Ordinance No. 3740

(Amending or Repealing Ordinances)

CFN=462 – Downtown Strategic Action Plan
Passed – 4/19/2005
Comprehensive Plan Amendment – Downtown Strategic Action Plan Update
ORDINANCE NO. 3740

AN ORDINANCE of the City Council of the City of Kent, Washington, updating the City of Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan (CPA-2004-1).

RECITALS

A. The Downtown Strategic Action Plan (DSAP) was initially adopted as a subarea plan in April 1998 to recognize the role of downtown Kent as a designated Urban Center. The DSAP is a visioning document for the Urban Center and is intended to provide the framework for further project-level analysis and planning. After seven (7) years, it is appropriate to update the DSAP to reflect changes in existing conditions, planned capital projects, and citizen interests.

B. As currently adopted, the DSAP contains outdated information such as policy recommendations that have been incorporated into the Kent City Code (KCC); and capital improvement projects that have been completed, delayed, or removed from the six-year Capital Improvement Program and the six-year Transportation Improvement Program. The update of the DSAP also provides an opportunity for the incorporation by reference of relevant documents such as the Commuter Rail Station Area Study (2000), the Kent Station Planned Action Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (2002), and the Economic Development Strategic Plan (2003). The DSAP also provides for needed area wide land use and zoning map designation amendments, development standards text amendments, wider application of Downtown Design Review, and changes to parking space requirements.
C. The SEPA Responsible official issued an Addendum and Adoption Notice on October 18, 2004 determining that the proposed DSAP update and implementing regulations are consistent with the range, types and magnitude of impacts and corresponding mitigation outlined in the April 1998 integrated SEPA-GMA document for the DSAP; a separate threshold determination is not required.

D. To facilitate the process of updating the DSAP, City staff facilitated two public participation workshop sessions on May 17, 2004, and two sessions on June 14, 2004. These sessions were used to identify the challenges, opportunities, strengths and weaknesses of downtown Kent and to provide opportunity and strategies to address these issues in the update of the DSAP. Citizen input from these workshop sessions as well as responses from a general interest survey of City employees were summarized and provided to the Land Use and Planning Board at its July 12, 2004, workshop. The Land Use and Planning Board held four (4) public hearings on the proposed amendments to the DSAP on August 23, 2004; September 27, 2004; October 25, 2004; and November 8, 2004. The Planning and Economic Development Committee considered the update to the DSAP on December 6, 2004.

E. On February 9, 2005, the City provided the required sixty (60) day notification under RCW 36.70A.106 to the state of Washington of the City’s proposed update to the DSAP. The sixty (60) day notice period has lapsed.

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

SECTION 1. - Amendments. The City of Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan adopted by Ordinance 3398 is updated as shown in Exhibit A, attached and incorporated here (CPA-2004-1).

SECTION 2. - Severability. If any one or more sections, sub-sections, 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 thirty (30) days from and after the date of passage as provided by law.

ATTEST:

BRENDA JACOB
BRENDA JACOBER, CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

TOM BRUBAKER, CITY ATTORNEY

PASSED: 19 day of April, 2005.
APPROVED: 19 day of April, 2005.
PUBLISHED: 23 day of April, 2005.

Comprehensive Plan Amendment - Downtown Strategic Action Plan Update
I hereby certify that this is a true copy of Ordinance No. 3740, 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
CITY OF KENT
DOWNTOWN STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

INTEGRATED WITH

THE FINAL SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Originally prepared for the City of Kent by
MAKERS Architecture and Urban Design, BRW, Property Counselors,
Langlow Associates and the City of Kent Planning Services Office
With the Assistance of a Washington State Planning
And Environmental Review Fund Grant

UPDATE ADOPTED
APRIL 19, 2005
MAYOR
Jim White

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
Mike Martin

CITY CLERK
Brenda Jacober

CITY COUNCIL
Julie Peterson, President
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I. Introduction

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

The Downtown Strategic Action Plan also provides a framework for project-level planning appropriate for each Downtown district defined in this document. Subsequent project-level planning could be specified in Planned Action Ordinances. “Planned Actions” are discussed in Section C. of this introductory chapter.

This Year 2004 update to the Downtown Strategic Action Plan intends to strengthen the connection between this policy document and the recently updated Comprehensive Plan, as well as acknowledge changes in Downtown Kent that have occurred since April 1998.

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 Kent 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
Introduction

designation of downtown Kent as an urban center through the King County Countywide Planning Policies processes.

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 Kent. 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, the 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 Kent subarea plan. The team consisted of MAKERS architecture and urban design, BRW, Inc., The Langlow Associates, Property Counselors, and Sierra Media.

After the April 1998 adoption of the original Downtown Strategic Action Plan document, the Regional Transit Authority (since reconstituted as Sound Transit) determined the preferred South Station Site to be impracticable to service the full length of its trains, and selected the North Station Site. Since February 5, 2001, Sound Transit Commuter Rail trains riding the Burlington Northern/Sante Fe railroad have been loading and unloading passengers between James and Smith Streets — approximating the North Station Site alignment. Several revisions to the Downtown Strategic Action Plan acknowledge this fact. The Commuter Rail Station Area Study, completed in 2000, updated the market analysis of the DSAP, and identified a number of parcels in Downtown with development and redevelopment potential in proximity to the Sound Transit rail station.

While some things have not changed in Downtown Kent, other circumstances have changed since the 1998 adoption of the DSAP. The Borden Chemical Company sold their property and their operations to the City of Kent in 2001, significantly shortening the timeframe for potential redevelopment of the 20-acre site. Some of the recommended actions listed in Chapter IV and Chapter V have been completed, yet others are in progress or have since been deemed infeasible.

Still other interested parties in Downtown Kent seek to expand existing business uses or obtain site improvement variances non-conforming to Downtown Commercial Enterprise (DCE) Zoning – particularly on Central Avenue. Some of Central Avenue within the boundaries of Downtown is currently zoned General Commercial (GC). The replacement of DCE Zoning with a zoning district more favorable to auto-oriented uses should be carefully mitigated by the application of Downtown Design Review. Interest in development opportunities along the James and Smith arterial streets adjacent to Kent
Station exist, although the area north of James is constrained by the current single-family residential Comprehensive Plan Map and Zoning District Map designations.

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 (DSAP) 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 Impact Statement.

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 held in 1996. Prior to adopting the DSAP, the City subsequently conducted six additional public workshops and seven Downtown Stakeholders Task Force meetings. City staff responded to numerous letters, telephone calls, and Planning Department visitor’s questions. 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.

The Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the DSAP was issued on February 4, 1997. The DSEIS, contained three land use and urban design alternatives, and 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, entitled the Draft Downtown Strategic Action Plan and Preliminary Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, was issued on May 19, 1997 to provide additional information and allow additional time for public comment and discussion prior to integrated plan adoption. The Preliminary Final Supplemental Impact Statement contained 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 for establishing development goals and policies for the whole of Downtown Kent.
As the process chart (Figure I-1) in the Appendix 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.

This level of detail provides predictability and may reduce or eliminate the necessity for environmental review prior to project permit submittals.

In 2004, the City of Kent is updating the Downtown Strategic Action Plan (DSAP) to reflect the changes in existing conditions and development opportunities, as well as address concerns among some in the community about the negative impact of regulations on expansion of existing non-conforming uses. In late 2003, the City Council Planning Committee directed staff to analyze issues relating to zoning and development standards in the Central Avenue District of Downtown. Consideration of other issues, including the guidance of the Downtown Strategic Action Plan were identified as part of the work program.

Beginning in March 2004, staff prepared background information contained in the Downtown Strategic Action Plan, as adopted in April 1998, for comment and suggested revision in public participation workshops. Morning and evening workshop sessions were held on May 17, 2004 and June 14, 2004 at the Kent Senior Activity Center to identify present conditions, challenges and opportunities in Downtown Kent. Public participation at these sessions included facilitated discussion of Downtown issues and the DSAP, as well as opportunities for the public to self-record issues, concerns and ideas on 34”x 44” maps. These maps depicted DSAP districts with 1998 recommended actions at the May sessions, and the maps at the June sessions included commentary carried over from the May sessions.

As a substantially-large population who work, eat and shop in Downtown Kent, all City employees were offered an opportunity to respond to an all-users electronic message about their vision of Downtown as a place to live, play, or shop. The responses were summarized and included in a map reviewed by the Land Use and Planning Board in a July 12, 2004 workshop. The Land Use and Planning Board offered some of their own comments, and reinforced some of the comments provided by citizens and City employees.

PLANNED ACTIONS

The Downtown Strategic Action Plan provides development goals and policies for several districts within Downtown Kent. As such, the DSAP is a framework for future development plans of a more detailed nature. These plans, which are themselves subarea plans, will provide the— for pursuing Planned Actions. The level of detail required in a Planned Action Ordinance increases the predictability of anticipated environmental impacts and necessary mitigation measures related to specific development uses and intensities of use.
The Planned Action EIS process is a relatively 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. Using this tool, the City would evaluate several detailed subarea project development scenarios prior to receiving and reviewing development applications for the Planned Action subarea. 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. Typically, this means that a submitted development proposal, or proposals, are consistent with and do not exceed the thresholds of uses and use intensities established in the Planned Action Ordinance. 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 Planned Action Ordinance. The purpose of creating an integrated plan and environmental assessment document, consistent with PERF grant requirements, was to adopt a Planned Action ordinance if such an action was appropriate.

In 1998, as a result of planning analysis and environmental review conducted, the planning team determined that, despite the recommended mitigation measures, existing City regulations may not have provided sufficient environmental protection to take the place of the SEPA process at that time. As a result, the City of Kent has chosen not to propose and adopt a Planned Action ordinance with the approved plan.

However, the Downtown Strategic Action Plan provides development goals and policies for several districts within Downtown Kent. As such, the DSAP is a framework for future development plans of a more detailed nature, including Planned Actions.

**KENT STATION**

In 2001, however, with the City purchase of the Borden Chemical property, the opportunity to develop at higher intensities of mixed-uses in close proximity to the recently operational Sound Transit Commuter Rail Station was both real and immediate. The City initiated a Planned Action process for the property formerly owned by Borden Chemical, identifying site-specific environmental conditions and anticipated impacts and mitigation measures for development of three (3) development scenarios within the North Core District Subarea. The City Council selected Alternative 2 (Kent Station Proposal) as the Preferred Alternative in July 2002, and a private sector developer has begun the
process to develop Kent Station. Groundbreaking occurred on June 30, 2004. Eventually other districts within Downtown Kent may eventually similarly present significant opportunities for planned actions. 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 adopted, the project-related mitigation measures offered herein 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 task force meetings. City staff responded to numerous letters, telephone calls, and Planning Department-visitor's questions.

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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.

[Fig. I-1: 1996-1997 DSAP Process Diagram]
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-districts 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical SEPA EIS Section</th>
<th>Location of Information in the Action Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fact Sheet</td>
<td>A Fact Sheet is located at the beginning of Section VI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>The information typically found in an Executive Summary is located in Section I. And Section VI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>A summary of the project history, purpose, scope and public involvement process is included in Section I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternatives Considered</td>
<td>A description of the alternatives considered is contained in Section VI, Environmental Information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact Analysis</td>
<td>Impact analysis supplementary to the analysis found in the Draft SEIS and the Preliminary Final SEIS is included in Section VI, Environmental Information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitigation Measures</td>
<td>A summary of mitigation/implementation measures is provided in Section VI, Environmental Information, and in Section III, Summary of Recommended Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to Comments</td>
<td>A summary of comments and responses is located in Section VI, Environmental Information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. Vision: Growing a Home Town

Prior to this plan Downtown Strategic Action Plan (DSAP), 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 helped to form this plan as it was adopted in 1998.

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/Sante 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, the Historic Core, Kent Station, and the Commons Recreation Center & Playfields.

In addition to the above-mentioned Interurban Trail access, 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 Playfields, the Commons Recreation Center — not to mention the Regional Justice Center — will form a civic anchor at the Downtown’s northwest corner. The Regional Justice Center, by then about 15 years old, will be a still-imposing but more familiar fixture. Regional 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/Sante 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 Smith Street. The Regional Transit Authority Sound Transit commuter Commuter rail station, or Kent Transit Center, located between James and Smith Streets on either side of the railroad tracks, will be an important transit hub, with local feeder buses meeting the trains and regional buses for transfer to locations throughout the Puget Sound. Although commuter rail service was limited at first to two early morning northbound trips and two early evening southbound trips, congestion on the freeways will have led to all-day rail service, and the train has become the preferred transportation option for commuters to Seattle, Everett or 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 in Downtown. Smith Street will be one of the downtown's most attractive corridors, with a new hotel, office, and retail complex on the north pedestrian-oriented businesses and open spaces located on either side of the street. In particular, the Civic and Performing Arts Center will be a hub of daytime and evening activity downtown. Walking through the historic Meeker Street Historic core to the Kent Commuter rail station will be a pleasure because of the street trees, Sister Cities Parks, and pedestrian-oriented buildings. The first phase of the Boren site redevelopment Kent Station project will be underway, completed, with an integrated mix of uses and open spaces supported by a park grid and structured parking.

To the east of the BNSF tracks, the Public Market and Sister Cities Parks will anchor another cluster of shops and commercial activities. 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 as well as a pedestrian connection to the Kent Transit Center, 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 District, will have seen slower, incremental changes. New midrise mixed-use/residential complexes and townhouses, developed with sensitivity to well-maintained single-family homes of historic character, 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 Geese 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 success of the Historic Core will have been the connections that the City made to the north and south, as well as those connections made to the east and west, 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-Downtown will reach its goals. By enhancing the historic character of its eereCore Districts, the City will retain its eulture 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-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 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 Downtown will become a source of civic pride for the whole city.

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

And, through the continued efforts and care of its citizens, the Downtown town—will continue to be a “home town for the future.”

[Fig. II-2: Map - Downtown Kent 20 Year Vision (1998)]
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 (see Fig. III-1). 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/Education
  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), and the development of a branch of the Green River Community College at Kent Station would result in potential office demand of:
  - 1996-2000: 92,000-112,000 square feet
  - 2000-2010: 260,999-279,999,000 square feet
  - 2010-2020: 180,000-200,000 square feet

- Retail
  Projected retail development estimates are based on maintaining dramatically increasing Downtown’s share of market area spending, with increases in shares for specialty food, apparel, eating/drinking, and miscellaneous retail sales which may be facilitated by the development of Kent Station and adjacent properties, and other large parcels Downtown. Kent Station will include a fourteen (14) screen Cineplex, which may generate additional spin-off retail activity.
  - 1995-2000: 46,000-49,000 square feet (including RJC impact)
  - 2000-2010: 160,999,300-300,000 square feet
  - 2010-2020: 79,999,100,000 square feet

  In addition, the area could support a multi-screen 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 downtown area into the evening. However, a bond issue election held in 2000 to provide public funding for the Civic and Performing Arts Center failed to gain sufficient support, and development of this element would require significant private investment. 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.

[Fig. III-1: Map – Market area for downtown Kent (1998)]

- **Market Rate Residential**
  One-third of the residential capacity for the City is in the downtown area. In order for 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 districts, where land costs are lower, and small condominium and apartment projects at high-amenity locations in the core.

- **Hotel/Convention Center**
  A full service hotel with approximately 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. East Meeker Streets. The Pediatric Infant Care Center anticipates relocating to a larger facility to be built before 2006. 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—1998

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 Drages 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 City of Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan (the PlanDSAP) is to encourage downtown growth, infill and redevelopment while creating a stronger community identity and civic/commercial focus through a strategic public-and-private partnerships infill and redevelopment strategy. The PlanDSAP actions are intended to implement the directions provided by the City of Kent Comprehensive Plan (Comprehensive Plan), the goals and policies of the 1989 Downtown Plan, and the goals and policies in the downtown-Downtown and commercial sections of the Land Use ChapterElement. Consistent with the requirements of the Washington State Planning and Environmental Review Fund, the PlanDSAP integrates environmental analysis and environmental impact mitigation measures within the land use, transportation, urban design, problem solving, and implementation framework of the PlanDSAP. The Plan DSAP presents a framework that will maintain Kent’s existing physical assets of Downtown, 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 and organizational 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 and open spaces, including the active Commons Park, International-Sister Cities Parks, the Rose Garden, and Railroad Park. Kent’s City Hall, the Commons Recreation Center, library, the Senior Activity Center, and the Resource Center, add These parks and open spaces provide activity and enhance the downtown’s role as the City’s focal point. Nearby residential areas add a built-in consumer and employment base.

[Fig. III-2: Map – Challenges facing downtown Kent (1998)]

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. While the pace of this growth may fluctuate, the growth potential remains. Opportunities include additional retail development, office development, a full-service hotel, and urban-style housing. In addition, the new Kent Public Market will bolster businesses on the core’s east-side core districts, and as service expands, the new commuter-rail transit station, scheduled to open in 1999, Sound Transit Commuter Rail Station, operating since February 2004, will make Kent a regional transportation hub. The expanding presence of the commuter-rail station is also 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. Housing development, at densities consistent with the Regional Growth Center designation of Downtown Kent, should be encouraged throughout Downtown to stimulate an increase in demand for retail and commercial services.

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 Kent. 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 PlanDSAP are:

- Connect and unify important downtown features:
Planning Concept

- Enhance the periphery of the downtown-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;
- Encourage housing development throughout Downtown;
- Enhance civic identity.

Connect and Unify Downtown’s Features

Civic improvements, including the Regional Justice Center, and the Kent Commons, and the Public Market, are expanding the downtown-Downtown Core. The core business areas along Meeker Street, First Avenue, and Railroad Avenue will continue to serve as the Downtown’s commercial downtown’s south anchor. To maintain and improve this role, the historic Historic downtown must be linked to the northern features-districts by a combination of park, pedestrian, and vehicle connections along First, Second 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 Public Market link the Historic Core District and the commuter Commuter rail-Rail Station to the Regional Justice Center and planned commercial, office, and residential activities to the north.

[Fig. III-3: Map – The strategic redevelopment concept (1998)]

During the planning process, several commuter rail station locations were proposed within a five-block area adjacent to the Burlington Northern/Sante Fe railroad tracks between Titus and James Streets. This Plan recommends that DSAP acknowledges that the new commuter Commuter rail-Rail station-Station be-located just south of Gowen of Smith Street to provide an efficient multi-modal regional transportation hub. The Commuter rail-Rail Station will enhance Kent’s role in the region as “host community” and accentuate its identity. It will add significantly to the connectivity of northern and southern downtown-Downtown districts if the City restores the historic train station located between Gowen and Meeker Streets, develops parking areas, vehicular circulation systems, and good pedestrian and visual connections to other downtown 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, purchased by the City of Kent, located 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 has taken advantage of this opportunity by ensuring that there is access to the site (especially along Second Avenue from the south). It should The City is collaborating with a private developer to master plan the Kent Station site as a whole, and create a desirable
development setting around the site as described in the Kent Station Planned Action SEIS. The subdivision of Kent Station allows for the sale of parcels to developers in phases.

Enhance the Periphery of Downtown

The second downtown-Downtown redevelopment strategy involves upgrading the areas directly around the expanded core. Similarly, allowing office and mixed-use development between Fourth-First and Fifth Avenues north of Kent Station along James Street will accommodate and encourage investment in this highly impacted area. The single-family neighborhood east of Fourth Avenue and just north of James Cloudy Street is an important housing resource will be buffered from the intensive development along James Street by a lower intensity multi-family residential district.

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

Define Special Activity Districts

The plan-DSAP identifies and defines existing and emerging special districts within the downtown-Downtown area such as the historic Historic Core business district, civic activity areas, Kent Public 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. Planned Action Ordinances for each district could adopt subarea or subdistrict development plans with detailed environmental analysis of potential development scenarios. The preferred alternative of each subarea plan would then provide guidance for future district-development of the whole district subarea, or a discrete parcel of significant development capacity within the district. 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-Downtown.

Select Target Areas

Priority development sites have been identified during the past planning processes. The commuter-Commuter Rail-Rail station Station site, Kent Station, the Kent Public Market site, and the civic-Civic and performing-Performing arts-Arts center site are driven by previously determined plans. The Civic and Performing Arts Center did not receive the necessary bonds to locate and build at the Municipal Parking Lot as planned, and the Kent Public Market has since relocated there after a few challenging years at the Railroad Avenue site. 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-DSAP 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. Specific development scenarios may require additional consideration of site conditions, impacts on environmental conditions, and potential mitigation measures.

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-DSAP 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 — embodied in the durability of architectural styles, features and building materials.

— 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.
— 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 urban 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. 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, significant, adverse environmental impacts and proposed mitigating measures are included in this section. If a Planned Action Ordinance is not proposed for adoption, discussion on identification and analysis of existing environmental site/district subarea conditions, impacts and mitigating measures will serve as a guide for project-level SEPA review, to be used as guidance when projects are proposed within the district subarea.

The purpose of a Planned Action Ordinance is to conduct SEPA review for a number of development alternatives, one of which is determined to be most consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the DSAP, and any applicable District Subarea Plan. This "Preferred Action," when adopted by City Council, becomes the development blueprint for the District Subarea, with SEPA completed for the amount and character of development. Proposals meeting the identified requirements of the Preferred Action are generally exempt from additional SEPA review.

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

- **Continue to support the Kent Downtown Partnership, Kent's Main Street Program non-profit organization, as an agent of Downtown revitalization.**

  Assist the Kent Downtown Partnership (KDP) in its efforts to identify and promote community interest and economic health in Downtown.

- **Promote Infill Housing.**

  To meet the City of Kent Comprehensive Plan goals to enhance downtown Downtown as a place to live, and to create an attractive, dense mixed-use...
neighborhood, the City should promote construction of housing units. A mix of housing types including condominium townhouses, stacked and attached units that resemble single-family design and character, and residential mixed with commercial and office uses are desirable. In order to enable development of multi-family residential units in Downtown, it would be advisable to waive the minimum lot size requirement (KCC 15.04.170) for multifamily residential unit development occurring within the DSAP planning area, where many redevelopable lots are not of sufficient size to feasibly develop multi-family residential use, even if so zoned.

- **Encourage the development of at least two hundred (200) units of new market rate housing in Downtown by 2008.**

  Consider incentives such as reducing or waiving development permit fees for residential construction in Downtown, and extending the existing Downtown multi-family residential tax exemption program to include market rate rental housing. Developers of condominiums are challenged by two factors in Downtown – condominium owners are still having difficulty acquiring home insurance and the developers do not receive the tax exemption for developing condos in Downtown. Consider also allowing development of buildings with five (5) stories of wood frame construction above a concrete base, consistent with Downtown Commercial Enterprise (DCE) zoning.

- **Promote the construction of high quality new commercial, office, or mixed-use development and redevelopment. Also encourage the development of a hotel/conference center to serve as an attractor for commercial activity.**

  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 and a hotel/conference center will provide a variety of activities and living situations within districts that require ground floor retail uses. In order to be competitive in the marketplace, new office space in Downtown Kent should provide Class A-type amenities found in other regional centers. “Class A” office space, as described in CB-Richard Ellis Commercial Real Estate quarterly reports, “…have high quality standard finishes, state of the art systems, exceptional accessibility and a definite market presence.”

- **Assist the Kent Downtown Partnership in increasing the variety and vitality of businesses located in Downtown.**

  The KDP is leading the effort to attract two (2) new businesses to Downtown each year while retaining existing businesses, and is also seeking to increase the number of existing retail businesses with evening and weekend operating hours. The development of office space, a hotel/conference center and market rate housing in Downtown should increase the demand for variety in retail and restaurant choices available throughout the daytime and evening hours. Public comments received
Summary of Recommended Actions

during the 2004 workshops indicate a strong interest in increasing the variety of stores and restaurants in Downtown, with operating hours extending past 5 p.m. On the other hand, many comments were received about reducing the number of second-hand merchandise stores and thrift stores in Downtown.

- **Conduct a study of existing parking requirements related to residential and commercial density regulations in Downtown.**

  Revise the parking and density standards to improve the balance of on-site and off-site parking areas. Some property owners in Downtown have indicated difficulty in attracting redevelopment interest due to the maximum of 3 surface parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of commercial space for Downtown Commercial Enterprise (DCE) Zoning. This on-site parking requirement for commercial use is intended to encourage the use of on-street parking and the development of structured parking. Residential use has a minimum of one (1) space per dwelling unit, which should be an incentive for inclusion of residential units in commercial developments seeking to address parking needs.

- **Survey the impacts of retail uses such as pawnshops, bail bond offices, day labor offices, casinos, adult entertainment businesses, gas stations and tattoo parlors in Downtown locations in other cities. Restrict or prohibit specific commercial uses in Downtown that are known to generate negative impacts on the larger community.**

  Revise the zoning code to consider assigning conditional use permit status for such uses to address the results of the survey, if necessary. Certain uses, including pawn shops, bail bond offices, casinos, adult entertainment businesses, and tattoo parlors have been observed in other cities in the region to require an increased amount of police and social services. 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.

- **Work with social services providers, public safety officers, temporary labor agencies, and educational institutions to address homelessness issues in Downtown.**

  Address the causes and consequences of homelessness, and the impacts on community livability.

- **Make Downtown Kent the transportation hub of South King County.**

  Ensure that Sound Transit completes the Phase II Sounder rail service expansion to eighteen (18) train trips daily by 2008. This increase in service will encourage a commensurate increase in connecting bus and shuttle service located in Downtown –
making living, working, shopping or dining in Downtown Kent convenient as well as attractive.

- **Add pedestrian and bicycle facilities and bicycle lanes or trails in all districts of downtown Downtown.**

  Work with the community and the Bicycle Advisory Board to identify and provide plan the provision of sidewalk improvements, planting strips, traffic calming measures, wide curb lanes, trails and pathways. Utilize the Neighborhood Traffic Control Program as appropriate to identify safety-related improvements. The interurban-Interurban Trail provides a regional north/south pedestrian/bicycle/equestrian connection. Improved east/west links into downtown Downtown will attract commuters, shoppers, students and recreational cyclists.

- **Support the Performing Arts/Civic Center or a hotel/conference center in a downtown Downtown location.**

  Ensure that activities at in the Urban 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.

- **Support live performance arts in appropriate public places, and encourage live performance arts in retail and restaurant businesses.**

  The City of Kent has sponsored the well-attended Summer Concerts in the Park series, often held at Kherson Park at the northwest corner of Gowen Street and 2nd Avenue. Such events draw the community together to enjoy live music during lunch in a family-friendly atmosphere. Encourage the interest of retail and restaurant business members of the KDP and Kent Chamber of Commerce in providing space for live music, poetry readings, and other forms of artistic expression that contribute to the vitality of Downtown.

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

  Work with property owners and developers throughout the development process, offering incentives as appropriate for compliance with the Downtown Design Guidelines.

- **Enhance the City’s established public art program.**

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

- **Develop a downtown-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-Downtown as defined by this-the plan DSAP. Associate specific types of street tree plantings to specific streets throughout downtown-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.

- **Allow underground stormwater detention vaults where appropriate for development sites larger than one acre in Downtown to encourage attractive site development and maximum build-out of revenue-generating land uses.**

  The use of above-ground detention ponds can deter from the attractiveness of Downtown, particularly when the detention ponds are large and poorly landscaped. Such ponds also limit the economic utility of land zoned for much more intensive activities.

- **Adopt street standards for the entire downtown-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-Downtown in order to accentuate the identity of each area. Include requirements for undergrounding utilities in order to improve the attractiveness of the visual environment, and to provide more sidewalk space for walking or outdoor seating where appropriate.

- **Enhance gateways into downtown-Downtown.**

  Mark entrances to downtown-Downtown from streets, trails and rails, 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 charrette. Special attention to the pedestrian and visual connection between the Historic Core and North Core (Kent Station) along Second Avenue will be critical. Improvements along Smith Street to connect the West Frame and East Frame will also be important.

- **Actively promote downtown-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 historic 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, as many Kent residents and businesses have voiced continuing concern and interest in historic preservation, in Downtown and throughout Kent. Collaboration with the Greater Kent Historical Society and Kent Downtown Partnership may be necessary to clarify the value and potential scope of this action item.

- **Explore specific redevelopment opportunities within target areas.**

A principal objective of this plan is to attract appropriate, high-quality development to downtown 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 seek to fine tune the City’s City of Kent Comprehensive Plan. The transportation recommendations will upgrade connectivity and circulation to and within the downtown 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.

(Fig. IV-1: Map—Actions recommended by the Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan are summarized above. (1998))

**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 Kent Transit Center. 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,

(C2.f) Central and Meeker, and (C2.e) Central and Smith; (C3.a) the civic and

performing arts center; (C3.b) the Kent Public Market; and (C3.c) the historic rail station

depot 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 Historic core Core District,

south South core Core District, and Central Avenue District target areas could also be

initiated during the next two-few years to spur redevelopment in these areas. Initiating

these actions over the next two-few 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 development or the Regional Fast

Corridor project—the use of incentives for redevelopment of private property consistent

with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, the Downtown Strategic Action

Plan, and where applicable, a district subarea development plan.

(Fig. IV-2: Table – Phasing of Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan

recommendations. (1998))

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 (DSAP). Although the

costs were carefully prepared, they are based on preliminary concepts, intended to serve

as a general guide. The plan-DSAP spans a period of twenty years of potential new

development, redevelopment and infill in downtown Downtown Kent. The plan-DSAP,

costs, and infrastructure needs may change and adjust. Each proposed project should be

reevaluated in its own time based on specific plans, including district subarea

development plans.

Please note that the preliminary street improvement costs listed in the chart exceed the

cost of plan-DSAP 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 of preferred locations and
materials selection would be necessary before cost estimates can be provided.

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

[Fig. IV-3: Table – Preliminary Capital Cost Estimate (1998)]

[Fig. IV-4: Map – Recommended Transportation Improvements (1998)]

[Fig. IV-5: Map – Recommended Public Facilities (1998)]

[Fig. IV-6: Map – Land Use Recommendations (1998)]
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 Downtown Strategic Action Plan (DSAP) land use recommendations are directed toward fine tuning the City's comprehensive planning framework in response to specific redevelopment opportunities and neighborhood protection needs. Community interests. The transportation recommendations will be intended to upgrade connectivity and circulation to and within the downtown for additional businesses and residents. The public facilities improvements envisioned in the 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. The formulation of detailed district subarea development plans, to be adopted within a number of Planned Action ordinances, could provide specific guidance regarding environmental conditions, development potential, and impacts of such development.

Each district is described below with recommended actions and target areas where the City and the Kent Downtown Partnership, the Chamber of Commerce, property owners, business owners, and volunteers 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 North Core and the single-family neighborhood to the north. The North Frame District includes the Commons Park Playfields, with its ball fields, and several streets lined with single-family homes. While the overall intent of the plan is to preserve the peaceful, insulated single-family character of the North Park neighborhood, east of Fourth Avenue, two busy arterial streets - N. Fourth Avenue and James Street offer significant challenges to...
preservation of this character. Traffic along these streets, the Regional Justice Center, the Kent Transit Center, and the development of Kent Station to the south intrude on residential the desirable qualities associated with single-family residential neighborhoods to the extent that homes north of James Street and west of districts Fourth Avenue are difficult to maintain.

[Fig. V-1: Map - The Kent downtown districts. (1998)]

The Commons Playfields 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 single-family residential uses. Therefore, the plan DSAP seeks to create a strong edge of high-quality mixed-use development along the north side of James Street west of between N-North Fourth First and Fifth Avenues, transitioning to multi-family residential development primarily along the south side of Cloudy Street. The area is a designated redevelopment target area. 

Relieving congestion on James Street may be achieved to some measure by connecting Cloudy Street to Fourth Avenue from Third Avenue for pedestrians and vehicles. Upgrading the streets and Commons Playfields to benefit the local neighborhood and the city at-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 Playfields

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 or district subarea development plan should explore a variety of solutions to these problems. Participants in the Downtown Plan Downtown Strategic Action Planning process voiced many creative ideas for park improvement. The ideas include (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-North Fourth and N-North Fifth Avenues; and (5) the addition of a play structure. The City will explore the opportunity of shared public parking arrangements with the Regional Justice Center for evening use of the parking garage located across the street from the Commons Playfields.

--- Improve James Street
Kent Downtown Districts

Ultimately, James Street will be an important arterial, as well as being a vital and in the future should include improved pedestrian and bicycle routes connecting the Commons Park Playfields and the Interurban Trail to the Borden site redevelopment, Kent Station, the Kent Transit Center, 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 have sidewalks at least 12 feet wide 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.

[Fig. V-2: Map – Proposed elements of the North Frame District (1998)]

— Provide Gateway Improvements at Fourth Avenue and James Street.

This high traffic intersection close to the Kent Commons and the Regional Justice Center is an important downtown 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. As redevelopment of Kent Station occurs, this intersection will likely see increased pedestrian activity. Pedestrian-oriented design, including safety features, will need to be considered in designing this gateway.

[Fig. V-3: Drawings – The suggested concept for Fourth Avenue and James Street (1998)]

— Open Cloudy Street to connect Third and Fourth Avenues

In order to alleviate traffic congestion along James Street, residents of North Park would be able to exit onto Fourth Avenue. All streets intersecting James Street directly north of Kent Station will be restricted to right-in, right-out turns onto and off of James Street. The opening of Cloudy Street between Third and Fourth Avenues is already considered a mitigating action for the Kent Station development.

— Implement traffic-calming measures on Cloudy Street to reduce vehicular speeds if Neighborhood Traffic Control Program analysis concludes such measures are necessary

If findings of any Neighborhood Traffic Control Program (NTCP) study indicate necessity, design for reduced vehicular speeds in the vicinity of the Kiwanis Tot Lot, applying appropriate traffic-calming measures in order to improve safe vehicular and pedestrian travel behavior.
Development Target Area Actions

— Encourage Office/Residential Mixed-Use Development at the N. Fourth Avenue/N. Fifth Avenue and the First-Fifth Avenues/James-Cloudy Streets Target Area by amending the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning District designations

As noted above, the plan Downtown Strategic Action Plan (DSAP) promotes the conversion of the single-family area between N-North Fourth-First and N-North Fifth Avenues, and between James and Cloudy Streets to include a mixed-use mix of uses complementary to Kent Station, the Regional Justice Center, and the Kent Transit Center. Office, retail, and multifamily residential development would be encouraged along James Street to a depth of approximately 300 feet by designating the area for Downtown Commercial Enterprise (DCE) Zoning – consistent with Kent Station development south of James Street. Further north of the proposed DCE district expansion, to the south side of Cloudy Street, a designation of low-density multi-family residential (LDMF) Comprehensive Plan Land Use would encourage a transition between the intensive mixed use development along James Street and the single-family residential housing to the north. Extension of low-density multi-family residential zoning to include the five (5) Single-Family Residential-zoned parcels (SR-8) north of Cloudy Street between Fourth and Fifth Avenues would in part reaffirm a Council recommendation to rezone this area as adopted in the 1998 DSAP. Either a Multi-Family Residential – Garden Density (MR-G) Zoning District to allow market rate rental, or a Multi-Family Residential – Townhouse, 16 units per acre (MR-T16) Zoning District to allow only purchased units would be appropriate.

These uses will benefit from proximity to the park-Commons Playfields and the visibility along Fourth Avenue and James Street. Also, they will be less adversely impacted by the park-Commons activity and traffic. Figure V-4 illustrates the type of development that is envisioned.

(Fig. V-4: Drawing – The type of office/residential mixed-use development envisioned for the N. Fourth/Fifth Avenue target area. (1998))

Design Guidelines

Finally, the City should expand the Downtown Design Guidelines area of applicability to include the North Frame District, and administer district-specific guidelines to ensure that:

• Development presents an attractive building face and/or landscaping, particularly to James and Fourth Streets.
• Site improvements do not negatively impact existing development 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 Playfields could begin to address important issues. Redevelopment of the area land along the N. Fourth/Fifth Avenue corridors between First and Fifth Avenues north of James Street will provide opportunities for additional housing in a convenient downtown location near recreation resources and a regional transportation center. 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.

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 Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan identifies the entire Central Avenue Corridor 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 Kent Transit Center. 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, as it is with all downtown streets. 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 Kent Transit Center and the business core. The recommendation included special lighting to call attention to the
gateways. Participants in the charette included a landscape architect, an artist, an urban designer, downtown merchants, and City representatives.

The Kent Downtown Strategic Action 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 Kent Transit Center.

![Fig. V-6: Map – Central Avenue Corridor and West Frame Districts are illustrated above. (1998)](image)

**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 are some 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.

![Fig. V-7: Drawing – Design Issues That New Development Should Address in the Central Avenue District. (1998)](image)

![Fig. V-8: Drawing – Design Issues That Existing Development in the Central Avenue District Should Address. (1998)](image)

Because Central Avenue is many people's first impression of downtown appearance and development quality, this 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.

**Development Target Area Actions**

— Rezone properties along Central Avenue currently zoned DCE to General Commercial, Mixed-Use Overlay (GC-MU) for purposes of lending requirements regarding conformity of use and zoning.

Properties adjacent to Central Avenue within the DCE Zoning District have operating businesses that are non-conforming uses, and have non-conforming site characteristics. A rezone would allow for the existing uses to be deemed conforming for the purposes of obtaining financing for improvements. However, the applicant for any redevelopment or use expansion in Downtown, regardless of zoning, is not exempted from Downtown Design Review requirements.

[Fig. V-9: Drawing – Central Avenue as it exists today. (1998)]

[Fig. V-10: Drawing – A Visualization of How Central Avenue could look. (1998)]

[Fig. V-11: Map – Central Avenue Corridor 20 Year Vision (1998)]

**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 Middle Junior High School are located in the district, it is rich in public services. However, better connections to the downtown-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 to create a more attractive setting.

- **Improve/Enhance or replace pedestrian bridge over Mill Creek at Temperance**

Connectivity between the residential neighborhood at the foot of East Hill and the Kent Middle School (formerly Kent Jr. High School), and Downtown destinations including the Kent Transit Center, and Kent Station would be significantly improved by enhancing or replacing the existing pedestrian bridge over Mill Creek at Temperance Street. Aside from ensuring the attractiveness of the improvement, a particularly important consideration would be an increase in the width of this bridge to allow more than one person at a time to comfortably make passage. Ensure also that any improvement to the pedestrian bridge does not adversely impact Mill Creek salmonid habitat.

**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 areas by providing lighting and pathways, reducing hazardous areas, and providing visible entries.
- Provide useful open space and pedestrian-oriented streetscapes.

- **Consider options for flexibility in general parking standards for Downtown Commercial Enterprise (DCE) Zoning in the East Frame District with the economic development goals of the City**

The property owners in the East Frame District are not proposing intensive, mixed-use projects – and interest in developing such projects in the East Frame is limited at this time. Four (4) options to consider:

1. Allow outright 4.5 surface parking spaces per 1,000 gross square feet of commercial floor area;  
2. Allow 4.5 surface parking spaces per 1,000 g.s.f. of commercial floor area, provided that 25% of the overall gross floor area of the project is multi-family residential;  
3. No change – the existing 3 surface parking spaces per 1,000 g.s.f. commercial in the DCE zone is counterbalanced with a minimum of one-and-one half (1.5) parking spaces per multi-family residential unit east of the Burlington Northern tracks (KCC 15.05.070(C)). This
could be seen as an incentive to include housing units in commercial development in DCE:
4. Add two (2) year “Sunset Clause” from date of adoption for any DCE parking standards revision to evaluate the effectiveness of the revision.

While there are few specific recommendations for the East Frame District in this plan, the City should continue to monitor residential neighborhood conditions and act if special problems or opportunities arise.

[Fig. V-12: Map – Proposed Elements of the East Frame District (1998)]

[Fig. V-13: Map – East Frame District 20 Year Vision (1998)]

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 West Frame District. In 2005, Metro plans to phase out the park-and-ride lot located between Smith and James Streets when the Kent Transit Center/Commuter Rail Station is ready to accommodate express bus service connections. The parking demand from the park-and-ride lot will be served by the Kent Transit Center garage and 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 to West Frame from Willis Street

Major redevelopment opportunities in the West Frame District south of Smith Street will depend on a new street connection northbound through the area from Willis Street. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) reviewed an August 2001 proposal to upgrade the intersection of the northbound ramp off SR 167, and issued a response in March 2002 indicating denial. If a north-south route connecting Meeker Street with Willis Street is determined to be feasible in the future, the City should carefully evaluate the economic development benefits and its impacts on the downtown’s traffic system. A traffic signal was placed at the intersection of 74th Avenue South and Willis Street in 2004 to facilitate westbound turns onto Willis from 74th Avenue South.
— **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.

### Redevelopment Opportunities

**— Encourage redevelopment of King County-Metro Park & Ride lot**

King County-Metro is marketing for sale an 8 acre portion of the 9.5 acre Lincoln Park & Ride lot located between Smith and James Streets. The entire lot is zoned Downtown Commercial Enterprise (DCE). Much of the parking is anticipated to shift to the Kent Transit Center garage as most express bus service trips are replaced by Sounder Commuter Rail service trips to Seattle. The remaining 1.5 acres will continue to provide one hundred (100) surface parking stalls for the reduced service park and ride.

**— Encourage redevelopment of the area between State Route 167, the Union-Pacific Railroad, Willis and Meeker Streets**

The access road and Interurban Trail improvements could be key factors in this redevelopment opportunity. Revising the West Frame District surface parking standards to allow for more surface parking stalls per thousand square feet of commercial gross floor area (see West Frame District Design Guidelines Recommended Actions).

[Fig. V-14: Drawings – 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. (1998)]

### 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. A West Frame District Subarea Development Plan, adopted within a Planned Action Ordinance, could accomplish this goal as well.

**— Consider options for flexibility in general parking standards for Downtown Commercial Enterprise (DCE) Zoning in the West Frame District with the economic development goals of the City**
The property owners in the West Frame District are not proposing intensive, mixed-use projects – and interest in developing such projects in the West Frame is limited at this time. North-south access to this district has long been problematic, especially for vehicular traffic. Four (4) options to consider:

1. Allow **outright** 4.5 surface parking spaces per 1,000 gross square feet of commercial floor area;
2. Allow 4.5 surface parking spaces per 1,000 g.s.f. of commercial floor area, provided that 25% of the overall gross floor area of the project is multi-family residential;
3. No change – the existing 3 surface parking spaces per 1,000 g.s.f. commercial in the DCE zone is counterbalanced with a minimum of one (1) parking space per multi-family residential unit west of the Burlington Northern tracks (KCC 15.05.070(B)). This could be seen as an incentive to include housing units in commercial development in DCE;
4. Add two (2) year “Sunset Clause” from date of adoption for any DCE parking standards revision to evaluate the effectiveness of the revision.

[Fig. V-15: Map – Proposed elements of the West Frame District are illustrated above. (1998)]

[Fig. V-16: Map – West Frame District 20 Year Vision (1998)]

### E. South Core District

The area immediately south and west of the Meeker Street section of the historic 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 railroads 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 Gowé Street with platforms on both sides of the Burlington Northern/Sante 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 Gowé Street.

The **Plan Downtown Strategic Action Plan** encourages residential mixed-use in this area to help achieve the Comprehensive Plan’s housing Housing Element goals, and to provide a built-in market for downtown 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 Core District 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 the South Core 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 downtown economically if the image presented by the station is positive and the connections throughout downtown are clear. Therefore, stimulating the economic and physical vitality of downtown depends on a series of actions to connect the Kent Transit Center 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 Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan recommends a well-designed, distinctive station to provide downtown with a strong identity and indicate a commitment to high quality development.

- **Reduce Station Impacts**

  Carefully coordinate rail station design to reduce the impacts of the intermodal transportation facility on existing and future mixed-use development. Public Works has designed street widening projects to serve the Kent Transit Center on Pioneer Street between Central and Railroad Avenues, and Smith Street between Fourth and Railroad Avenues.

- **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 Railroad (BNSF) to restore the station. Recent discussions between the Kent Downtown Partnership
KDP and BNSF have included the possible sale of the Depot for a nominal fee conditional on the building being removed from its current location proximate to the railroad tracks. The Kent Downtown Partnership has considered the potential use of the Depot as a tourist information office and the Greater Kent Historical Society and Museum has expressed interest in the Depot as a history center. Citizens at the 2004 workshops were supportive of these types of reuse of the Depot should it become feasible for purchase and relocation.

- Construct traffic and pedestrian improvements to downtown streets as necessary to provide access.
  Design During station design, a comprehensive analysis of potential traffic and transit requirements may dictate new improvements for Railroad and Central Avenues, and Smith, Meeker, Gowe and Willis Streets. Connecting pedestrians living in neighborhoods east of Central Avenue and west of Fourth Avenue with the Downtown Core Districts has been voiced as important. No less important will be the manner in which traffic currently passing through Downtown is routed in such a way to minimize delays while ensuring pedestrian safety in a pedestrian-friendly environment throughout Downtown.

- 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/Sante 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. This project is planned for completion during the next five to ten years (2009-2014).

- Extend Angled Parking Along Saar Street to the Union Pacific Railroad
  Installing angled parking with vertical curbs and gutters 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.

[Fig. V-17: Map – Proposed Elements of the South Core District. (1998)]
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-18 and Figure V-19 illustrate design guideline recommendations for this district.

[Fig. V-18: Drawing – Architectural details appropriate in the South Frame District. (1998)]

[Fig. V-19: Drawing – This illustration demonstrates how landscaping can define open space and add texture to a building. (1998)]

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.

(Fig. V-20: Map – South Core District 20 Year Vision (1998))

F. North Core District

With the Regional Justice Center, the Kent Public Market, and the proposed civic and performing arts center, and a town square park, 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 Harrison and James Streets east of South Fourth Avenue make the North Core District unique within the region.

Because of these dynamic opportunities, the plan-Downtown Strategic Action Plan-designates the entire district-North Core 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 Kent Transit Center rail station with the Regional Justice Center, Kent Commons, and the neighborhood residences north of James Street (North Park). 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.

(Fig. V-21: Map – Proposed elements of the North Core District are illustrated above. (1998))

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 Kent Transit Center 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. Citizens have voiced interest in a pedestrian bridge across Smith Street between First and Second Avenues – connecting the Library with the Kent Transit Center garage. The
likelihood of such a pedestrian bridge being constructed depends on a number of variables including available right-of-way, funding, traffic flow and safety issues.

Improve or install new sidewalks, streetlights, and tree grates along connecting pedestrian corridors to other Downtown districts. 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 North Core District.

— Enhance Parks Along the Railroad to Provide Linkages Between the North Core/Station Area and the Historic 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 Public 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 between the North Core and Historic Core Districts

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 or hotel and conference 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 the Kent Downtown Partnership, the Chamber of Commerce, and other interested parties to ensure that the park and civic and performing arts center complement and enhances the mix of pedestrian-oriented land uses one another and connects adjacent Downtown districts.

— Support the Kent Public Market as a connecting activity between the Historic Core and the area north of Smith Street.

[Fig. V-22: Drawing – The above illustration shows existing conditions along Railroad Avenue. (1998)]

[Fig. V-23: Drawing – A canopy along Railroad Avenue will provide pedestrian protection and market space (1998)]

— 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.

*Fig. V-24: Drawing — “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. (1998)*

**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 Kent Station Border site issues described below.

**Redevelopment Opportunities**

The plan—Downtown Strategic Action Plan (DSAP) supports and integrates other development activities, including those described below.

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

Because of its large size, central location, and transportation access, the Borden-Kent Station site is one of the premier downtown-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, such as a Planned Action, 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 (realized as Ramsay Way);
- A defined, appropriate mix of uses and use intensities;
- Convenient access to transit facilities;
• Orientation to adjacent sites;
• Provision of open space and pedestrian amenities;
• Design guidelines for architectural and site design character;
• Mitigation measures for probable, significant, adverse environmental impacts.

— Support residential development in the North Core District.

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

[Fig. V-25: Drawing – Shown above is the proposed Civic and Performing Arts Center design by the Bumgardner Partnership (1998)]

— Support a Civic and Performing Arts Center or hotel and conference center in Downtown.

A Civic and Performing Arts Center or hotel with facilities for conferences and other events, would be an important attraction to the downtown 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.

[Fig. V-26: Drawing – Architect’s drawing of the proposed Kent Public Market building – courtesy of the Kent Downtown Partnership. (1998)]

— Support the Kent Public Market

The Kent Public Market on Railroad Avenue between Meeker and Smith Streets will adds an important weekend activity in Downtown. It will anchor businesses on Railroad Avenue, enhance the Sister Cities Parks complex, and serves as a connecting element between the commuter North Core rail station and the North Historic Core Districts. 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.

— Encourage mixed-use development projects in proximity to the Kent Transit Center

Encourage private sector interest in redeveloping or developing vacant or underutilized sites to mixed-use, through incentives such as expedited permit review at no additional...
cost, provided that project designs meet applicable development standards and Downtown Design Review criteria. The Municipal Parking Lot, located between Smith & Harrison Streets, and Fourth and Second Avenues, could provide an excellent opportunity for mixed-use development featuring structured parking.

[Fig. V-27: Map – North Core District 20 Year Vision (1998)]

G. Historic Core District

The Historic Core District is the traditional and geographic heart of downtown Kent. The Historic 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-Historic Core District also includes the Kent City Hall/civic campus just south of Gow Street.

The Historic Core District is bordered by the public parking lot and library on the north, the Central Avenue corridor-Corridor District 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 (DSAP) addresses the areas immediately surrounding the Historic Core District as well as the district-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-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.

[Fig. V-28: Map – Proposed elements of the Historic Core District. (1998)]
Public Improvements

- Make Pedestrian Improvements

While the downtown-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-Kent Transit Centennial station, the King County Regional Justice Center and other offices, businesses and residences throughout downtown-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 Gateways

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.

- Inform Historic Core property and business owners of the locations and functional lifespan of utility facilities, and involve these stakeholders in the planning and coordination of street improvements

Several buildings in the Historic Core may require utilities upgrading in order to attract stable businesses. Some buildings of historic age may be required to upgrade connections to the public utility system as it is upgraded – and without sufficient communication and coordination those on-site upgrades may be a factor that compromises pursuit of historic register status for such buildings.

- Plan for eventual undergrounding of all utilities in the Historic Core to improve the attractiveness of the visual environment and increase available sidewalk space for walking and other appropriate activities

Design Guidelines and Historic Preservation Activities

Meeker Street and First Avenue 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
Kent Downtown Districts

details. All of the streets in the Historic Core District are Class A pedestrian-oriented streets according to City design Downtown Design guidelines. New buildings in the Historic core should adhere to the Downtown Design 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 context-sensitive restoration and renovation 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.

[Fig. V-30: Drawings – Façade Improvement and Infill Development Concepts (1998)]

[Fig. V-31: Map – Conceptual Design for the Commuter Rail Station (1998)]

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 an historic-Historic landmark 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 Downtown as a whole.

[Fig. V-32: Map – Historic Core District 20 Year Vision (1998)]
VI. Additional Environmental Information

A. Fact Sheet

Description of Proposal

The City of Kent is supplementing its existing downtown-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-Downtown form for the next several decades, including what type of development should occur where and how it should be served. In 1998, the The-environmental analysis focuses focused on the screening of plan alternatives as prepared with contributions by advisory committees, Downtown Stakeholders Task Force, City staff, downtown-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-Downtown area as indicated in Figure III-1, Study Area. The approximate limits of downtown-Downtown Kent are SR 167 on the west, Cloudy and James Streets on the north, Woodford Avenue and Titus Street on the east, and Willis Street/SR 516 on the south.

Proponent and Lead Agency

City of Kent
Planning Department Services Office
400 West Gow Street
(Mailing Address: 220 Fourth Avenue South)
Kent, WA 98032-5895
206/859-3390 (253) 856-5454

Proposed Implementation Date

The Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan (DSAP) is scheduled to be was adopted on April 7, 1998. The first update of the DSAP is anticipated to be adopted on .... 2005.

Responsible Official

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Planning Director Principal Planner
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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

Final FSEIS Issue Date

April 8, 1998

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 Kent City Council Planning Committee included public comment on August 6, 1997.

Nature and Date of Final Action

The adoption of the Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan is scheduled-anticipated for April 7, 1998 early in 2005.

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 SEIS 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 Services Office
400 West Gowe Street
(Mailing Address: 220 Fourth Avenue S.)
Kent, WA 98032-5895
206/859-3399 (253) 856-5454

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 in person at the above address, or by mail. One copy will be provided to each individual or group upon request.
B. 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 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 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 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 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 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 (1998)**

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 Playfields. 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 (1998):**

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. Ensure 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 were incorporated with the plan as adopted in 1998.

**Incorporation of the Update Process & Recommendations**

As the Downtown Strategic Action Plan (DSAP) is updated, as in 2004, additional recommendations may be considered, and some recommendations previously adopted may be deemed completed or may be removed. Text may be revised to reflect changing conditions, and amendments to the goals, policies and recommended actions of the DSAP, and any consequent map designation changes may be proposed as part of the annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment process (KCC Chapter 12.02).

**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 (Sound Transit) issued a Kent downtown-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 be no difference — rather, that it is below the model’s significance threshold.

In September 2000, the Commuter Rail Station Area Study (CRSAS) was published with the intention of supplementing the Comprehensive Plan and DSAP, providing a framework for economic policies, redevelopment opportunities, land uses and streetscape improvements in the vicinity of the Regional Transit Authority (RTA)-selected Kent Transit Center (formerly known as Sounder Commuter Rail & Bus Station) site, located along the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad tracks between Smith and James Streets. A traffic study was completed as part of the CRSAS. The CRSAS is incorporated by reference into this EIS.

In July 2002, the City Council adopted the Kent Station Planned Action Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Kent Station SEIS), which established a range of environmental impact thresholds for the redevelopment of the site formerly occupied by the Borden Chemical Company, and the City municipal parking lots located between Smith and Harrison Streets. A number of impact studies were completed during the SEIS process. The Kent Station SEIS is incorporated by reference into this EIS.
In October 2003, the City Council adopted the Economic Development Strategic Plan, which includes implementation actions for Downtown Kent. This document is incorporated by reference into this EIS.

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 measures were discussed 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 Amending the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning District Map designations for the SF-8 area between Fourth-First Avenue N. and Fifth Avenue N. along James Street north to Cloudy Street, and five (5) parcels north of Cloudy Street between Fourth and Fifth Avenues N.; and to extend the Downtown Design Review Area to include all of the Downtown Strategic Action Plan Districts**

**Discussion:**

Revise the Comprehensive Plan map and adopt a new zoning designation for the area between Fourth-First Avenue N. and Fifth Avenue N., north of James Street to Cloudy Street. Revise the area extending three hundred feet (300') north from James Street between First and Fifth Avenues, revise the existing Comprehensive Plan Map designation, SF-SF-8 (Single Family residential, 8 dwelling units maximum per acre) to Commercial Urban Center (UC). The zoning code-district designation shall allow-limited office development, and include residential development combined with office development as a conditional-use be changed to Downtown Commercial Enterprise (DCE), consistent with the adjacent zoning along the south side of James. Institute new site development guidelines. Apply Downtown Design 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:
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>Front Yard</td>
<td>25 feet</td>
<td>Reduce to 10 feet to be the same as residential district.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the area between First and Fifth Avenues, and between Cloudy Street and the proposed DCE zone north of James Street, change the Comprehensive Plan Map designation from SF-8 to Low Density Multi-family Residential (LDMF) to provide a buffer between the residential neighborhood north of Cloudy and the mixed-use development along James Street. Between Fourth and Fifth Avenues, extend low-density multi-family residential designations north of Cloudy Street to include the five (5) SF-8/SR-8 designated parcels immediately south of the existing adjacent LDMF/MR-G district along the west side of Fourth Avenue. Change the zoning district designation to either Multi-Family Residential, Townhouse 16 units per acre (MR-T16), or Multi-Family Residential Garden Density (MR-G), which also allows 16 units per acre - the only difference is whether units are owner-occupied or rented. Notably, condominium insurance problems still exist statewide, and the City of Kent Downtown Multi-Family Residential Development Tax Exemption applies at this time only to owner-occupied units. Developers therefore have at least two reasons not to develop condominium units in Kent.

Environmental Impact Evaluation:

- The proposed Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map and Zoning District Map Code revisions if adopted will result in the eventual conversion of single family housing units within the area of change - to a mix of multi-family residential and commercial uses.

- The proposed bulk and scale of office/residential/mixed-use development as well as the placement of buildings on the site may create impacts to homes in the existing MR-G, Garden-low density multifamily residential district, although MR-G or MR-T16 zoning is proposed for extension south of Cloudy from the original 1998 proposal. The MR-G district is located north of the proposed office/residential area.

- Replacement of single family homes with office/residential/mixed use 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. Multi-family residential development would restore some of the open space in more concentrated areas.
• During the weekday peak hours, office uses will create additional traffic and turning movements onto Fourth Avenue N.

• The increased intensity of mixed-use development allowed for an estimated 8.4 acres under Downtown Commercial Enterprise (DCE) Zoning density of office-use and increased residential density will result in approximately four hundred-ten (410) additional peak hour trips above the number of trips anticipated for Single-Family Residential, Eight Units per Acre (SR-8) Zoning to and from the Kent Valley.

• The increased intensity of development allowed under low density multi-family residential zoning for an estimated 10.6 acres (either MR-G or MR-T16 – each with a maximum of sixteen (16) units per acre) will result in approximately eighty-one (81) additional PM peak hour trips to and from the Kent Valley.

• Office/residential-Mixed-use 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. DCE zoning encourages inclusion of residential units, and MR-T16 or MR-G both provides for appropriate development of housing close to the Downtown Core.

• Incorporate the North Frame District into the Downtown design guidelines Design Review Area, and recognize the specific context north of the proposed rezone area, to ensure high quality, substantial office/residential mixed-use and multi-family residential development compatible with the adjacent residential neighborhood.

• To make better use of existing open space, improve Commons Park Playfields, 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 of Kent Planning Services Office is responsible for revising-amending the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning District designation maps and zoning, pursuant to the legislative review process before the Land Use and Planning Board, which then forwards a recommendation through the Mayor to the City Council for final action. 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.

Rezone the Downtown Commercial Enterprise (DCE) area located between Smith and Gowe Streets at one parcel depth on either side of Central Avenue, to General Commercial, Mixed-Use Overlay (GC-MU)

Discussion:
Revise the Zoning Districts map designation for the area between Smith and Gowe Streets at one parcel depth on either side of Central Avenue, to General Commercial, Mixed-Use Overlay (GC-MU). Continue to apply Downtown Design Guidelines to ensure high-quality, substantial development that respects and improves pedestrian connectivity to Core Downtown districts.

Environmental Impact Evaluation:
• In the short-term, Central Avenue may continue to provide a visual, noise, and physical health (concentrated pollution) barrier for pedestrians seeking access to and from the Core Downtown districts.

• Ingress and egress from small parcels with auto-oriented commercial uses onto Central Avenue will continue to be problematic, for pedestrians and other vehicles.

Mitigation Measures:
• Ensure that permit applications for GC and GC-MU zoned properties within Downtown are subject to Downtown Design Review.

• Ensure that pedestrian amenities are included as part of Central Avenue street improvements.

Responsibility:
• The Planning Services Office is responsible for area-wide rezone proposals that are presented to the Land Use and Planning Board as part of the legislative review process. The Land Use and Planning Board then forwards a recommendation through the Mayor to the City Council for final action.

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

Discussion:

Because of its central location and large area, the former Borden industrial property (Kent Station) 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 City of Kent purchased the property in 2001, adopted a Planned Action Environmental Impact Statement (Kent Station SEIS) detailing a range of development uses and intensities and anticipated probable, adverse, significant impacts. The City is currently reviewing site development permit applications under a Master Planned Development Agreement. The plan-MPDA must be is 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 Services Office would be responsible for developing the master plan requirements and submitting it to City Council for action.

Promote infill housing — encourage the development of at least two hundred (200) units of new market rate housing in Downtown by 2008
Discussion:

In order to meet the Comprehensive Plan’s intent to enhance the downtown area 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. Consider using incentives such as reducing or waiving development permit fees for residential construction in Downtown, and extending the existing Downtown multi-family residential tax exemption program to include market rate rental housing. Developers of condominiums are challenged by two factors in Downtown – condominium owners are still having difficulty acquiring home insurance and the developers do not receive the tax exemption for developing condos in Downtown. Consider also allowing development of buildings with five (5) stories of wood frame construction above a concrete base.

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 onto 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 area. 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-207)

• Construct storm water facilities consistent with the 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.

• 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 high quality new commercial, office, or mixed use development and redevelopment. Also encourage the development of a hotel/conference center to serve as an attractor for commercial activity.

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, as well as hotel and conference space for business-industry meetings.

Environmental Impact Evaluation:
• Development of mixed-use development that includes residential units will increase the need for open space.
Additional Environmental Information

• 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 onto 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 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 the number of residential units within mixed-use development increases in 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 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.

Public Facilities

Masterplan the Commons Park Playfields.

Discussion:

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

Environmental Impact Evaluation:
- Currently the Commons Park Playfields typically hosts six softball games or nine soccer games at one time. It hosts assorted other activities when soccer is not underway. 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, such as restrooms and bleachers 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 Playfields parking area entrance would 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 would 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 Playfields 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 the 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 Playfields 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.
Responsibilities:
• The City shall be responsible for identifying appropriate sites, working with landowners, 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 Kent Transit Center 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 a pedestrian protection, serve as outdoor stalls for the market, and visually tie the Sister Cities Parks together. The expansion of the General Commercial (GC) Zoning District on Central Avenue parallel to these parks may have long-term impact on the attractiveness of using these parks.

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 Downtown gateways would be responsible for incorporating building designs compatible with the gateway.

Support development of a Civic and Performing Arts Center or a hotel and conference center.

Discussion:
Support a civic and performing arts center between Meeker and Smith Streets. A civic and performing arts center at this location, or a hotel with facilities for conferences and other events, would be an important attraction to the downtown 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, or hotel and conference center may be able to use space presently providing parking – at least in the interim.

- Before and after the performance hours, patrons will create additional traffic.

- The proposed Civic and Performing Arts Center or hotel and conference center will create additional peak trips to and from the Kent Valley.

- The proposed Civic and Performance Arts Center, or a hotel and conference center could increase in 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, or hotel and conference 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 the 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:**
Additional Environmental Information

The Civic and Performing Arts Center, or hotel and conference 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 has 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 Park, discussing with the Lions Club and other sponsors how to increase the viability of the Public Market. Future relocation or restructuring of the Public Market may become necessary to meet the mixed use development goals of the City for this area.

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.
Additional Environmental Information

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

• Construct storm water facilities consistent with the 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 Downtown near Saar, Willis, Meeker, and James Streets.
  b. Ensure 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 Kent Station 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 Kent Transit Center.

Urban Design

Revise the Kent Zoning Code and the Downtown Design Review Handbook to address more specific design guidelines for all of 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.

City of Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan
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 Kent Transit Center. Address design guidelines, buffers for adjacent residential neighborhood, zoning code enforcement, zoning use issues, and streetscape improvements.

c. **Smith Street and Fourth Avenue Corridors (North Core, North Frame, Historic Core, South Core):** 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 (South Core, North Frame, West Frame):** Encourage small- to medium-scale mixed-use redevelopment west of Fourth Avenue and East of State Street, emphasizing residential neighborhood qualities.

e. **Area Between Fourth, First and Fifth Avenues N. (North Frame):** 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. **East Frame:** Revise DCE surface parking standards in this district, with any conditional criteria, to increase the number of stalls per thousand square feet of commercial gross floor area from three (3) to four-and-a-half (4.5).

g. **West Frame:** Revise DCE surface parking standards in this district, with any conditional criteria, to increase the number of stalls per thousand square feet of commercial gross floor area from three (3) to four-and-a-half (4.5).

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 Kent Transit Center, 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 Kent 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 as acceptable a Level of Service (LOS) Standard-F for automobile traffic on streets and intersections within the Urban Center boundaries which are generally consistent with the study area defined for the Downtown Strategic Action Plan. The previously adopted LOS Standard used transportation analysis methods which have since become obsolete. The City is currently in the process of revising the City of Kent Concurrency Ordinance as needed to reflect current transportation analysis methods. The role of Downtown Kent as a pedestrian-oriented destination for several transportation modes (including pedestrian, bicycle, and transit) will be recognized in such analysis.

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

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 Kangley area. Willis Street is also forecasted to experience a high proportion of through-trip growth.

Unless the adverse impacts of this growth in overall traffic can be mitigated, the City’s level-of-service (LOS) thresholds will be exceeded, and more severe congestion and delay will result. Possible mitigation measures could include widening for the creation of additional turning lanes along 4th Avenue South, Smith Street, James Street, and Central Avenue 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 valley floor-employers).

The mitigation process is as follows: The developer either shall provide a detailed traffic impact study (TIS) to identify both existing and future adverse traffic impacts upon the City of Kent street and road network, including street capacity, traffic queues, and traffic signal levels-of-service (LOS), and then constructs those mitigation measures listed in the approved TIS as a condition of development, or, in lieu of conducting the above-described TIS, and subsequently constructing or implementing the respective mitigation measures identified in that TIS, the developer may instead agree to pay Environmental Mitigation Fees (EMF) toward the City’s cost of constructing the City’s South 272nd Street/South 277th Street Corridor Project. The final benefit will be determined using $1,068 (in 1986 U.S. Dollars and adjusted for inflation and rezones) for each new PM peak hour trip generated by the development 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 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>
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<tr>
<td>Land Use</td>
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<td>Building Permits</td>
<td>Number of Permits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Dwelling Units</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Multifamily</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Single Family</td>
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<td>Retail</td>
<td>Square Feet</td>
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<td>Office</td>
<td>Square Feet</td>
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<td>Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Density</td>
<td>Avg. FAR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vacant/Underdeveloped</td>
<td>Acres</td>
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<td>Intersections (per intersection or avg.?)</td>
<td>Peak Hour LOS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>Total Spaces</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Occupancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>Ridership</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Commuter Rail</td>
<td># of AM/PM Trains</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ridership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Facilities</td>
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<td>Stormwater</td>
<td>Impervious Surface</td>
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<td>Detention Facility</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capacity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sewer</td>
<td>Gallons/day/customer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Gallons/day/customer</td>
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<td>Parks</td>
<td>Acres/1,000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Passive</td>
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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

1997-1998

The City received twenty-one written comments from nineteen correspondents during the public comment period for the Draft Supplemental Environmental impact statement in early 1997. 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/Sante 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 performing 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-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-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 (Sound Transit) Environmental Analysis of the proposed Commuter Rail Station (Kent Transit Center), 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/Sante 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

City of Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan
Additional Environmental Information

Joseph Kolodziejczak
Val Batey, Regional Transit Authority
Paul Hammerschmidt
Washington State Department of Community, Trade & Economic Development
Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation
Tom V. Harmer
Mr. Gregory Griffith
Carol McPherson, Kent Arts Commission
Gary Kriedt, King County Metro Transit Division
Doug Johnson, King County Metro Transit Division
Howard H. Montoure
Robert Whalen
Dee Moschel
Pat Curran, Kent Downtown Partnership
Don B. Shaffer
Ms. Carol Schwindt
Mr. Melvin L. Kleweno, Jr.
Robert A. Stevens

B. Glossary

Commuter Rail Station (Kent Transit Center): A station and the facilities for boarding and alighting passengers on the commuter rail line, which operates along

City of Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan
existing Burlington Northern-Sante Fe freight railroad tracks between Smith and James Streets. Also referred to as “Kent Transit Center” to reflect the shift of service routes anticipated when King County sells the Lincoln Park & Ride Lot for redevelopment.

**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 Ratio (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 effects 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.

Sound Transit (formerly “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 the Kent Transit Center 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.