve pedestrian conditions in the East Frame. The improvements would connect the First Avenue to Kennebeck Avenue sections to the Historic core and the commuter rail station and create a more attractive setting.

Design Guidelines

Design guidelines are recommended to:

- Increase compatibility between commercial and residential uses through screening, site design and building bulk regulations or guidelines.
- Increase security and safety in the area by providing lighting and pathways, reducing hazardous areas, and providing visible entries.
- Provide useful open space and pedestrian-oriented streetscapes.

While there are few specific recommendations for the East Frame in this plan, the City should continue to monitor residential neighborhood conditions and act if special problems or opportunities arise.
Create a Trail Along Mill Creek, Linking Mill Creek Park w/ Kent Memorial Park

Refine Design Guidelines To Build Quality Residential Neighborhoods And Ensure Compatibility With Commercial & Public Uses

Extend Meeker & Gowe Street Improvements To The East

Improve Central Avenue Streetscape Refine Design Guidelines To Upgrade Commercial Corridor

Legend:

- Public Facilities
- Special Districts
- Street Improvements
- Redevelopment Opportunities
- Entry Points
- Transit Station
- Gateways
- Parks/Open Space

Downtown Kent SubArea Action Plan
East Frame District

Figure V-12 Proposed Elements of the East Frame District

Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan
V-16
Please Note: This visualization is a conceptual interpretation of growth management policies and Downtown Kent Strategic Action Plan recommendations. It does not represent a specific recommendation for any one parcel. Its purpose is to provide an example of possible building infill, including height, location, use, density, and site amenities.

Figure V-13 East Frame District 20 Year Vision
D. West Frame District

The area between the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and SR 167 includes a large Metro park-and-ride lot with regional bus service, a skateboard park and sports fields, the remains of a historical residential neighborhood, industrial shops, and vacant lands. The Interurban Regional Bicycle Trail runs north and south through the district. Metro plans to phase out the park and ride lot located between Smith and James Streets when the Commuter Rail Station is built, and incorporate the functions of the park and ride lot into the rail station area design. However, the area south of Smith Street may experience dynamic redevelopment. A mix of retail, office, and residential uses is consistent with current zoning. This plan recommends street construction and design guidelines to support development efforts.

Public Improvements

— Review Proposal for a New Access Street

Major redevelopment south of Smith Street will depend on a new street connection northbound through the area from Willis Street. The Washington State Department of Transportation is currently reviewing a proposal to upgrade the intersection of the northbound ramp off SR 167. If such a north-south route connecting Meeker Street with Willis Street is determined to be feasible, the City should carefully evaluate its impacts on the downtown's traffic system.

— Connect Interurban Trail to Core Districts

Besides the proposed access, the most important transportation improvements recommended by this plan are bicycle and pedestrian connections from the Interurban Trail eastward along or near James, Meeker, and Willis Streets. The James Street pedestrian connection is especially important because some Commons Park users park at the park-and-ride and then walk to the ball fields. Crossing James Street is often difficult, so providing better parking and access for park users will be an important consideration in the recommended Commons Park Master Plan.
Figure V-14 Existing view and the view with the proposed improvements along Willis Street near the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. Note the bicycle pedestrian trail connecting downtown to the Interurban Trail, greensward improvements, and new mixed-use residential development along Saar Street.

**Design Guidelines**

Design guidelines are recommended to ensure that the new development comprises a unified whole with compatible uses, integrated circulation, adequate capital facilities, and attractive amenities. The design guidelines should reflect the type of uses proposed by the property owners. This particular district would also benefit from large site master planning so that project review might involve a phased site master plan concept.
Kent Downtown Districts

Figure V-15: Proposed elements of the West Frame District are illustrated above.
Kent Downtown Districts

Please Note: This visualization is a conceptual interpretation of growth management policies and Downtown Kent Strategic Action Plan recommendations. It does not represent a specific recommendation for any one parcel. Its purpose is to provide an example of possible building infill, including height, location, use, density, and site amenities.

Figure V-16 West Frame District 20 Year Vision
E. South Core District

The area immediately south and west of the Meeker Street historic core consists mainly of single-family houses, apartments, senior housing, and churches, with some small businesses and an elementary school. The attractive setting includes tree-lined streets and numerous older, but still viable, buildings. Willis Street provides a pleasant greenbelt on the south and the civic campus and Meeker Street provide the north boundary. The railroad effects both the eastern and western margins, and development along these edges is less substantial. However, the City proposes to locate the commuter rail station south of Gowe Street with platforms on both sides of the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe railroad tracks. The preliminary station area plan calls for a four-story parking garage with retail on the first floor east of Railroad Avenue and south of Gowe Street.

The Plan encourages residential mixed use in this area to help achieve the Comprehensive Plan’s housing goals, and to provide a built-in market for downtown businesses. The area is already an attractive in-town neighborhood because of good automobile and transit access, public services, and pleasant streets. For this reason, vacant and underdeveloped properties in the entire district, except the BN&SF Railroad corridor, form a mixed-use redevelopment target area. The blocks directly west of the BN&SF Railroad tracks are appropriate for parking and commercial redevelopment.

The South Core District could become one of the most attractive in-town neighborhoods in south King County. Looking at the district map, the South Core District seems to cradle the historic commercial area. Similarly, a strong mixed-use residential neighborhood would provide economic support for a more viable downtown. Therefore, the City should assign high priority to the actions recommended for this district. The impetus for the recommendations below is to facilitate redevelopment that strengthens this emerging mixed-use neighborhood.

Commuter rail connections will make downtown a regional transportation hub, elevating its role and image in southwest King County. Experience in other communities has shown that such increased visibility can benefit a downtown economically if the image presented by the station is positive and the connections throughout the downtown are clear. Therefore, stimulating the economic and physical vitality of the downtown depends on in a series of actions to connect the station to the businesses, offices, and residences throughout downtown, and improving the area surrounding the station.

Public Improvements

- Provide Quality Commuter Rail Station Infrastructure
  The design of the station should complement and enhance the character of the South Core and Historic Core Districts. The station design calls for a platform on each side
of the tracks and at least 800 commuter-parking spaces. It also calls for a "kiss and ride" drop off area and eight bus-bays so that both local feeder buses and regional busses can meet the train when it arrives. The plan recommends a well-designed, distinctive station to provide downtown with a strong identity and indicate a commitment to high quality.

- **Reduce Station Impacts**
  Carefully coordinate rail station design to reduce the impacts of the intermodal transportation facility on existing and future mixed-use development.

- **Restore the Historic Train Station**
  The historic Burlington Northern station located between Gowe and Titus Streets is an expression of Kent’s history and character. The City should research opportunities to coordinate with the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railroad to restore the station.

- **Construct traffic and pedestrian improvements to downtown streets as necessary to provide access.**
  During station design, a comprehensive analysis of potential traffic and transit requirements may dictate new improvements to Railroad and Central/Avenues, and Smith, Meeker, Gowe and Willis Streets.

- **Improve connecting pedestrian corridors.**
  Improve or install new sidewalks, streetlights, and tree grates along connecting pedestrian corridors. Use the design elements previously selected by the community and installed on First Avenue to establish a consistent pedestrian character throughout the core.

- **Consider the impacts of the potential Willis Street railroad underpass.**
  The Willis Street and Burlington Northern/Santa Fe underpass and the Willis Street/Union Pacific underpass are two Kent underpasses included in the Seattle project of the Freight Action Strategy (FAST). Member agencies are seeking funding within the next six years.

- **Extend Angled Parking Along Saar Street to the Union Pacific Railroad**
  Installing angled parking would define the edge of the street and provide public parking. Both these improvements would help attract higher quality development to the area. The City could use the additional parking to provide required on-site parking as an incentive to developers.

- **Extend Pedestrian/Bicycle Paths from the Interurban Trail to the Core**
  Connections to the regional trail will provide an amenity for local residents and bring visitors and commuters into the downtown.
Improve Bike/Ped. Links To Downtown From Interurban Trail

Enhance 4th Ave. Corridor

Central Avenue Streetscape Improvements Refine Design Guidelines To Upgrade Commercial Corridor

South Core Redevelopment Target Area With Design Guidelines To Encourage Mixed-Use Residential Redevelopment

Commuter Rail Station and Parking Garage

Legend:

- Public Facilities
- Redevelopment Opportunities
- Street Improvements
- Gateways
- Bike/Ped. Links
- Parks/Open Space
- Cui-de-sac
- Transit Station

Downtown Kent SubArea Action Plan
South Core District

Figure V-17: Proposed Elements of the South Core District.
Design Guidelines

The Downtown Design Review Criteria should be refined to address specific issues in the South Core District, including:

- Enhancement of the historic character of the core and rehabilitation of historically significant structures. Portions of the South Core District may be eligible for historic district status.
- Maximum compatibility between adjacent uses. Locate buildings to achieve privacy for residents, separate noisy activities and integrate parking.
- Strong building relationship to the street, with entries visible from the sidewalk.
- Useable open space on site, as required in the Downtown Design Criteria, or require a contribution to acquire new or upgrade existing open space in the neighborhood.
- Reduction of the impact of parking on the streetscape.
- Minimizing the impact of service areas.
- Unified architectural concept consistent with the character and orientation of surrounding buildings.
- "Pedestrian scale" in buildings.
- Building massing, details, and articulation to achieve an "architectural scale" consistent with surrounding buildings.
- Building forms (such as row houses or courtyard apartments), elements (such as roofs, porches, or bay windows), details (such as building trim or decoration), and materials consistent with the surrounding neighborhood.
- Hardy landscaping to enhance building forms, articulate and enhance open space, and reinforce visual continuity with adjacent sites. Figure V- and Figure V- illustrate design guideline recommendations for this district.
Figure V-18: Architectural details appropriate in the South Frame District.

Figure V-19: This illustration demonstrates how landscaping can define open space and add texture to a building.
Other Redevelopment Incentives

The City should undertake the following actions as the opportunity arises to enhance development opportunities in the South Core District.

- Consider designating a historic district and/or historic sites. *(See recommendations under Historic Core District.)*

- Consider a housing demonstration project in this area.

- To increase potential for downtown housing, explore means to reuse older homes more effectively. Several of these old homes are important resources. In the past, this type of housing has been successfully moved, clustered on more appropriate sites, remodeled to provide more than one unit, or adapted to another appropriate use.

- Construct parking on the properties immediately west of the BN&SF Railroad between Willis and Titus Streets. Parking in this location would reduce conflict between railroad operations and existing residences, provide downtown parking and potentially allow redevelopment of the public parking lot at the southwest corner of First Avenue and Titus Street for housing. Reconfiguring First Avenue would add more parking and upgrade the development setting.
Fourth Avenue signature improvements

Realignment of street

Infill along core streets
supports historic character

Gateway landscaping
Redevelopment coordinated
with new parking along railroad

Parking and street improvements
along railroad

Commuter Rail Station
- Parking
- Bus center
- Station structure
- Platform and site improvements

Kent Downtown Districts

Path to Interurban Trail

Cluster of mixed-use/multifamily residences around courtyards and
along upgraded streetscapes

Willis Street
Boulevard

City Hall

Downtown Kent Strategic Action Plan

South Core District

Please Note: This visualization is a conceptual interpretation of growth management policies
and Downtown Kent Strategic Action Plan recommendations. It does not represent a specific
recommendation for any one parcel. Its purpose is to provide an example of possible building
infill, including height, location, use, density, and site amenities.

Figure V-20 South Core District 20 Year Vision

Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan

V-28
F. North Core District

With the Regional Justice Center, the Kent Public Market, and the proposed civic and performing arts center, the North Core District includes some of the most important new urban development in south King County. These facilities and the future redevelopment potential of the property located between Smith and James Streets east of S. Fourth Avenue make the North Core District unique within the region.

Because of these dynamic opportunities, the plan designates the entire district as a redevelopment area. Some vacant and underdeveloped properties will not redevelop immediately. The North Core District links the Historic Core District and the commuter rail station with the Regional Justice Center, Kent Commons, and residences north of James Street. It is especially important that new public and private investment be coordinated to provide improved connections between these activity areas. The recommendations below call for the City to take assertive action to realize the opportunities within the North Core District.
Rezone To Allow Office With Mixed Use Overlay

Master Plan and Upgrade Commons Park
- Parking & access
- Drainage
- Layout / use

Existing Park & Ride May be available for development

Interurban Trail
"Pedestrian All Cross" Intersection

Some Street Connections When Development Occurs

Plan For Future Of Borden Site
- Create high quality development nearby
- Retain street access
- Institute design guidelines

Focus High Quality Development North of Smith
- Streetscape improvements
- Guidelines to make compatible with Borden site

Possible Rail Grade Separation

Improve Parks To Provide Key North/South Connection

Legend:
- Public Facilities
- Redevelopment Opportunities
- Special Districts with Design Guideline
- Gateways
- Parks/Open Space
- Cul-de-sac
- Bike/Ped. Links
- Transit Station

Downtown Kent SubArea Action Plan
North Core District

Figure V-21: Proposed elements of the North Core District are illustrated above.
Public Improvements

— **Construct Traffic and Pedestrian Improvements to Downtown Streets as Necessary to Provide Safe, Convenient Connections.**

Connecting the North Core district with the commuter rail station south of Gowen Street will place new demands on Smith Street. Construct Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Improvements on Smith Street between First Avenue and Central Avenue. New street improvements may include a traffic signal at Railroad Avenue and Smith Street, straightening, a new center through lane on Smith Street, new crosswalks, pedestrian improvements, and directional signs.

Improve or install new sidewalks, streetlights, and tree grates along connecting pedestrian corridors. Use the design elements previously selected by the community and installed on First Avenue and Meeker Street to establish a consistent pedestrian character throughout the core.

— **Enhance Parks Along the Railroad to Provide Linkages Between the Station and the Core**

Upgrade Burlington Green, Yangzhou and Kaibara parks as connecting open space and as a kind of gateway. A canopy along the east side of the parks would provide pedestrian protection, serve as outdoor stalls for the market, and visually tie the Sister Cities Parks together. Not only will the parks be an important pedestrian link and open space resource, they will be highly visible to thousands of commuters taking the train from Tacoma to Seattle and be an important part of Kent’s image.

— **Locate a Town Square Park near the Smith Street/Meeker Street spine of the Core**

A Town Square Park would provide a downtown open space for large public gatherings and performances. It might consist of a small plaza constructed as part of or near the civic and performing arts center that could expand to accommodate concerts or celebrations by closing Second Avenue and the east portion of Harrison Street. Coordinate closely with the Performing Arts Center Committee and other interested parties to ensure that the park and civic and performing arts center complement and enhance one another.

— **Support the Public Market as a connecting activity between the core and the area north of Smith Street.**
Figure V-22: The above illustration shows existing conditions along Railroad Avenue.

Figure V-23: A canopy along Railroad Avenue will provide pedestrian protection and market space.
- Construct Pedestrian “All Cross” or Scramble System at the Corner of Fourth Avenue and Smith Street

The King County Regional Justice Center (RJC) brings many new employers and visitors to downtown. The RJC can be a boon to the downtown if it is linked to the core area shops, restaurants, and services. An “all cross” pedestrian connection, which provides for pedestrians to move diagonally through the intersection in the signal sequence while all automobiles wait, would facilitate pedestrian linkage. It is recommended that the Public Works Department explore the feasibility of such a design and the intersection be upgraded with gateway landscaping and signs. If an “all cross” or scramble system is not feasible, then, at a minimum, signals can be sequenced to encourage pedestrian crossing, especially during non-peak traffic periods.

Figure V-24: “All cross” or “scramble” intersection at Fourth and Smith Streets to allow 4-way crossing at a signal sequence. Decorative pavement, canopy or trellis, and enhanced private landscaping are possibilities.
Design Guidelines

Refinement of the existing design guidelines is recommended to:

Ensure quality development in the North Core District, especially along Fourth Avenue and Smith Street.

Classify Smith Street between Central and Fourth Avenues and Fourth Avenue between Titus and James Streets as Class A, pedestrian-oriented streets.

Ensure that development along these streets addresses the Borden site issues outlined below.

Redevelopment Opportunities

The plan supports and integrates other development activities, including those described below.

— Establish Design Parameters and Review Process for Redevelopment of the Borden Site

Because of its large size, central location, and transportation access, the Borden site is one of the premier downtown redevelopment opportunities in south King County. Although the Borden Company has indicated no immediate plans to move, the City should take steps to ensure that when redevelopment occurs, it is carefully coordinated. Therefore, it is recommended that the City establish a master plan process for this site, with standards to guide any future redevelopment proposal. The standards should include:

• Guidelines for streets and sidewalks.
• Provision for extension of Second Avenue into the site.
• A mix of uses.
• Convenient access to transit facilities.
• Orientation to adjacent sites.
• Provision of open space and pedestrian amenities.
• Design guidelines for architectural and site design character.

— Support residential development in the North Core District.

The North Core District is assuming a more central location and role in downtown activities. Vehicle and pedestrian circulation between activities in the North Core District and the Commuter Rail station will become increasingly important. For these reasons, the North Core District recommendations merit high priority.
Support a Civic and Performing Arts Center Downtown.

A Civic and Performing Arts Center with facilities for conferences and other events, would be an important attraction to the downtown, extending hours of activity into the night. It would provide a much-needed location for events, performances, meetings, and educational programs. The center would also be a lively element if pedestrian-oriented uses, such as small shops, newsstands, flower stalls, coffee bars, pedestrian spaces, and/or public artwork, are included along Fourth Avenue and Smith Street. The entry to the site could include a plaza that for outdoor performances and celebrations.

Support the Public Market

The Public Market on Railroad Avenue between Meeker and Smith Streets will add an important activity. It will anchor businesses on Railroad Avenue, enhance the Sister Cities Parks complex, and serve as a connecting element between the commuter rail station and the North Core. To support the market the plan recommends additional parking on Railroad Avenue and a sidewalk with a canopy east of Sister Cities Parks to provide a shelter for outdoor stalls in the summer and pedestrian weather protection in the winter.
Kent Downtown Districts

Signature street improvements along Fourth Ave...

Mixed-use development along Smith Street

Gateway feature

Office development

Potential for masterplanned mixed-use development

Pedestrian all-cross/gateway intersection

Improved Sister Cities Parks

Outdoor performance/celebration area

Smith Street street improvements

Downtown Kent Strategic Action Plan

North Core District

Please Note: This visualization is a conceptual interpretation of growth management policies and Downtown Kent Strategic Action Plan recommendations. It does not represent a specific recommendation for any one parcel. Its purpose is to provide an example of possible building infill, including height, location, use, density, and site amenities.

Figure V-27 North Core District 20 Year Vision
G. Historic Core District

The Historic Core District is the traditional and geographic heart of downtown Kent. The core contains three discrete retail areas: one along Meeker Street, the community’s “main street”; a second, emphasizing restaurants and specialty shops, just to the south and east along First Avenue (also known as the Old Titusville District); and a third, stretching along Railroad Avenue opposite Burlington Green and Yangzhou Parks. All three feature pleasant pedestrian conditions and turn-of-the-century buildings. The district also includes the Kent City Hall/civic campus just south of Gowe Street.

The Historic Core District is bordered by the public parking lot and library on the north, the Central Avenue corridor on the east, and the South Core District mixed-use residential neighborhood commuter rail station on the south and west. Considerable activity is generated within the Historic Core District by the Regional Justice Center located within 1,000 feet. All of these activities will support the Historic Core District economically if they are included in a comprehensive redevelopment strategy.

The Downtown Strategic Action Plan addresses the areas immediately surrounding the Historic Core District as well as the district itself because of the dynamic redevelopment potential of those areas. The surrounding districts will support the Historic Core District by accommodating residences, transportation facilities, jobs, and improved streetscapes and parks, directly adjacent to the Historic Core District. This strategy builds on the district’s current strengths, including pedestrian-oriented streets, civic attractions, and a variety of activities.

Several actions are recommended for the existing Historic Core District that are intended to:

- Enhance the historic architectural character and pedestrian amenities.
- Develop vacant or underutilized sites.
- Visually and physically connect the Historic Core District to the surrounding districts.
Core Area Design Guidelines
To Encourage Mixed-use Infill
And Reinforce Historic Character

Potential Civic Square

Assure Pedestrian Oriented Redevelopment At This Gateway

Enhance 4th Ave. Corridor

Improve Bike/Ped. Links To Downtown From Intercorurban Trail

Design Guidelines To Encourage Mixed-Use Infill Redevelopment

Improve Parks To Provide Key North/South Connection

Support Market With Improvements

Emphasize Restoration of Buildings Which Support Historic Character Of The Core

Railroad South Corridor Redevelopment Target Area

Central Avenue Streetscape Improvements

Commuter Rail Station

Legend:

Public Facilities
Redevelopment Opportunities
Street Improvements
Gateways
Bike/ Ped. Links
Parks/Open Space
Cul-de-sac
Transit Station

Downtown Kent SubArea Action Plan
Historic Core District

Figure V-28: Proposed elements of the Historic Core District.
Public Improvements

— Make Pedestrian Improvements

While the downtown benefited from recent improvements, including those to Rose Garden Park, First Avenue (Titusville business district), Meeker Street, and Kherson Park, further improvements are recommended to make connections with neighboring districts. Safe and attractive streets between the commuter rail station, the King County Regional Justice Center and other offices, businesses and residences throughout downtown will encourage pedestrian use. Pedestrian lighting and street furniture should be installed in the Historic Core District along Fourth Avenue when pedestrian systems are upgraded in the North Core and South Core Districts. As development occurs, 12-foot-wide sidewalks should be required on the east side of South Fourth Avenue. Meeker Street and Gowe Street pedestrian improvements should also be extended eastward from First Avenue to Kennebeck Avenue.

— Enhance Gateway

The intersection of Fourth Avenue and Meeker Street is identified as a gateway and should be enhanced with special street lighting, signage, distinctive intersection paving, artwork, and/or landscaping. The most effective way to upgrade the image of this intersection is additional good quality infill development with corner entries, architectural features, or plazas.

Design Guidelines and Historic Preservation Activities

Meeker Street retains much of the character of an early twentieth-century small town. Preserving this traditional quality is an important aspect of the community’s desire for a “home town” identity. Therefore, revised design guidelines for the Historic Core District should emphasize traditional building forms, materials, and details. All of the streets in the Historic Core District are Class A pedestrian-oriented streets according to City design guidelines. New buildings in the core should adhere to the guidelines so that the buildings provide continuous building frontage along the street. In general, exterior remodeling to existing buildings should be directed toward restoring the original character. However, there are some cases where the building is significantly altered or is not historically significant. The City should update the existing inventory of historic commercial buildings and encourage redevelopment in the Historic Core where appropriate.

A façade restoration project was initiated by the Kent Downtown Partnership in 1997. The program should be continued, and should include educational materials that demonstrate restoration techniques that conform with the Landmarks and Historic District Preservation Program. The program could also include low-interest loans and tax abatements to encourage façade restoration.
1. Meeker Street - Before

- Repaint the building exterior.
- Replace the canopy with a larger more traditional canopy and install below transom windows. Remove projecting and wall signs and replace with pedestrian oriented signs that hang below the canopy.
- These two buildings can be used together with a similar painting scheme and cornice line.

1. Meeker Street - After

- With the exception of this building and the Ben Franklin building, all the buildings along the south side of Meeker Street are two stories tall. This one story building is somewhat of a "missing tooth" along the Meeker Street elevation. This drawing suggests the addition of a second story for residential use.
- Increase the storefront glazing to the maximum height possible and install transom windows.
- Add awnings over each bay. Replace the existing projecting signs with signs that hang from the awnings below.

Figure V-30 Façade Improvement and Infill Development Concepts
Figure 31-Conceptual Design for the Commuter Rail Station
Redevelopment Target Areas

Because there are several different opportunities in the Historic Core District for the City to encourage private redevelopment, the whole district is identified as a redevelopment target area. One opportunity that merits further exploration is the district’s designation as a historic landmark district.

A very different set of opportunities lies east of the BN&SF Railroad corridor. Several properties are underutilized and could be rehabilitated to provide space for start-up businesses if the surrounding streetscape, access, and parking conditions can be upgraded.

Recent efforts by the City and the Kent Downtown Partnership have kept the Historic Core District viable. New initiatives should build on this work by focusing on redevelopment opportunities as they arise. Continued infill and connections to the Historic Core District will benefit the downtown as a whole.
Pedestrian all-cross intersection

Signature building at Fourth and Meeker

Infill development in historic core which reinforces historic character

Library

and park become civic focus in the North Core District

Maneuvered by

Sister Cities Parks

improvements

Public Market

Mixed-use/residential development

Fourth Avenue improvements

Street improvements on Meeker and Gowe Streets extended to east of Central Avenue

Downtown Kent Strategic Action Plan

Historic Core District

Please Note: This visualization is a conceptual interpretation of growth management policies and Downtown Kent Strategic Action Plan recommendations. It does not represent a specific recommendation for any one parcel. Its purpose is to provide an example of possible building infill, including height, location, use, density, and site amenities.

Figure V-32 Historic Core District 20 Year Vision
Part II
VI. Environmental Information
VI. Additional Environmental Information

A. Fact Sheet

Description of Proposal

The City of Kent is supplementing its existing downtown plan with a Downtown Strategic Action Plan that focuses on future actions and implementation measures. The plan will identify the main features of the City’s downtown form for the next several decades, including what type of development should occur where and how it should be served. The environmental analysis focuses on the screening of plan alternatives as prepared with contributions by advisory committees, Downtown Stakeholders Task Force, City staff, downtown property owners and merchants, and the public at-large.

Location of Proposal

The Downtown Strategic Action Plan and Integrated Preliminary Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) addresses the downtown area as indicated in Figure III-1, Study Area. The approximate limits of downtown Kent are SR 167 on the west, Cloudy and James Streets on the north, Woodford Avenue and Titus Street, and Willis Street/SR 516 on the south.

Proponent and Lead Agency

City of Kent
Planning Department
400 West Gowe Street
(Mailing Address: 220 Fourth Avenue S.)
Kent, WA 98032-5895
206/859-3390

Proposed Implementation Date

The Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan is scheduled to be adopted on April 7, 1998

Responsible Official

James Harris
Planning Director
City of Kent
400 West Gowe Street
(Mailing Address: 220 Fourth Avenue S.)
Kent, WA  98032-5895
206/859-3390

Contact Person
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Principal Contributors
City of Kent
Kent Downtown Partnership

MAKERS architecture and urban design
BRW, Inc.
Property Counselors
The Langlow Associates

Kent Citizens and Property Owners

Draft SEIS Issue Date
February 4, 1997

Preliminary FSEIS Issue Date
May 19, 1997

Public Meetings
A public workshop on the proposed plan alternatives and Draft SEIS was held February 5, 1997 at the Kent Commons. Comments on the Draft SEIS were accepted until March 6, 1997. The Kent Planning Department hosted an Open House on May 19 to display current modifications to the plan based on public input and comment. The Kent Land Use and Planning Board met April 14 and May 19 to review the plan and preliminary final SEIS. A public hearing was held May 27 and was continued to June 2. The City Council Planning Board included public comment on August 6, 1997.

Nature and Date of Final Action
The adoption of the Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan is scheduled for April 7, 1998.
Type and Timing of Subsequent Environmental Review

The programmatic Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), preliminary Final SEIS and subsequent Final SEIS constitute the required environmental review for the City of Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan. The Final SEIS will serve to supplement the City of Kent Comprehensive Plan Final EIS which was issued January 30, 1995. Any subsequent environmental review will occur on a project-by-project basis. The draft and final SEIS seek to adequately address the anticipated impacts of certain types of subsequent implementation actions consistent with the Downtown Strategic Action Plan. In the future, the City may decide to adopt a planned action ordinance which meets the requirements of RCW 43.21C.240.2.

If such an ordinance is adopted, the City, while reviewing a subsequent project action that is consistent with the recommendations of the Downtown Strategic Action Plan, may determine that the requirements for environmental analysis, protection, and mitigation measures in the City’s development regulations and the Kent Comprehensive Plan provide adequate analysis of and mitigation for the specific adverse environmental impacts of the subsequent project. As a result, project-level development proposals may have a reduced amount of environmental review, if any.

Location of SEIS Background Data

City of Kent
Planning Department
400 West Gowe Street
(Mailing Address: 220 Fourth Avenue S.)
Kent, WA 98032-5895
206/859-3390

Cost of a Copy of the Preliminary Final SEIS

This document is available for a fifteen dollar fee to interested citizens and groups. Copies may be obtained at the address above or by mail. One copy will be provided to each individual or group upon request.

Executive Summary

Alternatives and Selection Process

During November and December of 1996, the consulting team formulated three alternatives. The alternatives were based on the issues identified in public meetings, the environmental and technical analysis, and the redevelopment options outlined in the market report. All three alternatives were consistent with, and refinements of, the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Community members evaluated and commented on the alternatives at public meetings in January. The City published a Draft Supplementary EIS (DSEIS) in February of 1997 evaluating
the environmental impacts of the alternatives. Additional public meetings were conducted in February and March to review the DSEIS and to discuss the components of a preferred alternative with citizens.

The three alternatives were:

— **Alternative 1**

Alternative 1 described growth and development downtown with limited guidance. It emphasized current trends, such as capturing business from motorists, enhancing the historic core, and encouraging commercial development on Central Avenue. It recommended maintaining existing zoning, improving streetscapes, and improving access to all sections of downtown. This alternative proposed a commuter rail station at Smith Street with a Smith Street railroad underpass.

— **Alternative 2**

Alternative 2 focused on attracting regional trade based on further development of the compact historic commercial/civic core of downtown. It emphasized encouraging investors to assemble land, identifying redevelopable sites, and increasing park and street improvements. This alternative described a master plan process to develop the existing industrial property between Smith and James Streets east of S. Fourth Avenue. It also described commercial redevelopment of the north side of James Street. It proposed locating the proposed commuter rail station between Gowe and Meeker Streets and closing Gowe Street to vehicle traffic at the railroad grade. This alternative included railroad underpasses at James and Willis Streets.

— **Alternative 3**

Alternative 3 focused on attracting regional trade based on a business/hotel/performing arts complex located in the north area of downtown. It proposed relocation of the industrial use located on the Borden site. The relocation would be followed by a dramatic redevelopment of the property as an active link between the historic commercial core and the King County Regional Justice Center. This alternative suggested expansion of Second Avenue as a visual and pedestrian link to the historic commercial core. It placed the rail station between Smith and James Streets. James and Willis Streets railroad underpasses were also part of this alternative.

The Downtown Strategic Action Plan Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement contains complete descriptions, maps, and analysis of all three alternatives.

**The Preferred Alternative and the Recommendation Process**

The preferred alternative is presented as the Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan in Part I of this document. The actions recommended in the Downtown Strategic Action Plan are generally based on the concepts expressed in Alternative 2.
During the Land Use and Planning Board and City Council review of the preliminary FSEIS, which contained a recommendation for the alternative 3 (north), rather than the alternative 2 (south) rail station location, more citizens testified in favor of the alternative 2 commuter rail station location (south site) than in favor of the alternative 3 location (north site). Business owners from both the north and the south sites did not approve of relocation proposals. Retail business owners located east of the railroad right-of-way believed that rail station activity would generate additional business, others viewed businesses east of Railroad Avenue and south of Gowe Street as urban blight, to be replaced by a parking garage. Relative costs and vehicle and pedestrian circulation were debated. The City Council voted to recommend alternative 2 (the south site) and passed a resolution to approve the plan with the alternative 2 (south) station site in a location south of Gowe Street.

The recommendations made by The Land Use and Planning Board, the City Council Planning Committee, the City Council Committee of the Whole, and the final City Council approval action items have been incorporated in the plan. The recommendations and actions include:

**Land Use and Planning Board Recommendations**

1. Additional study of the north and south depot locations.
2. Do not revise the Comprehensive Plan and zoning designation of the north edge of the North Park neighborhood east of James Street from single family residential to limited office/mixed use multifamily residential overlay.
3. Eliminate the Commons Park parking as shown on the Plan maps and recommend angled parking with a wider and improved Fifth Avenue. Locate the angled parking on the west side of Fifth Avenue next to the Park.
4. Study the parking for the park on Meeker near Union Pacific railroad.
5. Develop realistic costs in relation to the Plan.
6. Consider an additional Gateway location at Central and SR-167.
7. Add a safe place for a drop-off/pick-up location at Commons park. This should be located on Fifth Avenue within the angled parking.
8. Study traffic patterns in the North Park area to consider safety and access.

These recommendations were carried out and/or incorporated in the plan, and referred to the City Council for final action. The Commons Park recommendations were incorporated in an action to provide a master plan for the park.

**City Council final Action:**

1. Change the plan sections that refer to the Performing Arts/Civic Center located in a specific location to a general location downtown.
2. Include additional support for bicycle lanes and paths.

3. Include additional support for historic preservation and commemoration.

4. Insure pedestrian and bicycle safety on the recommended trail linking Mill Creek Park with Kent Memorial Park.

5. Extend the Office/mixed use multifamily residential overlay that is recommended between Fourth and Fifth Avenues north of James Street and south of Cloudy Street north beyond Cloudy Street to the edge of the existing multi-family zone.

6. Refer only to a south commuter rail station location in the final plan document.

The above recommendations are incorporated with the plan.

**Additional Environmental Analysis**

The environmental impacts of adopting and implementing the Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan were identified and analyzed in the DSEIS and the Preliminary FSEIS. Since May 19, 1997, when the Preliminary FSEIS was issued, the City has received additional traffic and commuter rail station environmental information that is summarized below.

In December, 1997, the Regional Transit Authority issued a Kent downtown related document, the Tacoma to Seattle Commuter Rail Draft Environmental Analysis and the Technical Report in Support of Environmental Assessment. The environmental assessment includes proposed mitigation for traffic impacts during peak park-and-ride trips, including turn lanes in several locations, and signalization on Railroad Avenue. It includes assessments of potential impacts to socioeconomic factors, transportation, noise and vibration, hazardous materials, biological resources/ecology, historical, park, and recreation resources, archaeological and cultural resources, visual quality, safety and security, air quality, water quality, hydrology, and earth.

Both documents, incorporated with this EIS by reference, are available for public review in the City of Kent Planning Department.

A later assessment of 2010 PM Peak Transit Station Traffic Impacts, dated January 20, 1998, by HT Associates, a transportation consulting firm, is also incorporated by reference. It is available for public review in the City of Kent Planning Department. The findings stated:

"The impacts of traffic at either location are rather subtle...There would be a slight, but perceptible, degradation of intersection LOS in the CBD by station traffic at either location. However, the even more subtle differences in impact between the two locations probably cannot be regarded as significant, in light of the travel models inherent limits of precision. This is not to say that there would actually be no difference--rather, that it is below the model's significance threshold."
Environmental Impacts and Mitigation

The DSEIS contains environmental analysis of the environmental impacts three proposed alternatives and recommended impact mitigation measures. The actions proposed in the preferred alternative, together with an analysis of preliminary project related environmental impacts and recommended mitigation measures were discussed in the Preliminary FSEIS. The project related analysis and recommended mitigation in the preliminary FSEIS should be considered advisory - used as a guide as projects are initiated. If the City adopts a Planned Action ordinance in the future, some of the recommended actions are potentially eligible for a reduced amount of environmental review, if any. Those actions, impacts and mitigation measures are listed below.

Proposed planned actions are discussed below:

Land Use

Rezone the SF-8 area between Fourth Avenue N. and Fifth Avenue N.

Discussion:

Rezone the Comprehensive Plan map and adopt a new zoning designation for the area between Fourth Avenue N. and Fifth Avenue N., north of James Street. Revise the existing Comprehensive Map designation, SF 8 (Single Family residential, 8 dwelling units maximum per acre) to Commercial. The zoning code designation shall allow limited office development, and include residential development combined with office development as a conditional use. Institute new site development guidelines to ensure high-quality, substantial development. Initiate zoning use and development standards to require aggregation of lots and to prevent lot-by-lot conversion of single family homes to office commercial use. The new zoning designation should be consistent with the existing O, Professional Office, designation (Zoning Code Section 15.04.150) with the following exceptions:
Additional Environmental Information

Suggested revisions to the existing development standards are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permitted Uses</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Revised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Blueprinting and photocopying services would be prohibited. Multifamily uses would be a conditional use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Yard</td>
<td>25 feet</td>
<td>Reduce to 10 feet to be the same as residential district.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Environmental Impact Evaluation:

- The proposed Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code revisions will result in a loss of single family housing units within the area of change.
- The proposed bulk and scale of office/residential development as well as the placement of buildings on the site may create impacts to homes in the existing MRG, Garden density multifamily residential district. The MRG district is located north of the proposed office/residential area.
- Replacement of single family homes with office/residential uses will eliminate the private open space created by the typical single family yard. However, because of the potential increase in population in the area, the need for open space may increase.
- During the weekday peak hours, office uses will create additional traffic and turning movements onto Fourth Avenue N.
- The increased density of office use and increased residential density will create additional peak hour trips to and from the Kent Valley.
- Office/residential development will increase the area surfaced with impervious surfaces.
- An increased number of occupants will work and live in the proposed rezone area. Due to the proximity of jobs, services, shopping, and recreation, pedestrian activity will increase.
- The soil in the proposed rezone area may not support multi-story buildings on conventional foundations.

Mitigation Measures:

- Ensure that the new zoning designation permits adequate housing to replace the existing housing units as development occurs.
- Adopt design guidelines, specific to the proposed rezone area, to ensure high quality, substantial office/residential development compatible with the adjacent residential neighborhood.
• To make better use of existing open space, improve Commons Park, located directly west of the recommended rezone area, by instituting a master plan based on neighborhood involvement and participation.

• Prior to issuance of development permits, the owner and/or developer shall construct street and vehicle access improvements consistent with the adopted City of Kent Construction Standards or as modified and approved by the Public Works Director.

• The developer shall provide a traffic impact study (see page 20).

• The developer shall construct stormwater facilities consistent with City of Kent Construction Standards and source control best management practices, or as modified and approved by the Public Works Director.

• Construct pedestrian improvements as set forth in Section V of this plan.

• If required by the building official, prior to or in conjunction with a building permit application, submit a soils report stamped by a licensed geotechnical engineer. The soils report must identify soil classification, bearing qualities and include foundation recommendations.

Responsibilities:

• The City is responsible for revising the Comprehensive Plan designation and zoning. The City also is responsible for developing new design guidelines and the Parks Master Plan.

• The property owners and/or the developer proponents are responsible for on and off-site analysis, corridor mitigation, public facilities and other improvements.

Develop Master planning requirements to apply to any redevelopment proposal for the Borden Site

Discussion:

Because of its central location and large area, the Borden industrial property presents a great future opportunity for mixed-use (office, retail and residential) development. However, the owners have no immediate plans to relocate or redevelop the site. If, in the future, the owners of the Borden site propose a redesignation to allow mixed use development, coordinate with the owners to create a development master plan. The plan must be consistent with the recommendations of the Downtown Strategic Action Plan.

Environmental Impacts:

• No adverse environmental impacts are expected to result from this action. The master plan requirements should result in an improved development proposal consistent with the City’s adopted plans.
Mitigation Measures:
- None are required.

Responsibility:
- The Kent Planning Department would be responsible for developing the master plan requirements and submitting it to City Council for action.

Promote infill housing

Discussion:
In order to meet the Comprehensive Plan’s intent to enhance the downtown as a place to live, the City should promote the construction of new urban-style infill housing. Housing types should include condominium townhouses, stacked and attached units that resemble single-family design and character, and residential mixed with commercial and office uses.

Environmental Impact Evaluation:
- Development of additional residential units will increase the need for open space.
- The bulk and scale of residential development as well as the placement of buildings on the site, may create impacts to adjacent homes and/or businesses.
- During the weekday peak hours, residential uses will create additional traffic and turning movements adjacent streets.
- The increased residential density will create additional peak hour trips to and from the Kent Valley.
- Residential development will increase the area surfaced with impervious surfaces.
- An increased number of occupants will live in the downtown. Due to the proximity of jobs, services, shopping, and recreation, pedestrian activity will increase.
- The soil in the specific site may not support multi-story buildings on conventional foundations.
- Recent development of high-density multifamily residential uses appears to have created a demand for parking beyond what is required by code.

Mitigation Measures:
- As residential units increase downtown, assess the amount of available park and recreation facilities in relation to the number of households.
• Adopt design guidelines, specific to the individual districts, to ensure high-quality, substantial residential development.

• Construct street and vehicle access improvements consistent with the adopted City of Kent Construction Standards or as modified and approved by the Public Works Director.

• The developer shall provide a traffic impact study (see page VI-20).

• Construct storm water facilities consistent with City of Kent Construction Standards and source control best management practices, or as revised and approved by the Public Works Director.

• Construct pedestrian improvements as set forth in Section V of this plan.

• If required by the building official, prior to or in conjunction with a building permit application, submit a soils report stamped by a licensed geo-technical engineer. The soils report must identify soil classification, bearing qualities and include foundation recommendations.

• The City should conduct a study of the relationship of on-site and off-site parking and residential density to determine whether existing parking requirements are adequate to provide sufficient on-site parking.

Responsibilities:

• The City is responsible for design guidelines, park master planning and zoning code analysis.

• The property owner and/or developer is responsible for required on- and off-site analysis, public facilities, and other improvements.

Action A5: Promote the construction of new commercial, office, or mixed use development and redevelopment.

Discussion:

To respond to the potential for additional downtown office and commercial development identified in the market analysis the City should encourage the construction of commercial, office, and mixed-use developments within the downtown. provide a variety of living situations within districts that require ground floor retail uses.

Environmental Impact Evaluation:

• Development of mixed-use development that includes residential units will increase the need for open space.
• The proposed bulk and scale of commercial, office or mixed-use, development as well as the placement of buildings on the site, may create impacts to adjacent homes and/or businesses.

• During the weekday peak hours, commercial, office or mixed-use uses will create additional traffic and turning movements adjacent streets.

• The increased commercial, office or mixed-use density will create additional peak hour trips to and from the Kent Valley.

• Commercial, office or mixed-use development will increase the area surfaced with impervious surfaces.

• An increased number of occupants will work and live in the downtown. Due to the proximity of jobs, services, shopping, and recreation, pedestrian activity will increase.

The soil in the specific site may not support multi-story buildings on conventional foundations.

Mitigation Measures:

• As residential units within mixed-use development increase downtown, assess the amount of available park and recreation facilities in relation to the number of households.

• Adopt design guidelines, specific to the proposed area, to ensure high-quality, substantial office, commercial, and mixed-use residential development. The guidelines should require development that is compatible with adjacent uses and that maintains the pedestrian quality of the downtown.

• Prior to issuance of development permits, the owner and/or developer shall construct street and vehicle access improvements consistent with the adopted City of Kent Construction Standards or as modified and approved by the Public Works Director.

• The developer shall provide a traffic impact study (see page VI-20).

• The developer shall construct storm water facilities consistent with City of Kent Construction Standards and source control best management practices, or as revised and approved by the Public Works Director.

• Construct pedestrian improvements as set forth in Section V of this plan.

• If required by the building official, prior to or in conjunction with a building permit application, the developer shall submit a soils report stamped by a licensed geotechnical engineer. The soils report must identify soil classification, bearing qualities and include foundation recommendations.

Responsibilities:

• The City is responsible for park master planning and design guidelines.
• The development proponents shall be responsible for conducting the soils and traffic analyses. They are responsible for constructing the improvements listed in the mitigation measures.

Public Facilities

**Masterplan the Commons Park.**

**Discussion:**
Masterplan and improve the Commons Park. The Commons Park is an important resource for downtown Kent in many ways. A master plan should explore a variety of solutions to parking, access, drainage, and traffic problems, as well as the potentials for more efficient use.

**Environmental Impact Evaluation:**
- Currently the Commons Park typically hosts six softball games or nine soccer games at one time. It hosts assorted other activities when soccer is not under way. The high rate of utilization for ball fields is partly due to the lack of physical improvements, such as restrooms and bleachers that would typically support a play field of this size. Master planning the park to add physical support facilities may result in less space available for active and passive recreation.

- The increase in facilities may result in an increased need for on-site or off-site parking. The addition of parking on site would reduce the open space usable for recreation, but would create safer access to the park.

- Automobiles entering and exiting a Commons Park parking area entrance could create increased traffic congestion.

- The increased park usage may create additional peak hour trips to and from the Kent Valley.

- The development of a parking lot, restroom, bleachers, or paved paths would result in increased impervious surface.

- Increased park usage and traffic circulation may result in adverse impacts to pedestrian safety.

- The soil in the specific site may not support buildings on conventional foundations.

- The use of the park at night and required lighting could create adverse light impacts to adjacent areas if not installed and managed carefully.
Mitigation Measures:

- If needed, develop additional play fields in other areas in the City.

- Review available parking for Commons Park use. Consider restricting the number of parking spaces provided on site to drop off, loading, and handicapped spaces.

- Construct street and vehicle access improvements consistent with the adopted City of Kent Construction Standards or as modified and approved by the Public Works Director.

- The developer shall provide storm water facilities consistent with City of Kent Construction Standards and source control best management practices, or as revised and approved by the Public Works Director.

- Investigate ways to construct safe pedestrian crossings between the Commons Park and the RJC parking lot.

- If a building is constructed, prior to or in conjunction with application, submit a soils report stamped by a licensed geotechnical engineer. The soils report must identify soil classification, bearing qualities and include foundation recommendations.

- Shield lights so that off-site impacts are minimized. Schedule events in order to minimize night time use and restrict night time hours.

Responsibility:

- The City shall masterplan the park and mitigate redevelopment, if any.

Site a Town Square Park in the area between Smith Street and Meeker Street to provide a downtown open space for large public gatherings.

Discussion:

A Town Square is a traditional community gathering place. It should be large enough to hold community celebrations, performances, and ceremonies. It should be located near civic and historic places shared by the community.

Environmental Impacts:

No adverse environmental impacts are expected to result from this action. The Town Square will provide a safe, well-organized space for public gatherings.

Mitigation Measures:

None are required.
Responsibility:
- The City shall be responsible for identifying appropriate sites, working with land owners, master planning and developing the facility.

Masterplan Burlington Green, Kaibara, Rosebed and other parks along the railroad to enhance open space and park facilities and strengthen connections between the proposed commuter rail station and the core.

Discussion:
Enhance parks along the railroad to provide linkages between the station and the core. A canopy along the east side of the Burlington Northern/Yangzhou Parks would provide pedestrian protection, serve as outdoor stalls for the market, and visually tie the Sister Cities Parks together.

Environmental Impacts:
No adverse environmental impacts are expected to result from this action. The plan should result in improved pedestrian connections.

Mitigation Measures:
- None are required.

Responsibility:
- The City shall be responsible for master planning and developing the facility improvements.
- The City or, in some instances, a property owner and/or developer may be responsible for construction of the improvements.
- Owners and/or developers whose buildings occupied portions of downtown gateways would be responsible for incorporating building designs compatible with the gateway.

Support development of Civic and Performing Arts Center.

Discussion:
Support a civic and performing arts center between Meeker and Smith Streets. A civic and performing arts center at this location, with facilities for conferences and other events, would be an important attraction to the downtown, extending hours of activity into the night. It would provide a much-needed location for meetings, events, parties, catering facilities, and educational programs.
Environmental Impact Evaluation:

- The Civic/Performing Arts Center may use space presently providing parking.
- Before and after the performance hours, patrons uses will create additional traffic.
- The proposed Civic and Performing Arts Center may create additional peak hour trips to and from the Kent Valley.
- The proposed Civic and Performing Arts Center could increase the area surfaced with impervious surfaces.
- The patrons attending events at the proposed Civic and Performing Arts Center and persons using the additional retail and retail service shops will increase pedestrian activity in the surrounding area.
- The soil in the specific site may not support multi-story buildings on conventional foundations.

Mitigation Measures:

- Allow joint use of Civic and Performing Arts Center parking for public parking.
- Construct street and vehicle access improvements consistent with the adopted City of Kent Construction Standards or as modified and approved by the Public Works Director.
- The developer shall provide a traffic impact study (see page VI-20).
- Construct stormwater facilities consistent with City of Kent Construction Standards and source control best management practices, or as revised and approved by the Public Works Director.
- Construct pedestrian improvements as set forth in Section V. of this plan.
- If required by the building official, prior to or in conjunction with a building permit application, submit a soils report stamped by a licensed geo-technical engineer. The soils report must identify soil classification, bearing qualities and include foundation recommendations.

Responsibility:

The Civic and Performing Arts Center developer would be responsible for conducting the necessary studies and implementing the required mitigation.

Support development of the Public Market: Reconfigure Railroad Avenue as needed between Smith and Harrison Street to include angled parking and to limit traffic to one way.
Discussion:
The Kent Public Market been a successful community attraction in its present location between Smith and Harrison Streets. Markets in other Cities have operated successfully in permanent structures, extending business hours and offering a wider variety of goods and services. The City can take several actions to support this important activity, including providing angled parking on Railroad Avenue and outdoor vending space in the Sister Cities Parks.

Environmental Impact Evaluation:

- Development of the market will create an additional demand for parking.
- During the market hours, patrons will generate additional traffic and additional turning movements onto the proposed adjacent streets. The restriction of Railroad Avenue to one way between Smith and Harrison Streets may impact traffic flows and turning movements in the adjacent area.
- The proposed market may create additional peak hour trips to and from the Kent Valley.
- The development may increase the area surfaced with impervious surfaces.
- The patrons to the proposed market will increase pedestrian activity in the surrounding area.
- The soil in the specific site may not support multi-story buildings on conventional foundations.

Mitigation Measures:

- Conduct a parking study to assess the amount of public and private parking available and determine whether sufficient parking can be provided to meet demand.
- Construct street and vehicle access improvements consistent with the City of Kent Construction Standards or as modified and approved by the Public Works Director.
- The developer shall provide a traffic impact study (see page VI-20)
- Construct storm water facilities consistent with City of Kent Construction Standards and source control best management practices, or as revised and approved by the Public Works Director.
- Construct pedestrian improvements as set forth in Section V. of this plan.
- If required by the building official, prior to or in conjunction with a building permit application, submit a soils report stamped by a licensed geotechnical engineer. The soils report must identify soil classification, bearing qualities and include foundation recommendations.
Responsibilities:

- The property owner and/or developer is responsible for required on- and off-site analysis, public facilities, and other improvements.

- The Public Works Department will be responsible for restriping and restricting the portion of Railroad Avenue to one way traffic.
  
  a. Construct pedestrian/bicycle trails from the Interurban Trail into downtown near Saar, Willis, Meeker, and James Streets.
  
  b. Consider a trail along the south side of James Street when the north Borden (playfield) site is improved, and ensure that good pedestrian and bicycle routes are established when the larger Borden site is developed.
  
  c. Establish a pedestrian/bicycle route along Kennebeck Avenue and Mill Creek north of Smith Street connecting Mill Creek Park with Kent Memorial Park, and to other segments connecting to the rail station.

Urban Design

Revise the Kent Zoning Code and the Downtown Design Review Handbook to address more specific design guidelines for the districts identified in Section V.

Discussion:

Design guidelines are development review criteria that address the design of the site and structures of a proposed development. Guidelines provide flexible means to incorporate community goals and policies concerning aesthetics, character and function into a development. Effective design guidelines are the most important means that the City can use to achieve the high-quality, pedestrian-friendly design character called for in the plan concept. They are also useful in increasing compatibility between different activities in mixed-use zones. It is recommended that the existing design guidelines be updated, with more specific guidelines for the different districts, to achieve the objectives defined below.

Institute or refine design guidelines for the following areas. The guidelines should address the characteristics and uses proposed for each of the following districts. Ensure that the guidelines address multifamily and mixed use buildings where appropriate.

  a. **Historic Core:** Address historic preservation, adaptive reuse, and small-scale infill to provide a mixed-use area with pedestrian and commercial emphasis.

  b. **Central Avenue Corridor:** Conduct a corridor study to serve as a basis for improvement of the Central Avenue corridor. Include Railroad Avenue as related to the proposed commuter rail station. Address design guidelines, buffers for adjacent residential neighborhoods, zoning code enforcement, zoning use issues, and streetscape improvements.
c. *Smith Street and Fourth Avenue Corridors:* Attract high-quality development that adds to the streetscape and provides an excellent setting for Borden redevelopment.

d. *Area East and West of the Core:* Encourage small- to medium-scale mixed-use redevelopment the west of Fourth Avenue and East of State Street, emphasizing residential neighborhood qualities.

e. *Area Between Fourth and Fifth Avenues N.:* Buffer residential neighborhoods with fencing and landscaping. Present an attractive streetscape frontage. Prevent conversion of single-family houses to offices (require a minimum lot size)

f. The guidelines should illustrate and describe the following details for each district:
   - Design Intent.
   - The guidelines should provide graphic examples of how such uses would achieve the intent of each district.
   - Residential and mixed-use buildings where appropriate.
   - The City's intent for target areas.
   - How development should respond to public investment including streetscape, the proposed commuter rail station, parks, etc.
   - Historic preservation where appropriate.
   - Recommended additions or changes to the Pedestrian Plan Overlay
   - Deviations from the general design guidelines.
   - Revisions for “problems” identified through prior administration of the core.

**Environmental Impact Evaluation:**
- No adverse environmental impacts are identified

**Mitigation Measures:**
- None are required.

**Responsibility:**
- The Planning Department is responsible for reviewing the Design Guidelines and presenting revision proposals to the City Council for adoption.

**Traffic Mitigation**

The overall transportation plans for downtown as discussed in the Comprehensive Plan are to concentrate growth in the Urban Center and other activity centers in the City to facilitate public transportation and reduce dependency on the automobile. The City adopted a Level of Service Standard F for streets and intersections within the Urban Center boundaries which are generally consistent with the study area defined for the Downtown Strategic Action Plan.

Traffic impacts created by development recommended in this plan will also impact streets and intersections around the edge of the study area. Traffic mitigating elements of the plan, such as commuter rail, improved Metro transit circulation, improved pedestrian and bicycle and
pedestrian connections, and housing development close to jobs serve to mitigate the probable adverse environmental impacts in and near the downtown.

The City’s Level of Service (LOS) standard allows development without regard to traffic impacts until the average volume-to-capacity (v/c) ratio downtown reaches 1.0 (LOS F). If the v/c ratio in 2010 exceeds 1.0 without the proposed plan actions, those actions which generate additional traffic could not be completed without specific mitigating capacity improvements which would prevent the v/c ratio from increasing. This mitigation (an additional travel lane, for example) would be separate from the site-specific access, safety and street design improvements required under SEPA. It could, depending on the spatial extent of the traffic impacts, be required for any of the downtown intersections used to compute the average v/c ratio.

The existing average intersection v/c ratio for seven (7) key downtown intersections is 0.90 (LOS D/E), with two intersections exhibiting v/c ratios greater than 1.0 (Central/James and Central/Gowe). By 2010, traffic volumes in and through downtown Kent are forecasted to grow approximately 30%, about two thirds of this growth will be generally attributable to through trips (those trips for which both ends—the origin and the destination—are outside downtown Kent). The growth in through trips will be most evident on James Street and Central Avenue, due to trips between the valley floor industrial area and the East Hill/Kent-Langley area. Willis Street is also forecasted to experience a high proportion of through trip growth.

Unless the impacts of this growth in overall traffic can be mitigated, the City’s LOS threshold will be exceeded, and severe congestion and delay will result. Possible mitigating improvements could include widening for additional turning lanes at several intersections along Willis Street. It could also include improvements to promote transit use (such as park-and-ride lots in the East Hill residential area, increased transit service and incentive programs for valley floor employers).

The mitigation process is as follows: The developer shall provide a traffic impact study to identify all traffic impacts upon the City of Kent road network and traffic signal system caused by the proposed development. The study shall identify all intersections at level of service “E” or “F” due to increased traffic volumes the development.

The study shall then identify what improvements are necessary to mitigate the development impacts thereon. Upon agreement by the City with the findings of the study and mitigation measures outlined in the study, implementation and/or construction of said mitigation measures shall be the conditional requirement of the issuance for the respective permits.

In lieu of conducting the above traffic study, constructing and/or implementing the respective mitigation measures hereby, the owner/subdivider may agree to the following conditions to mitigate the traffic impacts of the subject development:

The developer shall execute an environmental mitigation agreement to participate in, and pay a fair share of, the construction costs of the City’s South 272nd/277th Street Corridor Project. The final benefit value will be determined in 1986 dollars, adjusted for inflation.
C. Monitoring System

The monitoring system is intended to identify and monitor system capacities for elements of the built environment, and to the extent appropriate, the natural environment. The system will monitor the consequences of growth as it occurs within the downtown area, and provides ongoing data to update the plan and environmental analysis.

Some systems can be monitored by the City with readily available data. Impacts to other systems require detailed analysis that is typically undertaken by development proponents.
The following chart lists the systems, the factors to be monitored and the responsibility for providing information to update the monitoring program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Land Use</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Permits</td>
<td>Number of Permits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Dwelling Units</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multifamily Single Family</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>Square Feet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>Square Feet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Square Feet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Density</td>
<td>Avg. FAR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vacant/Underdeveloped Land</td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Intersections</td>
<td>Peak Hours LOS</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(per inter. or avg.?)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>Total Spaces Occupancy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>Ridership</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuter Rail</td>
<td># of AM/PM Trains Ridership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Public Facilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stormwater</td>
<td>Impervious Surface Detention Facility Capacity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewer</td>
<td>Gallons/day/customer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Gallons/day/customer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>Acres/1000 population</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>* Active</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>* Passive</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The City should evaluate the above impacts every three years on a predetermined date. Based on the evaluation, the City should update the Downtown Strategic Action Plan and the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to ensure that planned actions and mitigating measures are adequate to realistically address the impacts of growth and change. Incorporate public participation into the evaluation and update process.
Appendices

A. SUMMARY OF COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

The City received twenty one written comments from nineteen correspondents during the public comment period for the Draft Supplemental Environmental impact statement. The City published the comments and responses in the Preliminary Final Environmental Impact Statement. The following is a brief summary of the comments.

The proposal to revise the Comprehensive Plan and rezone the property approximately three parcels deep north of James Street between fourth Avenue and the Burlington Northern /Santa Fe railroad right-of-way to allow limited office use with a mixed use overlay for office and multifamily housing received a number of comments. The major concern was the loss of the single family homes located within the proposal area, and the impacts the office/multifamily use would have upon the North Park neighborhood generally. Owners of the property directly adjacent to James Street sent letters in favor of the rezone proposal. The response to the neighborhood impact issue noted that the mitigation was proposed in the form of cul-de-sac streets to block office traffic through the adjacent neighborhood, and that expansion of the office area was not anticipated. On June 2, 1997, the Land Use and Planning Board voted to recommend revise the plan to eliminate the proposal in response to public comments.

A question regarding the boundaries of the proposed Comprehensive Plan revision and rezone of property between Fourth and Fifth Avenues north of James Street received a response explaining the proposed boundaries. After further analysis, the boundaries have since been moved north in response to comments.

Comments were received regarding a Smith Street Underpass of State Highway 167. The option was taken under consideration. The cost of such a measure was questioned in another comment letter. The proposal was not included in the proposed plan after analysis.

The proposed Performing Arts/Civic Center was discussed. One writer inquired about the possible donation of a portion of the municipal parking lot for this use. The response was that the details of the proposed project were beyond the scope of this study and that City Departments could provide details as the project develops beyond the conceptual stage.

Several urban design suggestions were noted. One suggestion was to extend the downtown gateway project beyond the plan boundaries. Another was to provide for space at the corners of blocks for people to gather. Another was to make sure that awnings are provided on new and refurbished buildings. A trellis structure similar to the trellis on First Avenue was suggested for Fourth Avenue. Several comments concerned additional pedestrian improvements throughout the downtown core. The comments were noted and awnings, open corners, and pedestrian improvements are elements of the plan. The gateway project does not include locations outside the core, but the City will consider the suggested locations as separate projects.
Preservation of historic downtown properties was a concern. The plan recommends to resume the historic properties analysis and preservation process conducted in the early 1990’s and institute regulations and incentives for restoration and preservation.

Several comments were received regarding traffic congestion, and the writer was referred to traffic analysis contained in the Preliminary Final SEIS. Additional traffic analysis has since been provided by the Regional Transit Authority’s Environmental Analysis of the proposed Commuter Rail Station, and the analysis of commuter rail traffic included in this document.

Several comments expressed approval of Plan alternative 2, and the south commuter rail station location.

The response was that the analysis of locations favored the north site because access and circulation was more problematic for the south site. Since that time, after numerous comments were received at public hearings, the south site was incorporated in the plan. Other commuter rail concerns included noise and vibration impacts, parking, circulation. The response noted that beyond the information offered in the Preliminary Final EIS, the RTA will be required to perform these evaluations for station improvements.

One correspondent requested public restrooms. Restrooms and telephones are not included in the plan.

A request for additional detail regarding the proposed James Street Underpass at the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe railroad was noted. A conceptual diagram of the underpass was provided in the Preliminary FSEIS, a preliminary cost estimate has been provided. The response stated that the Washington State Department of Transportation and/or the City will perform detailed evaluations before underpass construction.

Several comments were received regarding costs of proposed projects. The response noted that costs estimates at the level of detail requested were not available at that time. Preliminary cost estimates for major proposals in the plan are included in this document.

Questions and comments regarding the SEPA process, notice procedures, public participation, capital facilities information, and sources of information were answered.

Written Comments were received from the following participants:

Pamela Newcomer  February 5, 1997
Perry Woodford  February 5, 1997
Joseph Kolodziejczak  February 5, 1997
Val Batey, Regional Transit Authority  February 7, 1997
B. Glossary

Commuter Rail Station: A station and facilities for boarding and alighting passengers on a commuter rail line, which operates along existing freight railroad tracks.

Developer: An individual or business entity which buys real estate and prepares it for resale at a profit. Preparation generally includes assembling or subdividing parcels, obtaining permits and clearances, constructing utilities and streets and, in some cases, constructing buildings.

Economic Market Study: A study of the market demand for services, goods or housing within a particular area, and the extent to which that market demand is already being satisfied. For
example, a major developer might want to know if the current market demand for multiple family housing is great enough to justify a project; or if a proposed new shopping center would generate enough sales for tenants.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS): A document which analyzes the significant environmental impacts of a particular action or proposal, possible alternatives to that action and mitigation measures for those impacts analyzed.

ESHB 1724: A Washington State law that requires local jurisdictions to consolidate their local permit review and hearing processes and better integrate environmental regulations with the Growth Management Act. This 1996 law also mandates faster decision making by requiring local jurisdictions to implement a 120-day permit processing period for all land use and building permits.

Facilities: Capital Improvements. Often, but not always, the term implies capital improvements which are ancillary to or supportive of the main purposes of an overall project. For example, “The recreational facilities for this action includes a playground, tennis court, swimming pool and community center.”

Floor Area Ration (FAR): A measure of development density expressed as the amount of building floor area divided by the total development site area or parcel.

Grade Separated: Rights-of-way that are separated from general purpose rights-of-way by a level change, often on an elevated structure or in an underpass.

Growth Management Act (GMA): A 1990 Washington State law that mandates managing population and employment growth through comprehensive plans, regionally coordinated plan implementation and creation of urban growth areas.

Impacts: The effects or consequences of actions. Environmental impacts are affects upon the elements of the environment listed by SEPA.

Joint Development: Projects financed and developed jointly by public agencies and private developers.

Local Improvement District (LID): A special district in which a tax is assessed to pay for a specific public improvement, such as a new road.

Mitigation: Actions which avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, eliminate, compensate or correct otherwise probable significant adverse environmental impacts.

Mixed Uses: Any combination of activities which mix residential, offices, shops and other related uses. Mixed uses exist in concentrated centers and increase activity and density. Mixed uses can be single activities in their own buildings but clustered within walking distance; or buildings containing two or more activities, as in office space located above retail shops.
Pedestrian-Friendly: Designed to accommodate pedestrians’ (and sometimes cyclists’) priorities of safety, minimized walking distance, comfort and pleasant surroundings.

Planned Action: One or more types of project action(s) that: 1) are designated planned actions by an ordinance or resolution adopted by a city; 2) have had the significant environmental impacts adequately addressed in an EIS prepared in conjunction with a comprehensive plan or subarea plan; 3) are subsequent or implementing projects for a comprehensive or subarea plan; 4) are not essential public facilities; or 5) are consistent with a comprehensive plan.

Programmatic EIS: The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a “program,” consisting of a policy plan for many inter-related projects. Under Washington’s State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), an EIS must be prepared for significant public programs or policy documents, as well as for individual development projects.

Regional Transit Authority (RTA): In the Puget Sound region, the agency responsible for planning, building and operating the regional transit system. The system includes, regional bus service, high occupancy vehicles (HOV) lanes and access, light rail transit and commuter rail.

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA): Chapter 43.21C of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) - the general policies and regulations intended to help lead agencies and citizens make better environmental decisions.

Station Area: An area with an approximately ¼ mile radius around a rapid rail station containing transit-related activities and designed to accommodate large numbers of people.

Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS): Preparation of a SEIS is appropriate when a proposal is substantially similar to one covered in an existing EIS. New information indicating a proposal’s probable significant adverse environmental impacts may be provided in an SEIS. The SEIS should not include analysis of actions, alternatives or impacts that is in the previously prepared EIS.