

City of Auburn



***Auburn  
Downtown Plan/  
Final EIS***

ORDINANCE NO. 5549  
ADOPTED MAY 21, 2001

May 2001

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**Availability/Cost of Document**

Copies of the Downtown Plan and Final EIS may be purchased during regular business hours, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the City of Auburn Planning Department, City Hall, located at 25 West Main Street. The cost of the document will be based on the cost of printing. Public review copies are available at City Hall Planning Department as well as the Auburn Branch of the King County Library System.

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## Executive Summary

# Executive Summary

Downtown is the physical and cultural heart of the Auburn community. Like many American cities downtown Auburn began to decline in the 1960's and 70's. In the 1990's business owners, property owners and the City of Auburn began to take action to turn around this decline with a series of physical improvements. This Plan seeks to continue the revitalization of downtown Auburn through an increasingly comprehensive approach.

## **Why was the new downtown plan needed?**

The Auburn Downtown Plan was initiated in response to a number of factors, as outlined below.

### **1. The existing plan needed to be updated to continue Downtown revitalization**

The City has been using the *Downtown Auburn Design Master Plan* (also known as "the black book") to guide its efforts in Downtown since 1990. This 33 page document was instrumental in accomplishing many improvements in Downtown, including the reconstructed Main Street with decorative sidewalks, pedestrian street lighting, banners, and planters full of flowers. This contributed to a much needed facelift for Main Street, Downtown's most highly visible setting.

However, many of the projects outlined in this small "black book" have now been accomplished. And because of its abbreviated and conceptual nature, it simply doesn't have the level of detail which is now needed to take Downtown to the next level of development and revitalization.

### **2. The reopening of Stampede Pass raised many concerns**

The reopening of the Stampede Pass rail line and increased freight train traffic along the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad tracks raised concerns about the impacts such expansion would have on the success of Downtown. Safety hazards caused by extra, slow-moving trains was also a concern.

### **3. Multiple large projects were proposed for Downtown**

At the inception of this planning process several large-scale public transportation projects were being proposed in the

heart of Downtown. These projects include the SR 18/ C Street SW Interchange, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW Grade Separation (in response to the reopening of Stampede Pass), revisions to A Street SW and expansion of A Street NW, and the construction of a new Transit Center. These projects have the capacity to create major changes in both the appearance of Downtown and the way it functions. The community recognized that the layout and design of each needed to be coordinated into a larger, overall concept for Downtown.

#### **4. Private investment in Downtown is scarce**

The level of private investment in Downtown has been minimal over the last few decades, leading to a decline in quality of housing and commercial building stock. In the current climate of region-wide economic and population growth, now is an ideal time to turn around a stagnant business climate.

Community members and City staff saw the cumulative effect of these varied issues, and chose to study and respond to them with an integrated approach. The result was the decision to undertake a substantially expanded Downtown Plan.

#### **What is the Downtown Plan intended to do?**

The overall goal of the Auburn Downtown Plan (the Plan) is to strengthen the downtown community, economy and image by building on existing assets, facilitating catalyst projects in key locations, stimulating infill and redevelopment, and influencing the design and construction of high-quality public infrastructure.

Other goals of the Plan are to evaluate the impacts of increased rail traffic on the livelihood of Downtown, to establish City policy that implements and promotes revitalization, and to bring stakeholders together to generate ideas and concepts useful in developing a common strategy for the Downtown's future.

#### **What process was used in development of the Downtown Plan?**

A Downtown Plan Task Force of local residents and business people was formed to guide the Downtown Plan through its development. Opportunities for input from the community at large were also offered during the planning process. The environmental review process provides another occasion for public participation.

Funding for the study was obtained from several sources. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) supported this project with a grant and cooperative agreement to determine the impacts of

the reopening of the Stampede Pass rail line on Downtown. Financing from the City's Arterial Streets fund supported the extensive traffic analysis completed for the Plan.

### **How is the Plan organized?**

This Downtown Plan is unique in that it combines the Downtown Plan document with the required environmental analysis. This is a new approach that is allowed by the rules of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The advantage of this type of organization is that the environmental analysis is conducted simultaneously with development of the Plan, which allows the planning process to react to issues as they are brought up, rather than waiting until the process is basically complete.

The document is divided into four parts and appendice. The four parts are:

**Part 1: Downtown Plan**

**Part 2: Environmental Summary/Analysis of Alternatives**

**Part 3: Environmental Analysis**

**Part 4: Downtown Plan/EIS Addendum**

A summary of these four parts follows.

#### **Part 1: Downtown Plan**

is designed to provide the framework to guide and promote the redevelopment, economic revitalization and a high quality of life in the Auburn Downtown. This part discusses the planning process used; develops an Urban Design Vision; profiles the current assets and challenges to revitalization; lays out a strategy for improving many aspects of Downtown, and comes up with a set of recommended policies and actions. Specific recommendations are then described for 10 districts within Downtown. Finally, a detailed implementation strategy is presented with approximately 33 projects or programs to accomplish the goals of the Plan.

#### **Part 2: Environmental Summary/Analysis of Alternatives**

looks briefly at two alternatives for Downtown. The Downtown Plan (Part 1) is one alternative; a "No Action" alternative is the second. A summary of each alternative's impact on the built and natural environments is provided. These are described and analyzed more completely in Part 3.

### **Part 3: Environmental Analysis**

evaluates the Plan's environmental constraints and opportunities, identifies appropriate mitigation measures, and provides opportunities for public comment in the decision-making process. The City of Auburn Downtown Plan is a non-project action; therefore, this Environmental Analysis presents qualitative and quantitative analysis of environmental impacts as appropriate to the scope of the proposal and the level of planning. For the Downtown Plan, the level of detail addressed by the environmental analysis is broad, with many of the impacts described on a downtown-wide level. These analyses indicate very general environmental impacts, but in most cases do not provide precise measurements of those impacts.

### **Part 4: EIS Addendum**

provides the comment letters and responses to comment letters received during the DEIS comment period. This Addendum, prepared in April, 2001, along with the Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS issued December 7, 2000, constitutes the Final EIS for the proposal. The Addendum was prepared as a stand alone document to comply with the requirements of SEPA and has been incorporated into this document

### **How will this Plan be implemented?**

The Downtown Plan identifies a multitude of methods to implement the ideas set forth within. These include proposed projects, revision of regulations, and programs that will each take a step toward accomplishing the goals for Downtown. Some of these implementation steps will require the coordination and cooperation between the public and private sectors; others will require considerable effort by City staff to accomplish. The capital projects suggested vary widely in their costs, but overall, substantial funding would be needed to complete all the projects. Looking at this list realistically, it may take many years to achieve the total vision depicted here.

### **What are the conclusions of the Downtown Plan?**

The Downtown Plan forecasts a bright and hopeful future for downtown Auburn, if assets are capitalized upon, and challenges are addressed. Some of the major findings of the Plan are summarized in the paragraphs below.

### **Urban Design Vision**

Citizens contributed to a vision of Downtown Auburn that retains a traditional, small town feel, but that welcomes development which

combines new uses in creative ways. Downtown should be well-maintained, and should be comfortable and safe day and night. Residential opportunities should be expanded, and high quality office space should be built.

### **Assets and Challenges**

Citizens helped to define downtown's current assets and ongoing challenges. Among the many assets discovered were the sense of a "heart of the city" that Main Street provides, the recent street and streetscape improvements along Main Street, the presence of large employers like Auburn Regional Medical Center and the City of Auburn, entertainment venues such as the Performing Arts Center and Auburn Avenue Theatre, and the Transit Center with bus and commuter rail service.

Challenges are many: a retail district that is interrupted by heavy volume streets and an excessive number of taverns, underutilized and visually unappealing buildings and properties, insufficient reinvestments into downtown businesses and properties for many years, and major streets which do not convey the impression of a downtown. There are also many auto-oriented uses in an area that functions best when it is pedestrian-oriented.

### **Economic Profile and Market Forecast**

Auburn retail businesses generate almost \$50 less per square foot per year in gross sales than industry averages. The opportunity to turn these numbers around will appear, however, as market area population and income levels increase in Auburn. The Transit Center will create a demand for additional convenience retail and residential development. Overall demand for additional retail space is estimated to average from 6,000 to 20,000 square feet a year. Class A office space for professional services is a strong immediate need; lodging with conference space is also identified as a need.

### **Downtown Plan Strategy**

Major strategic steps for accomplishing the goals of the Plan include building out from the center of the Downtown; linking the various districts of Downtown to each other and improving their own individual identities; making improvements along key streets that might include landscaping, sidewalks, signage, crosswalks, and gateways; implementing catalyst projects on key sites that will stimulate further development; improving the quality of development by instituting design standards; and improving the image of Downtown Auburn as a great place to do business and invest.

conducted provides sufficient environmental analysis on Transportation and Stormwater Management for proposed developments to use in their own proposals, thus expediting the review process. This is intended to be an incentive to development of properties within the Downtown Plan study area.



# **Part One**

## **Downtown Plan**



## Section 1.1 Introduction

# Section 1.1 Introduction

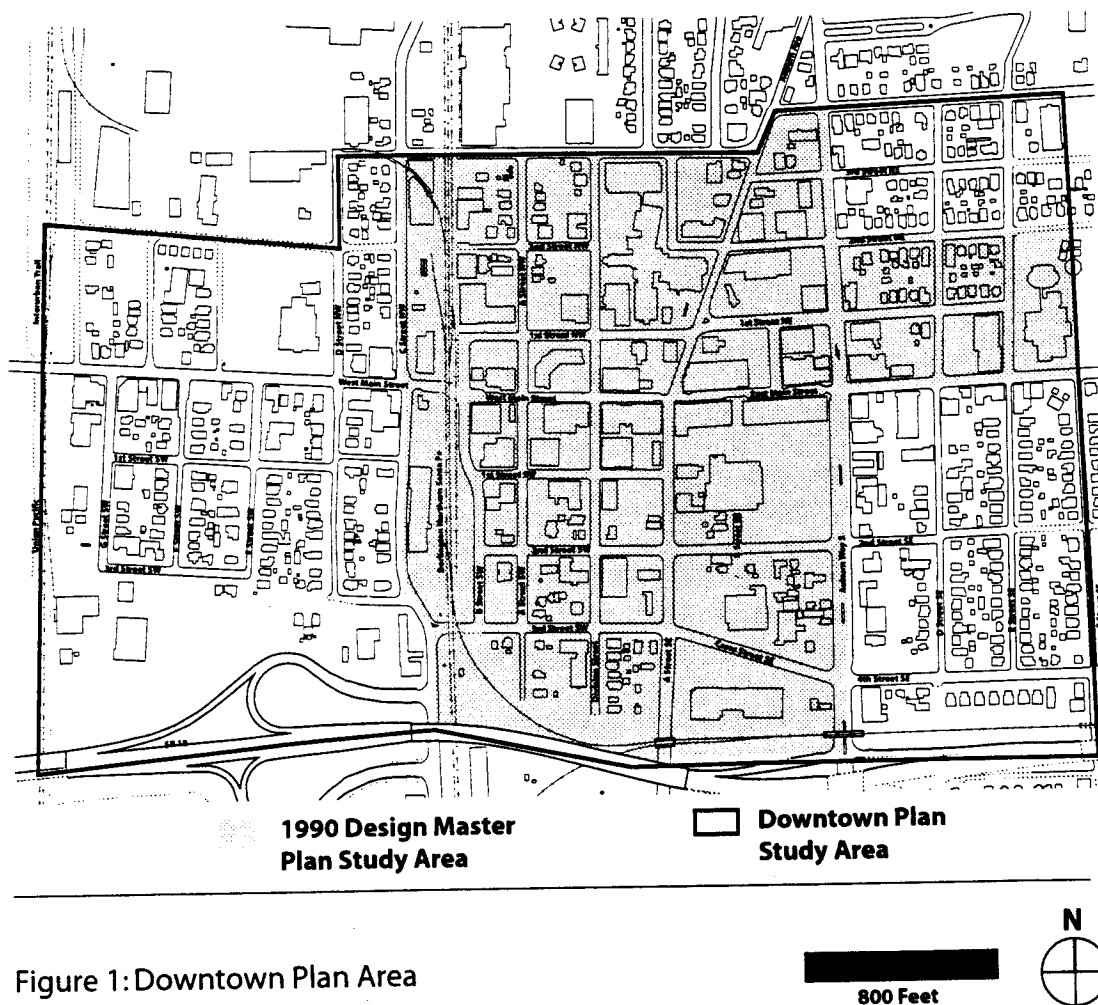


Figure 1: Downtown Plan Area

## 1.1.1 Goals and Purpose

The overall goal of the Auburn Downtown Plan (the Plan) is to strengthen the downtown community, economy, and image by building on existing assets, facilitating catalyst projects in key locations, stimulating infill and redevelopment, and constructing high-quality infrastructure. Other goals of the Plan are to evaluate the Downtown Plan's land use impacts on public facilities, to evaluate the impacts of increased rail traffic on the livelihood of Downtown, to establish City policy that implements and promotes revitalization, and to bring stakeholders together to generate ideas and concepts useful in developing a common strategy for the Downtown's future.

Downtown has been the heart of Auburn, both physically and culturally, since the community was founded in 1891. Like most American communities, downtown Auburn declined in the 1960s and 1970s as the suburbs grew and retail activity went elsewhere.

Auburn's residents and business owners recognized the decline and took significant steps to reclaim downtown. A number of major public investments were made over the last 20 years, including the decision to build City Hall at its Main Street location, the 1994 expansion of Auburn Regional Medical Center, the construction of West Auburn High School in 1992, the construction of the Performing Arts Center in the late 1970s, the 1990 Downtown Auburn Design Master Plan, and the implementation of the Main Street improvements, completed in the 1990s.

While public investment was significant during the past decade and has had a dramatically positive effect, other forces continued to have a detrimental impact on downtown, including the development of strip retail along Auburn Way, the decline in quality of downtown housing stock, and minimal private investment in quality development or building maintenance. These are not uncommon problems, as recent retailing trends have put more of a focus on major national chains. In Auburn's case, the trend has been toward automobile-oriented "big box" developments that have located just outside of downtown. Downtown merchants have had difficulty coping with these nationwide and regional trends. The reopening of Stampede Pass on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad line also created concern that Downtown would be effectively isolated from the rest of the city several times a day. This brought into question the whole issue of whether Downtown, already struggling, could remain viable under these conditions.

Today Auburn is experiencing another wave of major change. In the current climate of region-wide economic and population growth, a number of major transportation investments are proposed, under construction, or recently completed. These will have a major impact on the look and feel of downtown. Projects include the SR18/C Street Interchange and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW Grade Separation which will provide access to Downtown over the BNSF tracks; the Transit Center with commuter rail, local and express bus service; and the reconstruction of A Street SW. These significant public investments, coupled with the need to plan for downtown growth and redevelopment in a coordinated manner, created the impetus to prepare this Downtown Plan.

Related to these goals is the need to build on the successes of the 1990 plan. The current plan will look at a larger area than the 1990 plan (see Figure 1) and is designed to incorporate recent and upcoming developments; identify market conditions and development opportunities; identify and remove impediments to continued revitalization; and identify a realistic, action-oriented implementation plan.

For this reason, the Auburn Downtown Plan uses an implementation-based approach that is focused on getting things done. The approach is designed to gain the confidence of interested parties and to secure commitments to the completion and subsequent implementation of the Plan. Plan preparation included:

- Formulation of the Urban Design Vision for downtown
- Evaluation of increased rail traffic on business and residential viability
- Preparation of a detailed market analysis
- Identification of essential sites for catalyst projects which would trigger additional investment
- Identification of the infrastructure needed to accommodate future growth
- Collaboration with major property owners
- Development of a Plan EIS
- Development of Code Amendments
- Traffic mitigation program unique to the CBD
- Commitment to improving the overall quality of downtown development and infrastructure
- Improving image problems within downtown

These elements have helped to create a sound plan that generates enthusiasm, and translates into market support as various parties commit to the Plan's vision.

### **1.1.2 Planning Process**

This section outlines the process used to develop the Plan.

#### **Public Involvement**

The Downtown Plan was developed over a number of months with extensive public involvement at each step of the process.

#### **Auburn Downtown Plan Task Force**

The Auburn Downtown Plan Task Force guided the development of the Downtown Plan. The Task Force met regularly from November 1997 through development of the Draft Plan and worked on plan elements and urban design concepts. Comprised of more than fifteen citizens and community organization members



Citizens and consultants collaborating at the Downtown Charrette.

and ten City of Auburn employees, the Task Force also worked with the Sound Transit design team to oversee design and construction of the Transit Center.

### **Design Workshop**

A 3-day design workshop, or charrette, was held in early December 1997, to set the direction for the Auburn Downtown Plan. The charrette was hosted by the City of Auburn and the consultant team and was designed to share existing conditions information with the community, gather information regarding issues and priorities, and begin to develop concepts to be further refined as the Plan is developed. Sixty-five people were interviewed and approximately one hundred people attended the charrette.

Priority issues identified at the charrette were 1) identity and community character, 2) economic development, 3) transportation, 4) human needs and public safety.

### **Downtown Urban Design Vision Workshop**

An Urban Design Vision for downtown was created through a workshop hosted by the Task Force where community members identified photographs of development they liked, and met in small groups to discuss their selections. The Urban Design Vision presents the community's desired personality and identity for the continued improvement of downtown. The Urban Design Vision has been used as a means to define, improve, and bolster the image of downtown Auburn as the civic and commercial heart of the community (see Section 1.2).

### **Downtown Projects Open House**

A downtown projects open house was held in April 1998 to inform property owners and community members about the proposed SR 18/C Street overpass and Transit Center. The open house also provided an opportunity for community input on Transit Center options.

### **Downtown Plan Open House**

On January 31, 2001 the City of Auburn held an open house on the Downtown Plan in the City Hall Council Chambers. This open house, which was well received and attended, provided interested parties with background information about the Downtown Plan prior to the public hearing process that began in February 2001.

## **Public Hearing Process**

On February 6, 2001 the Auburn Planning Commission held a public hearing on the Auburn Downtown Plan. Subsequently, on February 13, 2001 the Planning Commission took action to recommended approval of the Downtown Plan to the City Council with certain revisions.

On May 7, 2001, the City Council held its public hearing on the Downtown Plan and, subsequently, on May 21, 2001 approved an ordinance adopting the Auburn Downtown Plan.





## Section 1.2 Urban Design Vision

# Section 1.2 The Vision for Downtown

The Downtown Urban Design Vision (the Vision) reflects the community's desired personality and identity for the continued improvement of downtown. The Vision incorporates new major public infrastructure investments in commuter rail, transit facilities, grade separations, and downtown streets. This public investment will be complemented by increased private investment in the retail, service, office, medical, and residential sectors. Together, these public and private investments will achieve the community Vision for the heart of Auburn.



Main Street improvements constructed in the 1990s through sustained community effort.

## 1.2.1 Purpose of the Urban Design Vision

The Downtown Urban Design Vision guided the development of the Plan and will be essential to its implementation strategy. Most immediately, the Vision will guide the streetscape design and urban design elements of the Plan. During the planning process this Vision was helpful in determining some of the design details for the Transit Center. After Plan adoption, the Vision will be used as the basis for design standards, amendments to the Zoning Code, and other aspects of Plan implementation.

## 1.2.2 How the Vision was Created

The downtown Urban Design Vision is comprised of three components:

- A text "Vision," which is based upon interviews with the Auburn Downtown Association (ADA) and the Chamber of Commerce;
- The Core Values for downtown identified by the Auburn community at the December 1997 Downtown Charrette

(see page 12), and the February 1998 Task Force Vision Workshop; and

- The images selected at the Vision Workshop, which provide a clear picture of the community's hopes for the future of downtown.

Each of these components can stand alone, but combined they form an integrated vision which is stronger than the individual components.

### **1.2.3 Auburn Downtown Association and Chamber of Commerce Vision**

As active participants in the revitalization of downtown Auburn, the Auburn Downtown Association (ADA) and the Auburn Area Chamber of Commerce have a vision for downtown. The following summary of their visions is reflected in the images from the Vision Workshop.

#### **A Healthy Downtown**

Both organizations see the need for a safe and comfortable downtown that has the following qualities:

- A downtown where citizens gather, celebrate, and conduct their business
- High-quality development and redevelopment projects
- A visitors' center, possibly in conjunction with the new Transit Center
- Emphasis on public and private art throughout downtown
- Design standards and a design review process for downtown development
- A plaza that supports gatherings and provides public information
- An accessible downtown through adequate roads, parking and pedestrian and transit connections.

#### **Future Downtown Development**

The Auburn Area Chamber of Commerce and the ADA see downtown expanded beyond Main Street, including both residential and commercial development and stretching to the west, north, south, and east.



This streetscape was the highest-rated image in the February 1998 workshop.

In addition, they envision:

- A central business district with quality destination stores and businesses; specialized clinics, and professional offices
- Higher density, higher quality housing in downtown, particularly near the Transit Center
- A cohesive downtown that provides incentives for investors
- Multiple anchor stores within downtown, with one occupying the former J.C. Penney building
- Improved pedestrian and urban design linkages between the medical community and downtown
- Retail stores at street level with housing and/or offices above
- Public/private partnerships

### **Downtown Streets**

- Streets which disperse traffic to parking areas within walking distance of downtown
- Attractive, well-marked pedestrian walkways directing foot traffic to Main Street and the Transit Center
- Design which enhances access while maintaining downtown character
- Design which overcomes barriers such as the railroad tracks and Auburn Way

- Expansion of the Main Street design concepts further east and west as well as beyond Main Street
- Quality gateways to downtown
- Adequate signage to direct people into downtown and to parking facilities

### **1.2.4 Core Values of The Urban Design Vision**

Below are the critical Core Values expressed by community members at the Downtown Charrette and the Vision Workshop. The Core Values form the basis of the overall Vision and serve as the guide, or roadmap, for the formation of the Auburn Downtown Plan.

#### **Celebrate Auburn's history**

- Create buildings with a flavor and form that echo the historic character of downtown and historic railroad themes
- Use building forms similar to the original Main Street buildings
- Use traditional building materials such as wood and brick, and avoid steel and glass
- Incorporate architectural elements such as covered sidewalks, using structural overhangs or cloth awnings, sidewalk level storefronts, and historic light features
- Provide symbols, such as a clock tower, that strengthen the downtown's identity, and provide space for a community plaza, meeting place, or park and open space

#### **Despite being a large city, Auburn retains a small town character**

- Design human-scale buildings
- Define downtown's urban form with continuous building facades placed adjacent to the sidewalk
- Strip malls are inappropriate for downtown
- Vary building type while avoiding very modern buildings with large window formats
- Integrate signage into the building facades

- Provide ample landscaping downtown
- Integrate public art reflective of our community's values

### **Comfort, Security, and Maintenance**

- Create downtown streets where people feel comfortable and safe both day and night
- Streets, buildings and landscaping are clean and well-maintained
- Downtown should be well lit and public areas have good sight lines and "eyes on the street"

### **People living downtown**

- Downtown should be a pleasant place to live
- Upper floor residents increase the downtown population.

### **Parking garages should not look like parking garages**

- Parking garages should look like buildings integrated into the urban fabric using traditional building patterns, materials and details

*"What is it going to look like in ten years?"*

*—Auburn Citizen*

## **1.2.5 Detailed Vision Elements**

The vision elements are provided for the categories of retail/mixed use, office/medical, transit, housing, and streets. At the Vision Workshop, 45 participants rated 100 slide images in sets of 4, identifying the most and least appropriate among the sets, or none of the 4 as appropriate for Downtown Auburn. After rating the images, participants broke into small groups to review the images and discuss in more detail which elements were appropriate for downtown, and why. The slide ratings, group responses, and written comments formed the basis of the detailed topic vision elements.

The next pages provide a more detailed vision for the following elements:

- Retail/Mixed Use Development
- Office and Medical Development
- Transit
- Parking Garages
- Downtown Streets
- Downtown Housing

# Retail / Mixed Use Development

## Key Features

- Brick and other natural materials
- Good shopping windows
- Awnings retain human scale when broken horizontally to emphasize individual shops
- Two- to four-story buildings
- Traditional architectural flavor: some character but not too modern
- Pedestrian friendly with outdoor seating
- First floor emphasized visually with different materials
- New and in good condition
- Well-organized signage integrated into the building facades



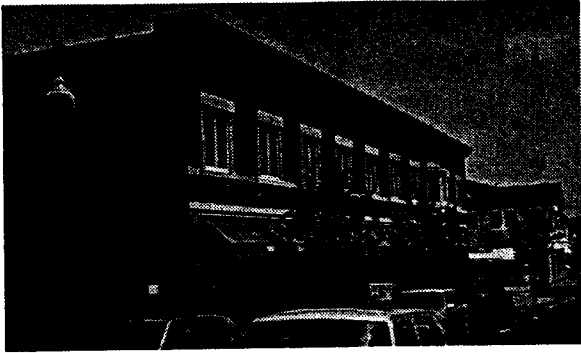
Mixed use development in downtown Auburn can have a variety of uses including retail, service, office, medical, and residential.

What is important to the community about mixed use development is that the first floor maintains and improves the pedestrian and retail orientation while devoting upper floors to the mix of uses, perhaps stepping them back from the street to maintain the human, historic downtown scale.

## What We Like



This building mixes brick with other materials and has a varied roof; features such as the clock tower are a bonus.



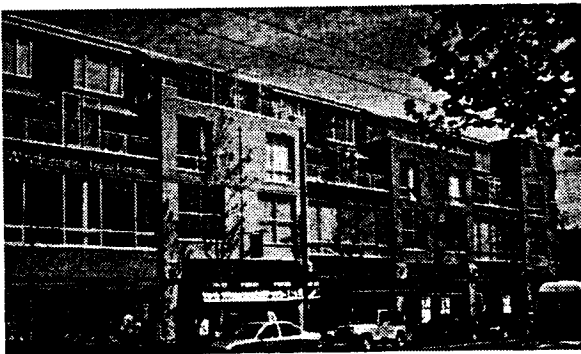
This is a new building made to look old. This was accomplished by using cloth awnings, simple lines, with small signs and friendly lights.



People liked the ground floor storefronts, roofline, awnings, and trees, but felt the upper windows were too small.

*"Liked the awnings separating the store fronts."*  
-Auburn Citizen

## Not Right for Downtown Auburn

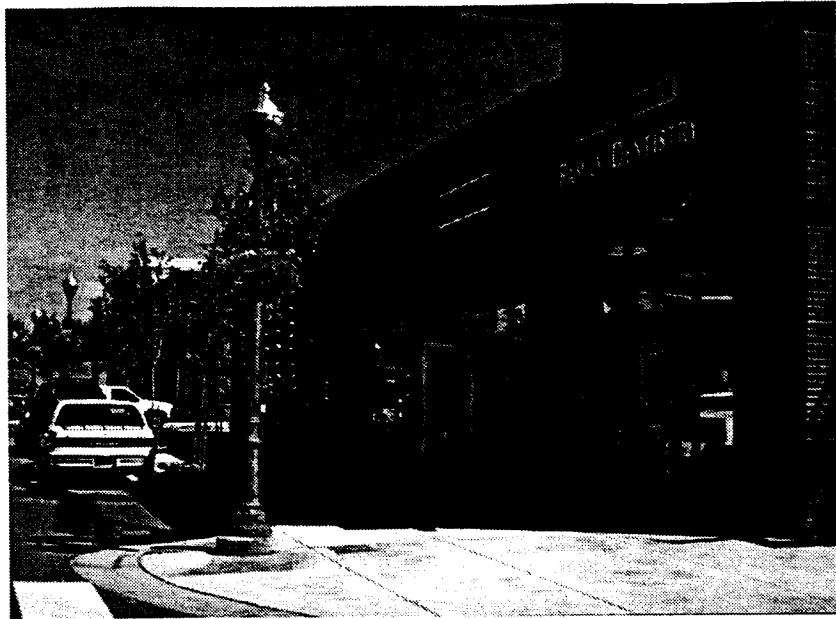


"Looks like downtown Seattle," "Massive box" with many different architectural elements.

# Office and Medical Development

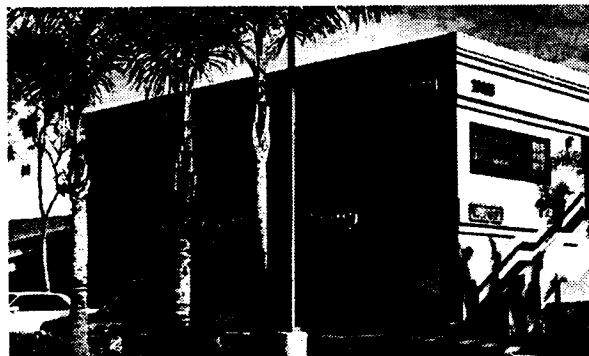
## Key Features

- Traditional materials, flavor, and elements
- First floor retail/pedestrian orientation
- Modulated facades and stepped-back upper floors
- Awnings
- Human-scale details and windows
- Buildings placed next to the sidewalk



The office characteristics that the community members felt were appropriate are similar to the core values expressed as appropriate for mixed use development.

## What We Like



Participants liked the fact that this was only a two-story building. It has cloth awnings over individual window sections, thus resembling retail space, although it is an office use.

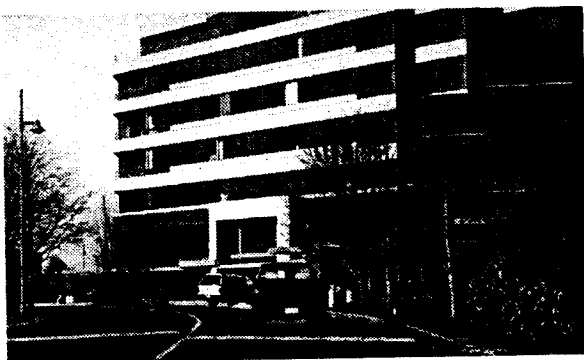


This is another new building that looks older, designed to fit into an established, traditional neighborhood, echoing residential architectural elements while providing offices.



Participants had mixed feelings about this building. They like the variety of materials and the clean look of the building, but thought that the wall was too massive.

## Not Right for Downtown Auburn



"Screams Downtown Seattle," "More brick might be better,"  
"Too big for Auburn"

*"No strip mall look—  
want modulations."  
-Auburn Citizen*



"Feel like I'd go in it & get lost,"  
"Don't like flat place on front - not inviting,"  
"Looks like a jail"

# Transit

## Key Features

- Open space, lawn, and trees
- Clock tower
- Mural at the bus transfer station
- Well-maintained and secure
- Historic features contained in the bus shelter and the old fashioned lights
- Clearly identified pedestrian walkways
- Retail and service uses
- Brick materials and classic details
- Weather protections and awnings
- Public art integrated into the facility
- Places to sit
- Connections to other facilities



Transit will play an increasingly larger role in Downtown Auburn in the near future with the recent construction of the Transit Center.

Community members identified a historic railroad flavor as the cornerstone of the station's identity, image, and function.

## What We Like



The brick building and clock tower give this bus station a traditional railroad look and includes retail services. The small group also liked the amenities such as telephone, benches and trash cans.

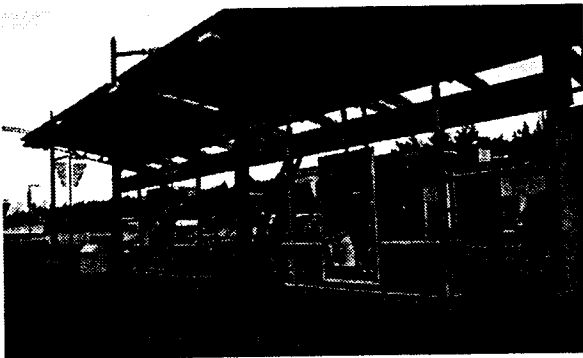


Participants liked the "European feel" of this row of retail stores in this station. The brick sidewalk makes it pedestrian friendly, as do the tables, lights and awnings.



The light coming through the glass awning, the brick walls, and the tile floors were all positive features found in this image.

## Not Right for Downtown Auburn



"Looks cheap, and utilitarian."  
"No protection from the wind and rain."

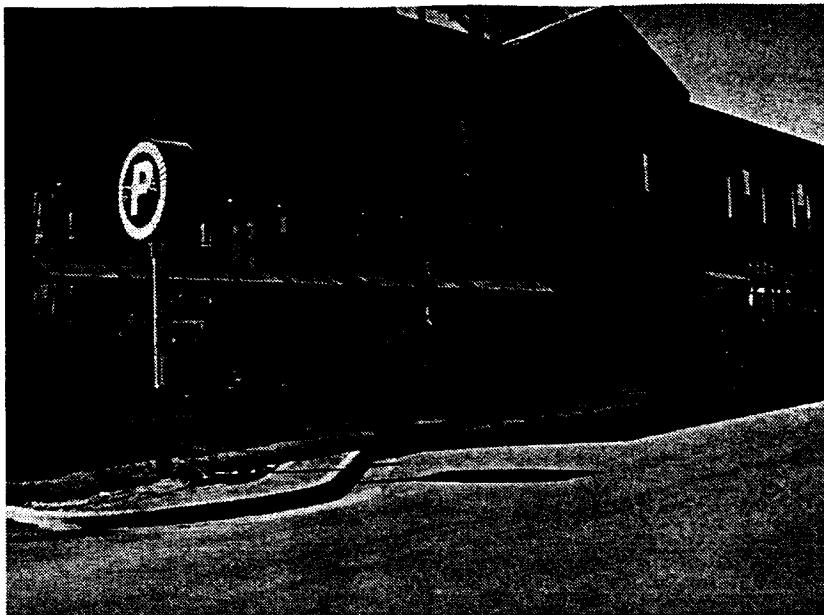


This transit center lacks much of what Auburn citizens are looking for.

# Parking Garages

## Key Features

- Brick facades or combinations of brick and other materials
- Street-level retail
- Auto entrance not visually dominant
- Size of openings limited
- First floor and upper floors differentiated by variations in floor height and materials



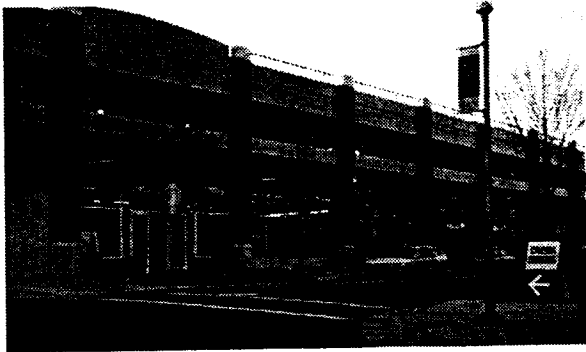
Parking garages should look like the traditional downtown buildings that reinforce and improve the traditional identity and character of Downtown Auburn.

Subdued signage clearly identifies parking entrances, while the street-side facades are primarily devoted to commercial activity and pedestrians.

## What We Like



This building has many features reminiscent of Auburn's history, including the cupola, brick, distinct first floor with high ceilings and retail.

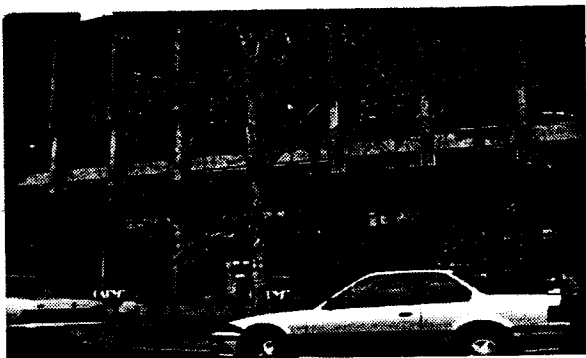


This mixed-use parking garage uses separated awnings and retail on the bottom floor, both qualities Auburn citizens are looking for.



In this building, the first floor is accented with different materials and height, the awning is appropriate, and it makes use of first floor retail. Also, the large-scale openings are broken up into window-sized elements.

## Not Right for Downtown Auburn



"Fine where it is — doesn't fit the decor of Auburn," "Don't want another like it."

*"A parking garage shouldn't look like a parking garage."*

*-Auburn Citizen*

# Downtown Streets

## Key Features

- Center planted median
- Landscaping designed to preserve visibility of adjacent businesses
- Special paving (such as bricks and cobbles) marks the way for pedestrians
- Underground utilities
- Decorative light poles
- Ample sidewalks and well-marked crosswalks free of obstructions
- High quality infrastructure functions as "gateways" to downtown
- Street trees



The quality of the downtown street infrastructure does more to create identity and an impression of quality than any other single urban element.

The Auburn community has identified downtown streets as the structure and glue that link public and private development into a cohesive urban fabric.

Well-designed public rights-of-way provide ample and comfortable facilities for vehicles, transit, pedestrians, and bicycles. Each element of public streets provides the opportunity for quality infrastructure which, through public art and carefully selected materials, serves to create and reinforce the image of downtown identity and quality.

## What We Like



The mature trees, brick sidewalk and general pedestrian friendly nature of this street were considered positive features.



Participants liked the trees down the center median and the on-street parking found in this image. They also appreciated the tree maintenance that had taken place with these mature trees.



Citizens liked the banners, the landscaped median which helps to provide a safe crossing, and the decorative lighting. Underground wiring would help to make this appropriate for Downtown Auburn.

## Not Right for Downtown Auburn



No median, almost no street trees, sagging wires, overhead cobra lights and ill-defined crosswalks.

*"A sidewalk is not just a sidewalk, (it should be used) for history, art, poles, banners, lights, etc."*

*-Auburn Citizen*



Citizens are looking for more than this in their downtown.

# Downtown Housing

## Key Features

- Ample landscaping
- Balconies—well modulated—without flat facades
- The relationship of the building to the street is layered: parallel parking, street trees, landscaping, building entryway, and building facade
- Gabled roof line conveys these are residences
- Vertically framed windows
- Provide housing on the upper floors of mixed-use buildings as well
- Open space away from the street



Recent improvements, a strong market demand, increased transit, and development activity are making downtown a more attractive place to live. An increased downtown residential population in town will support increased commercial activity.

Residential development that would meet diverse housing needs would be human scaled with modulated facades, pitched roofs, and clearly identified entrances, using traditional materials and architectural elements that echo Auburn's historic downtown form. Residential development could be a component of a mixed-use development or be a stand-alone project.

## What We Like



This building provides off street parking, is of appropriate scale with attention to details, and the interiors have good daylight.



A well-defined sequence of walkway, stairs, porch, front door, and housing is in smaller buildings that look residential.

*"Design details should be appropriate to the size of a building."*

*-Auburn Citizen*



Appropriate elements are: landscaping, clapboard siding and brick. This building is well maintained, although it needs well-defined entries for safety and identity.

## Not Right for Downtown Auburn



This building was called boring and citizens were concerned about its appeal.



This form takes up too much land for Downtown Auburn with parking in the front combined with front yards.

## **Implementation of the Vision**

The types of buildings and streets identified in the Vision and their relationship to one another define the urban form desired in downtown Auburn.

The Urban Design Vision outlined in this chapter was the basis of the recommended street design improvements and architectural design guidelines described in the following chapters.



## Section 1.3 Downtown Profile

# Section 1.3 Downtown Profile

Today, downtown Auburn is many things to many people: the historic and commercial core on Main Street, the through corridors of Auburn Way and Auburn Avenue/A Street, a place to catch the bus or train, home of the Auburn Regional Medical Center, and many others.

But all of these activities and functions occur within a built environment characteristic of a struggling downtown. Many storefronts are empty, buildings are underutilized and suffer from poor maintenance, individual renovations occur absent an overall common design, merchandise is limited, and retailing techniques lack attractions that can effectively compete against alternative retailing types including shopping malls and, more recently, e-commerce.

This Downtown Profile summarizes the policy, regulatory, and market forces which affect downtown and will set the stage for future Plan actions.

## 1.3.1 Past Planning Activities

### 1990 Downtown Design Master Plan

The Downtown Design Master Plan was successful in meeting the major objective, which was "to produce a physical setting that will support commercial and civic improvement activities."

The Vision from the 1990 Downtown Design Master Plan was for the downtown to retain its "home town" character; that it be a focus for civic activities; that it offer a full range of commercial and public services; and that it provide an "attractive and convenient pedestrian-oriented environment."

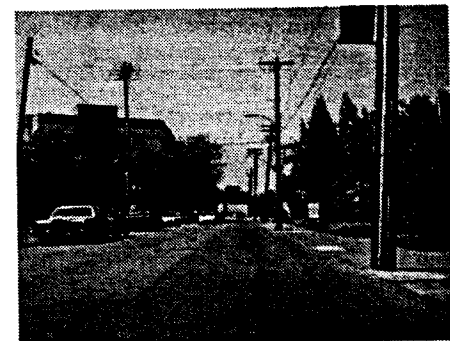
The community has worked hard to implement the Design Master Plan. The streetscape improvements on Main Street, including reconstruction of Main Street, sidewalks, light standards, hanging baskets, public art, parking and signage, are the most notable form of the 1990 Downtown Plan's implementation.

### Comprehensive Plan

The 1995 Comprehensive Plan designated Downtown as a special planning area and established a vision for Downtown.

### Existing Zoning

Downtown Auburn is divided into 12 zoning districts, with the majority of the land within the study area contained in the C-2 zone (See Figure 2).



Downtown Auburn today

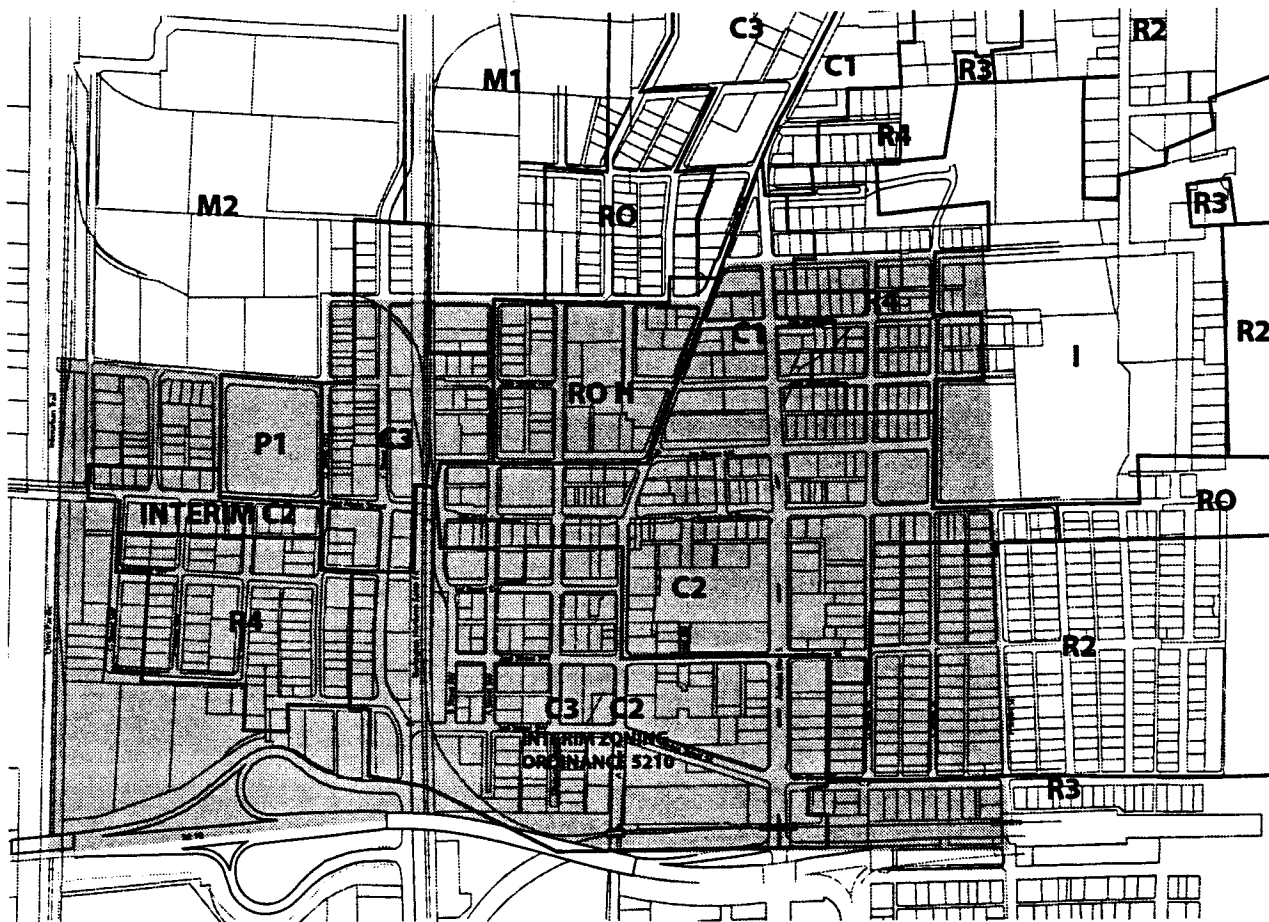


Figure 2: Interim Zoning- Adopted during Downtown Plan preparation

A brief description of these zones is as follows:

**C-1 The Light Commercial District** allows small and moderate-scale retail or professional businesses that are pedestrian-oriented. Mixed-use buildings are allowable in this zone with no density restrictions.

**C-2 The Central Business District** designation sets apart that portion of the City which forms the center for financial, commercial, governmental, professional, and cultural activities. Mixed-use buildings are allowable with no density restrictions. Additionally, multiple family dwellings are allowable as a conditional use with no density limitations.

**C-3 The Heavy Commercial District** allows retail services with outside production or service features. Mixed use buildings are not allowed, but multiple family dwellings are allowable as a conditional use provided that 1,200 square feet of lot area is provided for each dwelling unit.

**M-1 The Light Industrial District** accommodates a variety of industrial uses in an industrial park environment. While the M-1 zone is primarily intended for light industrial uses, some commercial uses may be permitted. Regional shopping centers and commercial recreation may also be permitted. The only housing allowable in this zone is work release, pre-release or similar facilities offering alternatives to imprisonment under certain conditions and standards.

**M-2 The Heavy Industrial District** allows general manufacturing and processing and grouping of industrial enterprises. Other uses are disallowed if they will discourage use of adjacent sites for heavy industry. No housing is permissible in this zone.

**P-1 The Public Use District** allows public uses that serve the cultural, educational, recreational and public service needs of the community. Housing is not allowed in this zone.

**I The Institutional Use District** is intended to provide an area for educational, governmental, theological, recreational, cultural and other public and quasi-public uses.

**R-2 The Single Family Residential District** allows relatively small lot sizes (6,000 square feet) and multifamily development as conditional uses provided that 6,000 square feet of lot area is provided for each dwelling unit, and there are no more than four dwelling units per structure. Accessory units, such as a guest cottage, are allowable.

**R-3 The Two-Family Residential District** accommodates a limited increase in population density by permitting two dwelling units on a minimum-size lot while maintaining a desirable family living environment by establishing minimum lot areas, yards and open spaces.

**R-4 The High Density Residential District** allows multiple-family residential development. It is intended as a residential district of single, duplex and multiple-family residences.

**RO The Residential Office District** accommodates business and professional offices, medical and dental clinics, banks and similar financial institutions at locations where they are compatible with residential uses. Some retail and personal services may be permitted if supplemental to the other uses allowed in the zone.

This zone is intended for those areas that are in transition from residential to commercial uses along arterials or near the hospital.

**RO-H The Residential Office Hospital District** is intended to be used for medical and related uses and those uses compatible with the medical community. Restaurants and other retail sales operations that support the medical community are allowable as a conditional use. Multiple family dwellings are allowable as a conditional use provided that 1,200 square feet of lot area is provided for each dwelling unit.

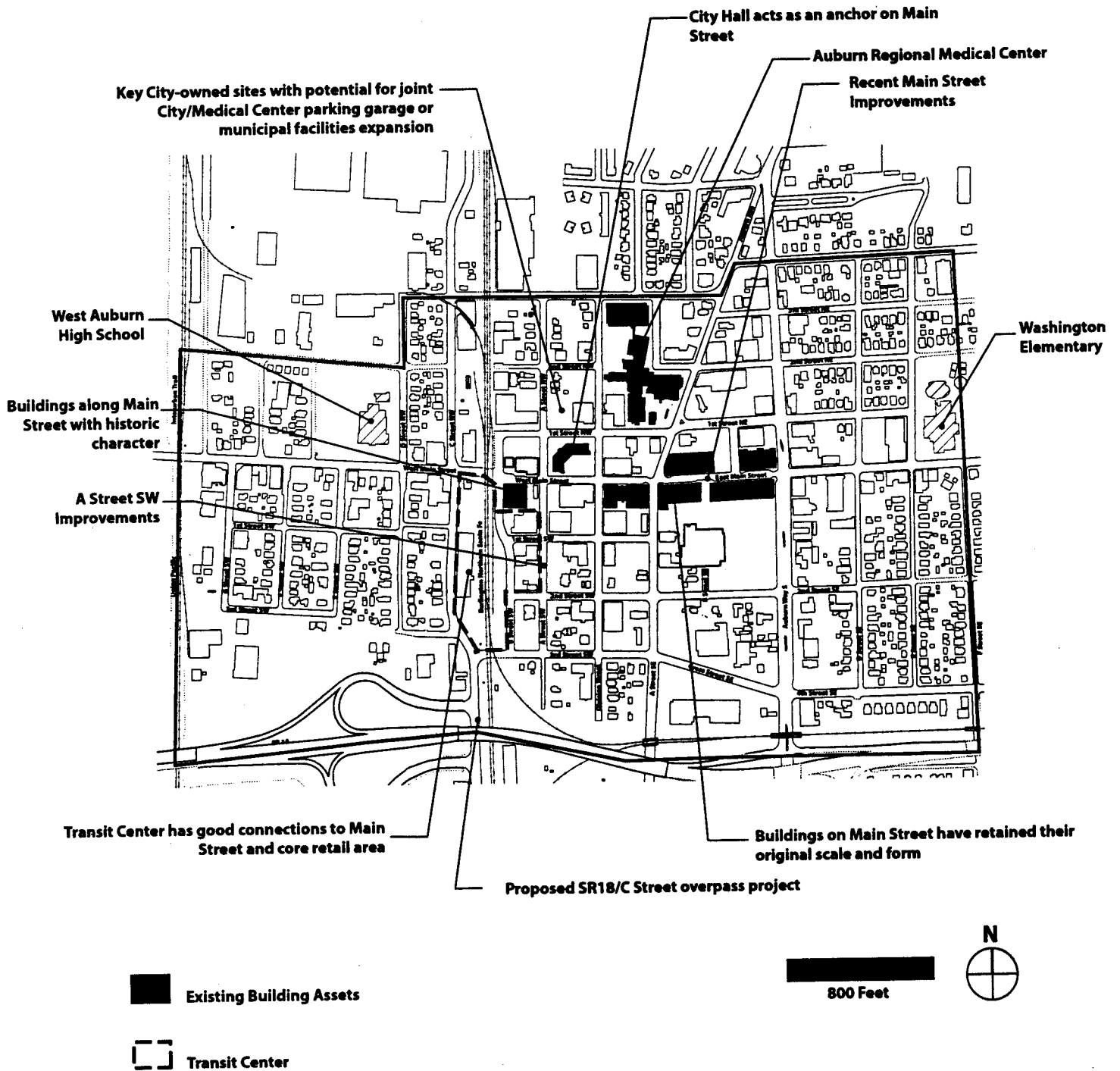
### 1.3.2 Existing Assets

Historically, Main Street was the heart and core of downtown Auburn. Thanks to continuing vision and investment provided by the combined efforts of the City and the downtown community over the last 20 years, Main Street is still one of downtown's greatest assets. City Hall acts as an anchor on the west end of downtown. The buildings on Main Street have also retained the original scale and form, which, combined with the recently completed Main Street improvements, forms the basis of downtown's physical identity. This provides the urban form model for future redevelopment as downtown continues to grow and revitalize. (See Figure 3: Existing Assets.)

Just off Main Street, near the core of downtown, are a number of other assets that will play a key role in Auburn's future. One is the Auburn Regional Medical Center, downtown's largest employer, largest physical facility and economic generator. The Performing Arts Center and two high schools and an elementary school also create activity in and near downtown. The Transit Center and A Street SW are recent major assets to the core area of downtown. A Street SW, the SR18/C Street Interchange and the 3rd Street Grade Separation project will improve access to downtown and alleviate traffic congestion that results from increased rail activity. Finally, Qwest has a central office facility (where calls are switched) located in downtown Auburn at Second Street SW and Division Street. Certain types of businesses, including Class A Office Space, particularly benefit from access to high speed communications infrastructure frequently associated with these facilities. Generally, closer proximity to a central office facility often means higher quality telecommunication services.

Finally, another Downtown Auburn asset is its traditional site and location for certain long standing community events and activities. This includes, for instance, the Auburn Good Ol' Days celebration and the Veteran's Day Parade. As such, Downtown Auburn is seen a focal point for events that enhance and build on

Figure 3: Existing Assets



community and civic spirit and pride, and serves to bring the community closer together.

### 1.3.3 Challenges to Revitalization

Despite the many assets in Downtown Auburn, there are also challenges to meeting overall downtown goals. A discontinuous retail district, the lack of connections between downtown districts, underutilized and visually unappealing properties, and major streets which lack visual impression of a downtown identity or culture contribute to these challenges. Much of this is attributable to property owners who have not sufficiently reinvested back into their properties.



Economic development interviews during the Charrette process.

Other challenges to downtown revitalization include vehicular traffic patterns that route regional trips through the Downtown. A well-designed and defined pedestrian environment is not present off of Main Street. Land use impacts associated with the intrusion of heavy commercial, industrial and/or auto oriented uses in the Downtown and an aggregation of taverns and undesirable secondary impacts also pose challenges to this Plan's revitalization program. (See Figure 4: Challenges to Revitalization.) While Main Street is particularly well lit, the remainder of downtown is dark and isolated. At present, Downtown does not provide the well-maintained, comfortable environment that is necessary to bring people here.

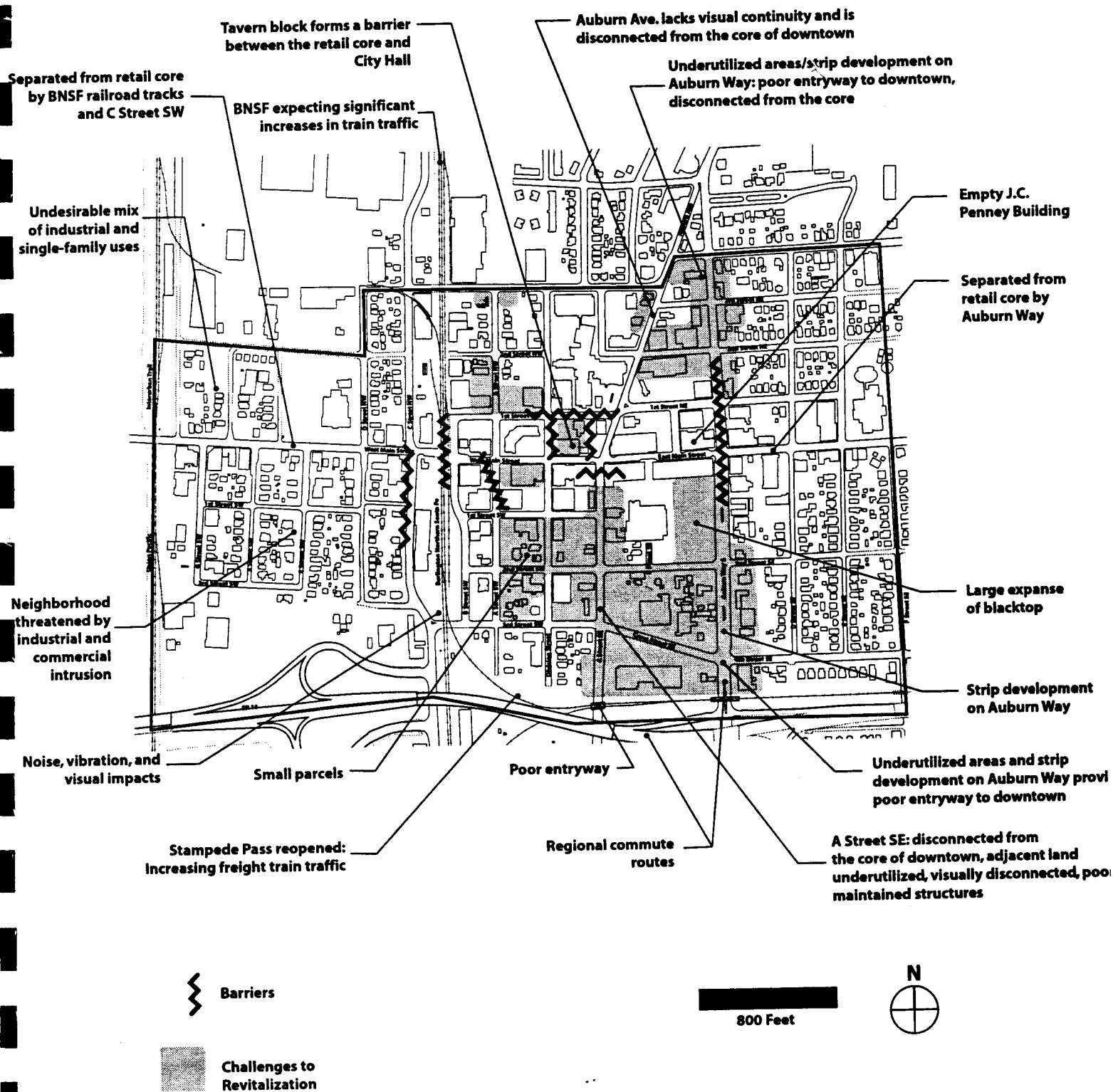
Further complicating this situation is the change in freight train traffic through Downtown Auburn which has recently occurred. Additional information about the effect of increasing freight traffic on Downtown will be provided in later sections and in the Environmental Analysis.

### 1.3.4 Downtown Economic and Business Profile

This section presents a snapshot of downtown from a business and economic perspective. A more detailed analysis of the Downtown Market can be found in the *Auburn Downtown Plan Market Study*, March 1998.

- The downtown core consists of 78 acres and 1.8 million square feet of buildings.
- There are 304 businesses in downtown, of which 84 are retail; 157 are service; and 44 are finance, insurance and

Figure 4: Challenges to Revitalization



## Potential Annual Absorption Rates

*From Auburn Downtown Plan Market Study, March 1998*

- **Retail:** 6,000 to 20,000 square feet/year
- **Office:** 15,000 square feet/year
- **Residential:** 25-50 units of new housing/year

real estate. Within the service category, there is a large concentration of health care providers.

- Taxable retail sales in downtown totaled \$38.1 million in 1996 and \$40.3 million in 1997, representing approximately 4 percent of taxable sales in the City.
- Auburn retail businesses generate approximately \$175 per square foot per year in gross sales, compared to \$213 per square foot per year for industry averages for community shopping centers.
- There are 331 residential units in downtown, of which 20 percent are single-family.
- Cultural activities are provided by the Performing Arts Center, Auburn Avenue Theater, Evergreen Ballet and the Auburn Symphony. Studies show that every dollar spent on the arts generates five dollars in the community.

## Development Influences and Opportunities

- Twenty percent increase in primary market area population is expected between 1996 and 2010.
- Increase in market area population and income levels will increase spending in Auburn.
- Growth in downtown employment and residential population is anticipated.
- Commuter rail station will create an additional demand for 4,500 - 6,800 square feet of convenience retail development.
- Office development related to health services and a class A building for other professional services will be the strongest immediate opportunity.
- Residential development will become increasingly popular in the downtown. Commuter rail service alone will support the demand for 90 - 110 new housing units.
- Incremental development of retail will continue, building upon the success of existing strong retailers and the addition of new employers and residents.

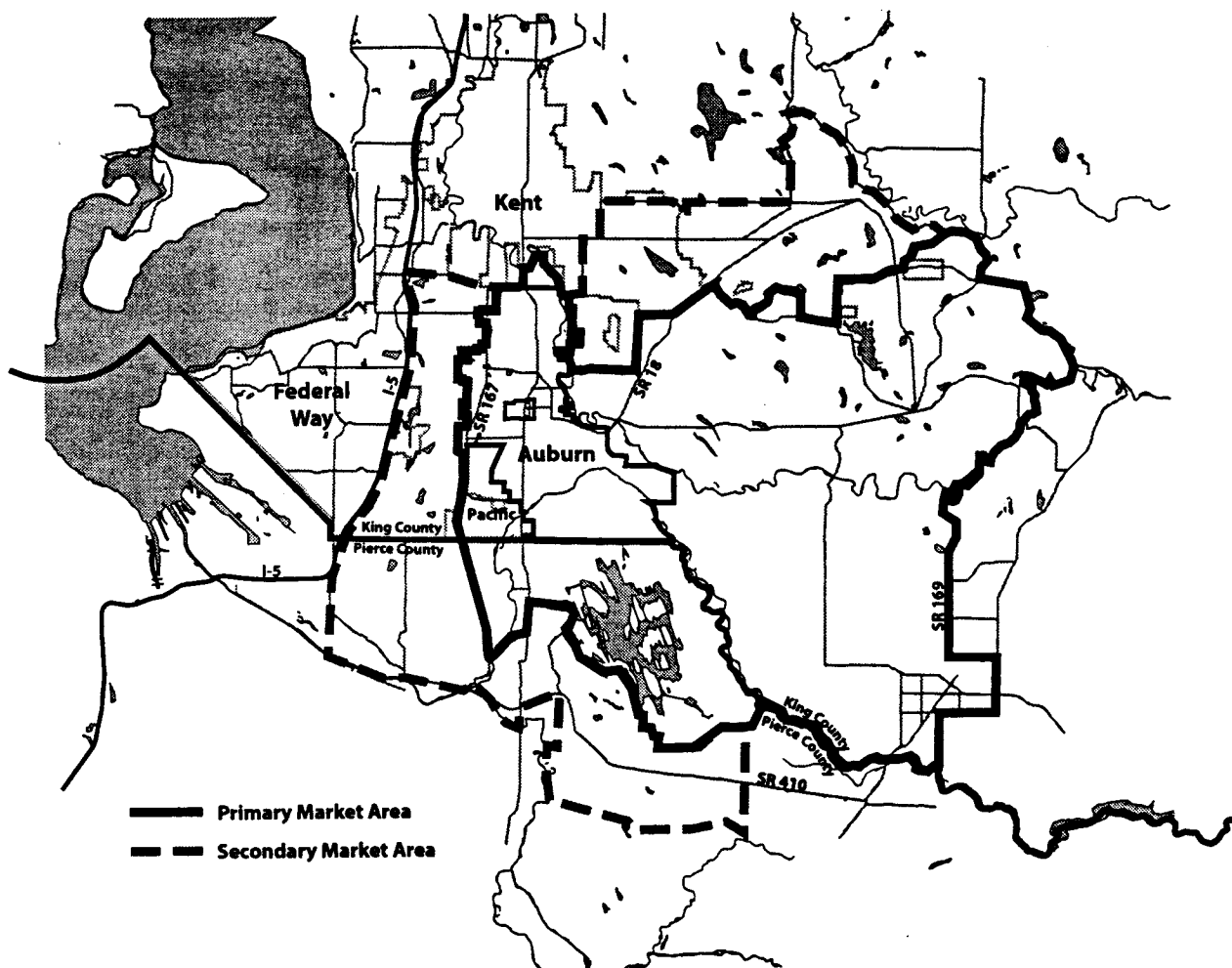


Figure 5: Downtown Auburn Trade Area Map

- Additional development of all types will occur, as each development creates demand for others and increases Downtown's vitality.
- Green River Community College offers a vital opportunity to Downtown in terms of residents, linkages with businesses, and use of transit facilities.

### 1.3.5 Market Forecast

The following section is a summary of the *Auburn Downtown Plan Market Study* (Property Counselors, February 1998).

## **Market Area**

- Trade area population: 192,000
- Potential growth: 227,000 by 2010  
258,000 by 2020

## **Retail Demand**

The demand for additional retail space is estimated to vary from 89,000 to 296,000 square feet through the year 2010, equivalent to average annual absorption of 6,000 to 20,000 square feet. The low end of the range is consistent with steady improvements to downtown market conditions. The high end is consistent with aggressive actions to attract employers, residents, businesses, and shoppers to downtown and not likely to occur without public and private intervention. Economic performance in the retail core has increased steadily over the last number of years, however, some of the existing downtown retail still performs less well per square foot compared to performance in nearby cities, indicating opportunities for stronger performance in some existing businesses.

## **Office Demand**

Of the approximately 300,000 square feet of office development in downtown, over half is health care related, and one-quarter government. Only 20 percent are traditional private office space users. There is no Class A office space in downtown. Class A office space refers to new office buildings with modern building systems and high quality interior and exterior finishes.

A Class A office building would attract image-conscious office tenants already located in downtown or elsewhere in the city. A 50,000 to 70,000 square foot, four story building such as the Centennial Building in Kent would meet this need. Growth in the Auburn Regional Medical Center would support 5,000 square feet of absorption per year. Overall office absorption should be sustainable over time at approximately 15,000 square feet per year.

## **Lodging Demand**

- Auburn has approximately 350 hotel or motel rooms, which meets current demand.
- There may be additional opportunity to attract a good quality limited hotel (a hotel which provides sleeping accommodations, but little, if any food service, or meeting facilities), an independent restaurant, and some type of public meeting facility in a coordinated development project.

- The overall result would be equivalent to a small convention hotel, and could attract moderate sized conventions of 150 to 200 attendees. The opportunity for such a development is dependent upon:
  - Identifying a site with access and visibility to SR 18, and
  - A strong effort to provide amenities such as meeting space in a public-private cooperative effort.

## **Residential Demand**

- Over 50 percent of the new housing built in Auburn has been multifamily (1990 to present).
- Apartment vacancy rates are 4.3 percent, compared to a 3.3 percent vacancy rate county-wide.
- Rental rates are the lowest among South King County communities, with average rates of \$481, \$555, and \$662 per month for one bedroom, two bedroom/one bath, and three bedroom units. Demand in the City would support 25 - 50 units of new housing in downtown each year. Downtown is also an attractive place for senior housing. The Auburn Regional Medical Center is a strong factor, as are the goods and services of the business districts.

## **1.3.6 Profile of Stampede Pass Reopening**

### **Historical Background**

Two major rail lines run north/south through the Downtown study area. Both lines, the Union Pacific (UP) and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) provide service along the west coast of the United States. The Union Pacific line is adjacent to the Interurban Trail, which forms the westernmost edge of the study area. About 1/4 mile east lie the double tracks of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, at the edge of the Main Street core. At the south edge of the study area is an east/west running rail line owned by BNSF, referred to as the Stampede Pass line. This is one of three east/west lines in the state of Washington that provides service across the Cascade Mountains. Ultimately, Stampede Pass is part of a system that traverses the U.S., from the east to the west coast.

Historically, much of Auburn's commerce and livelihood revolved around the railroad. After the advent of the automobile and the conversion of much freight traffic to trucking, use of the railroads, and Stampede Pass in particular, declined. The line passes through a tunnel in the mountains, which has snowsheds at each end to reduce the buildup of snow at the tunnel entrances. One of the snowsheds suffered extensive damage, and it was decided at the time to discontinue use of the line, since rail lines at Stevens Pass and the Columbia River were able to handle the existing demand.

In about 1996 BNSF began to explore the repair and reopening of the Stampede Pass line to meet expanding needs for freight train traffic. However, conditions in Auburn were somewhat different than they had been in the early heyday of train service. A formerly bustling downtown, built around the railroad, was now substantially less vibrant. The station in Downtown Auburn had been demolished, and the area around the tracks now stood vacant. Nearby homes had been built for railroad workers, and many of these modest homes had deteriorated or been altered in insensitive and unattractive ways.

The freeway and arterial road system had supplanted the rail system as a means of moving freight and people around the region. As population and vehicular traffic increased in the latter part of the 20th century, so did freight train traffic. Increasing traffic of all kinds has contributed to blocking problems around the railroad tracks, SR 18 and several at-grade crossings in Downtown.

Changes in railroad technology also resulted in a different kind of train traffic than had been experienced half a decade or more ago. Freight trains envisioned for the Stampede Pass line were projected to be 5,000 to 9,000 feet long—almost 2 miles at the longest. City officials became concerned about the prospect of the reopening of Stampede Pass. The junction of this coast-to-coast line with BNSF, a major west coast line, occurs just south of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW in Downtown Auburn.

Trains must slow to 10 mph to make the curve that joins the two main lines. At several thousand feet long, it was determined that a single train had the capacity to block five intersections at one time—three of these in Downtown. And streets might be blocked for as long as eight minutes at a time, several times a day.

### **Studying Impacts of Stampede Pass**

A study was commissioned by the City and funded by the Washington State Legislative Transportation Committee to analyse the impacts of the opening of Stampede Pass on the community's traffic. The study used a time horizon of 2005 and found the follow-

ing in its analysis.

- **Number of trains:**

BNSF plans to operate between 2 and 22 trains per day. The higher number is not expected to be reached in the foreseeable future. Air quality restrictions in the Stampede Pass tunnel would limit the maximum number of trains to 24 per day. Between 8 and 10 trains per day are expected to be running by 2005.

- **Grade Crossings:**

Trains would block seven streets with at-grade crossings in Auburn. Five grade crossings may be blocked at the same time.

- **Emergency Access:**

Auburn Regional Medical Center ("the hospital") is one of only three Level 3 Trauma Centers in the region. Access to the hospital from the west side of the City would be compromised if all grade crossings are blocked, and aid cars and ambulances would need to be redirected.

- Access to the commuter rail station and bus transit center would be impaired, making dependable transfer service difficult.

Conclusions of this study found that while grade separating all affected crossings is technically possible, doing so would be very costly. Grade separating some crossings such as West Main Street would create new problems, such as causing impacts on historic buildings and the shopping district. The study used sophisticated computer-based modeling techniques to determine the effects on traffic patterns and vehicle delays. The resulting analysis identified the most cost effective combination of projects to offset the impacts of Stampede Pass rail operations. In Downtown these include the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Grade Separation project and the A Street NW extension from 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW to 14<sup>th</sup> Street NW. Both of these projects are discussed throughout this Plan; the grade separation project is now under construction, and the A Street extension is in the design phase.

## **Grade Crossings**

The City participated in a study sponsored by Sound Transit called the *Tacoma to Seattle Grade Crossing Diagnostic Project*. Railroad experts from WSDOT Rail, BNSF, and Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) evaluated railroad grade

crossings throughout the BNSF rail corridor. This study group worked with the City of Auburn Traffic Engineer and Transportation Planner to identify issues at each individual grade crossing in Auburn and made recommendations for safety and functional improvements. Under consideration at the time was a proposal to increase train speeds from 40 mph to 79 mph in this corridor. Agreement to these new speeds was predicated on the improved safety conditions.

BNSF has plans to add a third set of tracks along the mainline through Auburn. Improvements will include the installation of the tracks, signal modifications, and installation of power switches in the rail yard. As this will be a substantial undertaking, it was agreed that when these improvements are made the company will also institute the crossing upgrade recommendations for Downtown Auburn as listed below:

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW**

- Raised medians are proposed on the west side of the crossing to prevent cars from going around the lowered gate arms. A short section of median may be possible on the east side of the tracks, but is limited by driveway entrances to businesses.

- Signal upgrades
- Repaint pavement markings

### **West Main Street**

- South side of West Main—The cantilever is currently placed so that when a train is approaching the crossing, the gate arm blocks only the car traffic. The cantilever will be moved so that it is positioned to stop pedestrians on the sidewalk, keeping them from crossing the tracks.

- Signal upgrades
- Repaint pavement markings

### **BNSF Right-of-Way**

Fencing is proposed in the following locations to eliminate informal crossings, and to direct pedestrians to protected crossing locations.

- At the Transit Center site, between the sets of tracks
- Parallel to B Street NW, between West Main and Mel's Lumber

## Impact of Stampede Pass on Downtown Business Vitality and Quality of Life

With a Downtown in need of support and revitalization, the community was very concerned about the impact of increased train traffic on the viability of Downtown businesses. It was feared that long delays at railroad crossings would cause such frustration that drivers would discontinue using the affected streets, thus reducing their number of trips to or through downtown.

It is difficult to determine the effect of the train traffic on businesses directly. An examination of the business community overall found that there has been a small, but fairly insignificant decrease in the number of businesses in Downtown between 1996 and 2000. The chart below is based on the businesses which are required to pay assessments as part of the City's Downtown Business Improvement Area (BIA). The BIA roughly coincides with the Downtown Plan Study Area, although residential areas are not included or affected within the BIA.

### Change in Number of Downtown Businesses

Year	Number of Businesses	Number of Medical and Medical Related businesses
1996	200	34 (17%)
2000	193	28 (14.5%)

Although there has been a small decrease in the total number of businesses, and in medical and medical related businesses, the numbers could be attributable to several factors. Circumstances such as declining condition of buildings, increased rental rates, and construction of new office and store spaces outside of Downtown are probably more directly related to business changes than train impacts. It is also not unusual to have a slight cyclical change in numbers, as business turnover occurs regularly throughout each year.

### Emergency Access

Emergency vehicles must have ready access to Auburn Regional Medical Center ("the hospital") to have the greatest chance of saving lives in emergency situations. Residents and employees who live and work on the west side of the railroad tracks need to have the same accessibility to emergency services as the rest of the City. The Auburn Fire Department has identified a number of alternative routes to reach the hospital in case their normal routes across 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW, West Main, or 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW are impassable. In the time since Stampede Pass has opened they have been able to use

other streets successfully, and have not found this to be an insoluble problem.

### **1.3.7 Parking Supply and Demand**

Downtown Auburn began its development just prior to the rise of the automobile as a primary mode of transportation. Its development pattern was, if anything, influenced more by the presence of rail and wagon facilities. However, it ultimately developed a street grid system capable of supporting automobile traffic and provided a full range of commercial services in mostly low density, low-rise buildings. A combination of on-street parking and small private lots appears to have sufficiently served the area adequately for decades. Auburn had what we today term a "pedestrian-friendly" street and use pattern that made it possible and even pleasurable to combine visits to many services and shops in a single visit.

Change was slow to come to downtown Auburn. J.C. Penney was probably the most intensive commercial use and it along with other stores in the area created high demand for parking until the store closed in 1996. Auburn Regional Medical Center expanded recently; other medical clinics have also located nearby, creating another area with high parking demand. These demands have recently been compounded by increased City of Auburn staff and court activity directly related to the City's rapid growth.

Auburn's place in the region has changed dramatically. Until the 1960's, Auburn was a freestanding city with its own employment base and a full set of commercial services located primarily downtown. After that time, the regional highway system connected Auburn with the rest of Central Puget Sound. Commute trip lengths increased and people sought expanded shopping opportunities at regional shopping malls. Downtowns like Auburn's could not compete well with the product variety and price offered in malls nor with the convenience of seas of free parking they offered. In the 1960's, the City sought to improve the situation downtown by constructing a series of surface parking lots financed through special assessments. These were successful in improving the parking situation and continue to provide the nucleus of downtown's current parking supply.

In recent years, as the variety and vibrancy of downtown commercial uses diminished, the overall supply of parking was not a problem although there were a number of issues:

- There were localized parking shortages in the vicinity of the hospital and post office.

- Parking was difficult for downtown employees and residents due to a requirement that limited parking in public lots to a maximum of 3 hours.
- It became difficult for developers to meet downtown parking requirements due to land cost and ownership patterns that divides blocks into many small tracts.
- City parking standards were developed largely for modern shopping center type development. The standards did not recognize the ability of a pedestrian-oriented downtown to support multiple trips and therefore unfairly penalized downtown property owners with excessive and costly parking requirements.
- There was a concern that available downtown parking was not sufficiently convenient and did not encourage new investment downtown.
- Issues of public safety, and parking code enforcement were also raised.

In 1996, the City undertook the "Auburn Parking Study" to respond to these concerns. However, it must be understood that the Study was responding to anticipated growth under the 1990 Downtown Design Master Plan and at that time, Sound Transit still had not received voter approval. The rapid growth in parking demand to support City Hall, and Police and Court services was not yet apparent. Additionally, the City had yet to experience a dramatic increase in parking demand that could result from a single, successful new business like the Sun Break Cafe. The conclusions of the study follow:

- With a few exceptions, total parking supply was not considered to be a major issue. Exceptions included the medical center and post office. Improved utilization of existing lots and reduction of demand through improved transit access were advocated.
- A complete overhaul of the Zoning Code's parking requirements specifically to support downtown development was advocated. The code revisions were later adopted by the City and generally served to reduce parking requirements in Downtown.

- It was recognized that the public sector had a role to play in meeting new parking demand. The advantages of coordinated, well designed and located public lots serving multiple businesses with a high turnover rate, were understood to be more advantageous than multiple, small private lots that were inconsistent with the desired downtown development pattern. The Plan also recognized that the provision of public parking could serve as an economic development tool.
- The Plan identified two potential locations for public parking facilities: one at the site of the recently constructed transit center, and the second in the vicinity of the post office.

Section 1.4 of this plan identifies some potential approaches to improve parking conditions in Downtown. This section also includes extensive policies and possible financing mechanisms for creating an overall parking strategy.

### **1.3.8 Profile of Historic Resources**

Historic buildings, both commercial and residential, are a primary asset within the Downtown Plan study area. Distinctive architecture, significant events and important persons and historic movements are tangibly embodied in buildings and places throughout the Downtown Plan area. Sometimes the significance and irreplaceable, unique value of these places and their design isn't recognized until they are lost. The value of historic resources is often economic as well, since authentic history and character are an attraction and business asset themselves.

#### **Historic Character**

It is not surprising that the values identified in the Urban Design Vision are demonstrated in or originate in the traditional building patterns and forms present in Auburn's historic buildings and streetscapes. The historic patterns of Auburn's core are human-scaled and pedestrian-oriented in both commercial and residential areas. Historic Main Street is intensely commercial and well-suited for pedestrians. Like commercial buildings everywhere, Auburn's historic Main Street buildings have had periodic facelifts—new windows and doors, a change of first floor exterior materials, new signs, etc.—but the traditional arrangement of most of the facades persists and much of the original exterior material is still

present.

Auburn's older residential neighborhoods, particularly those within and adjacent to the Downtown Plan area, contain primarily wood-frame and wood-clad one and one-half to two story single family residences. Gable-roofed vernacular bungalow style buildings predominate throughout the planning area. Mature street trees are common. The different quadrants of the planning area differ somewhat in age and character. The most distinctive is the southwest residential area, which has several large residences on multiple lots built by prominent people of the community. The north and southeast residential areas are more consistent, with smaller houses and lots, larger blocks and fewer street trees. Most of the surviving historic housing stock dates from the period between 1910 and 1925, a prosperous and expansive period for the city.

## Overview History

Auburn's history can be condensed into four major periods, each tied to developments in land use and transportation and reflected to some degree in the physical components of the city.

During the first period, including Native American and early-European-American settlement prior to 1883, settlements were primarily focused on the river and sustained by farming. Nothing within the planning area remains from this period.

The second developmental phase (1883-1912) includes the founding and early development of the town. The town, first called Slaughter, was platted in anticipation of the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad service from Tacoma. Development intensified after the platting of the townsite.

The third phase (1913-1945) followed the development of a major Northern Pacific Railroad yard in Auburn from 1910-1913, which brought more population to Auburn and intensified industrial development. The 1910s and 1920s saw continued growth and extensive redevelopment on Main Street. Early wooden buildings were gradually replaced by more substantial masonry structures.

The fourth phase (1946-present) covers the city's post war regionalization and industrial development. Following the war, Auburn experienced a substantial building boom. Businesses became increasingly automobile-oriented and many, such as car sales, moved outside the historic core into areas that had only recently been farmland.

By the early 1970s Auburn's current form and character were evident, though within smaller boundaries. A compact historic core, with auto-related and dependent commercial development along

radiating arterials, was surrounded by older and newer residential and light-industrial areas. The traces of most of its significant periods of history were evident in the center of the city, although most storefronts had been recently remodeled.

Remodeling and new construction since the 1970s have removed additional traces; construction to accommodate renewed use of the Stampede Pass rail line, development of commuter rail services, and other major transportation and economic changes will continue to affect the city's historic resources.

### **Preserving Historic Resources**

Historic resources are best preserved when they continue to have an active useful life in the community. The challenge in preserving significant architecture and reminders from the past is to sustain changing uses while retaining the significant historic features and character of older buildings. Changing uses and new construction need not destroy irreplaceable treasures from earlier eras. Historic buildings can continue to house businesses and residents, contribute character to the downtown, and inspire the present.

Preservation requires a process of identifying, evaluating and protecting historic resources through a variety of means. The City has a vital role to play in identifying its historic resources and then acting to encourage their protection and continuing use. Some steps have already been taken, including those listed below:

- **Inventory**—An inventory of historic resources on Main Street has been completed.
- **Landmark Designation**—Auburn's most significant historic properties can be recognized and preserved through historic landmark designation. Buildings or properties designated as Auburn Landmarks will undergo a special historic design review process to insure that changes do not destroy the significant historic features of a building. There are three properties designated as Auburn Landmarks in the city, two of which are in downtown Auburn.
- **Benefits to Landmark Property Owners**—Owners of historic buildings may qualify for many incentives for preservation or restoration of their buildings. Incentives include property tax reductions, grants and low interest loans for restoration, and technical assistance for care and maintenance of older buildings.

## Historic Resources in Downtown Auburn

This Plan groups historic buildings into three categories:

1. **Historic Landmarks**—These are buildings that are officially recognized and protected as Auburn Landmarks. These are buildings that are officially recognized and protected as Auburn Landmarks. Buildings that receive Landmark status are eligible for several financial benefit programs. They also must undergo design review for approval of any proposed changes to the exterior of the building, to ensure that significant historical features are retained. There are two designated landmarks in the Downtown Plan study area:

- The **Auburn Public Library** (1914), now Auburn Music and Dance, and
- The **Auburn Post Office** (1937), now the Seattle-King County Public Health Department.

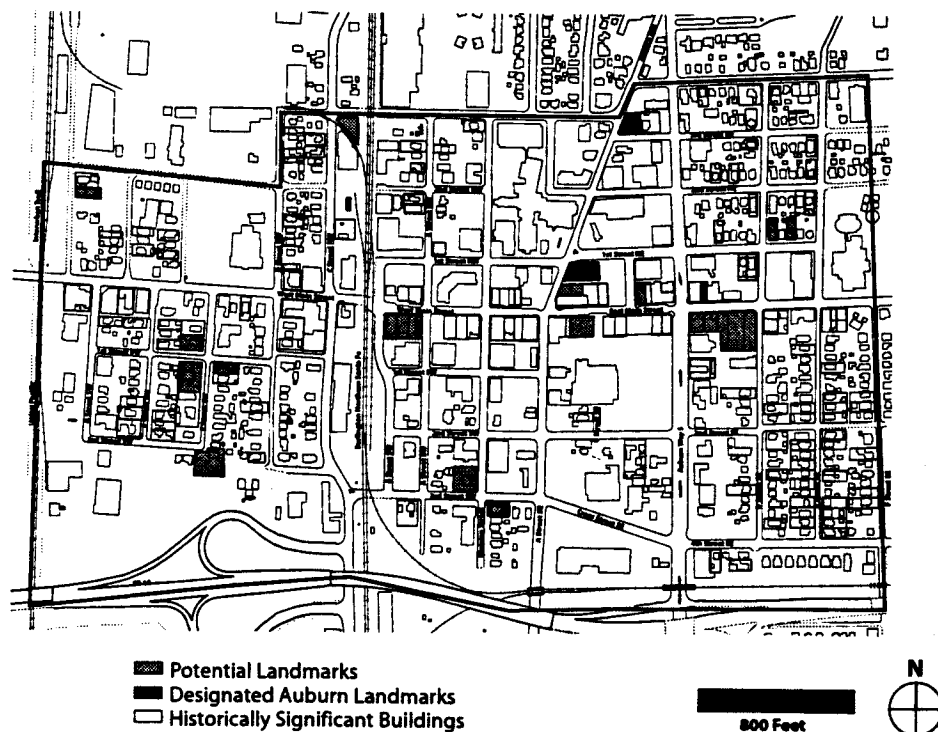
2. **Potential Landmarks**—These homes and commercial buildings are significant historic buildings that contribute greatly to a unique and distinctive sense of Downtown. These are buildings that are worthy of protection and/or restoration. Work conducted during the course of the Downtown Plan has identified 19 potential landmarks that appear to be eligible for landmark designation due to clearly significant historical associations, architectural character and relative lack of change over time. The following are some of the outstanding potential landmarks. A complete list of potential landmarks is provided in Table A.

- The **Tourist/Lotus Hotel** (1905) and the adjacent **Knights of Pythias Hall** (1923) deserve serious consideration for landmark designation
- The **J.C. Penney building** (1921).
- The **Auburn Masonic Hall** (1924) and other buildings in the block
- The **Williams Auto Livery** (1926), now the Auburn Avenue Theater
- The **Farmers' Warehouse and elevator** (circa 1920), now Del's Farm Supply
- The **Knickerbocker Residence** (1906) at 1<sup>st</sup> and E Streets SW
- The **Otto Bertsch Residence** (1922) at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SE and S. Division.

**3. Historically Significant Buildings**—Buildings in this category contribute to the character of districts within the Downtown Plan area. This Plan identified 147 historically significant buildings that are, or should be, included in the City's historic resource inventory. Some may be eligible for landmark designation. Many of these are houses in the East Main and West Main Residential districts. While not individually significant, these houses create distinctive historic neighborhoods whose character should be protected. A preliminary list of historically significant properties is identified in the Appendix.

A more complete inventory should be conducted of properties in this category. This process should identify potential landmarks, and eventually lead to designating the most significant as landmarks. Those that are not suitable for landmarking may still be

Figure 6 : Downtown Plan Area Historic Resources Map



**Table A: Potential Landmarks**

Address	Historic Name	Current Name or Use	Year Built
102-130 W MAIN	Pastime Tavern-Tourist Hotel Block	Potential W Main Historic District	1905-1923
10 AUBURN AVE	Williams Auto Livery/Auburn Ave. Theater	Auburn Avenue Dinner Theater	1926
224 E ST SW	McHugh, James Residence	Residence	1920
201 E MAIN ST	J.C. Penney / Auburn Investment Co.	J. C. Penney Building (Vacant)	1921
25 E ST SW	Meade, Arthur Residence	Residence	1908
506 1ST ST SW	Knickerbocker, I. B. Residence	Residence	1906
102 E ST SW	Bungalow	Residence	1913
304 DIVISION ST S	Bertsch, Otto Residence	Residence	1922
116 H ST NW	Queen Anne Residence	Residence	1909?
232 C ST NW	Farmers' Warehouse Elevator/ Offices	Del's Farm Supply and Storage	1920
307 E MAIN ST	BPOE (Eagles) Aerie #248 Hall/ Avalon Theater	Lifegate Auburn Foursquare Church	1925
124-144 E MAIN ST	Brooks Hotel / Johnson Block	Auburn Antique & Craft Mall	1921
340 E MAIN ST	Dahlgren & Massey Grocery & Meat Market	Auburn Family Sports Center	1946
318 E MAIN ST	Drive In Restaurant Building	Café	1950
302-310 E MAIN ST	King Solomon Masonic Lodge 60 Hall	Masonic Temple	1924
116-120 W MAIN ST	Knights of Pythias Hall	Apartments, Vacant Commercial	1923
124-130 W MAIN ST	Tourist/Lotus Hotel (Site Ohio House)	Harold's Plumbing, Lynn's Antiques	1905
219 DIVISION ST S	Hoye, Dr. Bartholomew Residence	Residence	1914
304 F ST SE	Truitt, Elmer Residence	Residence	1922

important for the character they give to the neighborhood. In these cases, permit review that looks at the larger issues of historic preservation, or in the case of proposed demolition, advertising the building free to anyone willing to relocate it are options for maintaining some of the historic resources.

The historic resource map (Figure 6) shows properties of historic and architectural interest. Information has been compiled from a number of sources including a windshield survey of the planning area conducted in April, 2000, partial inventories previously con-

ducted by the City, and an extensive inventory of Main Street conducted over the past three years. Further research and consideration of properties not yet inventoried will modify the list of properties somewhat.

Section 1.4 contains policies and recommended actions for addressing the needs of retaining or preserving the community's most valued historic resources.



## Section 1.4 Downtown Plan

# Section 1.4 Downtown Plan

## 1.4.1 The Plan Strategy

The overall goal of the Auburn Downtown Plan is to strengthen the downtown image, community, and economy by building on existing assets, facilitating catalyst projects in key locations, stimulating infill and redevelopment, and constructing high-quality infrastructure.

Downtown Auburn will change dramatically in the near future as several major transportation projects have recently been completed, or are under construction. These include the Transit Center with commuter rail, local and express bus service; A Street NW and SW; the SR18/C Street interchange; and the 3rd Street Grade Separation. The Plan sets a framework for action to make the most of the public investment and to leverage funds already allocated to stimulate the larger revitalization of the overall downtown area.

The Plan identifies a series of actions (projects, programs, and policies) which should occur in phases, capturing growth in a manner that will implement the Downtown Vision and that will strengthen downtown's role as the heart of the community. Implementation of the Plan will be brought to fruition by the coordinated efforts of the City of Auburn, other governments, the downtown community, the Auburn Downtown Association, the Chamber of Commerce, and the development community at large.

Months of planning efforts, citizen participation, and the Downtown Vision have determined priorities in downtown Auburn, along with methods for accomplishing these priorities. The following elements represent this work, and outline the overall Plan strategy.

The following section identifies policies, the key recommendations and actions for downtown as a whole. The next chapter (1.5) breaks the downtown into districts and describes the future of each district in greater detail.

### A. Build Out from the Center

The Plan strategy is based on the concept of solidifying investment in the core and building outward from the center (for investment and action area see Figure 7: Plan Concept). This will allow investments to build upon each other so that key assets and activities reap the maximum possible benefit from one another. Infrastructure investments, such as the Transit Center, can lead to investments in residential and commercial development. Residential and commercial development, in turn, are mutually beneficial and will also spur further investment into Downtown

### The Plan Strategy

- Build out from the center
- Link downtown districts and improve identity
- Improve key streets
- Implement catalyst projects on key sites
- Improve the quality of development
- Improve business and development image

Auburn in the form of growing commerce.

The construction of the new Sun Break Cafe between City Hall and the new Transit Center demonstrates how investments create needed links that solidify the downtown core. This approach of concentrating development to profit from multiple benefits is what defines a downtown and is the antithesis of strip development.

The Plan includes policies and implementation measures that are necessary to ensure that new development is consistent with this approach (see Section 1.4, Table B, Summary of Recommended Actions, Section 1.5 Downtown Plan Districts, and Section 1.6 Implementation Strategy).

## **B. Link Downtown Districts and Improve Identity**

After revitalizing downtown outward from the center, the next step is to link the different downtown districts to the core, creating a more cohesive and readily identifiable downtown. Downtown today can be loosely defined by districts which have common land uses or other unifying characteristics. Main Street, Auburn Way, and the Medical Center district can be easily identified as areas that are distinct from one another. While these areas are all within the downtown study area, one could travel along Auburn Way and not get a sense of being in a downtown or city center. The same is true for parts of the Medical Center area. There are, however, places along Auburn Avenue that one would identify as part of a downtown.

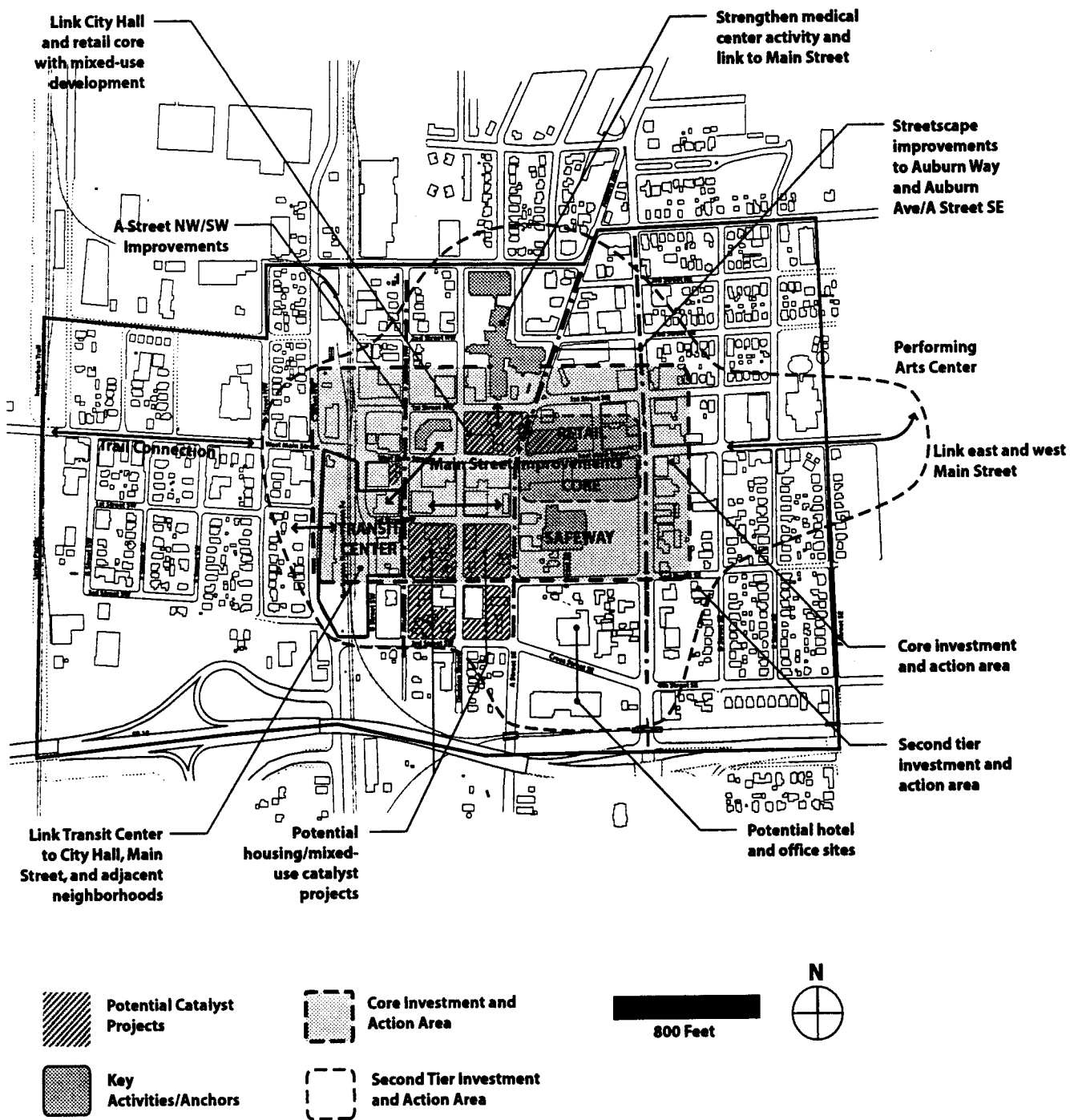
Other parts of downtown, such as the area around A Street SE, do not have a distinctive character or similar land uses. Rather they are a collection of residential uses, auto-oriented uses, and underutilized or vacant properties. In contrast, the residential and industrial districts on the periphery of downtown are easily identified as such.

Linking these disparate districts through the continued development of buildings and streets to create a dense, cohesive urban form is a major precept of the Plan. These actions will expand the urban form currently found on Main Street and link the outlying areas to the core.

## **C. Improve Key Streets**

The plan aims to improve downtown's image, identity and cohesiveness through the improvement of street form. Key streets are those that are an integral part of the identity of downtown. In downtown, key streets include East and West Main Street, A Street NW/SW, Division Street, A Street SE, Auburn Avenue, Auburn

Figure 7: Plan Concept



Way, and sections of 1st Street SW, 2nd Street SW, 3rd Street SW, and Cross Street SE (See Figure 8, Key Streets).

There are two main elements that compose street form:

- 1) street design (the size, configuration, and amenities on the street itself), and
- 2) building form (the location, size, and form of buildings adjacent to the street).

Throughout downtown Auburn, building form can be improved by ensuring that:

- buildings are located adjacent to the sidewalk,
- retail and service uses occupy street-level floors,
- doors and windows face the street, and
- office or residential uses occupy upper floors.

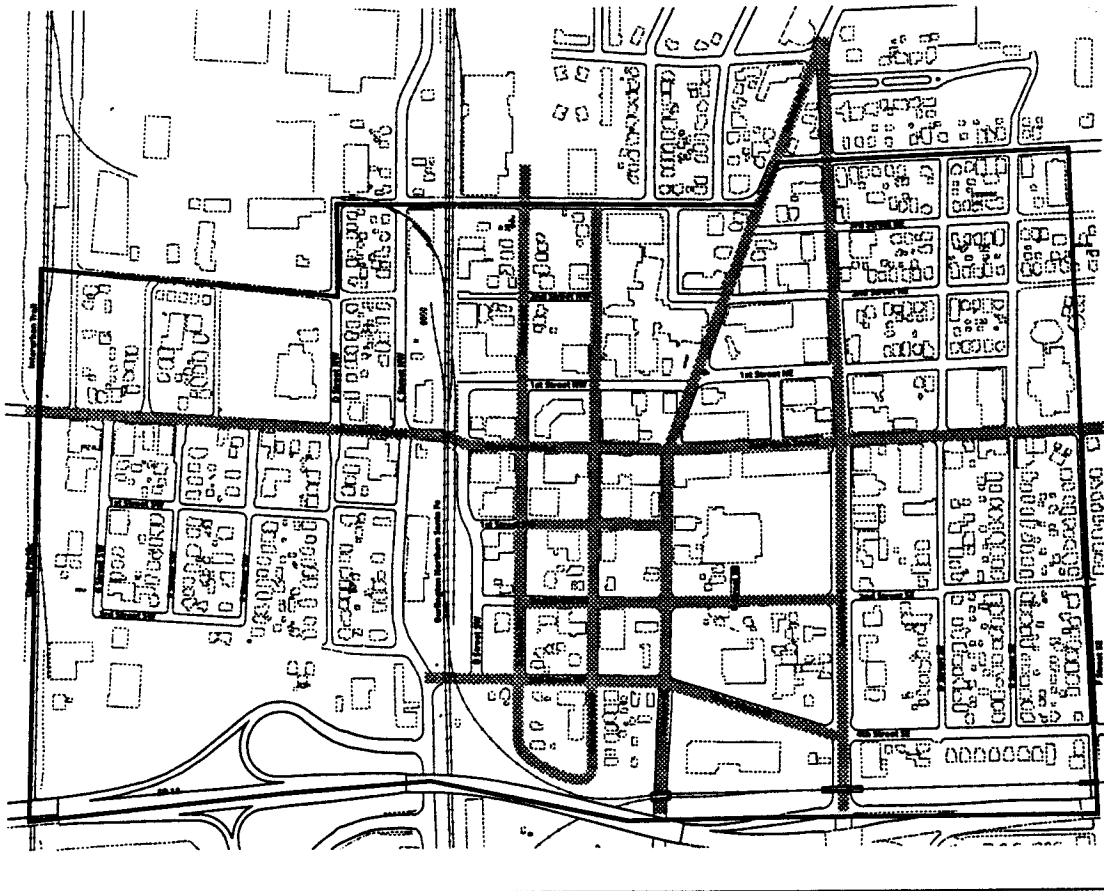


Figure 8: Key Streets



While good building form is particularly important on key streets, it should be ensured throughout downtown. Buildings “frame” the street by providing the most prominent visual elements along it. When new development is located adjacent to the sidewalk, a human-scale space is created. This is, however, dependent upon the width of the street. Retail and service uses on ground floor with windows and doors facing the street increase the level of activity on the street, helping to create a more vibrant downtown.

For good overall street form, new development should be complemented by high quality public streets that are safe, comfortable and attractive. Key streets must be improved to create continuity throughout downtown and to distinguish downtown from other commercial areas in Auburn. Street improvements that would significantly support connections and promote a downtown identity include landscaping, street trees, sidewalks, a coordinated signage plan, clearly marked and specially paved crosswalks where warranted, undergrounding of overhead wires, clearly identified entry points (or gateways) to downtown, public art built into the infrastructure, and the minimum number of lanes necessary to accommodate traffic flows.

At least one route is needed to provide access between the east and west sides of Downtown without interruptions by train traffic. Previous studies identified 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW as the best location to provide a grade separated street that will serve the greatest number of vehicles. This project is under construction and scheduled for completion in 2002. Main Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW will remain affected by commuter and freight trains, and will require special attention to pedestrian and safety features. Finally, there are also key streets related to transit. The development of the commuter rail station and the rail station's transit center will necessitate shifting some transit service onto different streets through downtown. Key transit streets identified by Metro relating to bus service to the commuter rail station include 2nd Street SW, 1st Street NW and A Streets NW/SW.

#### **D. Implement Catalyst Projects on Key Sites**

The Plan recommends building quality development on key sites. This supports the concept of building out from the center and making the most of every action and dollar spent. This will stimulate additional investment and development and demonstrate the viability and wisdom of investing in downtown. Catalyst projects will take several forms and will build on different types of opportunity. Some projects will be identified on key sites that have a strategic location. Others will capitalize on a historic building, capture a market opportunity, meet a specific goal or solve a specific problem, while still others will take advantage of a planned

investment of capital improvement and leverage that action to create additional development opportunities. (Specific catalyst projects are described in detail later in this section.)

### **E. Improve the Quality of Development**

As revitalization occurs, it will be important to ensure that the quality of new development fulfills the Downtown Urban Design Vision and that it continues to improve the overall image of downtown as a good investment. The Plan recommends adoption and implementation of design standards, which will play an important role in the successful implementation of the Plan and the Vision, as will improved City standards to guide public investment, including new downtown street standards, sign regulations, and landscaping programs.

### **F. Improve Business and Development Image**

The last element of the strategy is public relations. To achieve the Plan's goals, it will be important to improve the image of downtown Auburn as a place to do business and as a great place to invest. A downtown public relations program/media campaign and ongoing service improvement training for all City staff are examples of how the downtown image can be improved. The program will need to be created and successfully marketed by a coalition of the City, Auburn Downtown Association, and Chamber of Commerce to achieve the desired quality of implementation.

### **Circulation Plan**

Major transportation changes in Downtown Auburn will result in substantially revised circulation patterns. The construction of the grade separation on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW will result in increased traffic on this route and adjoining streets, as some drivers adopt this route for east/west travel, replacing Main Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW. The Transit Center, with Sound Transit commuter rail service and express bus service, and Metro local bus service, will prompt considerable new bus and vehicular traffic on all the surrounding streets. A and C Streets SW, and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets SW will be particularly affected as activity at the Transit Center increases. When A Street NW is extended northward to 14<sup>th</sup> Street this will create a much-needed north/south alternative to C Street NW/SW and Auburn Way. Changes in traffic patterns can be expected as drivers change habits to include getting to and driving on A Street NW.

Pedestrian and bicycle circulation patterns will be revised to a lesser extent by some of these changes. Main Street will remain a primary corridor for these users. The introduction of a pedestrian bridge

## **1.4.2 Recommended Policies and Actions**

This section presents major actions and supporting policies to carry out the overall goal of Downtown revitalization. Many of these actions are related to physical improvements that the City can make or initiate. Others suggest new programs or approaches that might stimulate additional investment by the private sector. While the list is long, and will require many years to accomplish, these are the steps deemed necessary by the Downtown Plan Task Force to meet the community's long term ambitions.

Illustrations of some of these concepts are shown on the following pages. Figure 9, Summary of Recommended Actions, illustrates physical improvements that are suggested for both public and private sector action. Figure 10 presents a Long Range Vision for downtown Auburn. Figure 10 depicts what Auburn might look like in 20 years, if many of the recommended actions are accomplished. It is important to note that this graphic doesn't imply specific development plans for any particular property, but is conceptual in nature only.

### **A. Strengthen Main Street Retail District**

Most retail shopping in Downtown occurs along Main Street; unfortunately recent losses of strong businesses along Main Street and a decline in customers have weakened the retail environment. Main Street can reach its full potential as the heart of downtown by filling existing gaps in the retail core and linking Main Street on the east and west sides of Auburn Way. Gaps currently exist in the Penney's building, the "Tavern Block" (west of Auburn Avenue on the north side of Main Street), across from City Hall (south side of Main Street), and at the west end of Main Street between the BNSF railroad tracks and A Street SW (see Figure 4: Challenges to Revitalization). A tenant or development of some significance is needed to attract additional activity to Main Street east of Auburn Way. East Main could also be improved by extending some of the concepts of the Main Street improvements to that area and trying to tie Main Street more strongly into the Performing Arts Center.

#### **GOAL 1 To take positive action that creates a successful retail environment in Downtown, particularly along Main Street.**

Specific actions the City might take to influence the retail environment are expressed in the policies below:

##### **Policy 1-1 Facilitate private investment**

The City should seek opportunities to facilitate private sector investment in developing new retail opportunities downtown.

### **Policy 1-2 Ground floor retail**

The City should seek to incorporate ground floor retail space in parking garages and other public structures Downtown.

### **Policy 1-3 Coordinate marketing of Downtown**

The City, Auburn Downtown Association, and Chamber of Commerce should cooperate to improve the marketing of Downtown. This might include the creation of a coordinated website, educating business owners in e-commerce options, and encouraging property owners to upgrade and/or restore buildings.

## **B. Diminish Blighting Influences**

Blight can occur in the form of poorly maintained buildings and/or land uses that are incompatible with a high quality, pedestrian-oriented downtown. Blighted properties and influences adversely impact the ability to attract private sector investment. They also create an atmosphere in which many residents elect to conduct business elsewhere, in surroundings that are perceived to be safer and more comfortable.

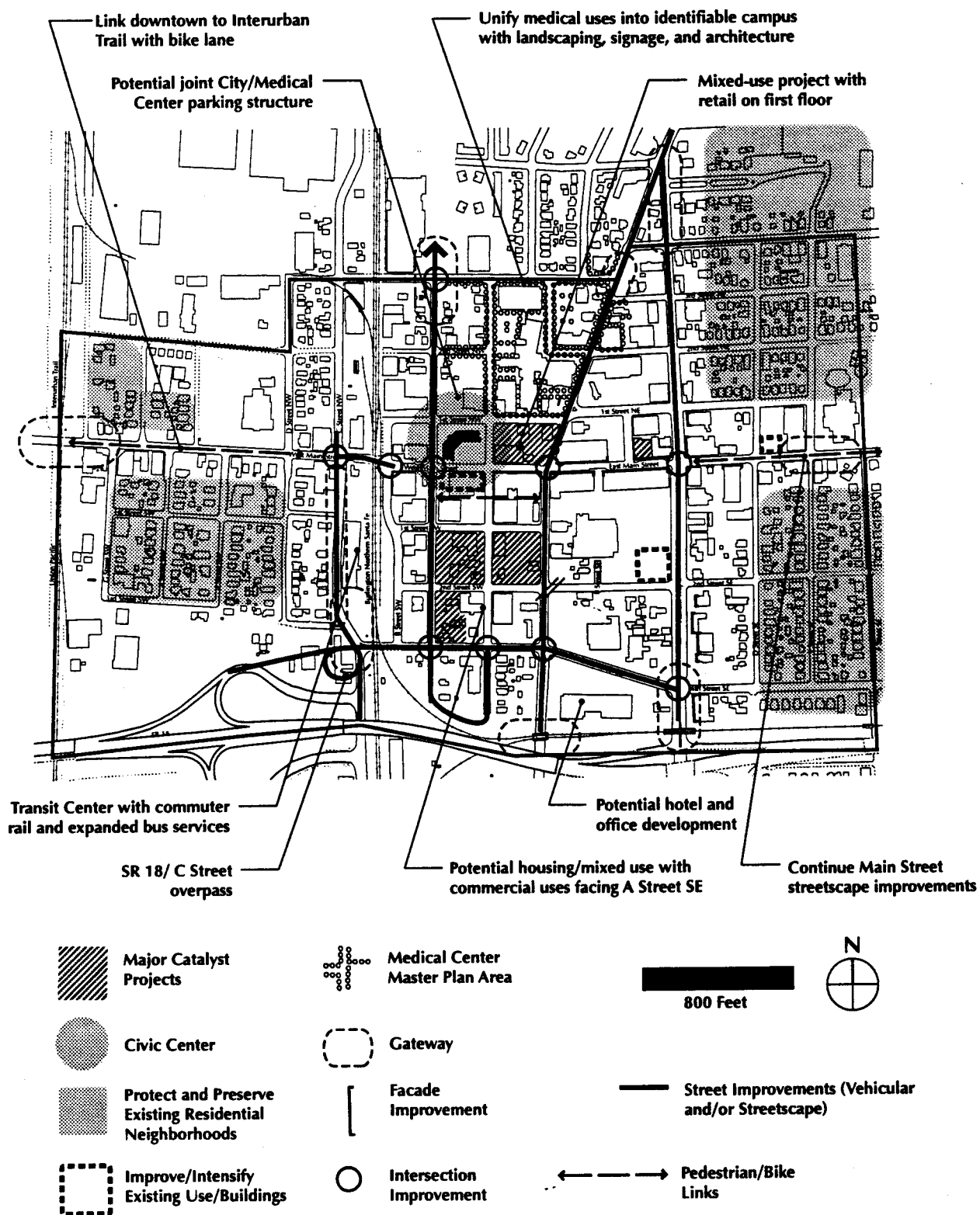
### **Blighting influences in downtown Auburn include:**

- Excessive number of taverns, related issues of building maintenance and impact of tavern customers on public safety (real and perceived).
- Underutilized or vacant parcels, often with trash and maintenance issues.
- Poorly maintained buildings.



Potential Redevelopments: A Street SW, Transit Center and Housing/  
Mixed Use Project

Figure 9: Summary of Recommended Actions



**Table B: Summary of Recommended Actions**

<b>A. Strengthen Main Street</b>
B. Diminish Blighting Influences
<b>C. Intensify Land Use in the Core</b>
D. Integrate Major Public Facilities
<b>E. Transportation Policies and Street Improvements</b>
1. Downtown Circulation
<b>2. Street Design/Development Standards</b>
3. Sidewalk Corridor
<b>4. Curbs</b>
5. Driveways
<b>6. Street Corners/Intersections</b>
7. Bike Routes
<b>8. Pedestrian Circulation</b>
F. Parking Strategy
<b>G. Major Plan Projects</b>
1. Catalyst Projects
<b>2. Public Sector Projects</b>
3. Private Sector Projects
<b>H. Increase Cultural/Entertainment Activities</b>
I. Increase Downtown Residential Population
<b>J. Facade Improvements</b>
K. Protect Adjacent Neighborhoods
<b>L. Provide Stormwater Management</b>
M. Regulatory Revisions
<b>N. Expand Downtown Public Art Program</b>
1. The Ramp
<b>2. Pedestrian Linkages</b>
3. Parking Lots and Parking Garages
<b>4. Medical Center</b>
5. Transit Center
<b>O. Preserve Historic Resources</b>
P. Adopt Downtown Design Guidelines or Standards

- “Commercial strip” development along Auburn Way that is inconsistent with pedestrian-oriented, densely developed downtown.
- Industrial and auto-oriented uses within the downtown and/or adjacent to residential uses. These impact upon traffic, visual quality, neighborhood atmosphere, noise and other issues.

## **GOAL 2 To remove or diminish the impact of blighting influences throughout Downtown.**

Wherever possible, the City should seek to remove or diminish the impact of blighting influences.

### **Policy 2-1 Encouraging removal**

Removal of blighting influences is encouraged.

### **Policy 2-2 Public sector investment**

When private sector investment is not feasible or timely, public sector investments in catalyst projects should be considered. The City shall have the ability to acquire properties to aggregate into larger projects.

### **Policy 2-3 Code and liquor license policies**

The City should consider zoning code amendments and liquor license review policies to limit the adverse impacts of taverns and drinking establishments.

### **Policy 2-4 Remove non-conforming land uses**

Zoning Code amendments should be sought to remove non-conforming and inconsistent land uses over time.

### **Policy 2-5 Enhance code enforcement**

The City should undertake enhanced code enforcement to insure that buildings and properties are appropriately maintained.

### **Policy 2-6 Evaluate historic buildings**

Older buildings should be evaluated for their historic significance and ability to be successfully rehabilitated as an alternative to demolition.

### **C. Intensify Land Use in the Core**

With the exception of the Auburn Regional Medical Center, most of the buildings in downtown Auburn are one-or two-stories in height, which presents a low ratio of building area to ground area for downtown as a whole. In addition, a significant amount of land in downtown Auburn is occupied by surface parking. This low intensity means a lower economic return for downtown development in general than is possible. Also, the low building density means that the appearance of downtown streetscapes (with the exception of Main Street) is that of suburban strip development more than of a downtown or city center.

The urban design vision for downtown identified two to four stories as appropriate for downtown, with stepped back upper floors above three stories. These heights would allow a much greater building volume than currently exists in downtown. Further discussion with the Downtown Plan Task Force revealed a desire to allow greater building heights to respond to the economic needs of potential developers. The design guidelines presented in this section detail the approach to building heights that was proposed by the Task Force.

With intensifying land uses the City of Auburn should consider having downtown designated an Urban Center in accordance with King County's County-Wide Planning Policies. To designate downtown an Urban Center, estimated growth targets for housing and employment must be established, and downtown would need to comply with King County Growth Management Planning Council criteria for Urban Center designation.

### **GOAL 3 To increase the number of people living and working downtown by increasing the density, height and volume of buildings.**

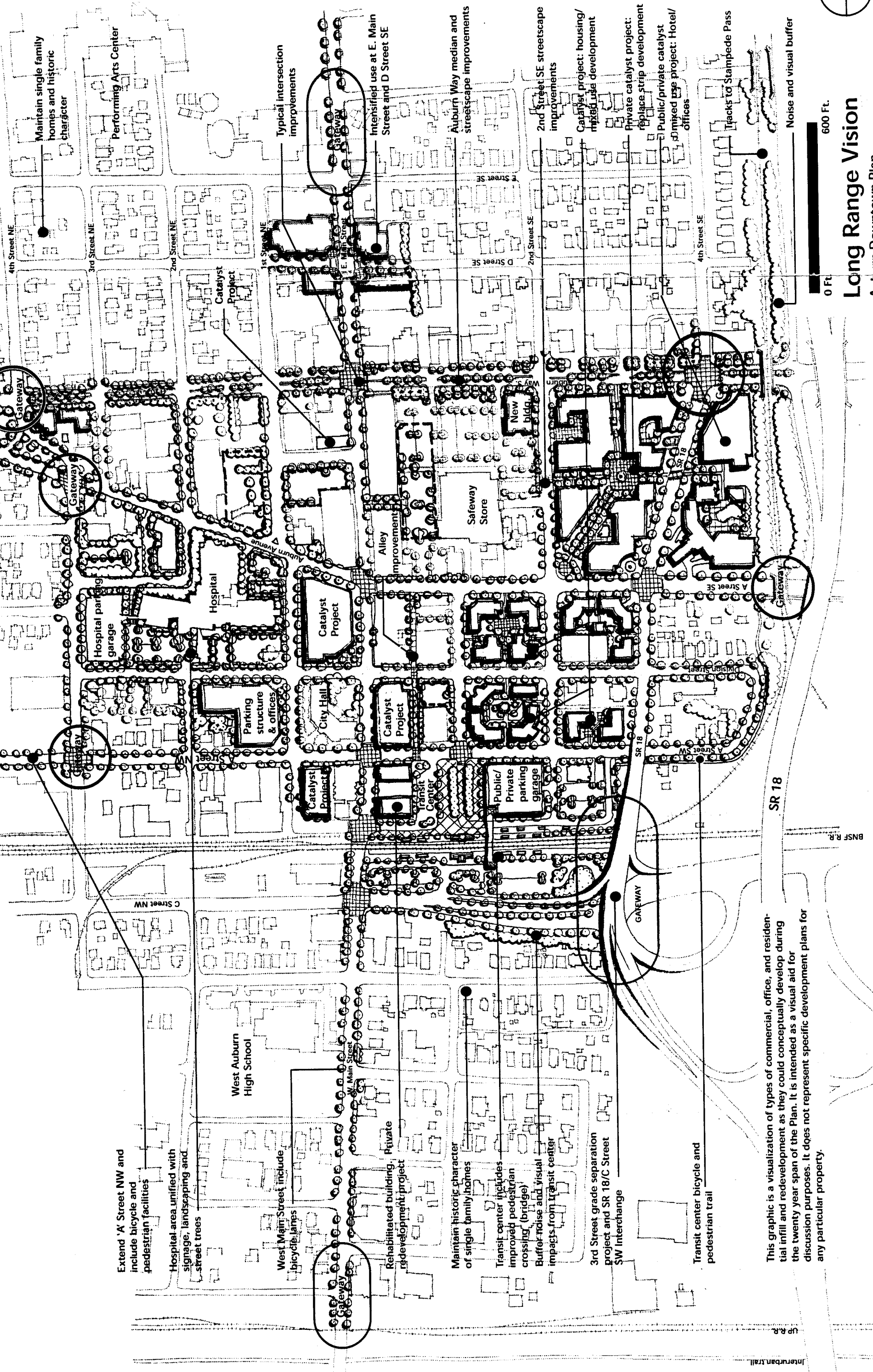
#### **Policy 3-1 Building height and density**

To provide more options to support downtown development, there shall be no maximum building height requirement in the C-2 zone. Rather, the maximum building height shall be determined based on the applicant's ability to satisfy performance and design standards that provide for an appropriate sense of street level enclosure and sunlight penetration.

#### **Policy 3-2 Multi-use parking**

The City should continue to facilitate multi-use public parking lots and garages to permit increased development density.

Figure 10: Long Range Vision



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

# Long Range Vision

Auburn Downtown Plan

### **Policy 3-3 Urban Center**

The City shall seek an amendment to King County and Puget Sound Regional Council plans and policies to have Auburn's Downtown designated as an Urban Center.

### **D. Integrate Major Public Facilities**

Three major transportation improvements are recently completed or under construction in Downtown Auburn. These include:

- The SR 18/C Street Interchange and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW Grade Separation
- The Transit Center, and
- A Street SW improvements

The Downtown Plan Task Force and subcommittees were instrumental in reviewing these projects, and ensuring their coordination in this south central part of Downtown. Each is far reaching in impact and represents the investment of many millions of public dollars.

The scale of the three projects is such that they need to be delicately integrated into the downtown fabric to ensure that they have a positive aesthetic impact. Input from the Task Force helped to define how this integration might occur. There will still be opportunities after construction for continued efforts to "fit" these large structures and facilities into the community through aesthetic approaches such as street tree plantings, plantings along large walls, and provision of public art and street furnishings.

Other public facilities, such as below-ground utilities and power lines, also need to be integrated overall and within each individual project. Development in Downtown began in the late 1800s; some of the older systems, such as water pipes, are still in place. The increased density encouraged by this Plan may have an impact on these systems and their ability to service the number of people and businesses envisioned. While some improvements have been installed in the last couple of years, close coordination will need to occur between the Public Works and Planning Departments to guarantee that current systems are not overtaxed by new development, and that system upgrades are planned to meet upcoming needs.

As density and traffic increases, there is also a need to create a clearer identity for Downtown and to provide better tools to help visitors and residents find their way around.

**GOAL 4 To plan for public facilities to serve the increased density in Downtown.**

**Policy 4-1 Coordinate utilities with development**

Coordinate water service, sanitary sewer and storm water utilities, electrical and fiber optic facilities with the increasing development Downtown. Pursue opportunities to develop technologically advanced high speed communication infrastructure that supports or could attract desired businesses to Downtown Auburn.

**Policy 4-2 Underground utilities**

All new development shall provide underground utilities.

**Policy 4-3 Gateways and landmarks**

Opportunities to develop gateways, landmarks and a wayfinding system in Downtown shall be explored.

**Policy 4-4 Enhance transportation facilities**

Visual and environmental enhancements shall be provided for large scale transportation facilities in Downtown.

**E. Street Improvements/Transportation Policies**

All streets in downtown Auburn are envisioned to function as carriers of vehicular traffic and as urban pedestrian-oriented environments. Visual and functional improvements to key streets will provide facilities for all modes of travel for business and recreation. Key recommended transportation improvements are illustrated in Figure 11. Streets to be improved include Auburn Way, Auburn Avenue, A Street SE, A Street NW and SW, Cross Street, East Main Street, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW. Key improvements include the addition of gateways, sidewalk improvements, public art, improved signage, landscaping, and undergrounding of utilities. Major intersections that need aesthetic or functional improvement include Main and Auburn Way, Main and A Street SW, Main and C Street SW, Auburn Way and Cross Street, A Street NW and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW and A Street SW and Cross Street.

A number of policy actions are needed to implement the Downtown Urban Design Vision. As population and activity increase over time in Downtown Auburn, additional congestion should be expected, and will be a sign that downtown is becoming more economically competitive and attractive. To foster economic development and revitalization, a lower level of service standard will be acceptable in Downtown Auburn than in the rest of the City. The reduction in the LOS for Downtown will be

complemented by other efforts to promote street improvements that enhance pedestrian safety and access. This will minimize vehicular/non-motorized conflicts.

Policies to accomplish the intent and vision for street improvements and transportation presented in this Plan are detailed below:

**GOAL 5 To acknowledge that Downtown automobile and pedestrian traffic are unique within the City, and that standards need to be more flexible in Downtown.**

**Policy 5-1 Level of service in Downtown**

A lower Level of Service (LOS) is acceptable in Downtown than elsewhere in the City.

**Policy 5-1 Level of service in Downtown**

A lower Level of Service (LOS) is acceptable in Downtown than elsewhere in the City.

Auburn's downtown is a unique area within the City. In order to promote the density of development needed to support a vibrant downtown while improving pedestrian accessibility, the City accepts that a successful downtown will have a lower level of service then is applied elsewhere in the community.

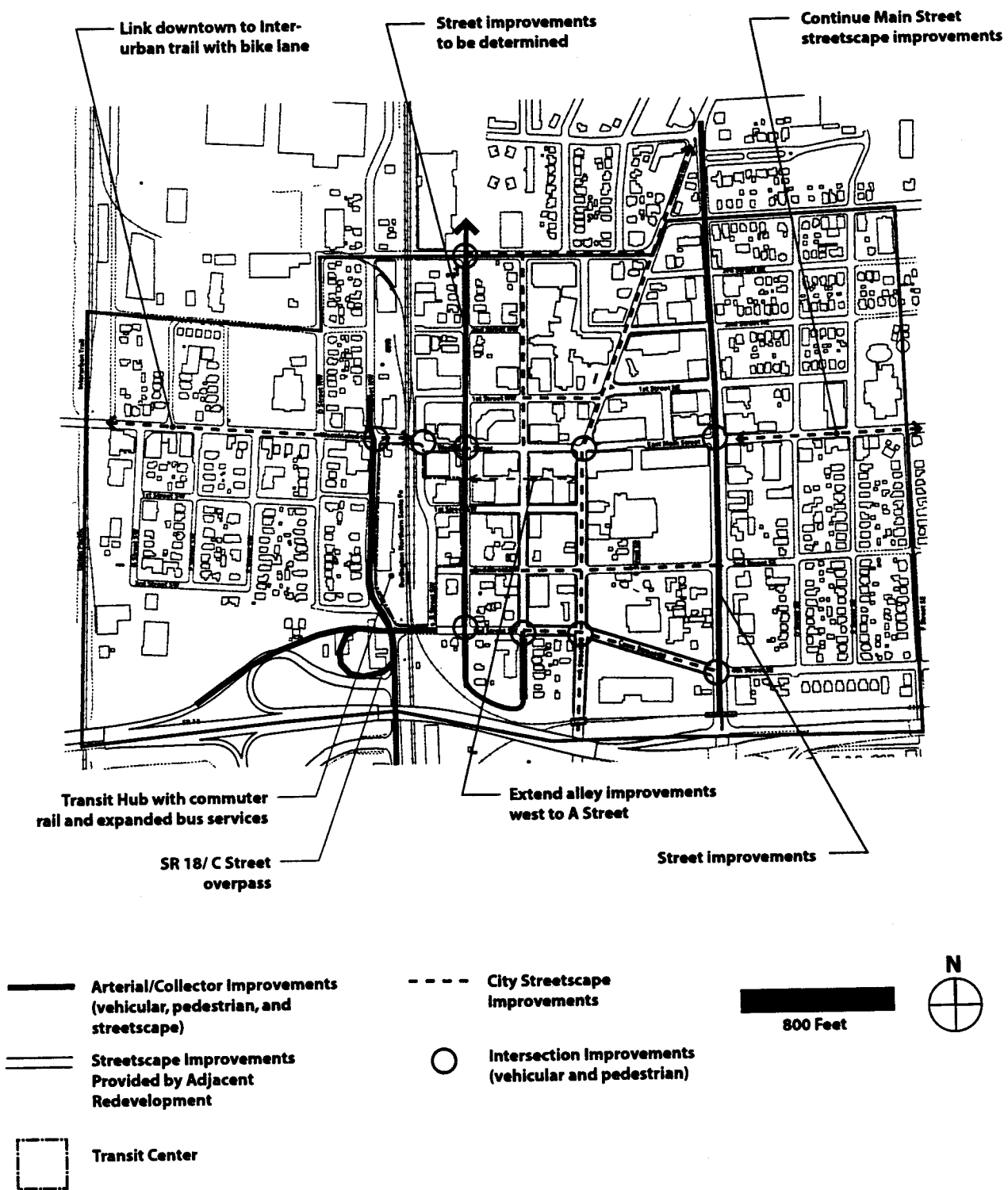
The overall Level of Service in Downtown Auburn can be reduced to an average LOS of "E," except along the corridors of Auburn Way, Auburn Avenue/A Street SE and C Street NW, which must be maintained at the current City of Auburn LOS standard. When determining if the average LOS of "E" is being maintained, no three consecutive intersections on a corridor can be Level of Service "F." While any single intersection in Downtown Auburn, excluding intersections along those corridors mentioned above, may fall to LOS "F," an average LOS of "E" or better must be maintained when averaging the compromised intersection with the four intersections immediately adjacent to it on the north, south, east and west. Finally, no intersection may be allowed to fall below LOS "F" for a time period exceeding the peak hour.

**Policy 5-2 Through traffic**

The City will maintain through-traffic movements on arterial routes that pass through the Downtown. Background traffic will continue to grow as the community and its surroundings develop.

The City's standard Traffic Mitigation Program is satisfied by the analysis provided in this Plan. The analysis demonstrates that development anticipated in the Plan can be safely accommodated.

Figure 11: Transportation Improvements



between 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW and 3<sup>rd</sup> St NW (with an extension north of downtown from 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW up to 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW).

- The Transit Center (which will provide express bus, local bus, and commuter rail service).
- The SR 18/C Street Overpass.
- Cross Street improvements (widening and sidewalks).
- Auburn Way improvements (widening and sidewalks) between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets NE .
- Improvements between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets NE and on Auburn Way North, and between A Street SE and Auburn Way South on Cross Street.

Other transportation improvements that this plan recommends adding to the City's Transportation Plan are:

- Improvements to the West Main Street/C Street NW intersection.
- Auburn Way improvements (sidewalk, streetscape, signal improvements, and access management).
- Auburn Avenue/A St SE (sidewalk and streetscape improvements).
- Planned and recommended improvements are described in detail below and in Section 1.5, Downtown Plan Districts.

## **Circulation Plan**

Major transportation changes in Downtown Auburn will result in substantially revised circulation patterns. The construction of the grade separation on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW will result in increased traffic on this route and adjoining streets, as some drivers adopt this route for east/west travel, replacing Main Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW. The Transit Center, with Sound Transit commuter rail service and express bus service, and Metro local bus service, will prompt considerable new bus and vehicular traffic on all the surrounding streets. A and C Streets SW, and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets SW will be particularly affected as activity at the Transit Center increases. When A Street NW is extended northward to 14<sup>th</sup> Street this will create a much-needed north/south alternative to C Street NW/SW and Auburn Way. Changes in traffic patterns can be expected as drivers change habits to include getting to and driving on A Street NW.

Pedestrian and bicycle circulation patterns will be revised to a lesser extent by some of these changes. Main Street will remain a primary corridor for these users. The introduction of a pedestrian bridge over the BNSF tracks at the commuter rail station platform will offer an alternative to the pedestrian or cyclist waiting at a grade crossing blocked by a slow-moving train. A Street SW will also be heavily used by pedestrians.

## **Street Design Guidelines and Policies**

This section identifies guidelines and policies that are recommended throughout the Downtown. The improvements should be incorporated into Downtown streets with all public and private development and improvements.

Within the scope of this planning effort, it was possible to develop design guidelines for street and streetscape improvements appropriate for consideration within the downtown. However, it was not possible to develop and implement ordinance and design revisions to codify these improvements. Consequently, two policies are required to implement this section of the Plan.

It is essential to recognize that downtown streets and blocks are uniquely different from the balance of the community and that standards applicable elsewhere cannot be uniformly applied here without resulting in unwarranted expense and damage to the goals contained in this Plan. Therefore, a mechanism is required to recognize this difference and give the City the flexibility to apply different standards.

In the longer term, the City needs to develop design standards uniquely suited to downtown. This effort will require dedicated staff time and funding.

### **GOAL 8 To develop and implement design standards for downtown streets and streetscape.**

#### **Policy 8-1 Pedestrian access**

Pedestrian access shall be a high priority in the development of street and streetscape design standards in Downtown. High pedestrian activity locations in and around downtown should be identified and evaluated. Engineering studies should be conducted to determine appropriate measures for pedestrian improvements.

#### **Policy 8-2 Street design standards**

The City shall prepare street and streetscape standards appropriate for use within the downtown.

### **Policy 8-3 Street and streetscape standards**

Street and streetscape standards for the Downtown shall take into consideration public transit routes and infrastructure needs of public transit providers.

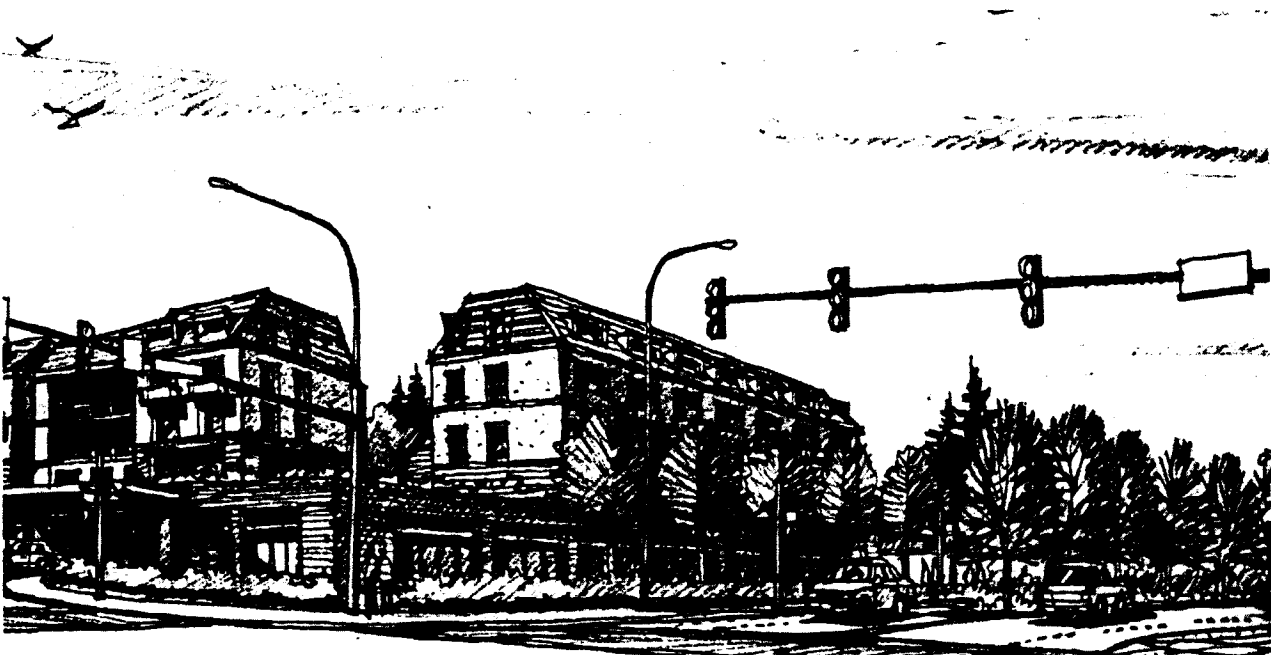
### **E.2 Overall Downtown Streetscape Improvements**

Streetscape improvements are recommended throughout downtown Auburn to complement Main Street. Variations of a decorative, hooded light, a paving strip adjacent to the curb and sidewalk, street tree standards, and a Chinook-style tree grate will be used throughout downtown to enhance its character while providing common visual elements.

Variations of a hooded light, by Architectural Area Lighting, Universe Collection, (see illustration) will be used along streets throughout downtown. This style is similar to those on Main Street, but dissimilar enough to maintain Main Street as a distinctive place in downtown.

A one-foot wide, gray concrete paving strip with a textured band will separate sidewalks from the curb in downtown Auburn. This strip will help provide uniqueness and character to all of downtown.

Adopted street tree standards from Auburn's Design and Construction Standards will improve the streetscape by "softening"



Potential Hotel Development near SR 18

the hard urban environment, while providing shade and pedestrian comfort, among other benefits. The standards should be revised and adopted for downtown. Using the revised standards will ensure a consistent look throughout downtown.

A "Chinook"-style tree grate by Urban Accessories, Inc. (see illustration) will be used for sidewalk trees throughout downtown. This style subtly reflects the Northwest while further improving the character and uniqueness of downtown Auburn.

### E.3 Sidewalk Corridors

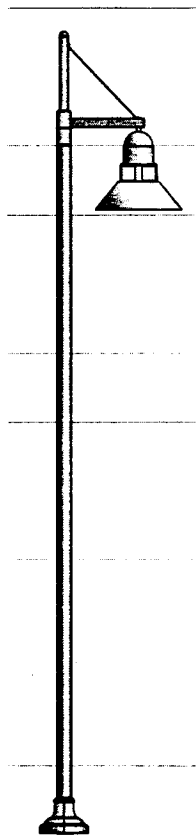
Downtown streets have been constructed and it is unlikely that they will be rebuilt in large measure throughout the downtown. The following section addresses the need to improve pedestrian conditions within downtown Auburn while working (in most cases) within the existing right-of-way and with the existing curbs remaining in their current locations. Resolutions of conflicts in every given case must be based upon a balance of conflicting needs and uses and adjusting the solution to fit the magnitude of both need and conflict.

The following approach is recommended when considering the layout of sidewalks and their accessories:

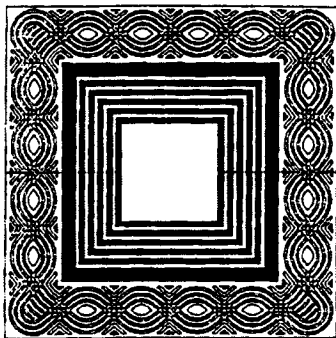
- Downtown sidewalks can be divided into zones to separate

**Table C: Sidewalk Corridor Recommendations**

SIDEWALK CORRIDOR	APPLICATION	FURNISHINGS ZONE	THROUGH PED. ZONE	FRONTAGE ZONE
15 feet	Recommended for arterials where ROW width is 80 feet and collectors and pedestrian districts	4.5 feet	8 feet	2 to 6 feet
12 feet	Recommended for arterials, collectors and pedestrian districts where ROW is 60 feet	4.5 feet	6 feet	1 foot to 6 inches
10 feet	Recommended for arterials, collectors, and pedestrian districts	4.5 feet	5 feet	0 feet to 6 inches
9 feet	Not recommended for new construction or reconstruction; street trees must be planted in a minimum of 3 feet	3 feet to 6 inches	5-6 feet to 6 inches	0 feet
Less than 9 feet	NOT RECOMMENDED Accepted in existing constrained corridors when increasing sidewalk width is not practicable	2 feet to 6 inches (trees not possible)	6 feet to 6 inches	0 feet



Proposed hooded light fixture



Detail of "Chinook"-style Tree Grate

uses and functions of different parts of the sidewalk: Furnishings Zone, Through Pedestrian Zone (No Obstruction Zone), and Frontage Zone. The purpose, function, and design of each zone is discussed below.

- Table C provides guidance for recommended widths of these zones under various street conditions. When a major new development is proposed the entire street cross-section should be evaluated, considering the role and needs of motorized and nonmotorized traffic in the particular location. This will help determine the dimensions for the entire sidewalk corridor and the individual zones, where appropriate.
- Streets in downtown Auburn have already been built, and in many cases the existing sidewalk corridors are too narrow to accommodate the recommended zone widths. Competing needs for space in constrained sidewalk corridor spaces can be resolved in either of two ways: by compromising on the minimum width required for some or all of the sidewalk zones, or by increasing the dimensions of the Sidewalk Corridor.

In some cases, it is possible to widen the Sidewalk Corridor either through acquisition of additional right-of-way or through public walkway easements, or by reallocation of existing right-of-way. Such measures should be considered on A Street NW, Auburn Avenue/A Street SE, and on Cross Street.

#### THE FURNISHINGS ZONE

The portion of the sidewalk directly next to the curb is identified in this plan as the "Furnishings Zone".

The Furnishings Zone buffers pedestrians from the adjacent roadway, and provides the area where elements such as utility poles, signal poles, street lights, controller boxes, hydrants, signs, driveway aprons, grates, hatch covers, street trees, and street furniture are properly located. This is also the area where people alight from parked cars. Vending carts might occupy a portion of the Furnishings Zone.

Where it is wide enough, the Furnishing Zone should provide street trees. In downtown, this area could be paved, with tree wells and planting pockets for trees, flowers, and shrubs.

Separating pedestrians from auto travel lanes greatly increases their comfort as they use the Sidewalk Corridor. This buffer function of the Furnishing Zone is especially important on streets where there are high volumes of automobile traffic.

All grates and hatches within the sidewalk should be located in the Furnishings Zone and should be flush with the surrounding sidewalk surface (and outside the Through Pedestrian Zone). Ventilation and tree grates should have openings no greater than 1/2" in width. Pavers are acceptable as tree grates. Hatch covers should have a rough surface texture with a slightly raised pattern and be slip-resistant.

#### THE THROUGH PEDESTRIAN ZONE

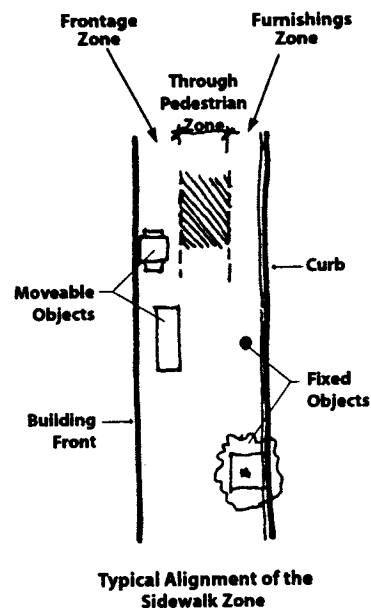
The Through Pedestrian Zone defines the area of the sidewalk that is intended for pedestrian travel. This area should be free of permanent and temporary objects. As a general rule, the zone should be a minimum of 5'-8' wide on downtown streets (see table C). Driveway aprons should not intrude into the Through Pedestrian Zone (see detail for Typical Alignment of the Sidewalk Zone).

Walking surfaces should be firm and stable, resistant to slipping, and allow for ease of passage by people using canes, wheelchairs, or other devices to assist mobility. Sidewalks should generally be constructed of Portland cement concrete. Unit pavers could also be used, particularly in the Furnishings Zone or around mature trees where lifting occurs. Concrete sidewalks should be scored to achieve patterning as is appropriate.

Walking surfaces should be relatively level, with a preferred cross slope of the entire Through Pedestrian Zone of 2%.

#### THE FRONTAGE ZONE

The Frontage Zone is the area between the Through Pedestrian Zone and the property line. This zone allows pedestrians a comfortable "shy" distance from building fronts, in areas where buildings are at the lot line, and from elements such as fences and hedges which may also abut the property line. Where no Furnishings Zone exists, elements that would normally be located in that zone might be located in the Frontage Zone, but should be reviewed for appropriateness on a case by case basis. Temporary uses, such as sidewalk cafes and vending carts, may occupy the Frontage Zone so long as the Through Pedestrian Zone is maintained.



## E.4 Curbs

Curbs should be maintained on all downtown streets to prevent stormwater from entering the sidewalks, discourage vehicles from driving on sidewalks, and to make street cleaning easy. In addition, curbs help to define the pedestrian environment within the streetscape as separate from the vehicular environment. And, at corners, the curb is an important tactile element for pedestrians who are finding their way with a cane.

## E.5 Driveways

Driveways (curb cuts) interrupt the pedestrian realm with cars and changes of grade. Frequent driveways also add multiple turning movements on streets and pose potential safety hazards to both pedestrians and vehicles.

The following guidelines are recommended:

- Encourage access from alleys where present.
- Driveway aprons should be designed to not intrude into the Through Pedestrian Zone.

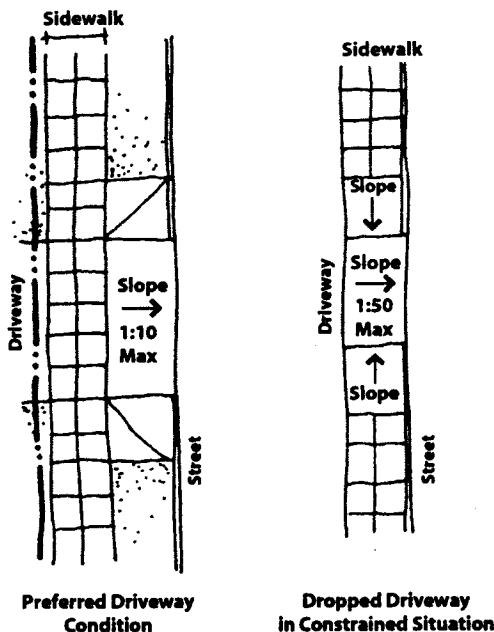
### DRIVEWAY APRON DESIGN

The preferred condition for driveway design is where the Through Pedestrian Zone is maintained at 1:50 slope across the entire driveway, and is scored with a sidewalk pattern. The sloped portion of the driveway is located entirely within the Furnishings Zone and should be sloped to a maximum of 1:10 to minimize the width of the sloped apron. Where necessary to keep the driveway apron slope from exceeding 1:10, the sidewalk may be partially dropped to meet the grade at the top of the apron. This is preferred to extending the sloped apron into the Through Pedestrian Zone.

Where sidewalk widths are too constrained to accommodate the preferred condition, a "dropped" driveway, may be used. This driveway meets ADA requirements and is appropriate where the sidewalk width is less than eight feet wide. The sidewalk scoring grid should continue across the driveway through the Through Pedestrian Zone.

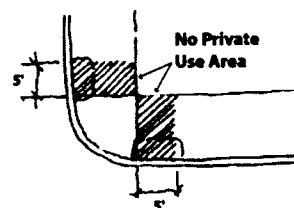
## E.6 Guidelines for Street Corners/Intersections

Pedestrian activities are concentrated at street corners, where sidewalks converge and where pedestrians wait to cross. They are also the primary location for street signs, traffic control signs, and traffic signal bases. The design of the corner affects the speed with which turning traffic can maneuver through an intersection. Visibility at street corners is an issue for all street users.



The following street corner guidelines are recommended:

- **Clear space:** Corners should be kept clear of obstructions and have enough space for the typical number of pedestrians waiting to cross, and should have enough room for curb ramps, transit stops (where appropriate), and for street conversations. If possible, utility poles, newspaper boxes and other physical elements should be located outside of the clear space area. There should also be an identified “no private use area” to ensure that there is adequate waiting area and visibility at intersections.
- **Visibility:** It is critical that pedestrians at street corners have a good view of the travel lanes and that motorists in the travel lanes can easily see pedestrians.
- **Legibility:** Symbols, marks, and signs used at corners should clearly indicate what actions the pedestrians should take.
- **Accessibility:** All corner features, such as ramps, landings, call buttons, signs, symbols, marks texture, etc., must meet accessibility standards.
- **Separation from Traffic:** Corner design and construction must be effective in discouraging turning vehicles from driving over the pedestrian area.
- **Special paving at key intersections and gateways:** Special paving, such as cobble, bricks, or other unit pavers, should be used at the intersection of Main Street and Auburn Way, and also at the north and south gateway intersections of Auburn Way and 4<sup>th</sup> Street NW and Auburn Way and Cross Street. Design standards should be developed that identify appropriate and accessible locations for use of special paving.



Corner No Obstructions

### Minimizing Crossing Distances at Intersections

Many factors govern the choice of a curb radius in any given location, including desired pedestrian area at that corner, traffic turning movements, the turning radius of the design vehicle, the geometry of the intersection, the street classification, and whether there is parking or a bike lane between the travel lane and the curb.

Given all of these factors, the following guidelines are

recommended:

- The chosen radius should be as small as possible for the circumstances.
- Refuge islands (islands that allow pedestrians to cross one segment of the street to a relatively safe location out of the travel lanes and which shorten the length of the crosswalk) should be provided at intersections with large turning radii, however, smaller turning radii are preferable. (This guideline may apply to the Auburn Way/Cross Street intersection).

### **E.7 Bicycle Routes**

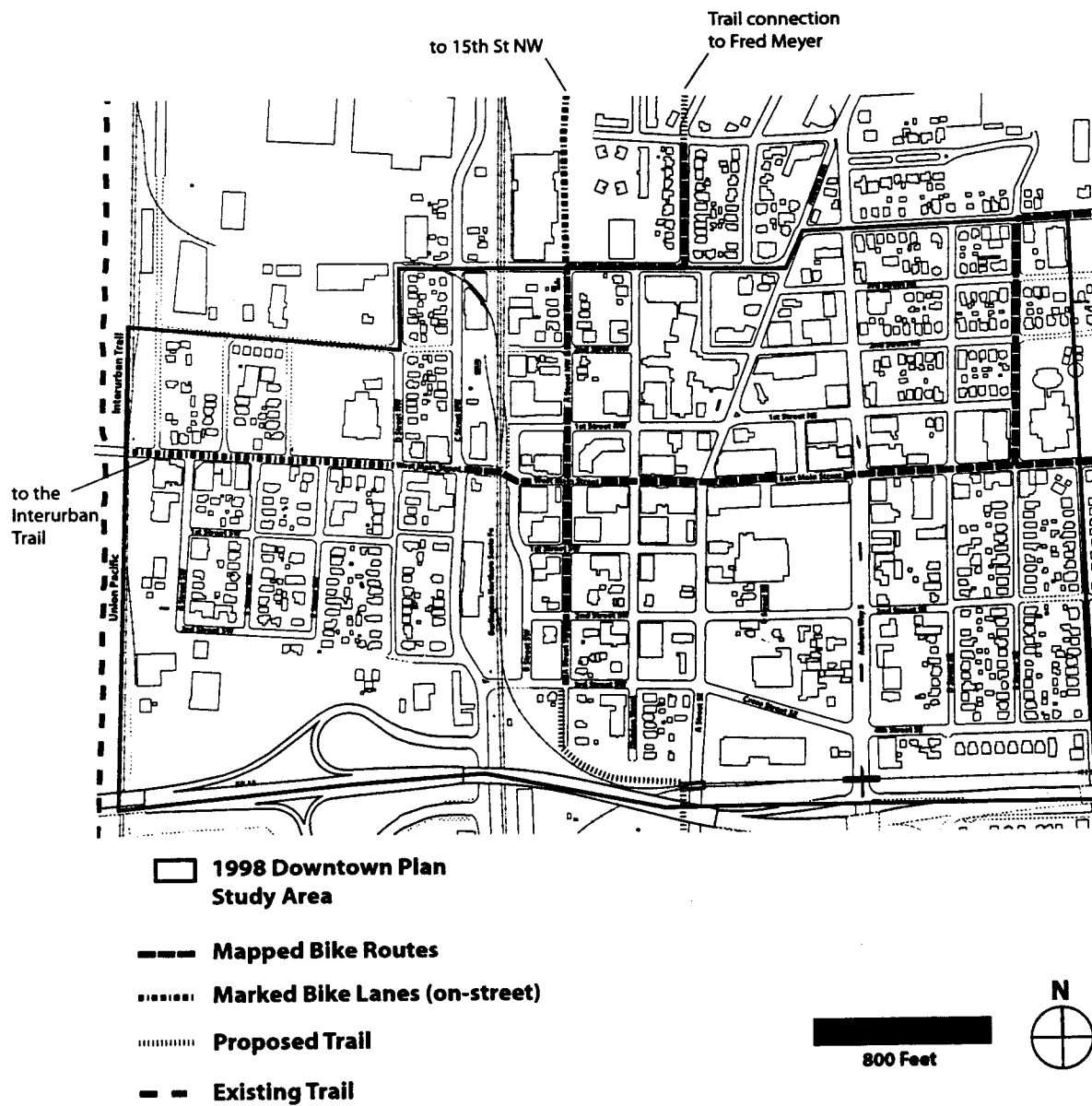
Downtown Auburn currently has two routes that are commonly used by bicyclists. These are the Interurban Trail, and Main Street. The Interurban Trail is a paved, 12 foot wide trail on the west edge of the Downtown Plan study area that provides a vital north/south route traversing the entire length of the City. The 4+ mile segment in Auburn is part of a regional trail that extends from Pacific to Tukwila and is 17 miles in total length. This is an important connector to other valley communities for both commuting and recreational cyclists.

Many cyclists use Main Street as a connector to and from the trail. Although there are no marked bike lanes on Main Street, traffic in the core area moves slowly enough that sharing the lane with vehiclular traffic is not an uncomfortable experience. With the arrival of the Transit Center, it is desirable to provide improved access for bicyclists from all directions, and to provide directional signage for cyclists, and signage to let motorists know to expect cyclists in the roadway.

Main Street is also the primary east/west connection from the Interurban Trail and Downtown to the east part of the City. It is frequently used by bicyclists traveling toward SE Green Valley Road and Flaming Geyser State Park to the southeast, and toward the Green River Road to the northeast.

Access from other parts of the City into Downtown is more difficult. Arterial streets that pass through Downtown are heavily traveled and provide no bike lanes or wide right lanes suitable for bike travel. Local residential streets have low traffic volumes suitable for bicycling, but few streets extend for more than a few blocks due to dead ends, such as at railroad tracks. This makes using these streets a circuitous and unlikely prospect. Bicyclists who need to travel across the city, through Downtown, are also without good

Figure 12: Downtown Bicycle Routes



options other than Main Street.

The Nonmotorized Transportation Plan, adopted in December 1998, identified the need for access into Downtown and the Transit Center from A Street SE and the southeast part of the City. The City has purchased property to construct a separated trail along this route as part of the A Street SW extension project. The planned extension of A Street NW to 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW should also be designed with bike facilities, creating a longer north/south route that will access both the Downtown and North Auburn Central Business District. Figure 12 shows existing and proposed bicycle routes in downtown.

Goals and policies to enhance the bicycling environment in Downtown are listed below.

### **GOAL 9 To improve opportunities for bicycling in and through Downtown.**

#### **Policy 9-1 Trail to Transit Center**

The City shall seek funding to construct a paved, separated trail connecting the Transit Center and A Street SE.

#### **Policy 9-2 A Street NW bike facility**

Planning, design and construction of the A Street NW extension shall include bicycle facilities.

#### **Policy 9-3 Seek opportunities for bike facilities**

Other opportunities to improve bicycle facilities in Downtown should be sought, particularly in association with planned traffic improvements. A bicycle service center that provides safe long term parking and other facilities should be developed at the Transit Center.

### **GOAL 10 To provide lane marking and a signage system oriented to bicyclists.**

#### **Policy 10-1 Mark bike lanes on Main Street**

Bicycle lanes should be planned and marked on West Main Street, from the Interurban Trail to the Transit Center, and should be explored on East Main Street, from approximately D Street NE/SE to R Street NE/SE.

#### **Policy 10-2 Directional signage**

Directional signage shall be developed to guide bicyclists to the major sites in and around Downtown. An information kiosk shall

be provided at the Main Street trailhead of the Interurban Trail directing cyclists to points of interest in Downtown and beyond.

## **E.8 Pedestrian Circulation**

Most visitors to Downtown are pedestrians at some point during their visit. It is a goal of this plan that the pedestrian experience be improved and expanded, and that more visitors will see this as a great place to walk. To accomplish this it is necessary to examine the existing pedestrian circulation system to identify needed improvements.

A street tree/sidewalk inventory conducted in 1999 found that most streets in Downtown Auburn have sidewalks in place. The condition of these varies substantially, however. Many of the oldest sidewalks are from the early part of the century. These are often narrower than are required today. Some have surface damage or have been uplifted or broken up by tree roots or other natural or manmade forces. While the sidewalk dimensions and conditions probably do not unduly influence walking, they do reduce the aesthetic quality and safety of the experience.

### **Pedestrian Destinations and Barriers**

Bigger factors in whether people walk downtown can be framed by two questions:

- 1) Is there someplace for people to go? (a destination) and,
- 2) Is there anything in the way of getting there? (a barrier)

An examination of the pedestrian destinations or generators (places with a large number of employees such as the hospital) found about a dozen major locations in Downtown. These include the Main Street Core shopping district, transit center, banks, grocery store, hospital, schools and City Hall.

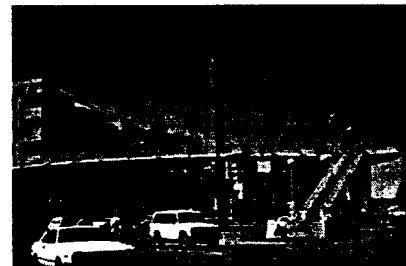
Numerous barriers to walking were also identified; these are primarily related to transportation features such as wide, busy streets, or railroad tracks. These barriers contribute to the feeling that, although close in distance, adjacent areas are actually very dissimilar and unrelated. These barriers may be more psychological than physical, but they are effective in discouraging people from walking from the Main Street core for example, and crossing Auburn Way, to the Performing Arts Center on East Main Street. Figure 13 identifies the most obvious pedestrian destinations/generators and barriers to walking.

This Plan refers repeatedly to the desire to become more "pedestrian-oriented." Other sections identify means such as the design of streets or buildings as ways to contribute to this effort.

But the pedestrian system itself must also be conducive and attractive to Downtown visitors to make a true difference in the numbers of walkers, and the distance that people are willing to walk.

All Downtown streets should be accessible by sidewalks. Opportunities to replace damaged walks or install new sidewalks where none exist should be sought. This is supported by Goal 8.

Pedestrian Bridges



### High Priority Pedestrian Corridors

A pedestrian system that identifies certain high priority pedestrian corridors for future development would be helpful. The Long Range Vision (Figure 10) and the Pedestrian Destinations/Generators and Barriers Map (Figure 13) should be used to help determine the best locations for such pedestrian corridors. These high priority corridors will receive the most emphasis when applying for grants, preparing plans for new developments, or as other opportunities for improving the pedestrian network appear. Initial review indicates that, at a minimum, Main Street, A Street SW, Division Street, and the alleyway behind the south side of Main Street would qualify as high priority pedestrian corridors.

### Pedestrian Safety

The presence of two railroad mainlines and several arterial streets raises concerns about keeping pedestrians as safe as possible. As a result of the construction of the Transit Center and the reopening of the Stampede Pass line, the need to address pedestrian safety at railroad tracks has become a timely and pressing issue.

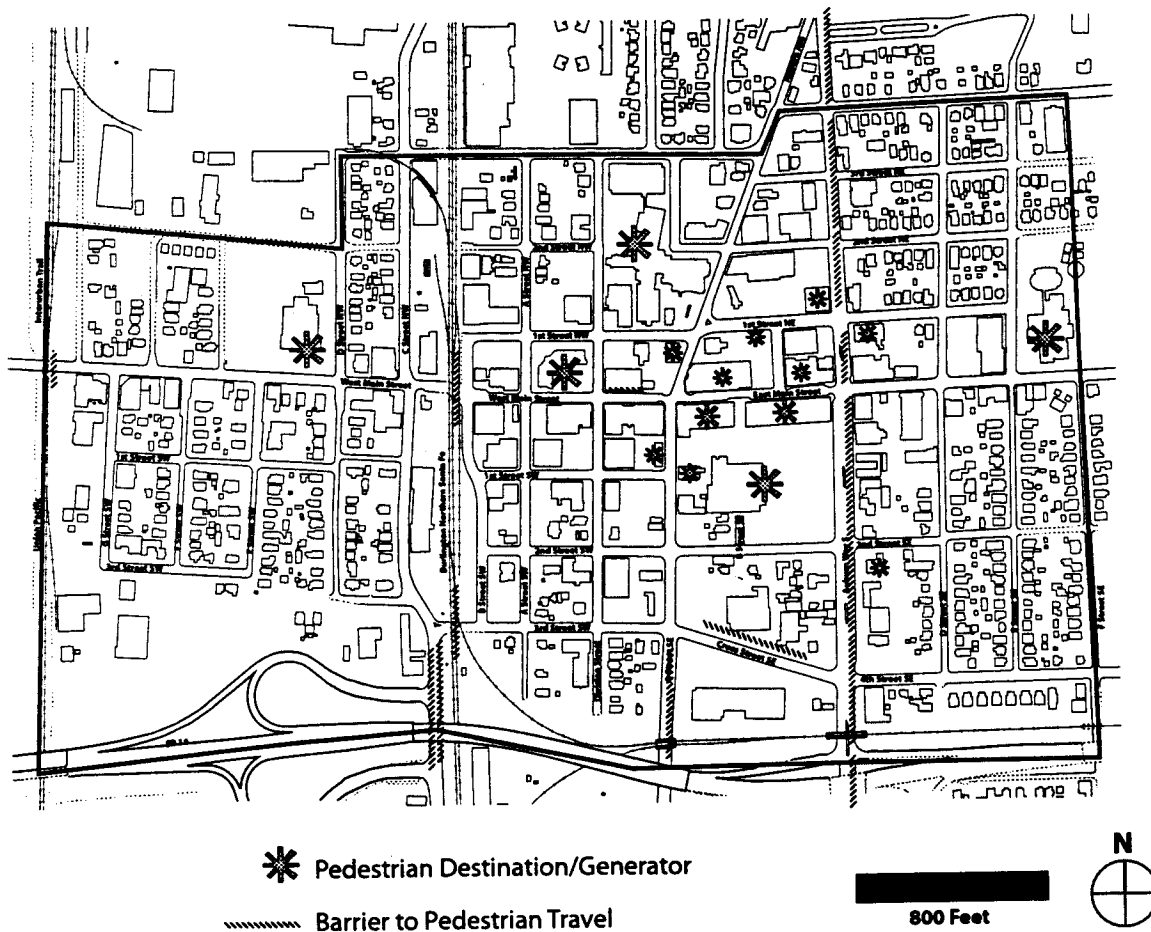


Figure 13: Pedestrian Destinations/Generators and Barriers

While plans for the Transit Center were being developed, the City participated in a study with Sound Transit called the *Tacoma to Seattle Grade Crossing Diagnostic Project*. This study identified issues at each individual grade crossing in Auburn and made recommendations for safety and functional improvements. In Downtown these recommendations that apply to pedestrians include installing fencing between the tracks to discourage unprotected crossings, relocation of gate arms so that the pedestrian walkway is blocked when a train is present, and the repainting of striping that helps define the pedestrian walkway at the grade crossing. Construction of the Transit Center will also include a pedestrian bridge that crosses the BNSF tracks.

The following goal and policies are provided to address additional pedestrian issues as discussed above.

## **GOAL 11 To provide well-developed pedestrian corridors that provide connections to the major destinations in Downtown.**

### **Policy 11-1 High priority pedestrian corridors**

Pedestrian corridors that serve major destination points should be identified as high priority for repair or development.

### **Policy 11-2 Directional signage**

Directional signage should be provided to direct pedestrians and bicyclists to safe travel and railroad crossing locations.

## **F. Parking Strategy**

A parking strategy is recommended for downtown Auburn to assist in redeveloping a more efficient and active downtown. A 1996 Parking Study for downtown Auburn found that two strategies would improve parking in downtown Auburn:

1. Providing shared parking opportunities and
2. Reducing parking requirements.

Many individual surface parking lots serve individual uses and establishments within downtown Auburn. Costly and inefficient because of their expansive use of land, surface parking lots should be studied to determine where shared parking could take place, particularly near the retail core and the Transit Center.

Additionally, public/private partnerships could be formed to develop parking structures. Structured parking could be initiated by the City, and the private sector could buy into the use of a parking structure as development occurs in downtown.

While only a few years have passed since the Auburn Parking Study was completed, the nature of the issues has undergone significant changes.

Sound Transit was approved by the voters and Auburn's station opened in Fall 2000. The station includes surface level parking for approximately 120 cars. An additional 500 to 600 will be in a multi-story garage with ground floor retail uses.

At the time the Parking Study was undertaken, the conceptual site plan showed the garage on the west side of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe tracks. During the Downtown Plan process the garage location has been shifted to the east side. The current location offers the distinct advantage of being able to provide additional parking resources for redevelopment since it is physically closer to the center of downtown. The garage is designed with sufficient parking to support the on-site retail and still have stalls additional to those needed for transit that could be made available to support redevelopment in the area. The garage parking will be available for City use during non-transit hours which could easily support complimentary uses such as housing or entertainment that need the stalls in the evening or weekend.

- The Sound Transit contract gives the City the option of utilizing much more of the east side garage stalls in the future if Sound Transit constructs another garage for commuters along C Street to replace the lost spaces. Thus significant flexibility has been built into the plan.
- Sound Transit will provide 23 "kiss and ride" parking stalls between A and B Streets SW, just north of the garage. These surface stalls will only be needed for transit during morning and evening commute times and will be made available for the public at all other times.
- This Downtown Plan envisions increases in development densities over previous plans due to the coming of mass transit and development trends which are favoring a return to traditional downtown development.
- The Sun Break Café relocated into the heart of downtown directly across the street from the station. The restaurant's business has grown significantly in its new location. Plans called for the construction of some on-site surface parking supplemented by improvements to a heretofore underutilized public lot located on Division Street. As a result, these parking lots are now heavily utilized throughout the day and on weekends.

- In the decade of the 1990s, the City added nearly 10,000 people and an equal number of jobs through growth and annexations. As a consequence, staffing at City Hall and the nearby Police Headquarters and Municipal Court has increased, as has business activity. As a result, public surface parking lots located on Main Street, at Division and 1<sup>st</sup> Streets NW, between Division and A Streets NW, and in two lots located west of A Street NW, are now often full to capacity. The coming decade could easily see the City add another 20,000 to 30,000 people as the balance of Lea Hill and the West Hill are annexed and Lakeland Hills builds out.
- Auburn Regional Medical Center continues to grow. At the time of writing, the Hospital is planning to construct a second multi-story tower on the site of a former funeral home.

As a consequence of these factors it is important for the City to identify a coordinated yet flexible approach to meeting potential parking demands. The period we are entering is likely to be one of rapid change where opportunities must be seized or lost. The policies outlined below introduce the approaches that will provide for future parking capacity and flexibility.

## **GOAL 12 To coordinate the planning, construction and financing of public parking garages.**

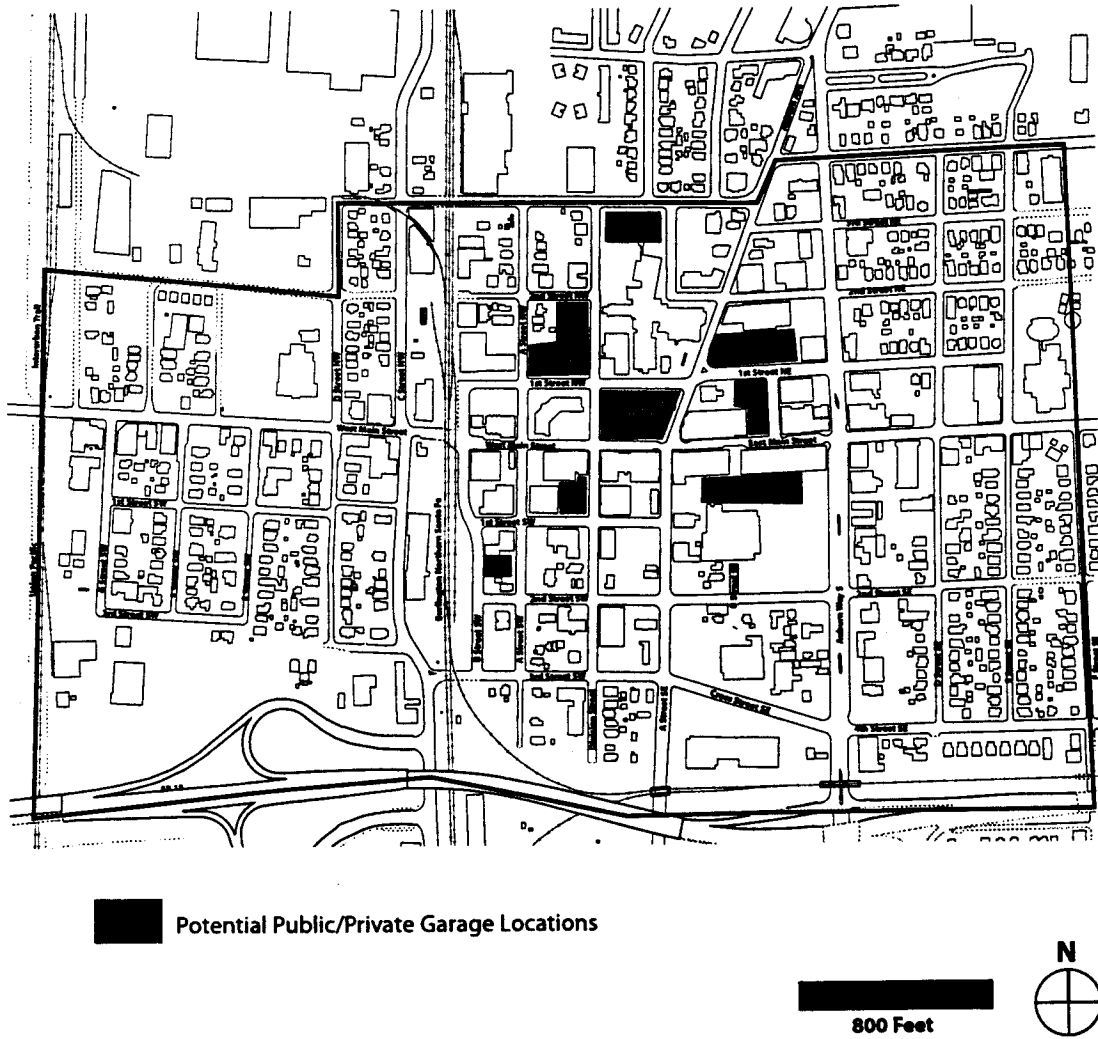
### **Policy 12-1 Public/private parking garages**

The primary source of new parking in downtown Auburn should be in the form of public or public/private lots and garages. Large numbers of individually-owned, private surface lots are incompatible with a pedestrian-oriented, densely developed downtown.

### **Policy 12-2 Financing mechanisms**

The City should develop public and public/private financing mechanisms to support the construction and maintenance of parking facilities. The use of LIDs, special taxing districts, and sale of existing public lots to raise capital for structured parking are among the mechanisms that should be considered. At some point, it will be necessary to consider charging for parking although this should be avoided as long as possible to maintain a competitive advantage for downtown.

Figure 14: Potential Public/Private Parking Garage Locations



### **Policy 12-3 Private development/public parking**

The City should develop mechanisms that allow developers to contribute to local improvement districts (LID), for the purpose of constructing parking. Contributions will be credited to the developer's requirement for parking spaces.

## **GOAL 13 To locate public parking where it will meet the greatest need.**

### **Policy 13-1 Activity centers**

Public parking facilities should be located near centers of activity. Direct vehicle access to and from Main Street should be avoided.

### **Policy 13-2 Potential parking garage sites**

Potential parking garage sites have been identified and are illustrated on Figure 14. The designation does not infer the support of the property owner nor the cost effectiveness of the particular site. It simply indicates that these sites offer unique opportunities that should be explored in more detail as opportunities arise.

Downtown Auburn at full development will not need to utilize all of the illustrated parking opportunities. In fact no more than two or three sites will be required to meet ultimate demand. Individual sites should be selected for further study based upon development opportunities that present themselves in the future. The potential sites include:

1. Wells Fargo surface lot and drive up facility
2. Tavern/ Key Bank Block
3. Block north of City Hall
4. Safeway lot
5. B Street SE/ East Main Street public lot

## **GOAL 14 To provide parking lots and garages that are aesthetically beneficial to downtown and that meet the needs of many users.**

### **Policy 14-1 Long and short-term parking**

The City should provide a variety of parking opportunities. This should include longer duration parking for employees and residents, and short-term spaces that turn over several times a day to support a vibrant downtown community on weekdays, weekends and in the evenings:

### **Policy 14-2 Architectural requirements**

Public parking structures should include architectural detailing consistent with the downtown location. The inclusion of first floor retail and/or office space should be required and the use of air-rights for office or other development can be considered.

## **GOAL 15 To provide safe and effective use of public parking facilities.**

### **Policy 15-1 Parking enforcement**

The City should develop a parking enforcement strategy that maximizes effective utilization of an expensive resource.

### **Policy 15-2 Parking safety**

The City Police Department should incorporate parking lots and garages into its normal patrol patterns.

### **Policy 15-3 Leased space in commuter rail station parking garage**

Leasing of tenant space in the commuter rail station parking garage shall give preference to commercial establishments that:

- a) Demonstrate economic stability by virtue of having a successful regional and/or national presence;
- b) Are transit oriented by supporting the convenience needs of transit riders with goods or services such as "drop and go" convenience services or merchandise that can easily be carried;
- c) Can also successfully support downtown revitalization by being open during weekends and/or during other non-peak commute hours to serve non-commuters; and,
- d) Provide goods and services and/or a quality of goods and services not otherwise readily available in the downtown.

## **G. Major Plan Projects**

Special projects that could contribute significantly to downtown revitalization are listed here and discussed in more detail in Section 1.5: Downtown Plan Districts. Accomplishing large projects like these often require the coordination and cooperation of both public and private players. The policy statements below address the need for such involvement.

### **GOAL 16 To stimulate development of major projects that will contribute to downtown revitalization, and to further development of smaller projects.**

#### **Policy 16-1 Encourage private sector development**

The City should use its resources in a manner that encourages the private sector to undertake catalyst projects. Collaboration among property owners to consolidate parcels to create larger projects is encouraged.

#### **Policy 16-2 Civic center master plan**

The City should prepare a Civic Center Master Plan that seeks to concentrate municipal functions in a Downtown campus.

## **G.1 Catalyst Projects**

Catalyst projects are located in strategic locations and will, when developed, have a spillover, or catalyst, effect of stimulating additional redevelopment in their immediate area. These projects should be implemented through coordinated public and private actions.

#### **MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT ON THE "TAVERN BLOCK"**

The community has expressed that the highest priority is the redevelopment of the "Tavern Block" to create a needed link between the retail core and City Hall on Main Street. Potential uses include first floor retail and offices on upper floors.

#### **HOUSING/MIXED USE PROJECT NEAR TRANSIT CENTER**

The market study identified a market for multifamily housing near the Transit Center.

#### TRUITT BUILDING/PASTIME TAVERN REDEVELOPMENT

For almost ten years only the facade of the Truitt Building, which was destroyed by fire in 1991, remained standing. Next door, the building housing the longtime Pastime Tavern also suffered from many structural problems. Despite their historic importance they were deemed to be unable to be restored at a reasonable cost, and were demolished in September 2000. Redevelopment of these two building sites is needed to fill in the gap in the western-most block of the Main Street core. These structures were located on the most historically significant block in Downtown Auburn; redevelopment should be sensitive to and take advantage of the block's unique historic character.

Across A Street SW, the City-owned parking lot is a prime space for redevelopment, possibly in conjunction with a Truitt/Pastime project. These two corners constitute a major entrance to the Transit Center, and thus will have high visibility. A project here might add retail, office, or entertainment uses, and may be eligible for Transit-Oriented Development funding.

#### JC PENNEY BUILDING

The JC Penney Building was historically a downtown retail anchor. The store has been vacant for a number of years, since JC Penney closed the store, creating a major gap in the retail district. Public and private actions which could stimulate the redevelopment of the building include: City or another party's guarantee of a 2nd floor lease which would enable the current owner to secure financing, use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for renovation, and the City or other parties such as local business owners purchasing a partial share in the building.

## G.2 Public Sector Projects

#### CIVIC CENTER MASTER PLAN

A long-term plan for City facilities expansion in close proximity to City Hall is needed. Civic functions could be included as elements of mixed-use projects.

#### TRANSIT CENTER

The commuter rail and local and express bus hub will include a public plaza and a parking structure with retail on the first floor.

#### CITY/HOSPITAL PARKING STRUCTURE

A joint City/Hospital Parking Structure could provide needed parking and free up other sites for new development.

### **G.3 Private Sector Projects**

The following actions will also strengthen Downtown and should be implemented through private sector investment.

#### **HOTEL/SMALL CONFERENCE FACILITIES**

The market analysis identified the potential for a hotel and small conference facility near the Auburn Way/SR 18 intersection. This project would improve the image of the southern gateway to Downtown at Auburn Way and provide needed meeting facilities.

#### **DESTINATION LAND USE ON EAST MAIN STREET**

A new tenant or development on Main Street east of Auburn Way will assist in revitalization by bringing more activity to the area.

#### **CLASS A OFFICE DEVELOPMENT**

The market analysis also identified the potential for a Class A office development near the Auburn Way/SR 18 interchange.

#### **REVITALIZE BLOCK ACROSS MAIN STREET FROM CITY HALL**

This block, with the exception of Green River Music and the Sun Break Café, is a weak retail block and should be revitalized to complete the link between the Transit Center and the retail core. Revitalization could take the form of new tenants and facade improvements or redevelopment. If parking resources are available in the Sound Transit parking garage, the City should consider selling the parking lot at the corner of West Main and A Street SW and making it available for redevelopment.

### **H. Increase Cultural and Entertainment Activities**

Downtown can be further revitalized by increasing the amount of cultural and entertainment activities (restaurants, events, better links with the Performing Arts Center), that will bring more people Downtown during the daytime and evening hours.

#### **GOAL 17 To increase cultural and entertainment activities in Downtown during both daytime and evening hours.**

##### **Policy 17-1 Support events at Performing Arts Center**

Continued City support for events at the Performing Arts Center is encouraged.

### **Policy 17-2 Improve linkage to Performing Arts Center**

The City should seek to undertake projects and signage that improves linkages between the Downtown core and the Performing Arts Center.

### **Policy 17-3 Encourage quality restaurants**

Quality restaurants should be encouraged to locate in Downtown.

## **I. Increase Downtown Residential Population**

The Auburn Downtown Plan Market Analysis identified a market for the development of 25-50 dwelling units per year in downtown, which could greatly increase the downtown population. An increase in the student population of Green River Community College could also fuel the demand for downtown housing. Downtown residents should represent a mix of incomes.

Increasing the downtown residential population, including all income groups, will increase the amount of evening activity and support additional commercial development.

## **GOAL 18 To increase the number of residents living Downtown.**

### **Policy 18-1 Support residential development**

The City should undertake Code and Plan amendments that support Downtown residential development.

## **J. Facade Improvements**

False facades have been added to many of the core Main Street buildings. Removal of false facades and restoration would strengthen the appearance of Downtown buildings and create a stronger link to the past. Careful historic restoration would make some properties eligible for landmark designation and related financial incentives.

## **GOAL 19 To improve the appearance of building facades in Downtown.**

### **Policy 19-1 Encourage restoration of historic facades**

City design standards should be implemented that encourage removal of false facades and restoration of historic architectural features.

### **Policy 19-2 Implement facade improvement program**

The City and Auburn Downtown Association should explore ways to implement a facade improvement program. Façade improvement on Main Street should follow design standards that insure compatibility of materials, signage and storefront configuration with the predominant materials, patterns and character of historic buildings, with special attention to adjacent historic buildings.

### **K. Protect Residential Neighborhoods**

In keeping with the strategy of building out from the core, redevelopment should be encouraged in the more central locations of downtown, creating a critical mass in downtown. Residential neighborhoods should be protected from impacts from adjacent commercial and industrial activity, commercial expansion into residential neighborhoods, and from cut-through traffic.

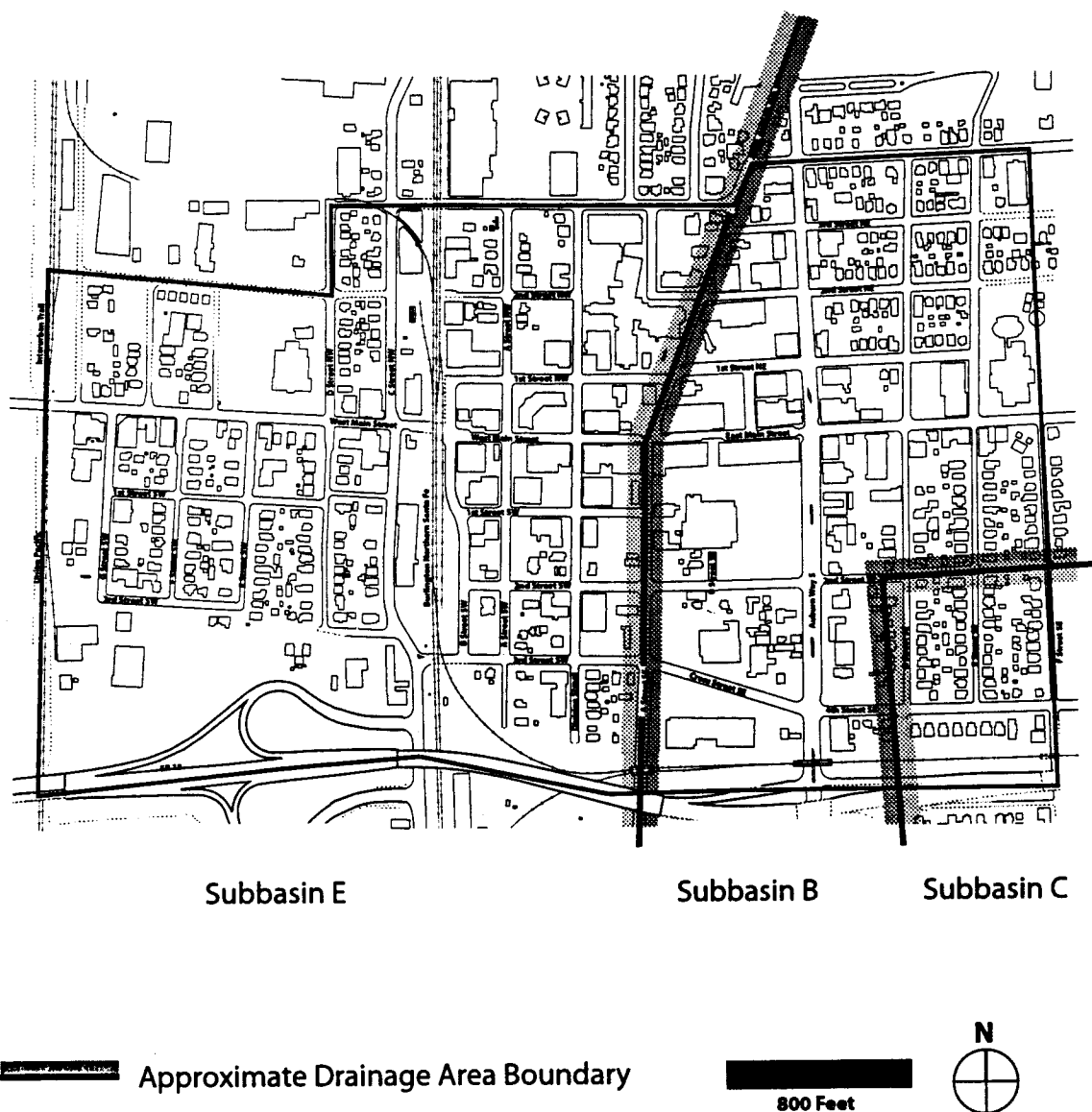
Design standards or guidelines can be employed to ease the transition from commercial to residential neighborhoods. Techniques such as stepping back building heights on the back of commercial properties abutting residential ones, shielded lighting, altering locations of dumpsters and delivery areas, and landscaping and fencing buffers can alleviate negative impacts on residential neighborhoods.

### **L. Stormwater Management**

The Downtown Plan envisions development unlike that in the rest of the City. It specifically pursues high density development to create a vibrant, aesthetically pleasing urban core with high levels of employment and housing served by a regional multi-modal transportation network. As much of Downtown Auburn already consists of impervious surfaces, the level of development envisioned in this plan may result in a small increase in impervious surface over existing conditions. Both stormwater quantity and runoff quality will also be affected as downtown development and redevelopment occurs. In some instances, this effect can actually be beneficial as certain redeveloped sites upgrade stormwater management facilities to meet the City's existing standards.

Downtown development does pose a challenge to traditional stormwater management techniques. For example, a preferred technique for storm drainage treatment is biofiltration such as grass-lined swales. Biofiltration techniques typically require more land area than is practically available in the downtown, with its

Figure 15: Downtown Plan Area Drainage Areas



relatively small blocks and parcels. These techniques also are not always visually compatible with traditional high-density development. Also, the City prefers retention systems when soil conditions are suitable for such application; however, soil and groundwater conditions in the Downtown Plan area are generally not conducive for retention systems (except in some eastern portions of the study area).

If a detention system is used for runoff control, the City's preferred method of storage has been parking lot ponding or an open pond. Neither of these is consistent with the goals of the Downtown Plan.

Therefore, flexibility and creativity are necessary to address stormwater management in the Downtown Plan area. As an example, an underground closed detention system can be used with pre-approval from the City. This detention system type would not be visible from the surface nor would it consume developable surface land, and would therefore be more consistent with development as proposed by the Downtown Plan.

A Comprehensive Drainage Plan was prepared concurrently with the Downtown Plan. The Drainage Plan identifies three drainage subbasins within the Downtown Plan study area. These drainage areas are illustrated in Figure 15. In the westernmost downtown drainage subbasin (Subbasin E) such flexible and innovative techniques may be used until planned regional stormwater detention system and water quality treatment facilities are built. In the two other downtown drainage subbasins (Subbasins B and C) that cannot drain to an available regional facility, the use of innovative techniques and approaches should be encouraged and allowed.

The following goals and policies support this flexible approach to stormwater management in the downtown

**GOAL 20 To provide a stormwater system and standards for the Downtown Plan area that provide sufficient capacity and treatment for a densely developed commercial and residential core, and a review process that allows flexibility in implementation.**

**Policy 20-1 Prior to regional storm basin**

Until regional facilities are available to serve Subbasin E in the western portion of the Downtown Plan Study Area, on-site detention and water quality treatment facilities shall be required, and, to the extent possible, be placed underground in this area.

**Policy 20-2 Non-traditional stormwater standards**

City stormwater quantity and quality design standards shall be administered to allow underground and/or other practical non-traditional stormwater facilities and methods in the Downtown Plan study area.

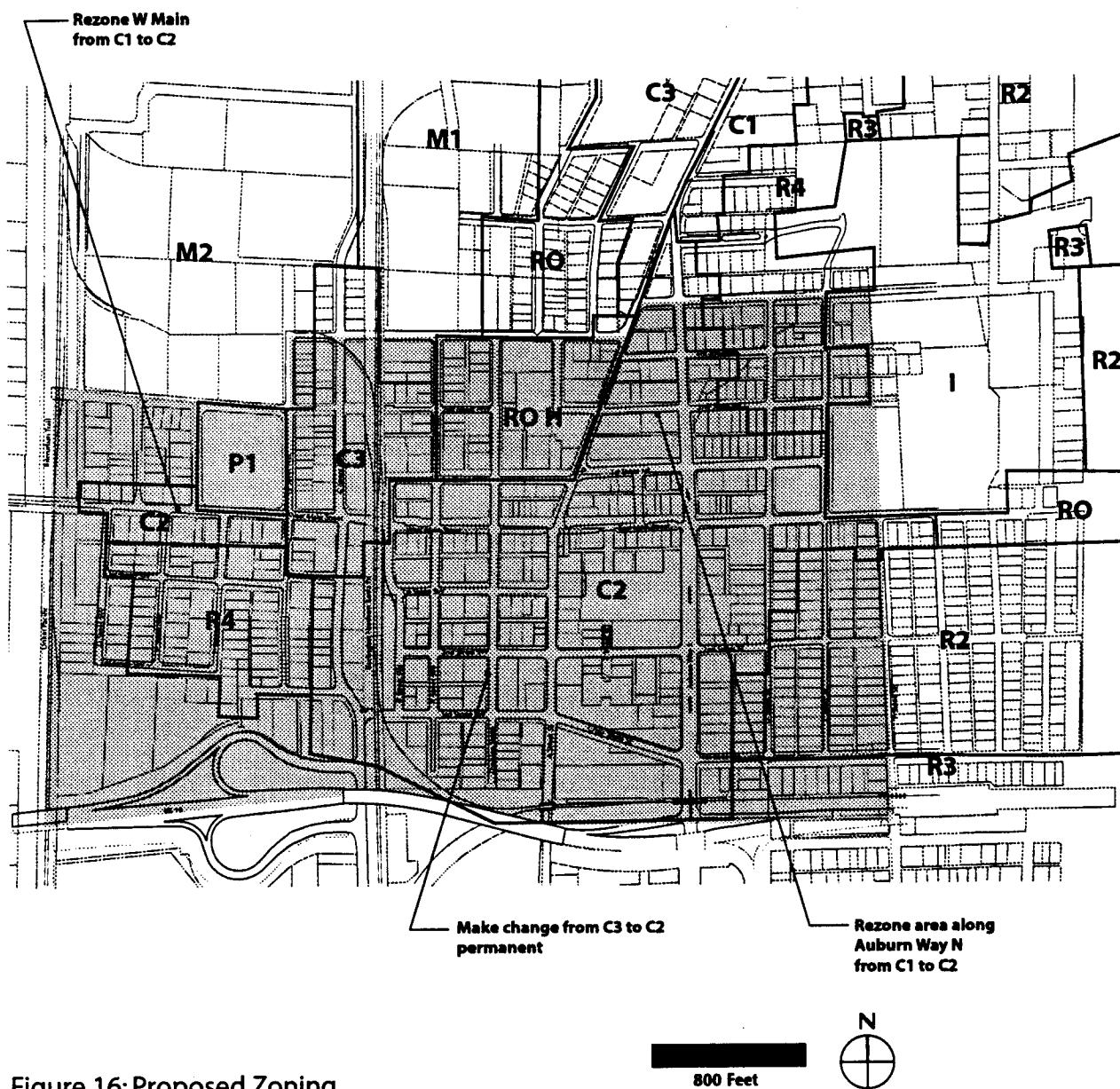


Figure 16: Proposed Zoning

NOTE: This figure reflects possible zoning changes to implement certain Downtown Plan concepts. The zoning boundaries that may be adopted are still subject to the public hearing process and may differ from the boundaries proposed and depicted in this Figure.

### **Policy 20-3 Waiving stormwater standards**

The City engineer may waive existing stormwater design standards in the Downtown Plan Study Area when a functional alternative is proposed that is consistent with the intent, vision, goals and policies of the Downtown Plan and provides comparable water quality and quantity control.

## **GOAL 21 To provide fair and equitable financing of stormwater facilities to serve Downtown.**

### **Policy 21-1 Fair share contribution**

When sufficient capacity in a regional stormwater system is available, developers of properties in the Downtown Plan Study Area shall be required to contribute their fair share toward the financing of such regional water quality and quantity improvements or construct an on-site facility specifically for the development, at the City's option.

### **Policy 21-2 Localized improvements**

Developers of properties in the Downtown Plan Study Area may be required to provide localized off-site improvements to the stormwater system to provide conveyance to the regional facility.

### **Policy 21-3 Improvements necessitating stormwater upgrades**

Improvements to properties within the Downtown Plan Study Area which exceed 50% of the assessed value, whether wholly exterior or a combination of interior and exterior will not necessitate upgrading of the storm drainage facilities to current City standards when there is no change in the amount of impervious surface. The City will enact changes to its regulations to implement this requirement, with the intent that such changes sunset after a five year period unless the City Council elects to extend it.

## **M. Regulatory Revisions**

The City of Auburn uses several methods to control or influence development. These regulatory methods include the zoning code and design standards for new construction. The City adopted interim C-2 zoning to insure that development occurring prior to the completion of this Plan maintained consistency with the intent expressed in the draft Plan. The City implemented the permanent C-2 zoning with the adoption of this Plan. The sign code should also be revised to better meet the Downtown Urban Design Vision and to protect the Downtown core from inappropriate development.

The following policy statements indicate regulatory revisions that should occur to implement the Downtown Plan.

## **GOAL 22 To revise existing regulatory mechanisms to implement the concepts of the Auburn Downtown Plan and Urban Design Vision.**

### **Policy 22-1 Design standards and review**

Design standards and design review reflecting concepts voiced in the Downtown Urban Design Vision shall be adopted.

### **Policy 22-2 Sign code revisions**

The sign code should be revised to require smaller signage, of appropriate materials and mounting style, that reflect the Downtown Urban Design Vision.

### **Policy 22-3 Respond to Business Trends**

Regulatory revisions shall creatively respond to business industry trends that enable desirable downtown businesses to be competitive and/or encourage new businesses to locate downtown. This includes, for example, allowing automobile fuel facilities as an accessory use to large grocery stores. Where appropriate, development regulations shall incorporate design and/or performance standards to ensure consistency of such uses with the principles of this Plan. The City shall not approve code amendments that are inconsistent with the policies and principles of this Plan.

## **N. Expand Downtown Public Art Program**

The Plan defines public art broadly and recognizes opportunities to integrate public art into buildings, streets, landscapes and large-scale infrastructure projects. Auburn's identity, history and culture will be reflected and reinforced through public art, which will create additional reasons to invest in downtown. Public art can enhance public space and create opportunities for social interaction and cultural enrichment. Public art creates a legacy for future generations.

Auburn has a vibrant regional industry and a rich history in railroad commerce, Indian culture, agriculture and pioneer history. Its role as a hub between Tacoma and Seattle is reinvented with the implementation of the Transit Center. Definition of the downtown core by marking the gateways to the city will shape Auburn's future. It is the intention of this plan to envision the most notable gestures and places for future investment.

## **N.1 Benefits of Public Art**

Public art provides the opportunity to reveal, enhance, interpret and aesthetically intensify the large-scale cultural, physical and other systems at work in a city. For example, the former course of the White River and the present storm drainage system could be marked and revealed in some way, subtly educating people about environmental change, the omnipresence of water and its movement, and the past history of the community. When thoughtfully integrated into a community's revitalization efforts, public art has a multitude of benefits, including:

- **Identity:** Art nurtures and establishes neighborhood and city-wide "ownership."
- **Cultural context:** Art integrates history, culture, and social dynamics into a project.
- **Orientation and experience of space:** Art contributes in a fundamental way, unifying movement and orientation in and throughout downtown.
- **Gateways:** Mark entries, create a sense of welcome, and define boundaries.
- **Surprises and discoveries:** Art reveals itself through surprise encounters.
- **Phenomena:** Art interacts with the environment to create awareness of the natural world and emphasizes temporal and seasonal change.
- **Lighting:** Art as illumination provides beauty and safety, identity and civic pride.
- **Infrastructure:** Art integrated into urban infrastructure improves city image and identity. It leaves a lasting impression of quality.
- **Landscaping and plant materials:** The use of plant materials as public art is directly related to quality of life and quality of experience.
- **Noise mitigation/drainage:** Art as an environmental water feature can address noise and drainage issues ecologically.

Public art, environmental design, urban planning and development must use an integrated design approach. The goal of this integrated approach is to improve the quality of life in Auburn now, and for generations to come. All project teams should include interdisciplinary professionals, including artists, who can creatively and skillfully accomplish the scope of work for each project.

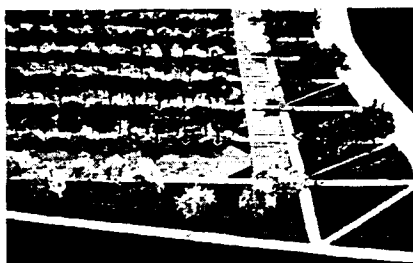
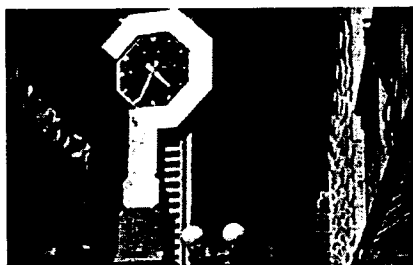
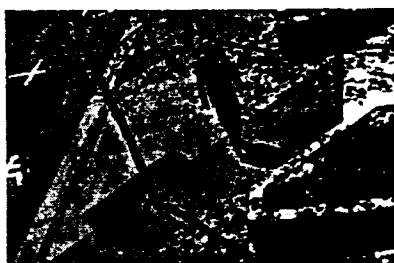
Implementing of this plan will take place over many years. As times and needs change, this plan should be re-examined and updated to fit the current circumstances and demands of the time. This plan is best viewed as a guide for prioritizing projects within the City, while providing an interdisciplinary method of engaging public art on a City scale. Certainly, stand-alone public art commissions (objects and site-specific art) should also be considered and utilized. Interdisciplinary design teams that include artists and a variety of design professionals offer the most comprehensive, creative and successful approach to revitalizing the city.

General recommendations and policy statements integrating public art into downtown Auburn follow. Area-specific and site-specific recommendations are included in Section 1.5: Downtown Plan Districts.

## **GOAL 23 To integrate art into public spaces in Downtown Auburn.**

### **Policy 23-1 Public projects**

All public projects shall consider the inclusion of public art. Development of artwork should be an integral part of the complete design process.



Streets & Parking

## **GOAL 24 To use art to create a distinctive identity for Downtown.**

### **Policy 24-1 Local flavor**

Selection or commissioning of public art shall consider the history, cultures, and future of Auburn and the surrounding region.

### **Policy 24-2 Signage and markers**

Directional signage or historical markers shall be designed to be both functional and distinctive.

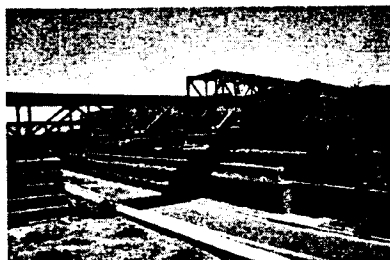
### **N.2 Art and the SR18/ C Street Grade Separation**

This new entrance to Auburn's Downtown Core forms a significant gateway feature that merits full consideration. Defined by highway infrastructure, retaining walls, stormwater ponds, and landscaping, this new entrance will be unlike the present one. The scale of the project is quite large in comparison to existing structures in the vicinity.

Concern about this disparity in scale and impacts of the structure led to creation of a subcommittee of the Downtown Plan Task Force that participated in evaluating and planning for the visual impacts of the grade separation project. The subcommittee was presented with a number of options by the consultant and staff team working on the project. The committee selected the following techniques to reduce the scale and impact of the structure:

- Concrete retaining wall and bridge surfaces will be finished with a texture that resembles ashlar stone.

Public Infrastructure as  
Public Art



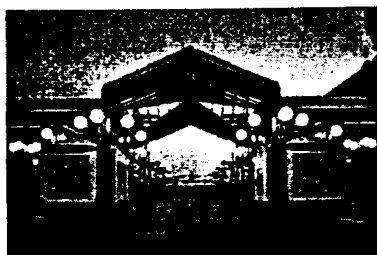
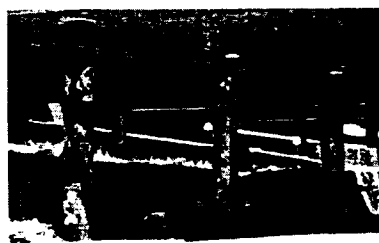
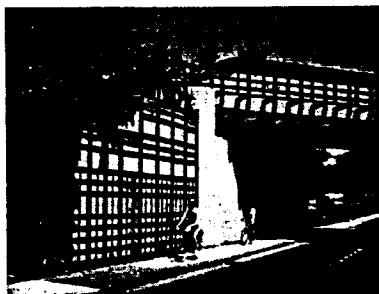
- Landscaping will be used in front of most tall, vertical surfaces
- Native plants will be installed along the highway interchange area owned by the State of Washington, at the request of WSDOT. This will reduce need for irrigation and maintenance.
- Unique lighting will be placed on the underside of the bridge structure.
- The bridge structure will resemble an old railroad trestle.

Financial constraints did not allow the incorporation of the following ideas during the construction phase, but these could be added at a later date:

- Installation of decorative railing and pedestrian-scale lighting on the bridge
- Gateway artwork, landscaping and/or signage

### **N.3 Art and Pedestrian Linkages**

Pedestrian linkages throughout the downtown will enhance movement and provide a more enjoyable pedestrian experience. These linkages are extremely important, as they promote walking in the downtown core, while providing safer and more “people-scaled” walkways. These linkages may be viewed as episodic experiences, marked by special paving, attractive landscape, urban



**Gateways & Entryways**

## **GOAL 28 To develop a Historic Preservation Plan for Downtown Auburn.**

### **Policy 28-1 Preservation Plan**

The City should undertake a comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan for Downtown Auburn to accomplish the goals and policies listed in this section.

## **P. Downtown Design Guidelines**

Design guidelines are presented here to guide future Downtown development in a manner that implements the Downtown Urban Design Vision. The following concepts are intended to be fairly general, but comprehensive. These guidelines, which should be evaluated after some time in practice, should be used to prepare Design Standards that are more definitive in nature.

### **What Design Guidelines and Design Standards are Intended to Do**

Design guidelines and standards create attractive communities and ensure that new development contributes positively to neighborhoods. These should be a tool with some flexibility that allows new development to respond to the distinctive character of its surroundings. Guidelines are advisory only, and are intended to assist development applicants understand and prepare proposals that meet the desired form of urban design. Standards are mandatory. The following design guidelines intentionally emphasize qualitative rather than quantitative measures and could generate numerous solutions.

It is recognized that building design and construction materials and methods will continue to evolve over time. No single style of design is proposed by this set of criteria. Instead, the goal is to ensure a high level of design quality, liveliness, and convenience for people who work, shop and live in the downtown. Varied and imaginative designs consistent with the Urban Design Vision are encouraged.

## **GOAL 29 To develop Design Standards for Downtown Auburn.**

### **Policy 29-1 Design Standards**

The City shall develop Design Standards to guide future development in Downtown Auburn. These Design Standards should be based on the Design Guidelines in this Downtown Plan.

## **The Challenge of Infill or Retrofitting Development in an Existing Downtown**

Because the Downtown area is largely developed, new development will generally add to, replace or fill in ("infill") between existing buildings. This poses a particular challenge that new construction in an undeveloped area doesn't typically face. The challenge is for the new and old buildings to relate to each other in a pleasing way. Experience in numerous other cities shows that new and old buildings can be designed to coexist harmoniously together, side by side, creating a more consistent and attractive whole.

### **Downtown Districts**

This Plan has divided Downtown into ten districts, based on land use patterns and other defining characteristics. These districts are illustrated in Figure 17, Section 1.5. For the purpose of design guidelines, these ten districts are combined into three areas:

#### **AREA 1: Main Street**

(includes the entire block both north and south of Main Street, therefore some properties will face onto 1<sup>st</sup> Streets NW/SW and NE/SE)

#### **AREA 2: Other Commercial and Industrial Districts**

(comprised of Industrial, C Street NW, A Street NW, Medical Center, Auburn Way and South Central Downtown Districts)

#### **AREA 3: Residential Areas**

(comprised of West Main and East Main Residential Districts)

Each of these areas is described briefly below. In some cases, such as Main Street, the overall form and character is one that is distinctive and desirable. Guidelines are intended to echo these desirable qualities. Other settings, though fairly consistent within an area, are not as desirable, and guidelines are presented that move away from the existing form.

### **Main Street Area (Area 1)**

Main Street originally developed in the 1890s and early 1900s in a classic western storefront style with wooden boardwalks. Simple wood frame buildings on what is now West Main Street were

replaced in the 1910s and 20s with more substantial brick and masonry buildings, many of which served the growing railroad industry. Another active period occurred during the 1930s and 40s.

### **Defining Characteristics: Main Street Area**

Main Street is one of the most distinctive and memorable streets in the entire city, and for many, Main Street is Downtown. What makes it so special? By breaking Main Street down into individual components, this distinctive character can begin to be understood. The following are defining characteristics for the Main Street District:

#### **1. Site Planning and Layout**

The site planning and layout along Main Street reflects a classic downtown style. Buildings are placed at the edge of the sidewalk, and there is typically no side setback between buildings. In other words, the buildings touch each other, and may even share common side walls. Primary entrances are directly from the sidewalk along Main Street; rear entrances are mostly utilitarian. Parking is confined to the street in front of the buildings, or in public or private parking lots behind or to the sides of buildings. With a few notable exceptions, there are limited midblock curb cuts for vehicular access. Most first floors contain retail or service-oriented commercial uses; upper floors of several buildings include small residential rental units.

#### **2. Building Design**

The architectural style of buildings on Main Street can best be described as "commercial vernacular." Although a few, such as the Masonic Temple or Tourist/Lotus Hotel, can be described according to a particular architectural style, most are simple buildings that were typical for traditional downtowns in the 1910s, 20s and 30s.

The scale of the buildings along Main Street is fairly small. Most buildings are only one or two stories tall, and cover the entire lot. The building facades are based on a historic platting pattern that is approximately 25 feet wide. This results in narrow storefronts that are very appealing to a person strolling along on foot, because the "scenery" is always changing. The storefront itself is divided into a classic three-part organization that consists of a recessed entryway with display windows on either side. The upper floors reflect a similar three-part organization, but with smaller windows that are vertical in alignment. The first and upper floors are sometimes divided by a decorative cornice, or canopy or awning. The buildings are consistently flat roofed, and often have a cornice along the top edge. Renovations

carried out in the mid part of the 20th century often removed or simplified these cornices. Corner buildings were sometimes designed with an angled entrance across the corner, which increased the visibility of the entrance from the opposite corners.

### **3. Streetscape Features and Site Elements**

Paved sidewalk is present throughout the length of Main Street. Between Auburn Way and B Street NW/SW, a length of about six blocks, textured, colored sidewalk was installed during the 1990s. At the same time the following street furnishings were also installed: teal colored benches and pedestrian light fixtures; exposed aggregate planters and trash receptacles; a brick paver plaza with artist-designed bollards, tree grates and tree guards for six Redspire Pear trees, informational kiosk, and totem.

A few parking lots are located next to Main Street; the screening of these varies from none at all to attractive landscaping that includes berms and trees and shrubs, such as alongside the "Mural" parking lot next to B Street SE. Signage consists of many examples of panel signs affixed flat against the face of a building. The materials used for these are somewhat evenly divided between plastic and wood. Other sign forms seen along Main Street are lettering painted or applied directly to awnings, "blade" signs that project out from the building surface, and a few pole-mounted signs toward the edge of the district.

### **Design Guidelines for the Main Street Area**

For the most part, the design characteristics described above give good guidance for how design along Main Street should proceed in the future. The demands of current economics and building practices may necessitate some departure from a strict interpretation of this historic pattern. The guidelines below should be followed when designing and developing new buildings or renovating existing buildings in the Main Street District.

#### **1. Site Planning and Land Use Guidelines—Main Street Area**

##### **SP1.1 SETBACKS, LOT COVERAGE**

Buildings shall be developed next to the public right-of-way. For buildings that face Main Street, the entire frontage should be occupied by a building. The building shall be oriented parallel to its lot lines.

### **SP1.2 Street orientation**

Buildings on Main Street should have primary façades and building entrances on Main Street. Angled entrances are acceptable on corners.

### **SP1.3 VEHICULAR ACCESS**

No new driveways or parking lot entrances shall be allowed on Main Street.

### **SP1.4 PARKING**

Parking shall be located behind buildings and surface parking should be screened. No new parking lots or garages shall be developed along Main Street. Buildings that include parking above the ground floor will be allowed.

### **SP1.5 LAND USE**

Retail or service uses oriented to the public should occupy all storefronts on the ground floor level of Main Street. Residential and office uses are encouraged on upper floors along Main Street.

## **2. Building Design Guidelines—Main Street Area**

Main Street has several significant historic buildings along its length. Literal imitation of older historic styles is not necessary; however, contemporary interpretations of traditional buildings, which are similar in scale and overall character to those seen historically, are encouraged.

### **BD1.1 BUILDING HEIGHT**

Buildings in the C-2 District may be constructed to a height equivalent to the width of the abutting street right-of-way at the property line. Additional building height may be allowed provided that the building steps back to maintain a minimum 1:1 street width to building height ratio. For the purposes of this policy an alley shall not be considered a street.

### **BD1.2 FACADE MODULATION**

Facade modulation shall be provided on buildings with significant mass to decrease the scale and to create visual interest.

### **BD1.3 STOREFRONT MODULES**

For large buildings, the repetition of a traditional storefront organization with approximately 25 foot wide “modules” is encouraged. These modules should be expressed three-dimensionally across the entire facade.

#### BD1.4 BUILDING STEPBCKS

Buildings taller than the width of the adjacent street shall be "stepped back" on the street side to reduce the apparent mass of the building. A cross-section analysis should be conducted to determine the best height for the stepback to coordinate with adjacent buildings.

#### BD1.5 BLANK WALLS

Large blank walls at ground level should be avoided by using a change in materials, color, windows, artwork, trellises or wall articulation.

#### BD1.6 COMPATIBILITY WITH EXISTING BUILDINGS

Where new buildings will infill next to buildings of historic significance, design review will be mandatory. Sketches or visual simulations should be provided that illustrate how the proposed structure will relate to the existing one(s). A comparison of floor to floor heights, the traditional building width, and materials should be made to evaluate the compatibility of the adjacent structures.

#### BD1.7 CORNER BUILDINGS

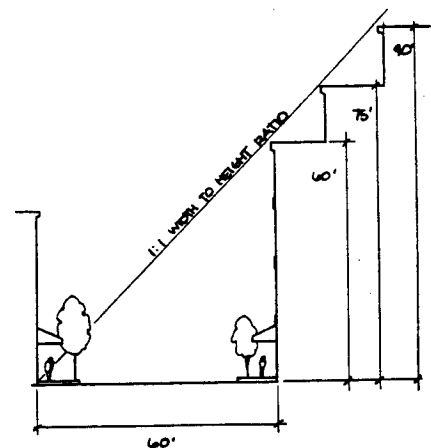
Corner buildings should have special architectural treatment such as an angled entry, turrets, bay windows or an accentuated cornice.

#### BD 1.8 BUILDING MATERIALS

1. Traditional materials such as masonry units, brick or stucco are encouraged.
2. Concrete block or masonry units visible from a public street or place should have a colored and/or textured surface. Tilt-up concrete wall construction should be avoided.
3. Plywood or wood siding shall be used for trim only in new construction.
4. Existing brick, stone or cast stone masonry facades may not be covered with metal siding, metal screening, plastic, fiberglass, plywood or wood siding materials.
5. Mirrored glass, chain link fencing and corrugated metal or fiberglass shall not be used.

#### BD1.9 WINDOWS AND DOORS

1. Upper story windows with vertical alignment are encouraged.
2. Building entrances should be recessed and clearly defined.



Proper Width/Height Ratio

#### **BD1.10 ROOFS**

Roof forms should be similar to those used historically. Flat roofs or parapets screening a slightly sloped roof are appropriate. Roof forms such as gables, hips or mansards, are inappropriate.

#### **BD1.11 ALIGNMENT OF FAÇADE ELEMENTS**

Maintain the alignment of horizontal elements along the block, including building cornices, window sills, moldings and awnings.

#### **BD1.12 COLORS**

Bright or brilliant colors should be used only for accent, such as for doors, or window or sign trim.

#### **BD1.13 UTILITY AREAS AND MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT**

Utility areas and rooftop mechanical equipment should be designed to be integral with the building architecture, or screened from view.

#### **BD1.14 WEATHER PROTECTION**

1. Canopies or awnings which provide weather protection for pedestrians are encouraged along street fronts. Coverings should extend at least five feet over the sidewalk. The width may vary as necessary to accommodate street trees, lighting and other features.
2. Traditional awning shapes and materials such as canvas are encouraged. Translucent vinyl or plastic materials and backlighting should not be used.

#### **BD1.15 CORPORATE ARCHITECTURE**

Avoid standard "corporate" architectural styles as associated with national chain businesses.

### **3. Streetscape Feature Guidelines—Main Street Area**

#### **SS 1.1 SIGNAGE**

Signs should be designed as an integral part of the building design, and should be primarily oriented to the pedestrian view. The number of signs should not contribute to visual clutter.

#### **SS 1.2 SIGN MOUNTING**

Flat panel signs affixed directly to the building or blade signs that project from the building are encouraged. Blade signs hanging under canopies and hand-painted lettering directly applied to windows are well-suited to pedestrians, and are desirable.

### SS 1.3 EXTERNALLY LIT SIGNS

Externally lit signs shall have the light source shielded from view.

### SS 1.4 PROHIBITED SIGNS

Monument and pole mounted signs shall not be allowed in the Main Street Area. Internally lit plastic signage shall not be used.

### SS 1.5 SIGN QUALITY

Professional quality materials should be employed.

### SS 1.6 SIGN SHAPES

Creative sign shapes that reflect the nature of the business are encouraged. For example, a pair of scissors might advertise a beauty salon.

### SS 1.7 NEON

Neon should be used minimally, and only as signage.

### SS 1.8 PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING

Pedestrian level lighting is encouraged. The same light fixture used in the Main Street core should be continued east and west along Main Street.

### SS 1.9 LIGHTING LEVELS

Lighting levels should be relatively consistent from one area to another. Avoid extreme contrasts between brightly lit and shadowy areas.

### SS 2. SHIELD FROM GLARE

Exterior light fixtures should be designed to cast light in a downward direction, and to shield adjacent land uses from light or glare.

## **Other Commercial and Industrial Districts (Area 2)**

The remaining commercial and industrial properties in Downtown that are located outside of the Main Street District are comprised of the Industrial, C Street NW, A Street NW, Medical Center, Auburn Way and South Central Downtown Districts. These areas have developed individually and sporadically over the past 50 years or so.

## **Defining Characteristics: Other Commercial and Industrial Districts (Area 2)**

Area 2 does not exhibit the well-defined character that is easily identified in the Main Street Area. While there are differences among the six districts in Area 2, none of the districts has an overwhelmingly strong character. The districts are neither cohesive or visually appealing, for the most part. The following are defining characteristics for Area 2.

### **1. Site Planning and Layout**

Although some of the districts within Area 2 display a classic downtown layout with buildings and entrances at the edge of the sidewalk, these are primarily found on the streets closest to Main Street. More commonly, commercial buildings are set back far enough from the sidewalk and street to provide parking in front of the businesses. Many buildings stand alone, with 30 or more feet between buildings a common occurrence. Numerous driveways are found along streets such as Auburn Way. All of these situations combined create a challenging environment for pedestrians.

In the residential settings small, grassed front yards are typical. Houses are set back from the street 10 to 25 feet.

### **2. Building Design**

With the exception of the Auburn Regional Medical Center, most buildings are one or two story. A few single and multi-family residences are found scattered throughout these districts. The homes, built mostly between 1900 and 1930, tend to be older than the commercial structures. In the case of the commercial buildings, three or four businesses may occupy a single building.

The commercial buildings are simple structures with little decorative trim or features, constructed of plain and inexpensive materials such as concrete block. The "storefront" extends across the entire width of the building, and has lost the narrow storefront modules common to buildings of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most have flat roofs and entry doors flush with the face of the building. Retail-oriented buildings tend to have large, horizontal display windows. Professional offices often have vertically aligned windows that cover less of the building surface than retail stores.

Residences in this district are typical of their age. They are wood frame construction, and most have horizontal wood cladding of some type. Roofs are almost always gabled or hipped, with occasional dormer windows. Porches are a prominent feature.

### **3. Streetscape Features**

Paved sidewalk is found along almost all street frontages in this area. Sidewalk width varies from about four to five feet wide on residential streets, to seven or more feet on commercial streets. A landscape strip is found on many streets, although it is often quite narrow. Some of these contain street trees. Little to no street furnishings are found in these districts.

## **Design Guidelines for the Other Commercial and Industrial Districts (Area 2)**

The districts above feature a variety of design approaches and materials that do not meet our expectations for Downtown today. Area 2 has no cohesive character, and is characterized by automobile-friendly, inexpensive construction. For that reason, the guidelines below seek to create some of the positive character exhibited on Main Street, but generally with more flexibility. Development of design standards should expand on the following concepts.

### **1. Site Planning and Land Use Guidelines—Other Commercial and Industrial Districts (Area 2)**

#### **SP2.1 SETBACKS AND LAYOUT**

The majority of a building's frontage should be next to the public right-of-way. Building layout should primarily be parallel to lot lines and/or the right-of-way.

#### **SP2.2 STREET ORIENTATION**

The primary façade and building entrance should be located on the street side of the buildings.

#### **SP2.3 PARKING**

Parking shall be located next to or behind buildings. Adjacent property owners are encouraged to share parking and vehicle access points.

#### **SP 2.4 LAND USES**

Commercial and residential uses should predominate in this area. Industrial uses shall be confined to appropriately zoned locations. Residential buildings are encouraged to include some retail or office space on the first floor. Purely commercial buildings should keep most retail uses on the first floor, with service oriented businesses or office spaces on upper floors.

## **2. Building Design Guidelines—Other Commercial and Industrial Districts (Area 2)**

### **BD2.1 BUILDING HEIGHT**

Buildings in the C-2 District may be constructed to a height equivalent to the width of the abutting street right-of-way at the property line. Additional building height may be allowed provided that the building steps back to maintain a minimum 1:1 street width to building height ratio. For the purposes of this policy an alley shall not be considered a street.

### **BD2.2 FAÇADE MODULATION**

Façade modulation shall be provided on buildings with significant mass to decrease the scale and to create visual interest.

### **BD2.3 BUILDING STEPBACKS**

Buildings taller than the width of the adjacent street shall be "stepped back" on the street side to reduce the apparent mass of the building. It may be desirable to begin the stepback at a lower than maximum level to coordinate with adjacent buildings.

### **BD2.4 BLANK WALLS**

Large blank walls at ground level should be avoided by using a change in materials, color, windows, artwork, trellises or wall articulation.

### **BD 2.5 BUILDING MATERIALS**

1. Traditional materials such as masonry units, brick or stucco are encouraged.
2. Concrete block or masonry units visible from a public street or place should have a colored and/or textured surface. Tilt-up concrete wall construction should be avoided.
3. Plywood or wood siding shall be used for trim only in new construction.
4. Mirrored glass, chain link fencing and corrugated metal or fiberglass shall not be used.

### **BD 2.6 WINDOWS AND DOORS**

1. Extensive use of clear glass windows is encouraged, particularly for first floors of commercial buildings.
2. Building entrances should be clearly defined.

### **BD 2.7 ROOFS**

A variety of roof forms are acceptable.

#### BD 2.8 UTILITY AREAS AND MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT

Utility areas and rooftop mechanical equipment should be integrated with the building architecture, or screened or placed so that views are minimized.

#### BD 2.9 WEATHER PROTECTION

1. Canopies or awnings which provide weather protection for pedestrians is encouraged along street fronts. Coverings should extend at least five feet over the sidewalk. The width may vary as necessary to accommodate street trees, lighting and other features.
2. Traditional awning shapes and materials such as canvas are encouraged. Translucent vinyl or plastic materials and backlighting should not be used.

#### BD 2.10 CORPORATE ARCHITECTURE

Avoid standard "corporate" architectural styles as associated with national chain businesses.

### **3. Streetscape Feature Guidelines—Other Commercial and Industrial Districts (Area 2)**

#### SS 2.1 SIGN DESIGN

Signs should be designed as an integral part of the building and/or site design.

#### SS 2.2 EXTERNALLY LIT SIGNS

Externally lit signs shall have the light source shielded from view.

#### SS 2.3 PROHIBITED SIGNS

Pole mounted signs shall not be allowed. Internally lit plastic signage is discouraged.

#### SS 2.4 SIGN QUALITY

Professional quality materials should be employed.

#### SS 2.5 SIGN SHAPES

Creative sign shapes that reflect the nature of the business are encouraged. For example, a pair of scissors might advertise a beauty salon.

#### SS 2.6 NEON

Neon should be used minimally, and only as signage.

#### SS 2.7 PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING

Pedestrian level lighting is encouraged. Light fixtures should not be identical to those on Main Street, but may be similar. Falsely historic fixtures should not be used.

#### SS 2.8 LIGHTING LEVELS

Lighting levels should be relatively consistent from one area to another. Avoid extreme contrasts between brightly lit and shadowy areas.

#### SS 2.9 AVOID GLARE

Exterior light fixtures should be designed to cast light in a downward direction, and to shield adjacent land uses from light or glare.

#### SS 2.10 STREET TREES AND LANDSCAPING

Planting strips with street trees and landscaping should be provided with new construction. Sensitive placement to avoid competition with signage is acceptable.

#### SS 2.11 SITE FURNISHINGS

Site furnishings such as benches, trash receptacles, and bike racks are desirable. These should be coordinated with others selected for Downtown, and approval should be sought before selection.

### **Residential Area (Area 3)**

Residential districts described in this Plan as the East Main Residential District and West Main Residential District are combined into one area for design guidelines. Most of the houses in this area were built between 1900 and 1930, and many remain relatively unchanged. They vary significantly, from the substantial Knickerbocker home, built in 1906 for Auburn's long-time City attorney, I.B. Knickerbocker, to small cottages built for rail workers.

#### **Defining Characteristics: Residential Area 3**

Although there are slight differences between the districts, and even from street to street within a district, the following are common features of the Residential Area (Area 3):

##### **1. Site Planning and Layout**

Single family homes are usually placed toward the front of long, narrow lots. Setbacks typically range from about 10 to 25 feet. Garages or accessory buildings are placed at the rear of the lot. Many streets feature alleys, and garages are accessed via the alleyways. Few homes have driveways or garages accessed directly from the street.

## **2. Building Design**

Homes were typically designed for a single family, although a few apartment buildings remain. Most homes were small to moderate in size, and were built for the workers on the nearby railroads and farms. They were one, one and a half, and two story homes, often using inexpensive construction materials and methods. A few very large homes were built for Auburn's prominent families, some of which have been divided into apartments.

Architectural styles include a variety of approaches to cottage and bungalow design, including the craftsman-influenced bungalow common to the 1920s and early 30s. Gable and hip roofs are the most commonly seen forms, with relatively steeply pitched roofs. Houses are constructed with wood-frames and covered with horizontal wood cladding of some type. Long, narrow individual windows are the norm in these neighborhoods. Most have front porches, wide fascia boards, and deep eave overhangs.

Home renovations have brought about a variety of improvements and oddities. Many renovations have obviously been carried out to improve the weather-protective ability of the houses. Replacement of windows and siding are the most common renovations. While understandable, many of the treatments chosen have reduced the historical value of the homes, and some are clearly inappropriate.

## **3. Streetscape Features**

The residential streets of Downtown tend to be quite narrow, and have limited space for on-street parking. The presence and size of sidewalks and planting strips varies without any apparent pattern. Several streets have huge, old trees that contribute substantially to the bucolic character of the neighborhoods.

## **Design Guidelines for the Residential Area (Area 3)**

Some of the residential areas will probably remain much as they are today, with only occasional renovations proposed by the homeowner. Guidelines for these situations should focus on retaining the character and form of the original house, while allowing needed updating to be performed.

Neighborhoods close to the Transit Center and in the midst of commercial development will come under more pressure for removal and replacement of existing houses, or the division of the larger houses into multiple units. These situations should be approached with great care to ensure that valuable resources are not lost forever.

## **1. Site Planning and Land Use Guidelines—Residential Area**

### **SP 3.1 SETBACKS**

To preserve and maintain their historical development pattern and character, the City shall consider reducing minimum setback requirements or adopting setback averaging provisions for residentially zoned districts within the downtown planning area.

### **SP 3.2 STREET ORIENTATION**

Buildings should be oriented to their primary street.

### **SP 3.3 VEHICULAR ACCESS**

Where present, alleys should be used for vehicular access and parking. New driveways and curb cuts from the street should be avoided.

### **SP 3.4 LAND USE**

Single family and appropriately scaled multi-family residences should be the primary land uses.

## **2. Building Design Guidelines—Residential Area**

The scale, materials, and forms of the homes found in Downtown residential districts are distinctive, and give these neighborhoods their desirable qualities. These should be imitated and improved upon with any renovations or new construction.

### **BD 3.1 BUILDING HEIGHT**

Maximum building height should be consistent with the underlying zoning designation.

### **BD 3.2 BUILDING FORM**

Renovations and new construction should seek to retain or imitate existing building forms in the following ways:

1. Gable and hip roofs should be the predominant roof forms. Roof pitches should be a minimum 5:12 vertical to horizontal ratio and a maximum 12:12 ratio.
2. Entry features such as porches and overhangs should be provided.
3. Windows should have vertical proportions.
4. Wide eave overhangs and fascia boards are encouraged.

5. New multi-family buildings shall be articulated to resemble the size and proportions of existing homes on the block.

#### BD 3.3 ADDITIONAL BUILDINGS

Accessory dwelling units or other new structures visible from the street should be compatible with the architectural character of the existing home and neighborhood. Similar building forms and materials should be used to ensure compatibility.

#### BD 3.4 BUILDING ENTRIES

Each building should have one primary entrance. Secondary entries, such as for an accessory unit, should be subordinate in appearance to the main entrance to the home. Modern doors, especially those that are primarily glass or without decorative panels, are discouraged.

#### BD 3.5 CONVERSION OF EXISTING HOME TO MULTI-FAMILY UNITS

Conversion of an existing home to multiple dwelling units should be done with sensitivity to the historic character of the home. Entries to individual units should be from inside the home to avoid multiple exterior doors. Where additional fire stairs or entry is necessary, these should be in a location not visible from the street.

#### BD 3.6 BUILDING MATERIALS

Materials for new construction or renovation of existing buildings should reflect the historic patterns of the neighborhood.

1. The use of metal window frames is discouraged. Vinyl-covered windows which require lower maintenance than wood are acceptable. These should be designed with dimensions to reproduce the appearance of wood.
2. Horizontal wood siding of various types, 4" to 6" wide, is predominant. Some stucco-type materials are also used. Vinyl siding is acceptable, in addition to these traditional materials.

### **3. Streetscape Elements—Residential Area**

#### SS 3.1 STREET TREES

Planting strips and street trees are encouraged on streets where sufficient right-of-way width exists. Trees should only be located in planting strips 5 feet or greater in width.





## Section 1.5 Downtown Plan Districts



# Section 1.5 Downtown Plan Districts

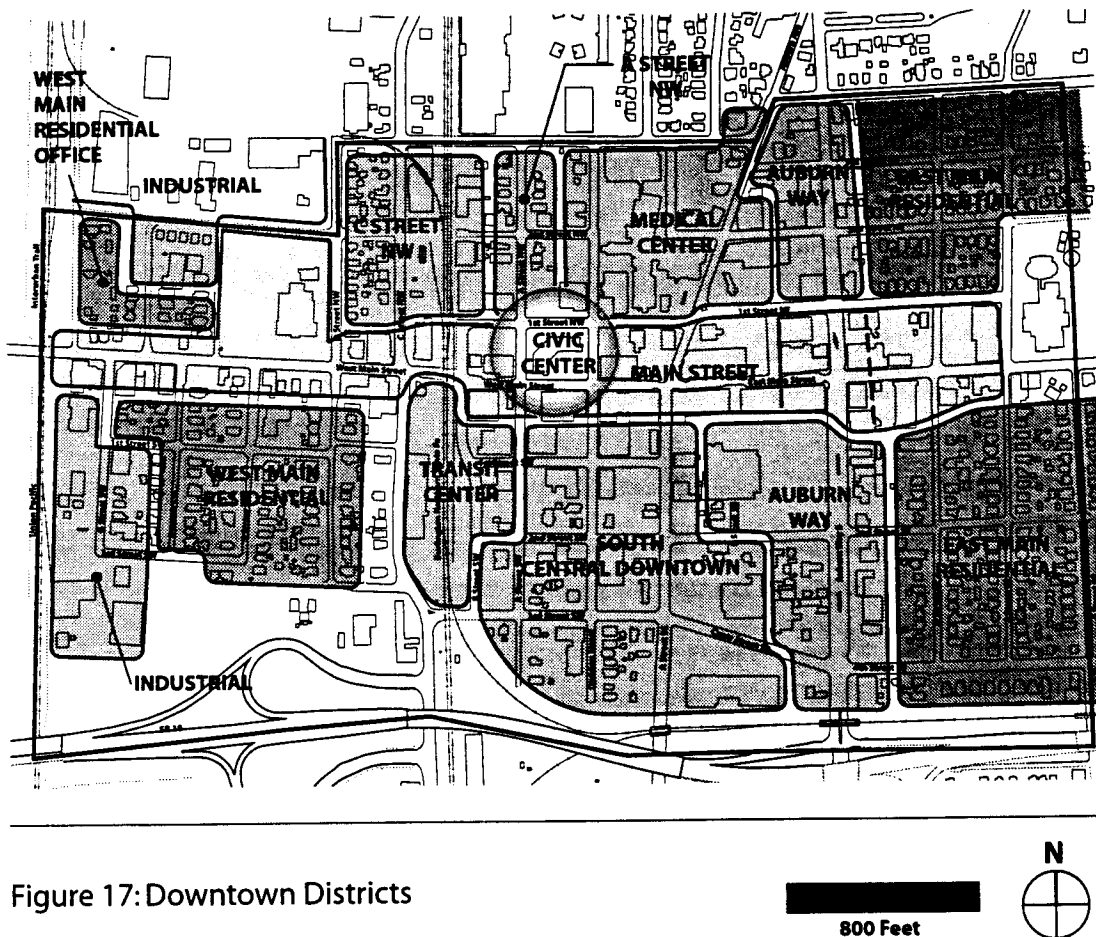


Figure 17: Downtown Districts

The Downtown Plan study area is broken up into ten districts based upon land use patterns and defining characteristics. Four residential districts, (one of which is planned for Residential-Office use), two industrial districts, and a medical district are located within the study area. The Main Street corridor forms a district within downtown Auburn, as does the automobile-oriented Auburn Way Corridor. The Transit Center lies adjacent to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad tracks and began operation in the year 2000. The areas between Auburn Way and the Transit Center, and along A Street Northwest, north of Main Street, are characterized by a mixture of land uses.

**Table D: Recommended Land Uses by District**

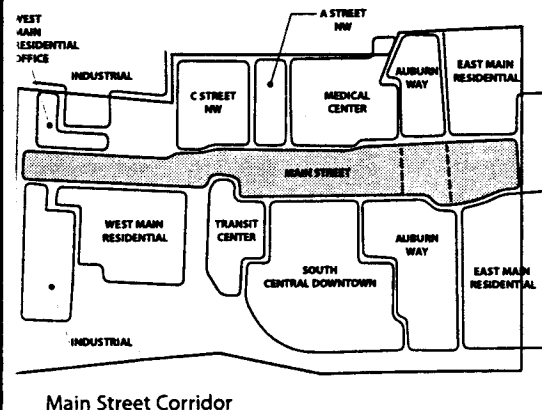
DISTRICT	RECOMMENDED LAND USE
Main Street	Mixed-Use: Retail, Service, Office, Housing, Government
South Central Downtown	Mixed-Use: Retail, Service, Office, Housing
Transit Center	Transit-Oriented Uses: Parking, Retail, Public Plaza
Auburn Way Corridor	Commercial Retail
A Street NW	Retail, Service, Office, Housing
Medical District	Medical, Office
C Street NW	Business Park/Light Industrial
East and West Main Residential	Residential
Residential, Residential-Office	Residential/Office

## 1.5.1 Main Street Corridor

### General Description/Existing Conditions

Main Street is the historic and current center of downtown Auburn, which retains a historic feeling while functioning as a retail destination. Although Main Street changes in character over its entire length, there are several characteristics that contribute substantially to its overall atmosphere. Many of the buildings along Main Street were built in the 1910s and 20s, using a traditional downtown pattern with buildings set at the back of the sidewalk, directly next to each other. Building surfaces are primarily masonry or stucco and the storefronts have large display windows and recessed entries. There are few curb cuts along the street, making this one of the best shopping streets in the city for pedestrians. Interruptions in the continuity of the street wall do occur in several locations where public parking lots have been constructed adjacent to Main Street, and at the City Hall plaza. Some of Downtown's best historic buildings are located on the corners of key street intersections, increasing their visibility and significance.

This Plan divides Main Street into three geographic areas based on the change in character from east to west. These are: 1) along West Main Street from the Union Pacific railroad tracks to the BNSF railroad tracks, 2) the Main Street Core, from the BNSF railroad tracks to Auburn Way South, and 3) from Auburn Way South to F Street on the east side of downtown.



Main Street Corridor

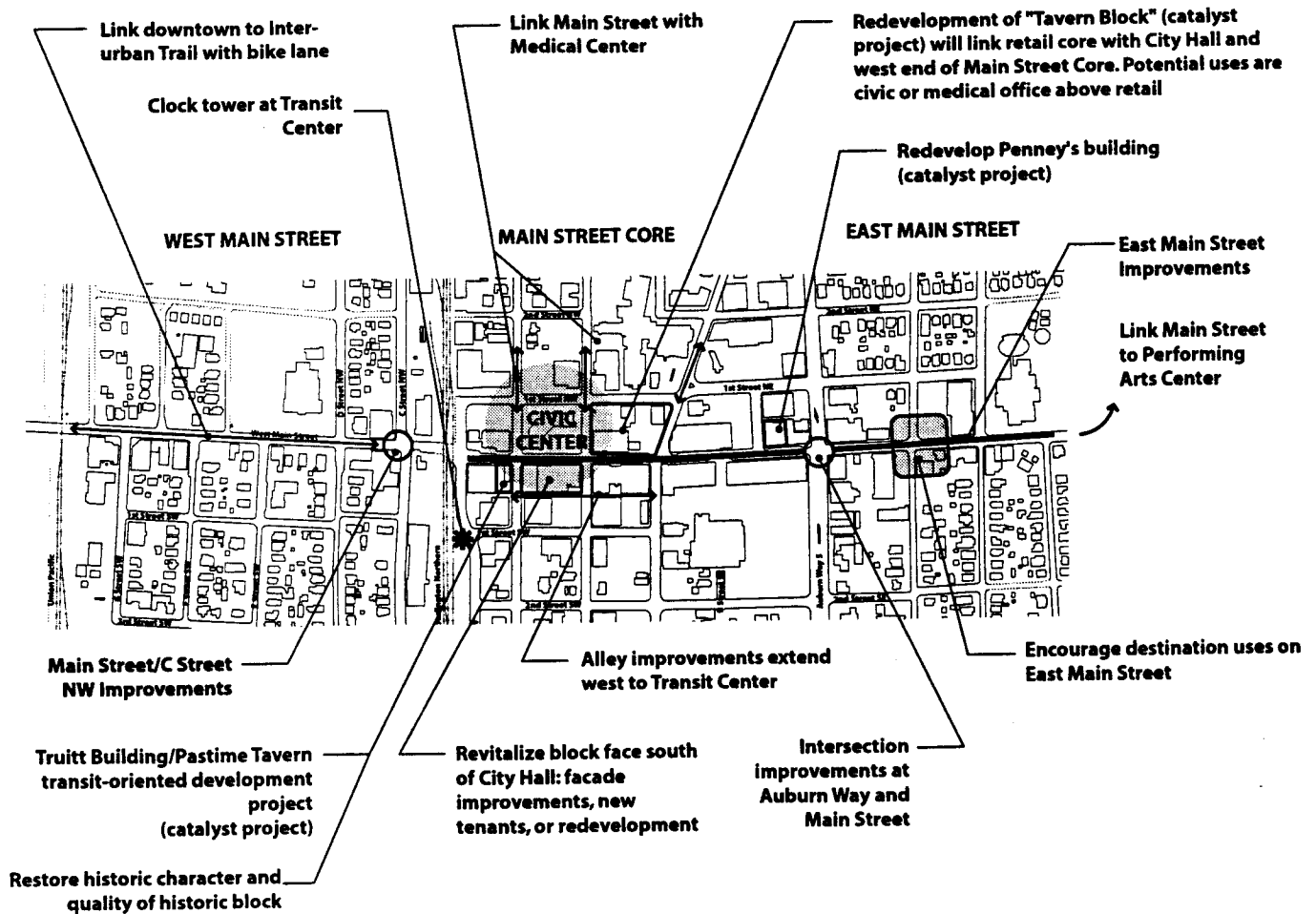


Figure 18: Main Street Corridor Recommendations



### Main Street Core

The Main Street Core is the heart and center of downtown Auburn, containing retail shops and City Hall. Main Street is also the ceremonial center of the City, hosting a number of festivals and parades, such as the Sidewalk Sale, Good Ol' Days, and others throughout the year.

The Main Street Core benefits from recent street improvements, and is pedestrian-oriented in scale, including a wide boardwalk-style sidewalk, decorative pedestrian-oriented street lamps, banners, artwork, curb bulbs to slow traffic, benches, receptacles, and landscaping. These elements, combined with the buildings in the area, reinforce the Main Street Core's unique identity which is distinguished from any other area of Auburn.



Main Street Today

The flowers, landscaping, and street furniture on Main Street are well-maintained, adding to the strength of the district. Unfortunately, maintenance of the new sidewalks has been a difficult problem to resolve, and they often look dirty.

The B Street SE Plaza improvements provide an excellent linkage between Safeway, a major pedestrian destination, and the Main Street commercial district. Public art helps define the space and create its particular identity. Despite the extensive improvements, the B Street Plaza remains underutilized, is often occupied by undesirable people who intimidate others from using the area, businesses have low traffic, and the plaza is frequently occupied by service or delivery vehicles.

The buildings in this district are located directly adjacent to the sidewalk, are typically one to two stories tall, and are occupied by retail businesses on the ground floor. The original building character of the district has been altered by the addition of false facades on many of the buildings and by the addition of some awnings which are out of character with the original building styles. The narrow street, on-street parking and slow-moving vehicular traffic supports the pedestrian orientation of the Main Street Core. Most off-street parking is not adjacent to the street in this area.

The south side of Main Street between Auburn Way and B Street SE is the healthiest part of the commercial core. There are some successful retail establishments on the north side of Main Street between Auburn Way and Auburn Avenue, but the continuity of the pedestrian experience is interrupted by the vacant Penney's building and the four taverns on the block between Auburn Avenue and City Hall, and the drive-through banking facilities near Auburn Avenue.

The civic center lies near the west end of the Main Street Core and consists of City Hall, the Police/Municipal Court Building, and adjacent city parking lots. This area has many pedestrian amenities including landscaping, benches, trash receptacles, wide sidewalks, and the plaza in front of City Hall. City Hall has public art both inside and outside of the building. There are more street trees here than in any other area of downtown. City Hall functions as both a major pedestrian destination and generator.

The BNSF tracks form a natural division between the Main Street core and the west end of Main Street. The tracks create both a perceptual, and at times, a physical barrier between the two sections of downtown. With the number of freight and commuter trains projected to increase substantially, a real concern about how to improve connections through Downtown and decrease impacts of rail traffic has arisen.

## East Main Street

While once an integral part of the Main Street Core, Main Street east of Auburn Way lacks the vital character evident in Main Street to the west. There are fewer destinations, an absence of pedestrian-oriented street improvements, and a barrier posed by Auburn Way, which is a wide, fast-moving, high volume street.

Some one and two-story retail buildings are adjacent to the sidewalk in this area. There are also some strip commercial buildings with surface parking lots adjacent to the street, which breaks down the continuous street wall. Fewer storefronts are used for retail and services east of Auburn Way, and this section of Main Street does not benefit from the Main Street improvements which terminate at Auburn Way. The street is wider than the other portions of Main Street and there is on-street parking on the south side of the street only.

The Performing Arts Center, part of the Auburn High School facility, lies at the east end of the Downtown Plan study area, but is functionally and visually separated from the downtown due to its location, the distance it is set back from the street, its visual appearance, and the landscaping and concrete barriers on its perimeter.

## Main Street - West of the BNSF Rail Line

Main Street west of the BNSF Rail Line has always had a different character than the Main Street core. The street in this location is wider than along the Main Street core and there are sidewalks and on-street parking on both sides of the street. Originally, from a block west of the BNSF tracks, West Main was lined by houses and a few commercial buildings. Many of the buildings remain today, although some of the houses are occupied by commercial uses. A fire in 1999 affected two historically significant buildings along this section of the street. The Natsuhara and Sons store was destroyed, and the former American Legion Hall suffered extensive interior damage.

West Main Street is home to West Auburn High School, in addition to a mix of older homes and businesses. Concern for this area revolves around a mix of possibly incompatible commercial and residential land uses as well as impacts from traffic on SR 18, the BNSF rail line and Main Street itself. The street, curb and gutter, sidewalks, and street trees are also in poor condition along this street.

## Main Street Implementation Actions

1. Redevelop the Tavern Block
2. Adopt Civic Center Master Plan
3. Redevelop the Truitt Building/Pastime Tavern
4. Redevelop the JC Penney building
5. Create destination uses on East Main
6. Revitalize the block across from City Hall between Division and A (facade improvements, new tenants, or redevelopment)
7. Facade Improvement Program
8. East Main Street improvements
9. Extend alley improvement
10. Improve intersection of Main and Auburn Way
11. Link East Main with Performing Arts Center
12. Bicycle facilities on West Main from the Interurban Trail to the Transit Center
13. Create and Improve links to Auburn Regional Medical Center
14. Design standards for development
15. Code amendments to C-2 district
16. Improve ped crossing at BSNF tracks and West Main

## **Future Land Use and Character**

### **Main Street Core**

The Main Street Core will remain the commercial center of downtown Auburn, and will be strengthened by the addition of more office, retail, and restaurant space. Mixed-use development in any combination of retail, housing, and office will be encouraged along the Main Street corridor. Facade and awning renovations will strengthen the visual character of Main Street, linking past to present through the use of older buildings that house present-day uses. Future development may include taller buildings that do not maintain the small town flavor identified in the Downtown Urban Design Vision. Redevelopment of the Penney building will bolster the retail core between Auburn Way and Auburn Avenue.

A mixed-use development should be sited on the "tavern block" to link City Hall with the retail east of Division Street. The block across the street from City Hall should be upgraded, either by facade improvements and stronger tenants, or through redevelopment. The retail uses between A Street SW and the BNSF tracks will be strengthened by the presence of the Transit Center, which will create demand for more retail and service uses at that end of the Main Street Core.

Improved pedestrian linkages will attract more users from the Auburn Regional Medical Center to the Main Street Core. Pedestrian safety and aesthetic improvements are also needed where the BNSF railroad tracks intersect with West Main Street to encourage walking between the Main Street core and the remainder of Downtown west of the tracks.

Increased Downtown residential population is envisioned, spurred by the development of the Transit Center. As the community grows, City facilities may also require additional space. Main Street is a location that the City of Auburn should explore as it evaluates the need for additional municipal office and activity space in Downtown. Additional government presence would provide stability to the area, and draw more people into Downtown.

The alley improvements between Safeway and A Street SE will extend west to provide another link between the Main Street Core and the Transit Center. The improvements will increase the use of and access to Main Street buildings.

### **East Main Street**

East Main Street should be linked to the Core by expanding the pedestrian-oriented facilities on the west side of Auburn Way to the east. Main Street improvements may be similar to those of the

Main Street core, while not being a literal replication. Economically and aesthetically stronger tenants in the existing buildings, when combined with the streetscape improvements, will attract additional users to East Main Street. Intersection improvements at Auburn Way and Main Street will make vehicular and pedestrian crossings easier and will visually link the two parts of Main together.

The Performing Arts Center can be better linked with Main Street in several ways. An intensive landscaping and signage program, the removal of the existing physical barriers to the facility, and a carefully thought-out painting scheme, perhaps using brighter colors, could emphasize the various elements of the facility, making it easily identifiable from a distance.



Existing "Tavern Block"



Potential Tavern Block Redevelopment

### **West Main Street**

West Main Street will continue to function as it is, and will be better linked to the Main Street Core with the intersection and street improvements in the vicinity of C and B Streets NW/SW. Bicycle facilities will be added to link the Interurban Trail at the Union Pacific railroad to downtown Auburn.

## **Implementation Projects**

### **Tavern Block**

Public comment indicates that redevelopment of the block immediately to the east of City Hall (the "tavern block") is a top priority for Auburn citizens. The four taverns break up the retail district. Many Auburn residents also perceive this block as unsafe, particularly at night. The removal of the taverns and subsequent redevelopment of this block is a critical step in revitalizing downtown Auburn. A mixed-use development on half or all of this block will establish the retail link that is currently missing, provide space for offices, and improve the appearance and function of Main Street and Auburn Avenue. Medical uses or future City facilities are possibilities. Implementation of this project may require public sector assistance such as purchasing properties and/or businesses or providing incentives for a third party to purchase the tavern block to facilitate its redevelopment. Business relocation assistance may also be a project component. Construction of a parking structure on the north half of this block would serve many nearby users and should be evaluated.

### **City Hall/Civic Center Area**

City Hall is a vital element of Main Street and Downtown Auburn. The building's presence, functions, and employment base are significant assets for downtown. These assets will be strengthened in the future as civic functions grow to support the size of the community. Future expansions of City Hall, police and court facilities should be located in the general vicinity of the existing buildings.

This Plan recommends development of a Civic Center Master Plan that will identify and assess future needs for City facilities such as expanded office space, courtrooms, and a public safety building. All City facilities should be designed as a cohesive civic center in a manner that improves the function and appearance of Main Street. This will help link east and west ends of the Main Street Core. Building design should be compatible with historic Main Street flavor. During the development of the Civic Center Master Plan, the City should consider the best use of all downtown properties and examine the potential for trading, selling, or sharing properties with the medical community or other appropriate development.

### **Truitt Building/Pastime Tavern**

Redevelopment of the site formerly occupied by the Truitt Building and the Pastime Tavern will fill a gap in Main Street and bring

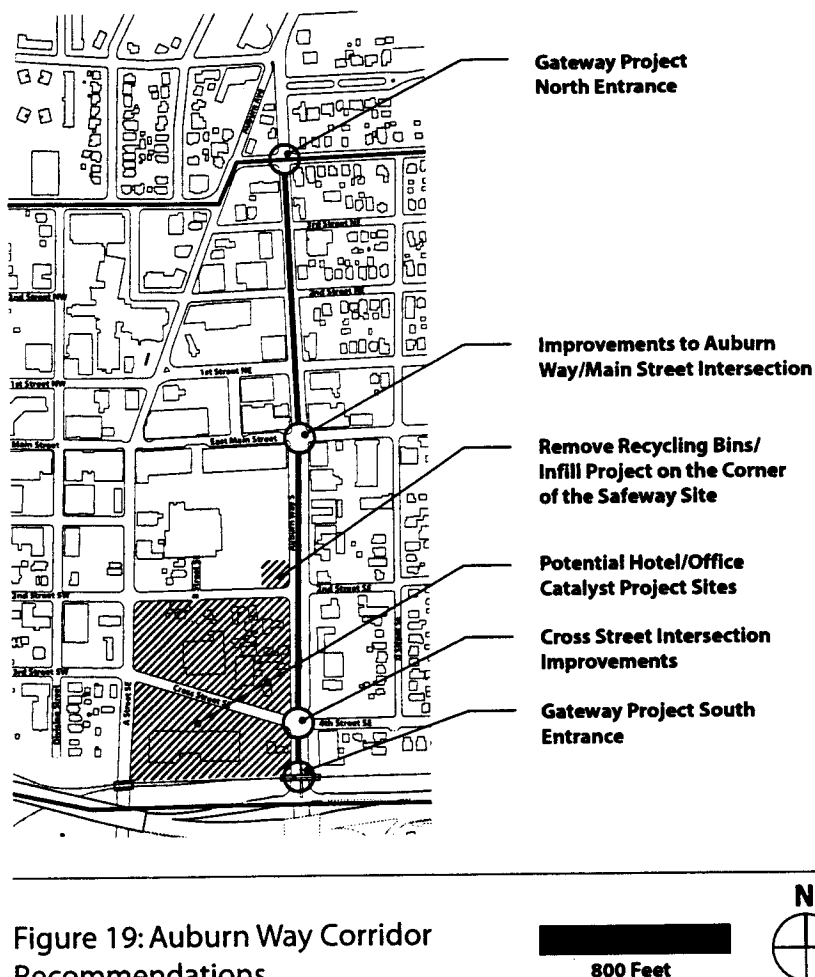


Figure 19: Auburn Way Corridor Recommendations

activity to the west end of the Main Street core. The proximity of this corner site to the Transit Center will further bolster its position as a key location in Downtown and will also increase the benefit as these projects being to act in concert. Frontage on A Street SW, Main Street, and the Transit Center plaza will increase the site's visibility and viability.

The significant historic character of this block should be respected in the design of new buildings for this site. Any replacement building(s) should utilize masonry exteriors, a higher first floor, extensive display windows, and recessed entries compatible with the former Pythias Hall next door.

### J.C. Penney Building

The vacant J.C. Penney Building presents a major gap in the retail district, both physically and psychologically, as vacancies in the retail district can create the impression of decline even when the

## Concepts for Auburn Way

### South of Main Street

- Selectively extend curb to gain planting area
- Center-planted median with larger trees in center
- Selected access management (primarily Cross to 2nd Street)
- Smaller double row of trees border sidewalk (accommodates power lines; trees limbed up to allow visibility to businesses)
- Signage consolidated above and below trees
- Add pedestrian-scale decorative lighting and paint light poles
- Textured pavement at Cross & Main Street intersection functions as gateway and alert to drivers
- Main Street intersection with split phase signal on Main to allow left turns
- Crosswalks at all intersections

rest of the district is healthy. Public and private actions which could stimulate the redevelopment of the building include: Development of additional public parking in the immediate vicinity, City or another party's guarantee of a 2nd floor lease which would enable the current owner to secure financing, use of CDBG funds for renovation, and the City or other parties such as local business owners purchasing a partial share in the building. Façade renovations should include removing the 1970s metal façade to reveal the original surface. Restoring the storefronts to their 1920s configuration should be considered. This was originally a very simple building; it is not necessary to "prettify" it. If the building is designated as an Auburn Historic Landmark, it would qualify for restoration under the more flexible Washington Historic Building Code, if adopted by the City.

## 1.5.2 Auburn Way Corridor

### General Description/Existing Conditions

Auburn Way is a major travel route through the City of Auburn, and experiences the highest volume of traffic within downtown. It is characterized by strip development over its entire length, including the portion which runs through downtown, between 4<sup>th</sup> Street NE and SR18. The street is characterized by parking lots

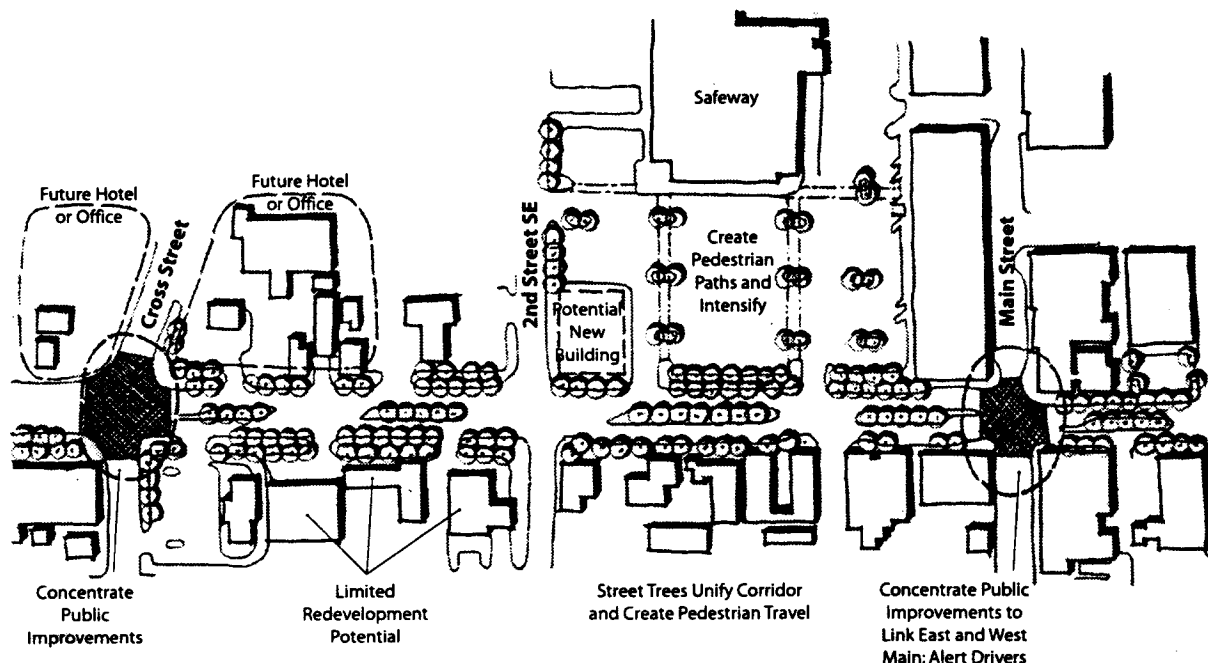


Figure 20: Concepts for Auburn Way South of Main Street

separating buildings from the roadway. It is rare to find a building with an entrance that is adjacent to the street in this district. Many of the buildings are single story and advertise themselves with tall pole signs designed to catch a passing automobile driver's eye. Landscaping is minimal along the corridor, with the exception of two small center planted medians and small trees and shrubs at intermittent intervals. Since repeating vertical elements tend to dominate the view in any street's case, pole signs and utility poles are the dominating physical characteristics along this corridor. The pavement, buildings and the landscaping become a minor element.

Auburn Way functions as a barrier to east-west pedestrian travel and to the cohesion of the retail district. The width of this heavily traveled arterial varies from four to six lanes, and many of the crosswalks on Auburn Way are in need of re-striping. There are sidewalks along most of Auburn Way within the study area, except around 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> NE and near Cross Street at the southern end. The sidewalk is integral with the curb, leaving no separation between the pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The sidewalk and street edge are characterized by curb cuts, with some properties having their entire frontage as a curb cut. Frequent curb cuts discourage pedestrian use because of frequent auto usage and the change in sidewalk elevation. These conditions create an uncomfortable pedestrian environment and decrease traffic safety.

## Concepts for Auburn Way

### North of Main Street

- Selectively extend curb to gain planting area
- Center-planted median with larger trees in center
- Selected access management
- Smaller trees border sidewalk (accommodates power lines; trees limbed up)
- Signage consolidated above and below trees
- Add pedestrian-scale decorative lighting and paint light poles
- Textured pavement at Main Street intersection
- Narrowed Main Street intersection with split phase signal (to accommodate left turns)

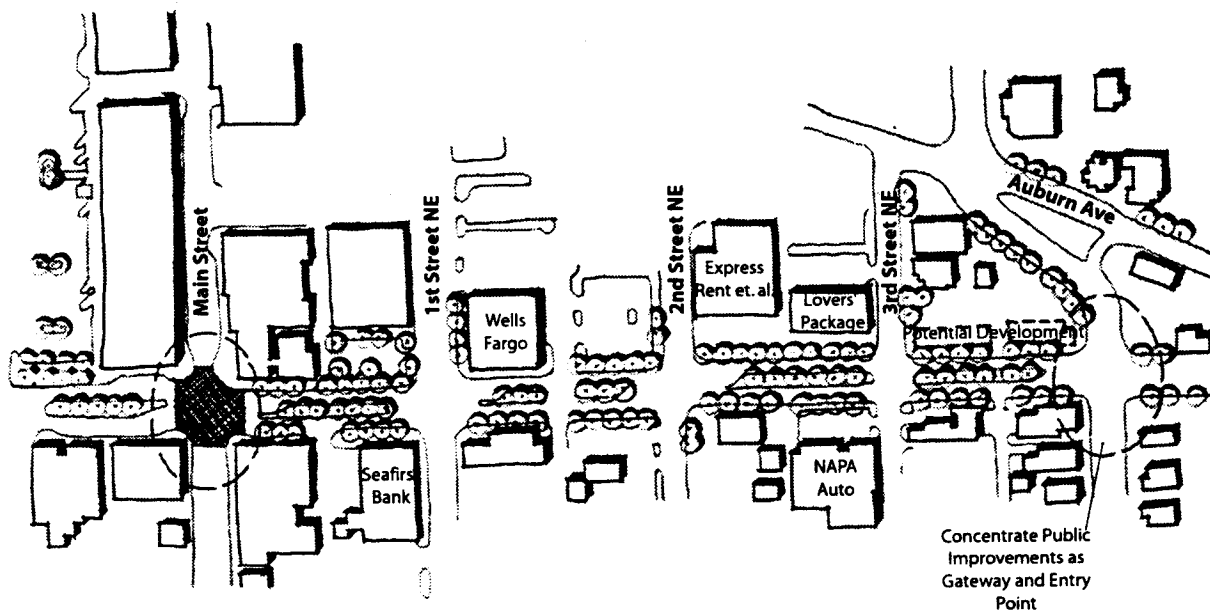


Figure 21 : Concepts for Auburn Way North of Main Street

## **Auburn Way Implementation Actions**

1. Street redesign (landscaping, undergrounding of utilities, access management, and street reconfiguration)
2. Improvements to Auburn Way/Main Street intersection
3. Gateway project north entrance
4. Gateway project south entrance
5. Cross Street Intersection
6. Hotel
7. Office
8. Infill project on the corner of the Safeway site
9. Signage Improvement Program (code changes and financial assistance program)
10. Design standards

Although the corridor is characterized by strip development, the areas north and south of Main Street are different. The right-of-way is at its greatest near Safeway at 100', and at its narrowest in the northern area between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets NE at 60'. The street varies in width as well, from 4 lanes north of Main Street to 5 lanes in the southern area where the curbside lane is wider than 20' and underutilized. The corridor appears especially wide around Safeway where the pavement is widest and where the buildings are set back the farthest from the street.

Given all of the conditions identified here, Auburn Way as the main travel route into and through downtown presents a poor impression and relates very little in form and function to the Main Street Core. Auburn Way is a key corridor and entry to downtown. Improving the aesthetics of Auburn Way is essential to improving downtown Auburn.

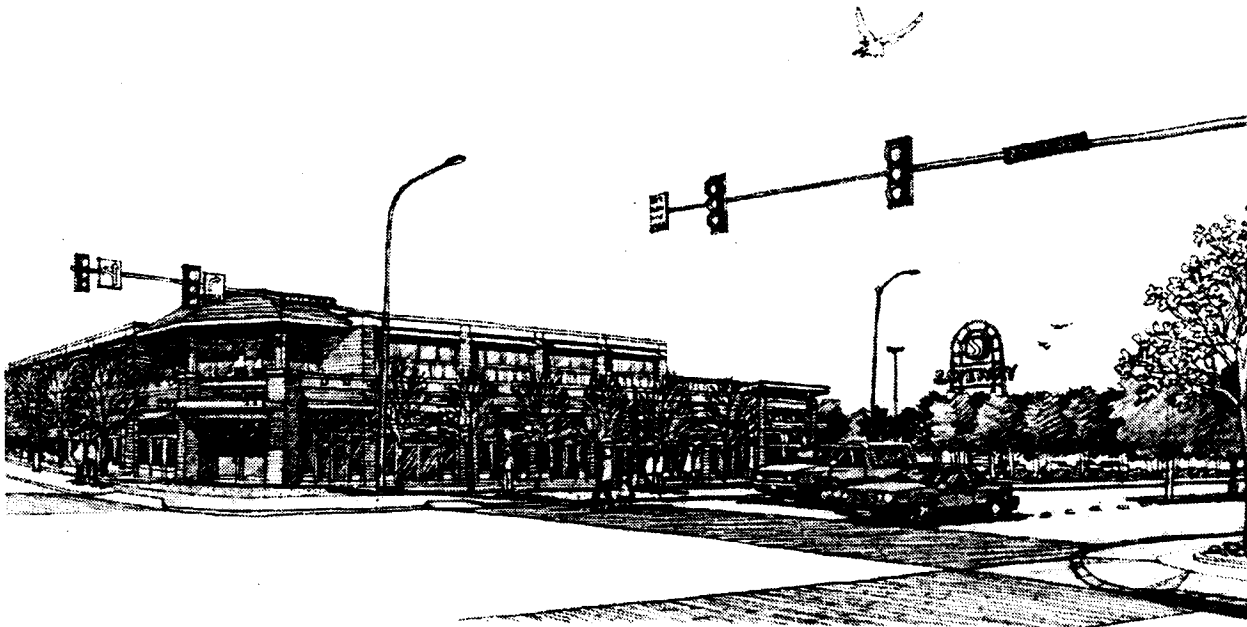
### **Future Land Use and Character**

While there is a lack of visual continuity on Auburn Way, and it does not have the desired character of a downtown, most of the buildings along the street are in good to fair condition, and most are occupied. The majority of parcels are relatively small, ranging from 4,000-10,000 square feet. The Safeway parcel is 270,000 square feet, and other minimal numbers of larger parcels do exist. These land use conditions lead to the conclusion that most of the existing buildings will remain in the foreseeable future, although the tenants may change.

Improvements to private property that will make a significant difference include signage that complies with a new City sign ordinance, and design standards for new development and redevelopment. As demonstrated in many Puget Sound cities, it is possible to successfully lower the heights and sizes of signs without destroying the viability of existing businesses. This helps to create the more pedestrian-friendly atmosphere which is a key element of the vision for downtown. Implementation actions may include both sign code changes and a City finance program to help businesses remove nonconforming signs. A specific amount could be dedicated per year to accomplish this task.

It is difficult to alter a land use pattern that is as established as Auburn Way. However, great potential exists to improve the public right-of-way, especially south of Main Street where the right-of-way is widest and the existing street width is not fully used.

The addition of landscaping, decorative lighting, and the undergrounding of utilities will complement the decreases over



Potential Infill on Safeway Site

time in the height and size of pole signs. After these improvements are made, the unifying element will become the landscaping, decorative lighting, and signage, both public and private. Improved building design will be accomplished over time as the design standards are implemented.

Another key area of the corridor is the intersection of Auburn Way and Main Street, as discussed in the Main Street District section above. With the implementation of design standards and a public signage program, the buildings and urban form will look more like downtown than like strip development, thus alerting the Auburn Way user that they are in the downtown area of the City. Intersection improvements will help to unify Main Street on the east and west sides of Auburn Way.

Redesigning the entries to downtown from Auburn Way will create a better impression of downtown than currently exists. Careful design of public art and the redevelopment of public infrastructure will speak for themselves in terms of the quality of the community and the downtown. The northern gateway will also link downtown to the emerging regional retail area to the north around 15th Street NE.

Intensifying land uses will also improve the appearance and function of Auburn Way. Potential projects include the addition of a building to the corner of the Safeway parking lot, and the addition

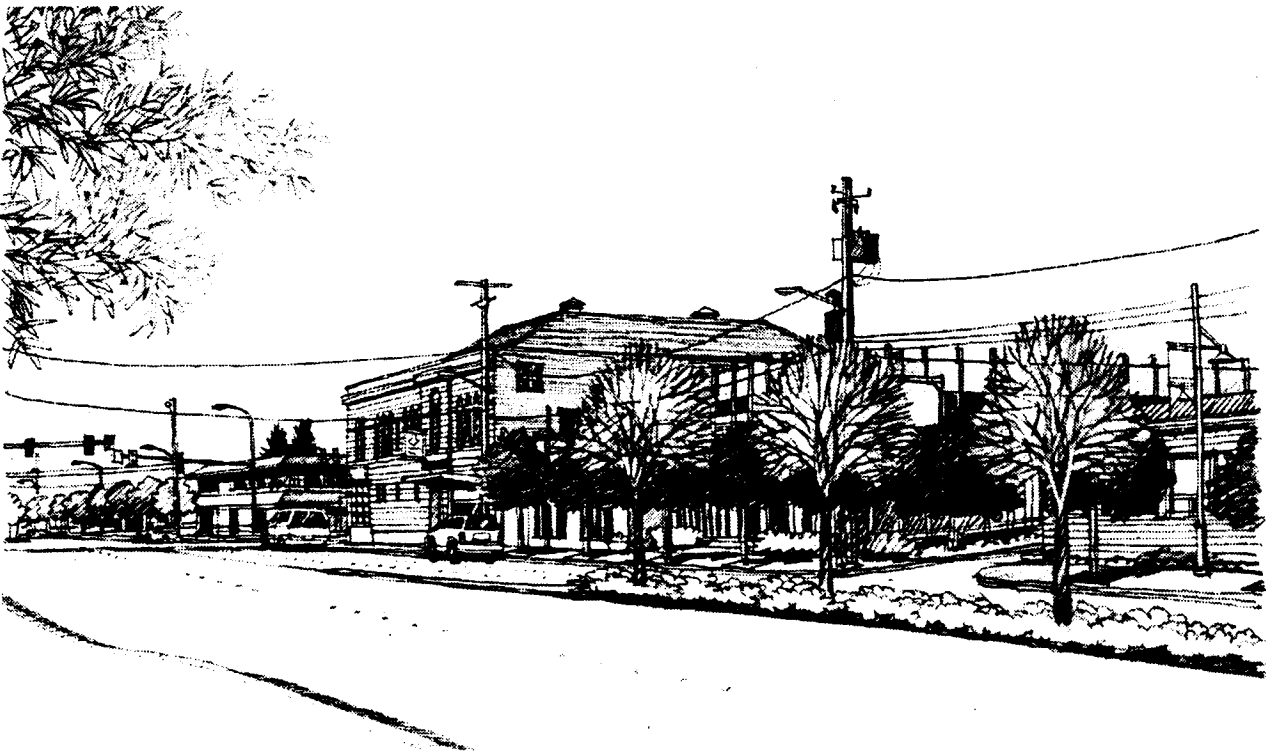
of a hotel and Class A office development at the southern area of the corridor.

### **Street and Intersection Improvements**

Of all of the identified catalyst projects, improvement of the Auburn Way street and intersections will have the greatest impact and unify the corridor visually while improving its physical function.

Specific improvements to be made include:

- Center-planted medians in the approximate locations shown in Figures 20 & 21
- At the intersection of Main Street and Auburn Way split phase signal improvements on Main Street should be explored (to allow left turns from Main Street to Auburn Way)
- Add a travel lane and sidewalk improvements between 2nd and 4th NE on Auburn Way



Potential Auburn Way Street Improvements with Existing Power Poles and Wires

- Realign Fourth Street NE between Auburn Way and Auburn Avenue to improve the 2 intersections
- The alley behind Main Street (south side) will be closed, and street entrances to Safeway consolidated
- Access management would be instituted on Auburn Way to minimize curb cuts and multiple accesses per block

### **Southern Gateway**

The southern gateway to downtown on Auburn Way South occurs at the crossing of SR 18 and railroad bridges. There are many opportunities for public art to be integrated with existing infrastructure. In addition to the SR 18 bridge and the railroad bridge, the Cross Street intersection also provides opportunities. Intensive landscaping and signage can begin at this gateway point to alert the user that they have entered downtown. These elements should be used throughout the Auburn Way corridor to establish continuity and identity.

### **Hotel and Small Conference Facilities**

The Downtown Market Analysis identified the potential for a hotel with small conference facilities to be developed in downtown Auburn near SR 18. Visibility and convenient freeway access are key to the success of a hotel facility. Also, a sizable site is required to meet the needs of the hotel and accompanying parking. Sites on the west side of Auburn Way near the Cross Street intersection would be appropriate for the hotel catalyst project, and, combined with public street and gateway improvements, would greatly improve the appearance of the southern entrance to downtown.

### **Northern Gateway**

The land uses at the northern end of downtown do not change dramatically when one enters the downtown core. There is no easily identifiable point at which one knows that "now I am in downtown." Therefore a gateway should be created. Given the land use pattern of strip development, the greatest potential exists to use the public infrastructure of the reconstructed street as a gateway. The change in the type and quality of the infrastructure in the vicinity of 4<sup>th</sup> Street NE will speak for itself. A cluster of trees, signage, and other art elements will function as the gateway and establish the identity of the downtown portion of the Auburn Way corridor.

### **Class A Office Development**

The Downtown Market Analysis identified the demand for Class A office space in downtown. Like the hotel, sites on the west side of Auburn Way near the intersection with Cross Street are appropriate and easy to access. Many other sites within the downtown core would also be viable Class A Office development sites. Class A office development typically has technological communication needs. The presence of the Qwest central office in this area could be used to help market and attract Class A Office development.

### **Public Art Opportunities**

The inclusion of an art program along Auburn Way would help to mitigate and organize the drivers' experience along this route.

Crosswalks and lighting would add to pedestrian safety while providing needed visual enhancements to the existing streetscape. A greening and tree planting program will greatly improve the visual quality of the street. Finally, the gateway bridges at Auburn Way and SR 18 should be viewed and addressed as important entryways. The proposed and the partially completed design

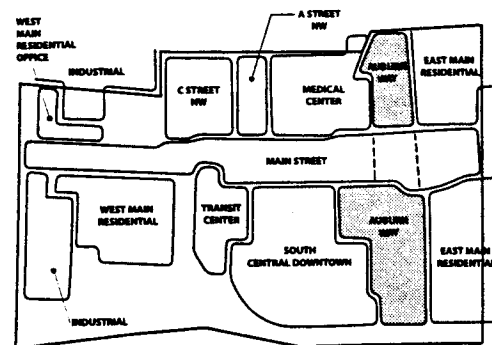


Conceptual illustration of parking garage at Transit Center with retail on 1st floor along the street

artwork on the BNSF railroad overcrossing should be prioritized and completed. Also, the SR 18 overcrossing should be renovated through an environmental design approach. This could be done in many ways, including graphics, color, and trellis work with greening. Lighting at this entry point would make a significant difference, especially if the two gateway bridges could be unified as an entry statement.

The following elements could improve the Auburn Way experience:

- **Crosswalks:** Special paving
- **Tree planting program**
- **Lighting**
- **Signage**
- **Medians:** Greening and landscaping as art form
- **Gateway opportunity at SR 18 overcrossing,** include completion of existing gateway bridge



Auburn Way Corridor



Auburn Way today at Cross Street

### 1.5.3 Transit Center

#### General Description/Existing Conditions

A Transit Center has recently been constructed adjacent to the BNSF rail line just south of Main Street. It is part of the Sound Transit's Regional Transit Plan. It is a multi-modal facility with commuter rail initially during the AM and PM peak hours, and regional and express bus service.

Located in the City's C-2 or Central Business District zone, the area around the Transit Center site has commercial uses, ranging from auto service to offices.

#### Future Land Use and Character

The Transit Center will focus around a public plaza that will link the platforms and parking on both sides of the tracks via a pedestrian overpass. Parking on the west side of the tracks will be approximately 120 surface stalls with the long term potential for a parking structure to replace the surface stalls. On the east side, a parking structure will accommodate approximately 500 to 600 stalls. The parking structure should be designed as part of the urban form rather than the more standard concrete structure with open decks. The first floor of the structure facing A Street SW and the plaza will have shops and services oriented to the transit user.

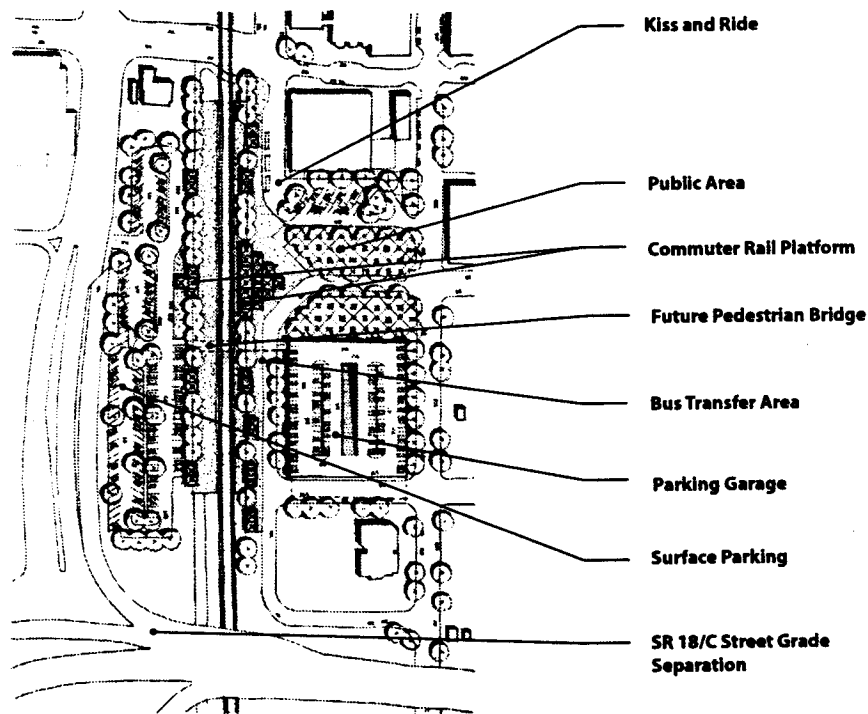


Figure 22: Transit Center Plan



The Transit Center facilities are designed to meet the Downtown Vision. Key features include a plaza with trees, seating, and public art. Canopies along the rail platform have been designed using the classic red brick that is a feature of many of the nearby historical buildings. The canopies are stacked at the end of the plaza to create a significant focal point with a custom-designed clock at the apex. It is anticipated that a public artist will be involved throughout the Transit Center design process.

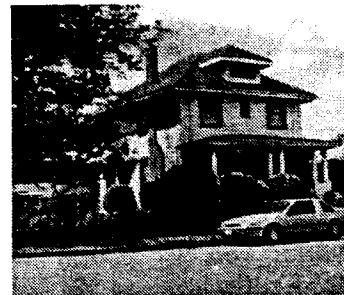
### Public Art Opportunities

The Transit Center will create a new center of activity in downtown Auburn and presents an opportunity for revitalizing the downtown core. It has the potential to create “an outdoor living room” for the community, flanked by retail, parking, plaza, park and pedestrian linkages. It will become a most important activity center and it should be enhanced to create an uplifting and inspiring transit experience, which reinforces a positive image of Auburn as a city designed for living and commuting.

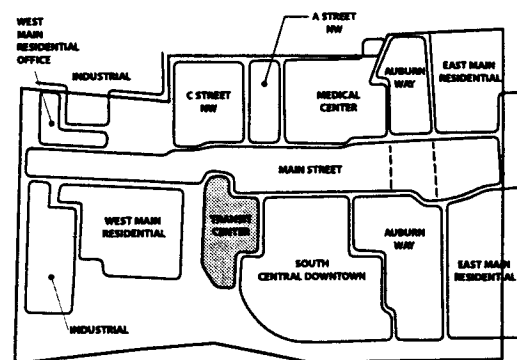
The station architecture reflects the surrounding context and Auburn's railroad history. Reflecting "historical context" does not mean "old-time" vernacular architecture, rather, it is a reinvention of historic forms to announce Auburn's forward-looking dreams for the present and the future.

The following elements offer future opportunities for public art:

- **Platform paving:** pattern, color, movement "canvas"
- **Platform furniture:** community living room/public-private partnership
- **Windscreens:** myth, history and poetry potential
- **Advertising panels, signage & kiosks:** could be illuminated
- **Identity lighting:** enhance light levels, seasonal change and celebrations
- **Noise abatement:** features such as fountains or water walls
- **Kiss and Ride plaza:**
  - **Drainage:** mitigate through greening and softscape
  - **Phenomena:** sound sculptures, wind elements
  - **Passive play structure for children:** possibly musical



Residential neighborhood west of the Transit Center



Transit Center

## Pedestrian Bridge (at Transit Center)

The pedestrian bridge provides a gateway opportunity to the Transit Center. The bridge will provide access between the platforms on each side of the Transit Center. It can also be used by pedestrians whose travel along Main Street or other locations is interrupted by train traffic. Although it might require walking out of one's way, hopefully it will reduce the inclination by some walkers to try to "beat the train," or to crawl between stopped train cars.

Design of the pedestrian bridge will be coordinated with the design of the parking garage, and will include elevator access from the platform and from the garage itself. The elevator will be sized to accommodate wheelchair users and riders with bicycles, and so can also meet the needs of these segments of nonmotorized traffic to cross the tracks safely and efficiently.

Historically, bridges have been built and designed by engineers, craftspeople and artists. Its role as a connector should be viewed as more than simply function. Bridges present an opportunity for

sculptural form and structure to come together in a powerful and functional urban form. This bridge should be designed to create an identity statement and to improve the experience of pedestrians in the Downtown core. The following options should be considered:

- **Lighting:** Lighting enhancements are featured on some of the most notable bridges and should be considered here. Lighting effects can be changed to mark the seasons, and mitigate effects of dark, dreary weather.
- **Bridge Design:** Design should relate well to the existing canopies along the the platform, the parking garage, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW Grade Separation to the south.
- **Identity Statement:** A distinctive appearance will contribute to a unique identity for the Transit Center and this end of Main Street. A strong identity will also contribute to a higher level of use.

## 1.5.4 Auburn Regional Medical Center District

### General Description/ Existing Conditions

The Medical Center and its surrounding medical uses make up a large district within downtown. It lies in the north-central section of the study area, and its most significant feature is the Auburn Regional Medical Center located between Auburn Avenue and North Division Street. The Medical Center is a major facility that one sees when entering downtown from the north on Auburn Avenue.

The five-story building is the largest in downtown, and houses the largest employer, with over 500 employees and more than 200 affiliated doctors. Medical office buildings from 1-3 stories and their associated parking lots surround the Medical Center.

The facility, the clinics, and the physicians' offices have grown over time. It has grown outward from its original building and the Center's orientation faces away from the rest of downtown. Sidewalks facilitate pedestrian travel to and from the other downtown districts, but there are no other visual clues to guide pedestrians between the medical district and Main Street. Consequently, the Medical Center is perceptually isolated from the rest of downtown.

The scale and the style of the Medical Center district buildings are diverse and do not have a specific visual identity. Facilities have been developed at different times by different entities. This is reflected in the eclectic mix of buildings.

### Future Land Uses and Character

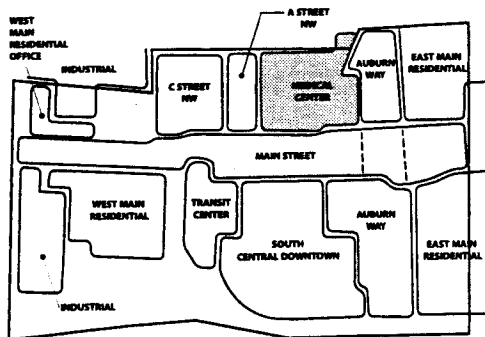
The Auburn Regional Medical Center is expected to continue to grow, adding approximately six physicians per year, and the surrounding medical facilities are expected to grow as well.

There are three primary goals for this downtown district: 1) improve the physical and visual connection between the Medical Center and Main Street, 2) increase Medical Center employees' use of downtown, and 3) improve the physical appearance and cohesiveness of the Medical Center district.

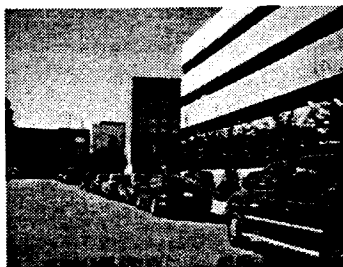
The most simple way to accomplish these goals is to prepare a master plan for the Medical Center. This could be accomplished through the voluntary collaboration between the Medical Center and the City on a master plan. Alternately, a master plan could be a regulatory requirement for future Medical Center expansion.

### Medical Center Implementation Actions

1. Auburn Way Improvements
2. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW Improvements
3. Medical Center Master Plan (required or voluntary)
4. Potential Use of City properties for Medical Center use, e.g. parking
5. Design standards



Medical Center District



Auburn Regional Medical Center today

A Medical Center master plan should identify both Auburn Regional Medical Center facilities, and other medical facilities in the District as well. A master plan would facilitate the growth of the area in a visually cohesive manner, would create the potential for shared parking and other facilities, and would help to meet the goal of greater integration of the Medical Center with Main Street and downtown Auburn. Another benefit would be the ability to plan for future impacts generated by Medical Center growth, particularly traffic, and alleviate some or all of the need for individual environmental review of future improvements.

The City could be a partner with the medical community in the development of joint facilities, such as parking. Simple improvements such as a cohesive landscaping plan will unify the disparate parts of the Medical Center district. Plantings should be distinctive to this area, to unify it and begin to create a unique and separate identity. At the same time, the Medical Center district should be integrated in the larger sense with downtown. This can be accomplished through greater emphasis on pedestrian orientation and linking facilities with other districts.

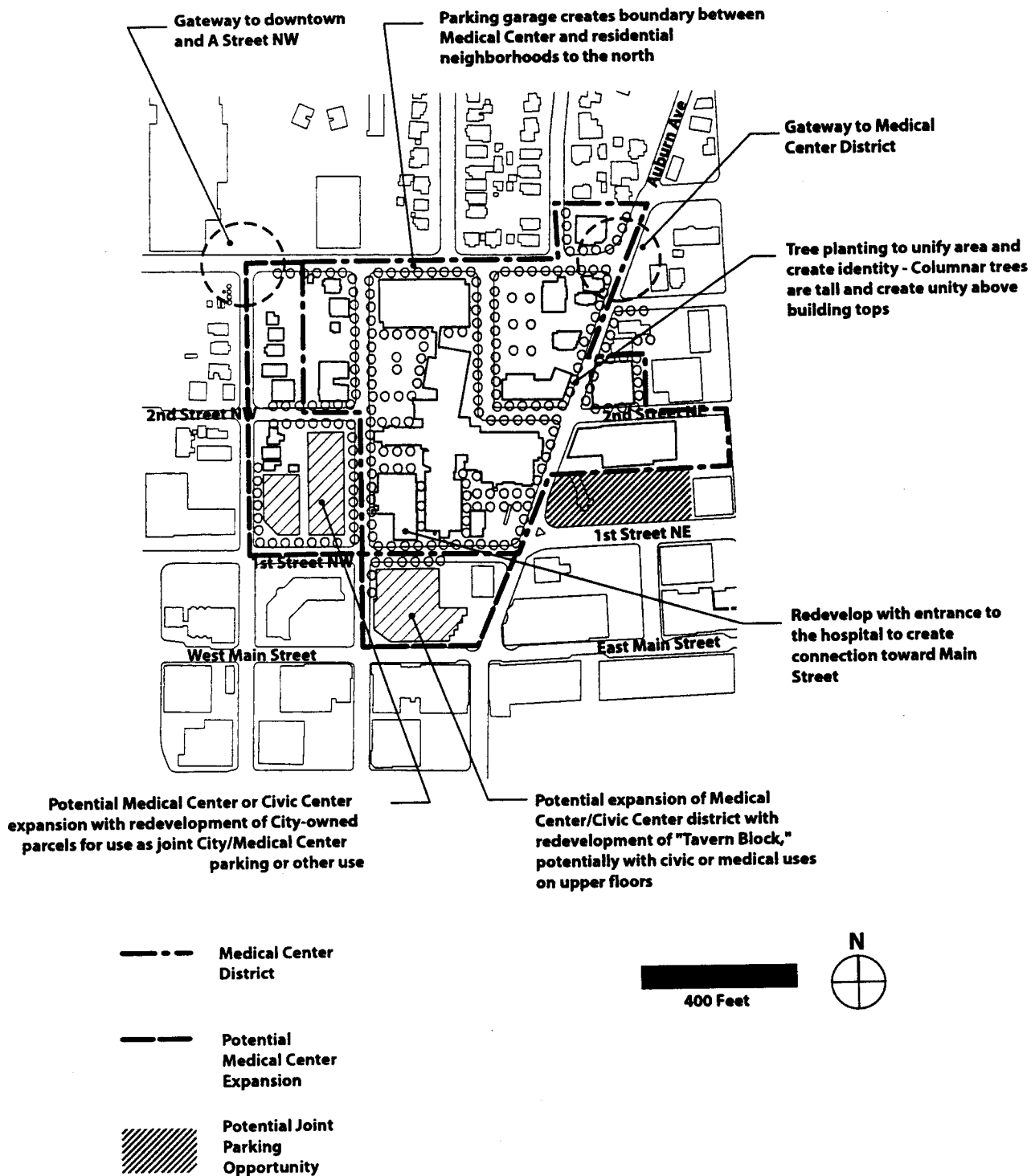
Street improvements to solidify and create an identity for the district include improvements along 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW/NE and Auburn Avenue. Although there are medical and professional office uses north of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW and NE, the scale and building form should remain residential with 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW/NE as the boundary.

Design and development guidelines for the Medical Center would focus on building location on the parcels, locations of doors and pedestrian walkways in relation to the street, signage, building materials, screening of parking, and parking garage design.

### Public Art Opportunities

Like A Street SW, A Street SE/Auburn Avenue Corridor redevelopment would greatly benefit from pedestrian enhancements which provide safety, comfort, and a journey that is specific to this street. There is an opportunity for a welcoming gateway gesture at the intersection of Auburn Avenue and Auburn Way North, marking the entrance to the downtown core. This is a significant intersection which should be marked by a major work of public art to be viewed by both drivers and pedestrians. It should address different scales and speeds as part of its design program.

Figure 23: Medical Center District



Opportunities to integrate public art into this corridor include:

- **Crosswalks:** Special paving or graphics
- **Pedestrian linkages/bicycle paths**
- **Sidewalk paving** with game inserts
- **Tree grates, tree guards**
- **Drainage**
- **Greening:** Tree planting program
- **Gateway opportunity** at Auburn Way

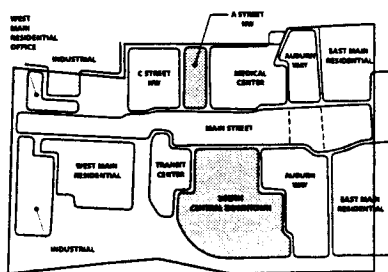
## Implementation Projects

### Potential Use of City Properties for Medical Center Use

One strategy to bring the Medical Center further into downtown is to use City-owned properties for either future medical facilities, or for jointly-developed City/Medical Center parking. Consolidation of City parking facilities into a joint parking facility with the Medical Center could free up land for medical and/or City facility use. Parcels currently owned by the City are within one block north of Main Street, which could help to bring the Medical Center within closer proximity to the downtown core.

## A St NW & South Central Districts Implementation Actions

1. A Street SE improvements
2. A Street SW improvements
3. A Street NW improvements
4. Design Standards



Mixed Use Districts

## 1.5.5 A Street NW & South Central Districts

### General Description/Existing Conditions

Two areas of downtown Auburn are identified as mixed use districts. The first is south of Main Street between Auburn Way and the Transit Center (A Street SW), and the second is along A Street NW north of Main Street. Both areas are currently occupied by a mixture of residential, commercial, and retail land.

The first area, south of Main Street, is split by A Street SE, which is characterized by underutilized parcels, houses, and other strip retail and office uses. A Street SW was upgraded during construction of the Transit Center.

The second area north of Main is primarily residential and office uses, with a few industrial land uses along the railroad. This area is zoned M-1, C-3, C-2, and RO-H. A Street NW runs through this area and is slated for improvement and reconstruction.

The C-3 zone is a heavy commercial zone which allows light

industrial uses, auto-related uses, and strip development. C-2 is the Central Business District. The M-1 zone is light industrial, and RO-H is the Residential Office Hospital District.

### **Future Land Uses/Character**

The zoning in the mixed use district, south of Main Street has been changed from C-3 to C-2, Central Business District, concurrent with this Plan's adoption. This shifts the land use focus for this area from heavy commercial and auto-oriented uses to retail, service, office, and housing. Land use in this area will become pedestrian-oriented mixed use, and auto-oriented and heavy commercial uses will be phased out over time. Housing is a priority use for both of the Mixed Use Districts, with their physical proximity to transit and the Main Street core, thus offering the ability to increase the downtown residential population.

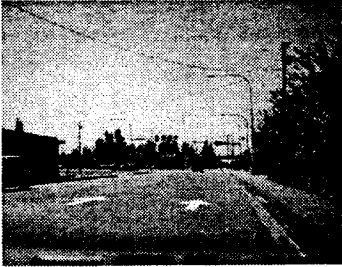
The first area south of Main has great potential as the district that links the Transit Center, Auburn Way, and the Main Street core through the creation of a more cohesive urban form. This area contains a number of underutilized parcels which, due to the proximity to the Transit Center, offer the opportunity to locate housing and offices near transit and the downtown core. Redevelopment of this mixed use district will bring higher land use intensity than currently exists in the downtown and a more cohesive urban form. Emphasis in this district will be on buildings located adjacent to the street, parking located at the rear of parcels, and first floor retail on parcels along A Street SE.

A Street SE, one of the major corridors through downtown, should be revitalized not only by private investment, but also by public investment in the street corridor to improve vehicular and pedestrian facilities and landscaping.

Due to planned street improvements and the future extension of A Street NW north to 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW, there will be a potential market for strip commercial development in the second area. The potential also exists to expand medical uses. The intersection of 3rd Street NW and A Street NW should be improved as a downtown gateway. Comprehensive Plan map and zoning map amendments for this area should be considered, especially given the planned extension of A Street NW and the identification of A Street NW and 3rd Street NW as a gateway. Design standards for this area will need to be carefully considered to ensure that redevelopment along the A Street corridor is in accord with the Downtown Urban Design Vision. (See Section 1.2: Urban Design Vision).

A Street SW/NW will be one of the most significant streets in

downtown Auburn, with gateways at the northern and southern ends. It is planned to be improved as a minor arterial. In addition, A Street SW will be the front door to the Transit Center and the street that links the Transit Center to the rest of downtown.



South Central District today

The reconstructed A Street SW was envisioned as a pedestrian-oriented urban street that would carry significant amounts of vehicular traffic. A Street SW was constructed with 2 travel lanes, a center turn lane, and on street parking on one side to serve the short term needs of adjacent retail and service businesses. Pedestrian and streetscape improvements include the reconstruction of the sidewalks and future inclusion of street trees, plantings, and decorative lighting. Utilities were placed underground.

Although planned, construction of the improvements north of Main Street and the link to 15th NW are not yet funded. This segment is also envisioned as a pedestrian-oriented urban street that will carry significant volumes of traffic, linking the Medical Center area with Main Street, and providing a gateway to downtown at 3rd NW. This segment of A Street should also be constructed to have 2 travel lanes with on-street parking on both sides. As with the street south of Main Street, pedestrian and streetscape improvements will include the reconstruction of the sidewalks, inclusion of street trees, plantings, and decorative lighting. Utilities should be placed underground.

A Street SE is currently a 4 lane facility with integral curb and gutter, fully using the 60-foot right-of-way. Although at present the appearance and function of A Street SE does not meet the urban design vision for downtown, there are no planned capacity or safety improvements for this street. Properties along A Street SE are currently underused, and therefore will likely see significant redevelopment in both the near term and long term. As A Street SE redevelops, a 10-foot building setback or easement should be required of private property owners which would increase the area available for streetscape improvements. Streetscape improvements would include creation of a planting strip between the curb and sidewalk, thus buffering the pedestrian from moving traffic and the reconstruction of the sidewalk in the setback area. Buildings should be required to be located at the property line which in time, with the streetscape improvements, will transform this auto-oriented strip into a more urban downtown street. Until an opportunity to underground the power lines occurs, street trees for A Street SE should be selected to fit under the power lines while still providing a visually prominent tree canopy.

Cross Street should also be improved for functional and aesthetic

reasons. Beginning with the gateway at Auburn Way, Cross Street links to 3rd Street SW and will experience increased traffic with the construction of the overpass at that link.

Today the properties along Cross Street are underused economically, and the street itself lacks sidewalks in places and has no landscaping. Properties on the north and south sides of the street are identified as the best locations for both the hotel/conference center project and for the development of a Class A office project. It will be important to design the improvements to include ample streetscape improvements including sidewalks, landscaping, and gateway treatments at both ends.

### **Public Art Opportunities**

A Street SW would benefit from public art and environmental design applications which enhance the movement, safety and visual experiences of the pedestrian and bicyclists. Public art should be used to create discoveries which heighten, mark and orient pedestrian movement.

There is opportunity to provide civic identity and greening by including an extensive tree planting program and by marking gateways. Another opportunity for a gateway exists at the intersection of A Street SW and Third Street SW. This gateway will become more significant with the redevelopment of the downtown core, especially since this entry to the City aligns with the new Transit Center. As such, this gateway merits a significant wayfinding and welcoming gesture.

The following elements could integrate public art into A Street SW and downtown.

- **Crosswalks:** Special paving or graphics
- **Pedestrian linkages/bicycle paths**
- **Sidewalk paving** with game inserts
- **Tree grates, tree guards**
- **Drainage**
- **Greening:** Tree planting program
- **Gateway opportunity** at Third Street SW

### **Catalyst Projects**

#### **Housing Near Transit Center**

Parcels on the east side of A Street SW have been identified as key locations for downtown residential development in close proximity to the Transit Center. The City, Chamber, and ADA will each

play a role in attracting developers and assisting with land assembly. Housing developments are expected to be one half block or one full block in size, with the potential for a number of individual projects to be developed in this district in the next number of years.

## 1.5.6 East and West Main Residential Districts

### General Description/Existing Conditions

There are four residential neighborhoods that exist on the periphery of downtown in the northwest, southwest, southeast, and northeast quadrants of the Downtown Plan Study Area. All four quadrants can be described as single family residential neighborhoods with multiple-family dwellings scattered throughout. Many of the streets in these areas have planting strips with mature trees separating the sidewalk from the street. The Grade Separation will be located adjacent to the West Main Neighborhood.

These neighborhoods contain some of the City's oldest homes, remnants of Auburn's railroad heritage. Several of them are potentially of historic significance. However, many of these homes are in poor condition and neighborhood stability is threatened by the intrusion of a mix of incompatible commercial and industrial land uses as well as impacts from traffic on SR 18, the BNSF rail line and Main Street itself.

### Future Land Uses/Character

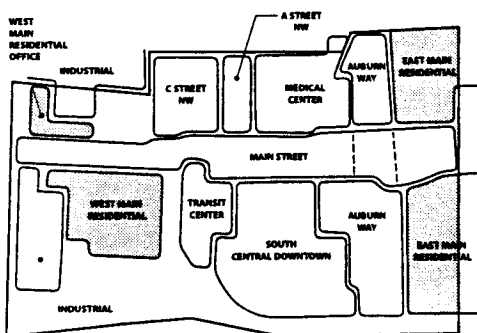
The residential neighborhoods are planned to remain in residential use, although the West Main Residential District north of West Main Street is planned for residential-office use. Design standards will help to protect the existing residences from the potential impacts of adjacent commercial development such as light, glare, cut-through traffic and noise. Standards will also protect historic houses from inappropriate remodeling activities.

Maintaining the ability to walk safely and easily to the Transit Center and the Main Street Core from the West Main Residential District was a concern during the planning and design phases of the Transit Center and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Grade Separation projects. As a result, a pedestrian connection will be provided from the neighborhood west of C Street to the Transit Center.

It will be important to protect the West Main neighborhood from impacts of the operation of the Grade Separation by designing and maintaining a landscaped buffer on the west side of C Street

### Residential Implementation Actions

1. West Side pedestrian connection to the Transit Center
2. Design Standards
3. Home ownership programs
4. Down payment assistance
5. Home repair
6. Active code enforcement



Residential Districts

SW between the Grade Separation and the neighborhood. Special care will also need to be taken regarding the impact of the Grade Separation on the Wayland Arms.

## 1.5.7 Industrial Districts

### General Description/Existing Conditions

There are two industrial areas within the Downtown Plan study area, both west of the BNSF rail line. These areas are characterized by large buildings, including warehouses, and lie on large parcels. The industrial areas are distinct in character and different from downtown due to the nature of their use.

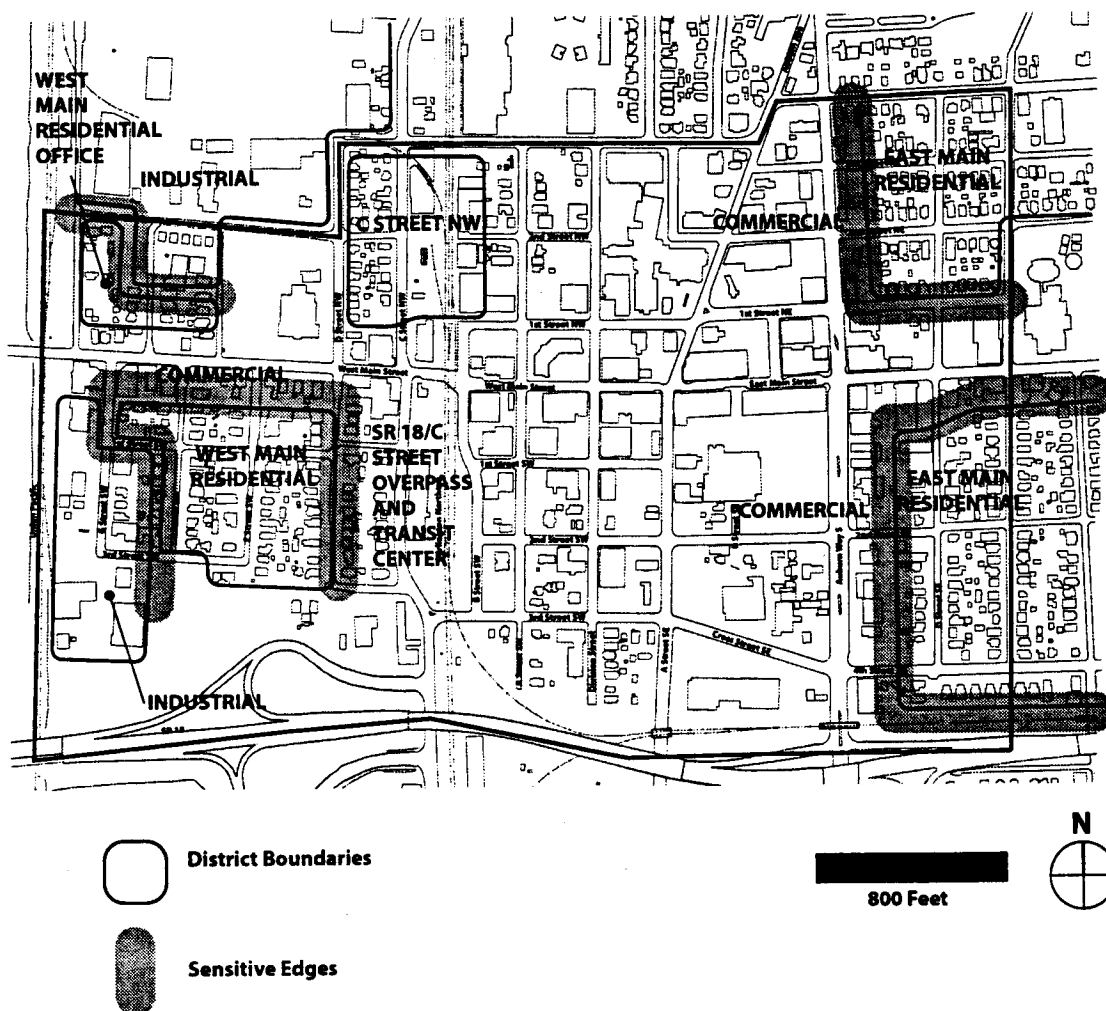
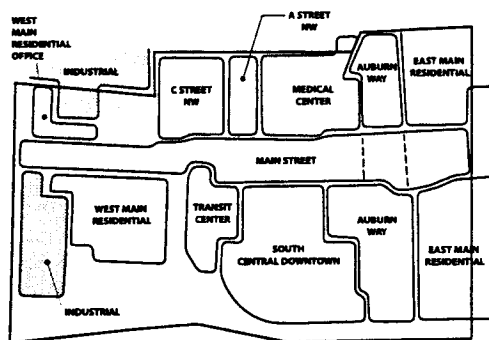
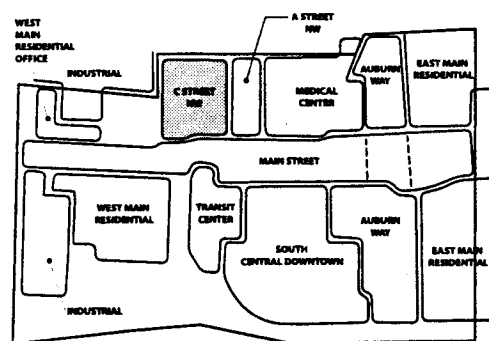


Figure 24: Residential and Industrial Districts



Industrial Districts



Business Park/Light Industrial District

## Future Land Uses/Character

The industrial areas are intended to stay in industrial use and to remain distinct in character from downtown. It is important to maintain the existing development standards that require buffers between industrial and adjacent residential uses. Truck routes should be designated to minimize impacts on adjacent residential uses.

## 1.5.8 C Street NW District

### General Description/Existing Conditions

This district is currently used for a variety of residential, commercial, and industrial uses, and is adjacent to the rail line and industrial districts, as well as the West Auburn High School. Housing stock in the district is older and in dilapidated condition. Existing houses have been converted to industrial/commercial purposes, and new industrial facilities have been built.

### Future Uses/Character

The trend of conversion from single family residential to small commercial and industrial uses would likely continue without intervention. The district will become increasingly less attractive as a residential neighborhood under the current conditions. However, due to its proximity to the Transit Center, City Hall, and West Auburn High School, C Street NW may be an appropriate place for additional commercial and multi-family residential uses. This could serve as a transition between the commercial and mixed use character of the Downtown core, and the industrial areas to the west and north. Comprehensive Plan and/or zoning map amendments to implement these objectives might be appropriate for this area.



## Section 1.6 Implementation Strategy

# Section 1.6 Implementation Strategy

The projects, programs, and policies identified in the two preceding chapters offer the potential for downtown revitalization that will strengthen downtown and allow it to reach its potential as the commercial, cultural, and civic heart of the community. This section outlines ways in which these preceding ideas can be turned into action.

## 1.6.1 Marketing and Implementation Philosophy

When taken in combination the multitude of implementation steps in this section will create a marketing strategy for Downtown Auburn.

This marketing strategy examines the means – that is, the tools, programs, incentives, policies, and other levers – that can be used to achieve development of a particular desired type, size, and character. It is a long-term, proactive process that does not just respond to unmet demand but, rather, involves the shaping of conditions to create and respond to opportunities. Such efforts are the responsibility of both the public and private sectors.

What follows is a marketing strategy that has been used to implement other downtown revitalization plans. The strategy provides a framework for broad participation, and encourages and supports actions that are consistent with the vision and objectives of the community.

The next sections present the key components that should be in place for an implementation program to succeed along with a list of projects recommended in downtown Auburn. Implementation inevitably faces barriers, and an analysis of what these might be and how to overcome them is also included.

It is clear that the projects identified in the downtown plan will be implemented over time and that funding is not identified at this point for the majority of the projects listed here. The City of Auburn would find it difficult to finance the implementation of this plan alone, even over a 20-year period. Nor, can the plan be implemented solely by regulations with the assistance of the occasional capital project.

Given the circumstances, implementation of the Auburn Downtown Plan is not solely the responsibility of the City, but of a part-

nership between the City and a broad cross section of the community. The proposed implementation strategy is based upon the following philosophy:

### **Make a Great Plan**

This plan is designed to be bold and far-reaching in its vision. This clear vision is required to unite the many players who will need to be involved over a long period of time to bring the plan to fruition, for it is difficult to unite people around a plan that is average or lacks excitement and vision.

A great plan is a vision powerful enough to carry the community into a future in which its specific elements are achieved. It boldly goes beyond patching current problems. It is also realistic, firmly grounded in both the market conditions and social mores of the community. It creates a coherent sense of place, generating a climate of community support and the commitment from stakeholders to see it through.

This means there are *many stakeholders* and *multiple projects*, and it relies on *development standards*.

### **Select the Right Leaders**

The plan will have many advocates – those who want to see at least their component projects implemented. Those who work toward implementation are the leaders. Both are necessary, but committed individuals, determined to see the entire plan through, are critical. They may be drawn from government, business, or the community at large. However, there are limits to what elected officials can do. Leadership must come from a balance of the many facets found in the community.

The plan as a whole must also have advocates and leaders working for overall implementation. A small group must coordinate the many component projects and the communication program. This is a matter not just of individual effort but institutional structure – organization – as well.

### **Many, Many Projects**

There are several reasons for having multiple projects. Each plan project brings with it a constituency. In becoming a part of the plan, a project can broaden its initial constituency by adapting to the needs and concerns of others. This is a mutually advantageous situation.

Section 1.6, Implementation Strategy identifies many projects, programs, and policies that will implement the Plan. No one project will revitalize downtown Auburn. Downtown can be likened to an

ecosystem: the diversity of life that exists in downtown is what guarantees its health. If one or a few projects are unsuccessful, the overall revitalization of downtown will not suffer.

Success breeds success. Investors, developers, and lenders seek out environments with market opportunity and areas with prospects for success. When there are many projects moving forward simultaneously, there is enough action to ensure that there will be a stream of success stories even if a few projects slow or fail. The actual number is not as important as the fact that there is a range of projects that will always keep the area moving forward.

### **Many, Many Stakeholders**

Just as multiple projects are required to implement the Plan, the same holds true for stakeholders. Having a broad base of stakeholders is critical. A stakeholder is anyone with an interest in the plan's outcome. This includes as wide as possible a group of individuals, companies, and public and private organizations, as well as government bodies at *all* levels.

In addition to committed leadership and multiple projects, many stakeholders representing a wide range of interests will be required to keep the Plan alive as it is implemented. Stakeholders who will be active in the process include public officials, public employees, business leaders, citizens, representatives of funding agencies and other jurisdictions, special interest organizations, the media, and others. Key partners in the Downtown Plan implementation are the ADA, the Downtown Plan Task Force, the Chamber, major downtown property owners, and the Auburn Regional Medical Center.

### **Communications**

With multiple projects moving forward simultaneously, there is a steady stream of news to report to stakeholders, residents, the development community, lenders, and other sources of help with implementation, as well as the media. This includes advertising success as it happens. The wider the audience, the more possible stakeholders.

### **Supportive Government**

Government commitment to the success of downtown revitalization is another key implementation component. The City of Auburn's commitment to the success of downtown revitalization is exemplified, in good measure, by the City's commitment to organizing and preparing this Downtown Plan.

Local government staff can be instrumental in implementing Down-

town redevelopment. Presently, City planning staff participate and are involved in Downtown revitalization efforts and organizations. More specifically, the City's Planning and Community Development Department has an economic development coordinator. Although committed to citywide economic development efforts, a significant amount of that position's time is spent on downtown revitalization and redevelopment efforts. In many ways the economic development coordinator serves as a development monitor, providing businesses with information and assistance regarding the city's development opportunities and coordinating actions so that a potential investor can be placed in quick contact with key individuals at City Hall to obtain needed information.

Perhaps one of the most important things local government staff can do is to actively listen to individuals expressing concerns about local codes, regulations, and policies and then using this information to determine whether the concerns are legitimate, and recommend changes. In general, many codes are often oriented toward situations involving *new development*, and not so much *redevelopment*. What works for new development may not work well for redevelopment. Listening to concerns and developing or amending codes that provide flexibility in redevelopment efforts are key functions city government can play.

### **Ongoing Review**

Because conditions change, the plan and its implementation strategy will benefit from establishment of a formal, ongoing review process. This will evaluate policies and perceptions of them. It is not intended to give people a chance to change the basic plan, but to adapt the means and specifics so that they remain consistent with the purposes. (In the extreme, if purposes change, that, too, can be addressed.) Such a review is best carried out under the umbrella organization - indeed, it is a task inherent in its coordinating role. To ensure that the Plan stays current and relevant, City staff will, on an annual basis, report to the Planning Commission on progress made toward implementing the Downtown Plan. Appropriate stakeholders should be invited to the meeting when the annual report is given for their input and to determine if amendments to the Downtown Plan might be warranted.

### **Building the Right Image**

This last principle may be as important as all of the others combined. The perception that downtown Auburn is a good place to invest without getting lost in a bureaucratic maze is crucial. The City must offer a friendly, efficient, and professional development review process that will greatly enhance and expedite the implementation process. This image must be built through a concerted

public relations program that is instituted upon Plan adoption and is maintained for a period of years. This will engage the development community and expedite the potential for new partnerships.

## Efficient Use of Limited Resources

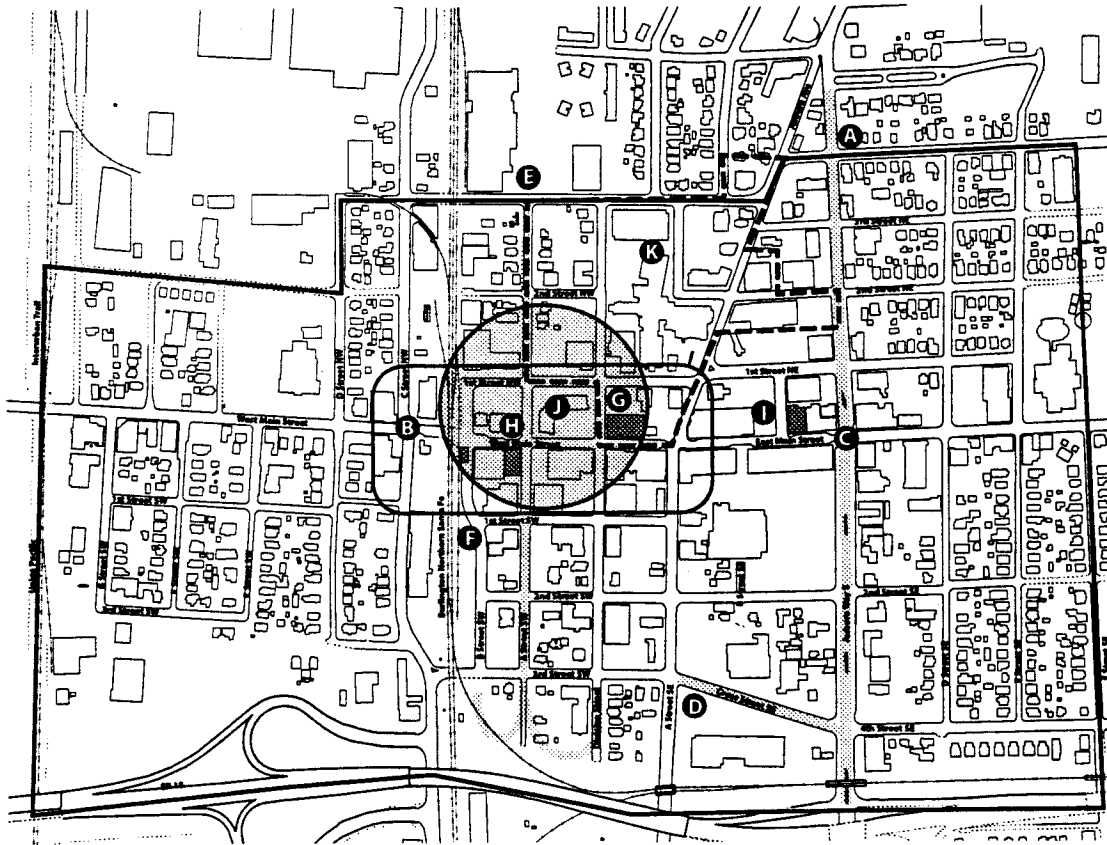
One advantage of multiple projects and breaking larger ones down into smaller pieces is that the pace of implementation can be set to the availability of resources; the key is to have to undo as little as possible of each previous step. Financial resources can be leveraged. In general, public investment should increase tax base and promote employment. These incremental revenues can be plowed back as investment in public projects, and these projects can leverage private ones.

### 1.6.2 Implementation Actions

The following section identifies all of the Plan implementation actions as a whole, by priority, and with a detailed description of each action. Actions are described by category: Policies, Regulations, Programs; Transportation/Street Improvements; Public Facilities; and Public and Private Catalyst Projects. This represents a range of possibilities for implementation. The City of Auburn has not endorsed or committed to implementation of all of these items.

**Table E: Actions by Task Force Priority**

Actions by Task Force Priority	Priorities		
	1 (0-3 years)	2 (3-6 years)	3 (6-9 years)
Policies, Regulations, Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Use Code Revisions</li> <li>• Sign Code Revisions</li> <li>• Downtown Image Program</li> <li>• Signage Improvement and Assistance Program</li> <li>• Downtown Street Design Standards</li> <li>• Downtown Street Lighting Program</li> <li>• Design Guidelines / Standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facade Improvement Program</li> <li>• Local Lender Program / Lending Pool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downtown Tree Planting Program</li> <li>• Downtown Art Program</li> </ul>
Transportation / Street Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Auburn Way Street Improvements</li> <li>• C St/Main St Intersection Improvements</li> <li>• Main St/Auburn Way Intersection Improvements</li> <li>• Cross St Improvements</li> <li>• A St NW and SW</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bicycle Facility on W Main</li> <li>• Auburn Ave/A St SE Improvements</li> </ul>	
Public Facilities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downtown Gateways Project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E Main St Improvements</li> <li>• Link E Main St with Performing Arts Center</li> </ul>
Public and Private Catalyst Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tavern Block Redevelopment</li> <li>• Truitt Building Transit-oriented Development</li> <li>• JC Penney Building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hotel/Conference Center</li> <li>• Class A Office Development</li> <li>• Revitalize Block across from City Hall</li> <li>• Housing near Transit Center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infill Project at corner of Safeway site</li> </ul>



### Physical Improvements

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>A</b> Auburn Way Street Improvements    | <b>G</b> Tavern Block Redevelopment                                  |
| <b>B</b> C St / Main Street Intersection   | <b>H</b> Truitt Building/Pastime Tavern Transit-Oriented Development |
| <b>C</b> Main St / Auburn Way Improvements | <b>I</b> JC Penney Building Redevelopment                            |
| <b>D</b> Cross St Improvements             | <b>J</b> Civic Center Master Plan                                    |
| <b>E</b> A St NW and SW Improvements       | <b>K</b> Medical Center Master Plan                                  |
| <b>F</b> Transit Center and Parking Garage |  |

 Downtown Plan Study Area

 800 Feet



Figure 25: Priority Projects Map

## Land Use Code Revisions

The Downtown Study Area consists of several zoning districts. The predominant zoning district in the Downtown Study area is C-2 (Central Business District). C-2 is the most compatible and consistent zoning district with the vision for Downtown Auburn. It allows land uses envisioned in this Plan for the Downtown and, perhaps more importantly, prohibits those that are not. The C-2 district also incorporates many development standards that fit the urban design vision. For this reason, much of the Downtown was rezoned from C-3 to C-2 with the adoption of this Plan.

Other parts of the Downtown study area are not zoned C-2. These and other areas not zoned C-2 should be reviewed and monitored following the Plan's adoption to determine whether part or all of their inclusion into the C-2 District would also be appropriate to prohibit undesired development in key areas.

Zoning amendments are the responsibility of the City of Auburn and necessary amendments should be implemented soon after they are identified to enable development consistent with the Downtown Urban Design Vision and lessen the likelihood of that which is not.

### Benefits

- Enable the development of mixed-use buildings and multiple-family dwellings in a broader area of downtown
- Phase out industrial and heavy commercial uses that are incompatible with the downtown Plan and Vision
- Implement uses and standards that are compatible with the Urban Design Vision

### Problems Solved

- Limits new development of strip and auto-oriented uses in downtown that are incompatible with the Urban Design Vision

### Steps Required

1. Prepare zoning code amendments
2. Planning Commission review and recommendations
3. City Council review and adoption

## Category

Policies, Regulations, and Programs

## Responsibility

City of Auburn

## Duration

On-going

## Estimated Cost

Staff time, Planning Department

## **Category**

Policies, Regulations, and Programs

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn

## **Duration**

On-going

## **Estimated Cost**

Code Revisions: Staff time,  
Planning and Public  
Works Departments  
Signage Program:  
\$50,000+

## **Sign Code Revisions/Downtown Information Signage Program**

The sign code should be revised to require signage that is consistent with the Downtown Urban Design Vision. Additionally, the City should develop a coordinated signage program for Downtown for directional and informational signage.

### **Benefits/Problems Solved**

- Revised signage requirements will improve key streetscapes
- Coordinated signage will decrease clutter and improve City identity and image
- Parking and destination locations will be more easily located

### **Steps Required**

1. Prepare zoning code amendments
2. Planning Commission review and recommendations
3. City Council review and adoption

## Facade Improvement Program

A facade improvement program will help to improve the pedestrian-friendly environment downtown and overall quality of development. This program would provide assistance to building and business owners with facade maintenance and improvement. This program should be coordinated with the Landmark Revolving Loan Fund and Special Valuation program that are available for restoration of historic properties and designated landmarks.

Other cities have used the following or similar programs:

The City, business organizations and financial institutions work together to establish a facade improvement program. The financial institutions provide low-interest loans for qualifying facade and maintenance improvements. The maximum loan amount is \$10,000 at 6% interest for 5 years. The interest rate may be reduced in proportion to the level of private investment. A committee (composition to be determined) evaluates the loan application and advises staff, and design assistance may be provided to the developer. Thirty loans would be anticipated with these estimated costs.

### Benefits

- Improves the pedestrian-friendly environment downtown and overall quality of development
- Makes Main Street retail district and other portions of downtown more cohesive and attractive
- Provides financial incentives to business or property owners who might otherwise be unable to fund these improvements.

### Problem Solved

- Many buildings in the Main Street core have false facades, plastic awnings, and are in poor condition, which does not convey an image of community pride/investment/prosperity

### Steps Required

1. Determine funding sources
2. Determine roles of City of Auburn, Auburn Downtown Association, Chamber of Commerce, and lending institutions and form partnerships
3. Publicize, solicit participants, and educate property and business owners
4. Implement

## Category

Policies, Regulations, and Programs

## Responsibility

City of Auburn

Auburn Downtown Association

Chamber of Commerce

## Duration

Planning & Program

Design: 9 months

Implementation: 3 years for facade improvements and 5 - 8 years for loan repayment

## Estimated Cost

1st year: \$100,000

2nd year: \$84,000 which combined would support 20 loans

3rd year: \$70,000 which would add another 10 loans

## **Category**

Policies, Regulations, and Programs

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn

Auburn Downtown Association

Chamber of Commerce

## **Duration**

Prepare plans: 6 months

Implementation: ongoing, with specified \$ available each year

## **Estimated Cost**

\$35,000/year for 3 years

Specific advertising on media campaigns would be above these costs

## **Downtown Image Program**

This element will propose a multi-pronged Public Relations program which will be used to recruit investment and improve the image of downtown as a place to visit, shop, live and work. A consultant would prepare the program for the City, Chamber and ADA to implement. An image program should use a variety of media to convey information on downtown to interested parties. This might include brochures, websites, press releases, presentation materials for speaking engagements, and city and downtown gateways. Incentives to developers or property owners to make building improvements or create new, high quality developments should be clearly described.

### **Benefits**

- Creates positive investment climate
- Actively shapes image of downtown as a place to do business
- Creates positive downtown image
- Adds directional and welcome signs that announce "you are here"

### **Problems Solved**

- Lack of knowledge of Downtown Auburn
- Wayfinding

### **Coordination**

Work with ADA and Chamber of Commerce to ensure consistency of effort and non-overlap.

### **Steps Required**

1. Determine roles of City of Auburn, Auburn Downtown Association, Chamber of Commerce, and form partnerships
2. Determine funding sources
3. Hire consultant to design program
4. Identify development incentives created or encouraged by the Downtown Plan. Select media to relay this information to potential developers and property owners.
5. Implement

## **Signage Improvement and Assistance Program**

This type of program could be set up in a similar fashion to the facade improvement program. It may be possible to combine the programs.

Assistance would be provided to business owners wanting to improve the appearance of their signage. New signage would be consistent with revised sign code.

A financial support program to encourage new signage consistent with the Code could be implemented. Could provide a maximum of \$2,000 per property on a one-time basis to assist business owners with sign-code compliance. Other incentives would include a waiver of signage permit fees, purchase or lease financing programs with a designated lender, no loan or processing fees, and a five year amortization of payments, and other incentives.

### **Benefits**

- Improved sign quality increases overall downtown attractiveness and quality of development
- Improved streetscapes and impression of downtown

### **Problems Solved**

- Coordinated signage will decrease clutter and improve City identity and image on key corridors

### **Coordination**

- Would help ensure consistency with revised sign code
- Could be coordinated with the facade improvement program

### **Steps Required**

1. Revise Sign Code
2. Determine funding sources
3. Inventory existing signs
4. Identify a lender for the program
5. Publicize, solicit participants, and educate property owners

## **Category**

Policies, Regulations, and Programs

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn

Auburn Downtown Association

Chamber of Commerce

## **Duration**

Planning: 9 months

Implementation: 5 years

## **Estimated Cost**

\$200,000, Staff time to administer

## **Category**

Policies, Regulations, and Programs

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn

## **Duration**

9 Months

## **Estimated Cost**

Staff time, Public Works and Planning Departments

## **Downtown Street Design Standards**

Downtown street design standards should be developed to ensure that future street improvements, both publicly and privately funded, will implement the Downtown Plan and Urban Design Vision.

Elements of street design standards include:

- Sidewalk corridors, including furnishings
- Curbs/curb ramps
- Driveways
- Crosswalks
- Pedestrian lighting
- Driveway apron design
- Street corner specifications
- Public transit infrastructure needs
- Other street development standards

### **Benefits**

- Ensures balanced function of streets for both pedestrians and autos, consistent with the Downtown Urban Design Vision
- Improved aesthetics and comfort for the pedestrian
- Improved downtown visual quality
- Pedestrian safety

### **Problems Solved**

- Downtown Auburn less automobile-dependent
- Bring streetscape quality and scale into accord with Downtown Urban Design Vision, Plan and function.

### **Steps Required**

1. Develop detailed downtown street standards, based on the guidance provided in this Plan in Section 1.4. Street Improvements/Transportation Policies
2. Review with Public Works committee and Planning Commission
3. City Council adoption

## **Local Lender Program/Lending Pool**

The City of Auburn should take a leadership role in establishing and implementing a local lending pool program targeted toward Downtown revitalization. The City must aggressively recruit and convene representatives from lending institutions, particularly those in a position to make lending decisions, and educate them about the Downtown, its redevelopment potential, and the City's commitment to implementing successful revitalization. All of this should be done with the goal of establishing a local lending pool program.

Under this program the City would obtain commitment from a number of local banks to provide loans for local priority projects and to hold the loans in the bank's portfolio. Such loans would be subject to the same performance as any other loan.

Then the City could recruit a developer who could obtain the loans if they met the specific loan criteria.

A local lender program/lending pool could have additional benefits. It could help increase lenders' exposure and access to stakeholders. For example, lenders could be brought into development processes earlier in the project formulation stage and positively influence a proposal's fiscal characteristics at an early stage.

### **Problems Solved**

- Streamline project development and financing phases

### **Steps Required**

1. Research potential lending programs
2. Identify banks willing to participate
3. Prioritize downtown projects
4. Distribute information on desired projects and financing options to the development community

## **Category**

Policies, Regulations, and Programs

## **Responsibility**

Chamber of Commerce

ADA

City of Auburn

Local banks

## **Duration**

Prepare program: 6 months, up to 10 years to implement

## **Estimated Cost**

Staff time, Economic Development Coordinator and Planning Staff to prepare and implement program

## **Category**

Policies, Regulations, and Programs

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn

## **Duration**

Prepare program: 9 months

Implementation: coordinated with streetscape improvements over phases, 10 years

## **Estimated Cost**

\$2000 - 4000 / light

Construction costs depend upon street conditions and other factors

## **Downtown Street Lighting Program**

A downtown street lighting program should analyze street lighting needs for downtown for both safety and as an amenity. Based upon the analysis, street lighting needs should be prioritized and coordinated.

Pedestrian-scaled lighting plays an important role in the streetscape by providing a softer light and better ambiance than that typically used for automobiles. The placement, style, details, and character of pedestrian-scale lighting, in concert with trees, awnings, and building facades, defines the streetscape. As a vertical, repeating element, pedestrian-scale lighting narrows the streetscape for the automobile driver and with other streetscape elements, creates a pedestrian zone that is separate from moving traffic.

Pedestrian-scale lighting is typically used in conjunction with overhead roadway lighting and is 12 to 14 feet in height. Maintenance requirements of lighting should be evaluated before selection.

### **Benefits/Problems Solved**

- Improves aesthetics of streetscape
- Improves functional use of street by providing light specifically intended for pedestrians
- Makes the street safer
- Lightens dark areas for pedestrians
- Adds a cohesive element to the streetscape

### **Coordination**

This program would take place in coordination with street design standards and streetscape improvements throughout downtown Auburn, including Auburn Way, Auburn Avenue/A Street SE, A Street SW/NW and East and West Main Streets and in all public parking lots. Maintenance needs and staff support should be coordinated with the Public Works Maintenance and Operations staff during program design and installation.

### **Steps Required**

1. Define needs: survey of downtown street lighting standards and appropriate locations
2. Prepare draft street lighting standards & improvement plan
3. Construction in phases, coordinated with other efforts

## **Downtown Tree Planting Program**

Street trees are another key element which will improve the overall character of downtown Auburn. A repeating vertical element that helps to define the street, trees also increase property values while adding to the attractiveness of businesses and adding to the overall cohesiveness of the downtown streetscapes. A comprehensive tree planting program should include extensive planning and preparation to minimize long term costs and maintenance and to maximize benefit to the downtown. Specific attention should be given to selecting low-maintenance species; identifying situations where ground covers, vines or shrubs are more appropriate than trees; and using design and construction techniques that provide a healthy environment for root growth, thus reducing the chance for damage to surrounding hard surfaces.

### **Benefits/Problems Solved**

- Aesthetically pleasing, trees provide variety while enhancing and unifying downtown character
- Shade in summer cools the air
- Trees have educational value to younger people
- Trees help clean the air and soak up stormwater
- Trees soften the urban environment

### **Coordination**

A street tree program should be implemented in coordination with the street lighting program, street design standards and streetscape improvements. A street tree program would be implemented over time in coordination with public and private development.

1. Research issues of cost and maintenance associated with a street tree program.
2. Identify potential locations for trees and/or other vegetation
3. Prepare street tree plan
4. Planning Commission review and recommendations
5. City Council review and adoption
6. Implement in phases over time

## **Category**

Policies, Regulations, and Programs

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn

## **Duration**

Prepare program:

9 months

Implementation:

coordinated with streetscape improvements

## **Estimated Cost**

Parks, Planning and Public Works Departments Staff time to implement and maintain

## **Category**

Policies, Regulations, and Programs

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn

## **Duration**

Prepare program:

9 months

Implementation:

Up to 10 years, coordinated with streetscape improvements, Transit Center and other projects

## **Estimated Cost**

1% of individual capital projects budgets plus additional funding for special projects

## **Downtown Art Program**

The 1990 Downtown Design Master Plan explained the role of public art:

"Public art can do much more than merely provide urban decoration. It can play a larger, more integral role in civic revitalization. Public art can make us more aware of our surroundings, reinforce the design character of our streets, parks and buildings, commemorate special events, provide useful information, and helps us to understand who we are and what is special about our community."

This project would be an expansion of the existing City Art Program, which has placed art downtown and throughout the City. The expanded program will identify opportunities to integrate public art into buildings, streets, landscapes, and large-scale infrastructure projects.

### **Benefits/Problems Solved**

- Enhances public space and create opportunities for social interaction and cultural enrichment
- Helps address downtown identity problem

### **Coordination**

This program will be coordinated with downtown streetscape improvements, the Transit Center, the Grade Separation, and the Medical Center, as well as parking garages and other new developments.

### **Steps Required**

1. Arts Commission develops Downtown Work Program, including an implementation process
2. Implement in phases over time

## **Enforcement of Policies and Codes**

Improved enforcement of proposed policies and codes in downtown Auburn can help to ensure that needed improvements take place and correct existing enforcement needs.

### **Benefits/Problems Solved**

- More code enforcement staff would help to ensure that implementation of the downtown plan is taking place.
- Develop and implement a continuum of response from advice or warning, up to legal action

### **Coordination**

- The role of code enforcement staff is to ensure correct implementation of the downtown plan

### **Steps Required**

1. City Council ongoing approval and budget allocation
2. Hire additional code enforcement staff

## **Category**

Policies, Regulations, and Programs

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn

## **Duration**

Ongoing

## **Estimated Cost**

Staff salary cost

## **Category**

Policies, Regulations, and Programs

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn

## **Duration**

Ongoing

## **Estimated Cost**

Staff salary cost

## **Designate Downtown as an Urban Center**

The City of Auburn may wish to have downtown designated an Urban Center in King County's County-Wide Planning Policies. To designate downtown an Urban Center, estimated growth targets for housing and employment must be established, and downtown would need to comply with King County criteria for Urban Center designation.

### **Benefits/Problems Solved**

- Having downtown Auburn designated as an Urban Center makes it eligible for funding for downtown projects and implementation
- Can strengthen downtown by requiring it to meet growth targets for population and employment

### **Coordination**

- Could be coordinated through economic development staff

### **Steps Required**

1. Establish housing and employment growth targets
2. Identify how to comply with King County criteria
3. Make formal request to PSRC for Urban Center designation

## **Downtown Parking Strategy**

A parking strategy is recommended for downtown Auburn to assist in redeveloping a more efficient and active downtown. A 1996 Parking Study for downtown Auburn found that two strategies would improve parking in downtown Auburn: providing shared parking opportunities and reducing parking requirements.

Many individual surface parking lots serve individual uses and establishments within downtown Auburn. Costly and inefficient because of their expansive use of land, surface parking lots should be studied to determine where shared parking could take place, particularly near the retail core and the Transit Center.

Additionally, public/private partnerships could be formed to develop parking structures. Potential locations for shared parking structures have been identified in this plan. Acquiring property, designing and constructing parking garages could be initiated by the City. Developers could obtain required parking spaces in downtown by participating in a Local Improvement District (LID) to contribute toward the costs of a nearby parking structure.

### **Benefits/Problems Solved**

- Shared parking and parking structures are a more efficient use of land and resources
- Shared parking and parking structures help make an active downtown
- Surface parking lots are costly and inefficient because of their expansive use of land

### **Coordination**

- Could be coordinated through economic development staff

### **Steps Required**

1. Explore shared parking concept with potential private partners
2. Determine major costs, including land acquisition, demolition, and construction
3. Investigate funding sources, such as Local Improvement Districts (LIDs), and management approaches, such as a parking authority
4. Prepare a parking strategy
5. Planning Commission review and recommendation
6. City Council review and adoption
7. Implement in phases, over time

## **Category**

Policies, Regulations, and Programs

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn

## **Duration**

Ongoing

## **Estimated Cost**

Staff time for development of parking strategy, Construction costs to be determined

## Category

Policies, Regulations and Programs

## Responsibility

City of Auburn

## Duration

Plan: 2 years

Implementation: On-going

## Estimated Cost

Staff time

Plan: \$50,000

## Historic Preservation

Preservation of historic buildings in downtown will help to maintain its unique scale and character. To accomplish this, historic preservation planning should include completion of a downtown building inventory and prioritization for landmarking or restoration; inclusion of historic data in the permit tracking database; providing information to property owners about financial incentives and technical assistance for restoring their properties; and developing design standards that encourage restoration of original facades and that protect historic buildings and residential neighborhoods from inappropriate renovations or construction. Coordinating these efforts with economic development programs will improve their efficacy. Preparation of a historic preservation plan would pull all the many efforts together.

### Benefits

- Preserves history of Auburn
- Maintains unique character of downtown
- Improves condition of existing buildings and housing stock

### Problems Solved

- Careful evaluation saves valuable historic buildings that might otherwise be destroyed
- Poor maintenance or inappropriate building changes are corrected

### Coordination

Coordination with economic development efforts is vital. The inventory and evaluation, design standards, façade improvement program and permit tracking steps should be coordinated with the new wave of downtown development.

## Steps Required

1. Complete inventory of historic buildings.  
Identify priority properties to become Auburn Historic Landmarks.
2. Provide inventory and technical assistance information to property owners
3. Prepare design standards
4. Adopt state historic building code, and/or amend existing code to allow increased flexibility for restoration of historic buildings
5. Input historic information into permit tracking system and SEPA process
6. Prepare comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan

## **Main Street and Auburn Way Intersection Improvements**

Intersection improvements planned for Auburn Way and Main Street are part of the larger Auburn Way street improvements project. Proposed improvements include adding textured pavement and narrowing the Main Street intersection by using corner bulbs. A split phase signal to accommodate left turns from Main onto Auburn Way should be explored.

### **Benefits/Problems Solved**

- Helps unify Main Street to east and west of Auburn Way
- Left turns from Main onto Auburn Way accommodated by split phase signal
- Alerts drivers to the fact that they are in downtown

### **Coordination**

This project will be coordinated with the Auburn Way improvements project.

### **Steps Required**

1. Prepare downtown street standards
2. Include and prioritize project in the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) and 6-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
3. Secure funding
4. Design project
5. Prepare final cost estimate
6. Construct project

### **Category**

Transportation/Street  
Improvements

### **Responsibility**

City of Auburn

### **Duration**

One construction season

### **Estimated Cost**

\$200,000

## **Category**

Transportation/Street Improvements

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn

## **Duration**

One construction season

## **Estimated Cost**

Funded at \$1.6 million

## **Cross Street Improvements**

Cross Street should be improved for both functional and aesthetic reasons. Cross Street is currently an auto-oriented street which lacks pedestrian facilities including sidewalks in certain locations. Beginning with the gateway at Auburn Way, Cross Street links to 3rd Street SW and will experience increased traffic with the construction of the ramp and Transit Center at that link. Another factor contributing to a need for improvements are the adjacent properties, which have been identified as the best locations for a hotel/conference center project and a Class A office project.

The City recently received Transportation Improvement Board funding for improvements to Cross Street. The 3rd Street/Cross Street project will extend from Division Street to Auburn Way South. It adds capacity by widening the link from the 3rd Street Grade Separation project to Auburn Way to five lanes and includes signal modifications. Design consideration should be given to access management, and improving the pedestrian environment through pedestrian friendly features such as pedestrian lighting and intersection pavement treatment.

### **Benefits/Problems Solved**

- Improved image and access to key redevelopment site
- Improved safety and enhanced traffic flow through access management
- Improved pedestrian environment through placement of lighting, landscape, sidewalks and textured pavers

### **Coordination**

This project would be completed through the coordination of the Auburn Way improvements, downtown street lighting program and street tree program.

### **Steps Required**

1. Include and prioritize project in the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) and 6-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
2. Secure funding
3. Design project
4. Prepare final cost estimate
5. Construct project

## **A Street NW and SW**

A Street SW/NW is planned to be improved as a minor arterial in the City of Auburn Transportation Plan, with a new extension between 3rd NW and 15th NW, thus linking downtown with the northern retail area of the City. Extension of A Street NW will provide a much-needed continuous north/south route through downtown and relieve some traffic pressures on C Street NW, Auburn Avenue and Auburn Way North. From Main Street to 3rd Street NW, the existing A street NW will be upgraded. The street is narrow in this older neighborhood location and design and reconstruction work should be sensitive to the adjacent properties. A Street SW will be the front door to the Transit Center and the street that links the Transit Center to the rest of downtown. A Street SW is designed to create a loop that will connect with S. Division Street where the two streets approach the Stampede Pass line. One of the catalyst housing projects has also been identified on A Street SW.

A Street SW from Main south to 3rd SW was reconstructed during construction of the Transit Center and the 3rd Street SW Grade Separation. The street is envisioned as a pedestrian-oriented urban street that also carries significant amounts of vehicular traffic. Pedestrian and streetscape improvements will include the reconstruction of the sidewalks, inclusion of street trees, plantings, and decorative lighting, with utilities placed underground. Gateways should be enhanced at the intersection of A and 3rd Streets NW, and at the intersection of A and 3rd Streets SW.

Improvements north of Main Street, the loop portion south of 3rd Street SW, and pedestrian amenities have not yet been funded. The portion of A Street from Main Street to 14<sup>th</sup> Street NE is included on the 2001-2006 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Funding and construction of this street will be key to providing access to redeveloping parts of downtown.

### **Benefits/Problems Solved**

- Improved investment climate
- Improved pedestrian environment and urban form
- Balanced needs of vehicular traffic, pedestrian safety and access, and appearance and appeal of downtown
- This project will need to be coordinated with Transit Center design and construction

### **Coordination**

3rd Street SW Grade Separation, downtown gateway projects

## **Category**

Transportation/Street Improvements

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn

## **Duration**

Two construction seasons

## **Estimated Cost**

A St. SW - construction complete, Main to 3rd Street SW except for A St. SW and 2nd St. SW traffic signal - \$150,000

### **Steps Required**

1. Include and prioritize project in the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) and 6-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
2. Secure funding
3. Design project
4. Prepare final cost estimate
5. Construct project

## **Category**

Transportation/Street  
Improvements

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn

## **Duration**

1 construction season

## **Estimated Cost**

\$400,000

## **Transportation**

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility on West Main**

Bike and pedestrian improvements on West Main would link the Main Street core to West Auburn High School and the Interurban Trail. Decisions will need to be made regarding the exact location and configuration of bike lanes. Adding a bike lane may require removal of one side of on-street parking. Existing street trees are in poor condition, and have raised and buckled the sidewalk. Both sidewalks and trees need to be replaced, using a planting method such as root barriers or structural soil, that will eliminate such damage in the future.

### **Benefits/Problems Solved**

- Improved safety for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Improve links between downtown and other public facilities
- Improve the overall non-motorized transportation system

### **Coordination with other Projects**

This project will be coordinated with Main Street/C Street NW improvements and Transit Center construction.

### **Steps Required**

1. Include and prioritize project in the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) and 6-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
2. Secure funding
3. Design project
4. Prepare final cost estimate
5. Construct project

## Transportation

### Auburn Avenue/A Street SE Streetscape Improvements

This project includes the design and construction of streetscape improvements which will be implemented over time through private development. Auburn Avenue improvements will be coordinated with the Medical Center Master Plan.

A Street SE is an area that is currently underused, and therefore will likely see significant redevelopment in both the near term and long term. A Street SE currently does not meet the urban design vision for downtown, and there are no planned public capacity or safety improvements for this street. Streetscape improvements would include creation of a planting strip and the reconstruction of the sidewalk in the setback area. Street trees for A Street SE should be selected to fit under the power lines, while still providing a prominent tree canopy.

The City needs to prepare a specific streetscape design plan to ensure that these improvements are implemented as private properties along A Street SE redevelop. In general, buildings should be built to the property line, however, a 10' building setback or easement may be required along private property to gain additional space for streetscape improvements.

#### Benefits

- Brings this key street into accord with the Downtown Urban Design Vision
- Street more pedestrian-friendly

#### Problems Solved

- Improves downtown image and helps revitalize this currently under-used area in the core of downtown
- Balances needs of vehicular traffic, pedestrian safety and access, and appearance and appeal of downtown

#### Coordination

Auburn Avenue streetscape improvements will be coordinated with the Medical Center Master Plan. All streetscape improvements will be coordinated with downtown street design standards.

## Category

Transportation/Street Improvements

## Responsibility

City of Auburn

## Duration

Streetscape Design: 9 months

Implementation: Ongoing with redevelopment

## Estimated Cost

\$400,000

#### Steps Required

1. City Council prioritizes and allocates budget
2. Funding sources identified
3. Project included in Capital Facilities Plan (CFP)
4. Finite cost estimates provided
5. Identify project manager
6. Project design
7. Construction

## **Category**

Transportation /Street Improvements

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn

## **Duration**

Two construction seasons

## **Estimated Cost**

Funded through the Ramp project

## **3rd Street SW Improvements**

In conjunction with construction of the SR 18/C Street SW Interchange, 3rd Street SW will be improved to solidify and create an identity for the South Central District. Improvements include the Grade Separation, public art, landscaping and street lighting.

### **Benefit/Problems Solved**

- Improved traffic flow as a result of the SR 18/C Street SW Interchange and access to the Transit Center
- Creates a natural gateway into Downtown

### **Coordination**

3rd Street SW improvements will be constructed as part of the Grade Separation project. Amenities such as landscaping and public art were not funded, and sources for these should be sought. Design of these elements should be coordinated between the planning and engineering staffs, the Arts Commission and the adjacent neighborhood

### **Steps Required**

1. Completion of the SR 18/C Street SW Grade Separation
2. Pursue additional funding for other elements

## **East Main Street Streetscape Improvements**

By continuing existing Main Street improvements east of Auburn Way, East Main Street would be better linked to the downtown core. Full Main Street treatment may not be necessary - extended facilities such as signage, lighting, landscaping, or banners may be sufficient to help make Main Street more cohesive with the improved section. This will help increase foot traffic to businesses on the east side of Auburn Way.

### **Benefits**

- Better linkage to core from east side of downtown
- Improved retail vitality east of Main Street with increased business visibility
- Connection to Performing Art Center

### **Problems Solved**

- Low viability of East Main Street businesses

### **Coordination**

This project would be coordinated with Auburn Way improvements.

### **Steps Required**

1. Include and prioritize project in the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) and 6-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
2. Secure funding
3. Design project
4. Prepare final cost estimate
5. Construct project

### **Category**

Transportation /Street Improvements

### **Responsibility**

City of Auburn

### **Duration**

Planning - 9 months  
Design and Construction  
-1 Year

### **Estimated Cost**

\$400,000

## **Category**

Transportation/Street  
Improvements

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn

## **Duration**

2 years

## **Estimated Cost**

\$3,000,000

## **Auburn Way Street Improvements**

Auburn Way is a key corridor and entry to downtown. As a main travel route into and through downtown, Auburn Way presents a poor impression and relates very little in form and function to the Main Street Core. Improving the aesthetics of Auburn Way is essential to improving downtown Auburn and to differentiating it from the other strip development on Auburn Way outside downtown.

The addition of landscaping, decorative lighting, widened sidewalks, selective center planted medians and access management will complement the decreases over time in the height and size of pole signs and the redevelopment of key gateway sites. After these improvements are made, the unifying element will become the landscaping, decorative lighting, and signage, both public and private. Improved building design will be accomplished over time as the design guidelines are implemented.

The project may be accomplished in 2 phases: north of Main and south of Main Street. The northern half would include the programmed improvements between 2nd and 4th Streets NE and the Auburn Way South/ 4th Street NE intersection improvements.

## **Benefits/Problems Solved**

- Gateways and improvements provide greater downtown identity
- Improved aesthetics
- Improved functionality and comfort for the pedestrian
- Improved investment image and climate
- Auburn Way will be less of a barrier to pedestrian travel both along Auburn Way and in crossing at East Main, 2nd Street SE, and Cross Street
- Some negative aspects of strip development will be alleviated
- Will contribute to making Auburn Way "feel" like part of downtown

## **Coordination**

This project will incorporate elements of the signage improvement program, downtown street design standards, a downtown street lighting program, a downtown street tree program, and a downtown art program.

## **Required Steps**

1. Include and prioritize project in the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) and 6-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
2. Secure funding
3. Design project
4. Prepare final cost estimate
5. Construct project

## **Link East Main with Performing Arts Center**

The Performing Arts Center has the potential of being a significant pedestrian generator and destination in downtown. It can be better linked with Main Street in several ways. An intensive landscaping and signage program, the removal of physical barriers to the facility, and a painting scheme, perhaps using brighter colors, could emphasize the various elements of the facility, making it easily identifiable from a distance.

### **Benefits**

- Improved access to Main Street businesses to and from the Performing Arts Center

### **Problems Solved**

- Corrects missing link between Main Street businesses and the Performing Arts Center

### **Coordination**

This project will be coordinated with the East Main Street Streetscape Improvements and with Auburn School District.

### **Steps Required**

1. Include project in the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP)
2. City Council prioritizes and allocates budget
3. Secure funding
4. Prepare final cost estimate

## **Category**

Public Facilities

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn

## **Duration**

Planning - 9 months

Construction - 1 season

## **Estimated Cost**

\$500,000

## **Category**

Public Facilities

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn

## **Duration**

1 year planning and design, construction over 5 years

## **Estimated Cost**

Planning & Design  
\$100,000;

Construction \$1 million  
over 5 years

## **Downtown Gateways Project**

Gateways will create easily identifiable points at which people will know they have entered downtown. A cluster of trees, signage, or public art elements will function as gateways. Gateway treatment is needed at the following locations:

East Main Street and the Performing Arts Center, Auburn Way at 4th Street NE, Auburn Way at 4th Street SE and railroad bridge, A Street SE and railroad bridge, Auburn Avenue and 3rd Street NE, A Street NW and 3rd Street NW, West Main Street at the Interurban Trail, and the SR 18/C Street Interchange.

### **Benefits/Problems Solved**

- Creates a sense of welcome to downtown
- Helps solve downtown identity problem
- Distinguishes downtown from other neighborhoods
- Establishes the tone for quality downtown development

### **Coordination**

Downtown gateway concepts should be more fully developed during preparation of a citywide gateways program. The downtown gateways project would be implemented through the City Art Program, downtown streetscape improvements, the downtown street tree program, the SR 18/C Street Overpass, and the Transit Center. Gateways would be coordinated with A Street NW improvements, A Street SE improvements, Auburn Avenue improvements, Auburn Way improvements, and East Main Street improvements.

### **Steps Required for Each Gateway Project**

1. City Council prioritizes and allocates budget
2. Prepare citywide gateway program
3. Prioritize downtown gateways and develop concepts for each
4. Design individual gateway projects
5. Pursue funding opportunities

## **Housing Near Transit Center**

Parcels on the east side of A Street SW have been identified as key locations for downtown residential development in close proximity to the Transit Center. The City, Chamber, and ADA will each play a role in attracting developers and assisting with land assembly. Housing developments are expected to be one half block or one full block in size, with the potential for a number of individual projects to be developed in this district in the next number of years.

### **Benefits/Problems Solved**

- Increased residential population in downtown Auburn contributes to overall revitalization
- Meets market demand for downtown housing

### **Coordination**

Local lending pool

### **Steps Required**

1. Determine appropriate and viable uses
2. Assess purchasing/acquisition options
3. Identify funding options
4. Prepare Request for Proposals (RFP)
5. Form public-private partnership
6. Partnering - attract developers
7. Design project
8. Construction

## **Category**

Public & Private Catalyst Projects

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn

Private Sector

## **Duration**

Planning - 1 year

Design - 1 year

Construction - 1 season

## **Estimated Cost**

Will vary with project

## **Category**

Public & Private Catalyst  
Projects

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn  
Private Sector

## **Duration**

Planning - 1 year  
Design - 1 year  
Construction - 1 year

## **Estimated Cost**

Will vary depending on  
scale of project

## **Truitt Building/Pastime**

Redevelopment of the site formerly occupied by the Truitt Building and the Pastime Tavern will fill a gap in Main Street and bring activity to the west end of the Main Street core. The proximity of this corner site to the Transit Center will further bolster its position as a key location in Downtown and will also increase the benefit as these projects begin to act in concert.

This building site is found on the most significant historic block in Downtown. Rehabilitating and reusing the existing building and storefront was not possible, therefore construction of a new building should be harmonious with the adjacent historic structures. Private development should concentrate retail uses on the first floor, with office, residential, or other compatible uses on upper floors.

### **Benefits/Problems Solved**

- Contributes to overall revitalization of downtown
- Brings activity to west end of Main Street retail area
- Fills gap in Main Street retail
- Provides more intense land use near Transit Center and Main Street

### **Coordination**

Local lending pool

### **Steps Required**

1. Work with developer of Truitt/Pastime Tavern site to assure new building design will fit with historic character of Downtown
2. Coordinate design with Sound Transit's adjacent Kiss and Ride facility

## **Hotel/Conference Center**

The Downtown Market Analysis identified the potential for a hotel with small conference facilities to be developed in downtown Auburn near SR 18. Visibility and convenient freeway access are key to the success of a hotel facility. Also, a sizable site is required to meet the needs of the hotel and accompanying parking. Sites on the west side of Auburn Way near the Cross Street intersection would be appropriate for the hotel project, and when combined with public street and gateway improvements, would greatly improve the appearance of the southern entrance to downtown.

### **Benefits/Problem Solved**

- Creates "gateway project"
- Presents quality development
- Provides conference center
- Provides secondary positive economic impact to downtown

### **Coordination**

Local lending pool, Auburn Downtown Association, Chamber of Commerce

### **Steps Required**

1. Identify potential users and developers and their needs
2. Explore ways to involve existing property owners and aggregate parcels
3. Prepare project package which illustrates site potentials, identifies constraints and local incentives
4. Circulate project package among potential investors

## **Category**

Public & Private Catalyst Projects

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn  
Chamber of Commerce  
Auburn Downtown Association  
Private Sector

## **Duration**

2 year planning & design;  
1 year construction

## **Estimated Cost**

Staff time, Economic Development Coordinator and Planning staff  
\$10,000 to prepare project package;  
Private development costs unknown at this point

## **Category**

Public & Private Catalyst  
Projects

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn  
Chamber of Commerce  
Auburn Downtown  
Association  
Private Sector

## **Duration**

Planning & Design - 1  
year

Construction - 1 year

## **Estimated Cost**

Staff time, plus \$10,000  
to prepare project pack-  
age

## **Class A Office Development**

The Downtown Market Analysis identified the demand for Class A office space in Downtown. Like the hotel, sites on the west side of Auburn Way near the intersection with Cross Street are appropriate and easy to access. Many other sites within the downtown core would also be viable Class A Office development sites.

The ownership patterns in downtown Auburn frequently result in contiguous small parcels under multiple ownership. This can pose an obstacle to site assembly that would allow for a larger development that is financially feasible. The City may have a role to play in site assembly to help aggregate contiguous parcels into a sufficient land area to facilitate its development, whether for Class A office space or for other development.

### **Benefits/Problems Solved**

- Assists in overall revitalization of downtown
- Meets projected demand for Class A office space
- Improves downtown image, possibly on a key gateway site

### **Coordination**

Could potentially be catalyst project

### **Steps Required**

1. Identify potential users and developers and their needs
2. Identify potential locations for projects
3. Analyze site assembly needs. Determine if City should undertake a role in site assembly.
4. Prepare project package which illustrates site potentials, identifies constraints and local incentives
5. Circulate project package among potential census and investors
6. Coordination with local lending pool

## **Infill Project on the Corner of Safeway Site**

This project would entail the development of a portion of the Safeway parking lot on the corner of 2nd Street SE and Auburn Way.

### **Benefit**

- Adds land use intensity and building presence in "strip" area

### **Problems Solved**

- Makes Safeway more pedestrian-oriented
- Improve visual quality of Safeway area

### **Coordination**

Coordination would take place with Auburn Way improvements, and the local lending pool.

### **Steps Required**

1. Prepare concepts and incentives for site
2. Contact Safeway
3. Recruit developer

## **Category**

Public & Private Catalyst Projects

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn, Auburn Downtown Association, Chamber of Commerce, Private Sector

## **Duration**

Planning & Recruitment - 1 year

Design and Construction - 1 year

## **Estimated Cost**

Economic Development and Planning Department, Staff time

## **Category**

Public & Private Catalyst  
Projects

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn, Auburn  
Downtown Association,  
Chamber of Commerce,  
Private Sector

## **Duration**

Planning & Recruit Ten-  
ant - 1 year  
Design - 1 year  
Construction - 1 season

## **Estimated Cost**

Will vary depending on  
scale of project

## **JC Penney Building Redevelopment**

The vacant JC Penney Building presents a major gap in the retail district, both physically and psychologically, as vacancies in the retail district can create the impression of decline even when the rest of the district is healthy. Public and private actions which could stimulate the redevelopment of the building include: City or another party's guarantee of a 2nd floor lease which would enable the current owner to secure financing, use of CDBG funds for renovation, and the City or other parties such as local business owners purchasing the building or a partial share in the building. Facade renovations are also needed to make the building appearance more palatable. Additional parking will be necessary to meet the needs of this and other businesses in the vicinity. A shared public/private parking structure should be considered to meet these needs.

### **Benefits/Problems Solved**

- Occupancy of Penney's building contributes to overall revitalization of downtown
- Potentially brings retail "anchor" to downtown Auburn

### **Steps Required**

1. Determine purchase/redevelopment approach
2. Identify future uses
3. Identify public incentives
4. Identify future tenants

## Destination Uses on East Main

East Main Street, between Auburn Way and the Performing Arts Center, has a scarcity of businesses or activities that draw the pedestrian, or even many visitors. This is intensified by the psychological barrier created by the heavy traffic and width of Auburn Way. Streetscape improvements have been recommended to improve the aesthetic experience when travelling this area by foot, bicycle or car. New businesses that create new life on this stretch of Main Street and serve the needs of visitors to the very active Performing Arts Center and Auburn Family Sports Center are critically needed. These might include restaurants, ice cream parlors and other businesses complementary to the existing uses.

### Benefit

- Increases overall vitality of downtown Auburn

### Problems Solved

- Creates opportunity for an entire "evening out" experience on this end of Main Street.
- Improves weak retail on east Main Street

### Coordination

Economic development staff should coordinate potential projects with the Performing Arts Center.

### Steps Required

1. Identify potential users and developers and their needs
2. Prepare project package which illustrates site potentials, identifies constraints and local incentives
3. Circulate project package among potential census and investors

## Category

Public & Private Catalyst Projects

## Responsibility

City of Auburn

Private Sector

Auburn Downtown Association

Chamber of Commerce

## Duration

1 year

## Estimated Cost

Economic Development and Planning staff time

## **Category**

Public & Private Catalyst  
Projects

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn  
Private Sector

## **Duration**

1 year

## **Estimated Cost**

Planning & Economic  
Development staff time

## **Revitalize Block Across from City Hall**

The block across Main Street from City Hall should be upgraded either by facade improvements and stronger tenants, or through redevelopment. The proximity of this block to the Transit Center will make it a highly desirable location for transit-oriented development. Such an upgrade will help create a stronger downtown core.

### **Benefits**

- Help in overall revitalization of downtown
- Fills in missing piece in Main Street

### **Problems Solved**

- Improves weak retail district west of Auburn Ave./A Street

### **Coordination**

This project would be coordinated by new economic development staff and with the Civic Center Master Plan.

### **Steps Required**

1. Identify potential users and developers and their needs
2. Prepare project package which illustrates site potentials, identifies constraints and local incentives
3. Circulate project package among potential investors

## **Tavern Block Redevelopment**

Public comment indicates that redevelopment of the block immediately to the east of City Hall (the "tavern block") is a top priority for Auburn citizens. The four taverns break up the retail district. Many Auburn residents also perceive this block as unsafe, particularly at night. The removal of the taverns and subsequent redevelopment of this block is a critical step in revitalizing downtown Auburn. A mixed-use development on half or all of this block would establish the retail link that is currently missing, provide space for offices and improve the appearance and function of Main Street and Auburn Avenue. Medical uses or future City facilities are both possibilities. Implementation of this project may require public sector assistance such as purchasing properties and/or businesses or providing incentives for a third party to purchase the tavern block to facilitate its redevelopment or assistance with the provision of parking. Business relocation assistance may also be a project component.

### **Benefits**

- Critical step in revitalizing downtown Auburn

### **Problems Solved**

- Safety issues and negative perception about downtown

### **Coordination**

Medical Center master plan, link Main Street to Medical Center, joint parking facility, local lending pool

### **Steps Required**

1. City Council prioritizes and allocates budget
2. Determination of appropriate and viable uses
3. Assess purchasing/acquisition options
4. Identify funding options
5. Prepare Request for Proposals (RFP)
6. Form public-private partnership
7. Design project
8. Construction

## **Category**

Public & Private Catalyst Projects

## **Responsibility**

City of Auburn, Private Sector

## **Duration**

1 year planning & design;  
1 year construction

## **Estimated Cost**

\$9,000,000  
(2 floors medical office over retail)





## **Part Two**

# **Environmental Summary/Analysis of Alternatives**



## Section 2.1 Introduction and Background

## Section 2.1 Introduction and Background

The City of Auburn proposes to adopt a Downtown Plan to serve as a subarea plan to the City's adopted Growth Management Act (GMA) Comprehensive Plan. The Downtown Plan provides analysis, goals and policies to manage change in Auburn's downtown over the next 20 years and provides the framework to guide and promote the redevelopment, economic revitalization and a high quality of life in the Auburn Downtown and the balance of the community.

The City of Auburn is considering two (2) alternatives in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS): 1) the "No Action" alternative; and, 2) the "Downtown Plan" alternative. Both alternatives are similar in that they are consistent with the GMA and have strategies to address downtown redevelopment and revitalization. The "Downtown Plan" alternative, however, outlines and details a much more comprehensive and coordinated redevelopment strategy. It identifies historical constraints and impediments to economic revitalization and, from there, identifies and articulates solutions and strategies. This DEIS analyzes the probable impacts upon the environment resulting from the adoption of the City's Downtown Plan and uses the "No Action" alternative as a basis for comparison.

The Downtown Plan is presented as an integrated State Environmental Policy Act/Growth Management Act (SEPA/GMA) document. It integrates environmental protection measures under SEPA with the broader planning requirements under the GMA. Part 3 represents the primary DEIS portion of the integrated document, although in certain areas it relies heavily on information contained in Part 1, the Downtown Plan, and does not repeat that information. To this extent, the DEIS and Downtown Plan are truly integrated, as the description of existing conditions and analysis in the Downtown Plan is referenced and integrated into the EIS section. Further, the planning process was integrated with the environmental analysis process.

In using this integrated format, this document should serve as an excellent economic development and marketing tool. The Downtown Plan and accompanying environmental review is sufficiently detailed to expedite certain project review elements for those projects consistent with the Downtown Plan and environmental analysis. Furthermore, this document provides

the general public with a better understanding of development and environmental impacts in the subarea and how these impacts will be mitigated. If public awareness is enhanced and development applications are expedited on the basis of this environmental review approach, then elements of uncertainty, time delay and risk have been reduced from the development review process.

The DEIS is intended to address critical questions such as:

- How can the Downtown Plan be implemented over the planning period?
- Does the proposal recognize environmental constraints and opportunities?
- How much growth can the downtown accommodate?
- What are appropriate ways to preserve community character?
- How does the opening of Stampede Pass affect the Downtown?

Therefore, the "Downtown Plan" alternative sets forth goals and policies that address the issues listed above as well as others that have emerged. The DEIS's purpose is to evaluate the draft plan's environmental constraints and opportunities, identify appropriate mitigation measures, and provide opportunities for public comment in the decision-making process.

It has been determined that the proposal may have a significant adverse environmental impact upon the environment and that the EIS process will address these issues in accordance with SEPA. In August 1998, the City of Auburn issued a Determination of Significance (DS) and request for comments on the scope of the EIS. The scoping process included public notification of affected agencies and request for public input on the particular issues that should be addressed in the EIS.

## **What does this Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) contain?**

The City of Auburn Downtown Plan is a non-project action (WAC 197-11-442). Therefore, this DEIS presents qualitative and quantitative analysis of environmental impacts as appropriate to the scope of the proposal and the level of planning. For the draft Downtown Plan, the level of detail addressed by the environmental analysis is broad, with many of the impacts described on a downtown-wide level indicating very general environmental impacts but in most cases not providing precise measurements of those impacts.

The following is a description of each major EIS section of this document.

### **Part 2 Environmental Summary/Analysis of Alternatives**

Besides this introduction and background, Part 2 also includes a summary that provides an overview of the Downtown Plan. This includes a description of the alternatives and summary discussion of impacts and mitigation.

### **Part 3 Environmental Analysis**

Part 3 evaluates the two alternatives: 1) The "No Action" alternative which represents the existing policies and development regulations; and, 2) The "Downtown Plan" alternative. Per SEPA, the discussion is organized by "Built" and "Natural" elements of the environment. The "Built" environment section assesses development and infrastructure such as land use and transportation. The "Natural" environment section identifies and describes elements of the natural environment likely to be affected by the plan.

The DEIS generally evaluates policies and proposals in the Downtown Plan that could have probable significant adverse impacts upon the environment, and then analyzes these probable impacts. Mitigation measures to reduce or alleviate probable impacts are identified. If an adverse environmental impact cannot be mitigated to a level of non-significance it is identified as an unavoidable adverse impact.





Section 2.2 Scope of the DEIS  
Section 2.3 Significant Areas of  
Controversy  
Section 2.4 Issues to be Resolved  
Section 2.5 Concise Analysis/  
Description of Alternatives

## Section 2.2 Scope of the DEIS

The integrated Downtown Plan/DEIS Scope was determined in accordance with the scoping process identified in WAC 197-11-408. Specifically, in August 1998, the City of Auburn issued a scoping notice for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Based upon the existing conditions in the study area and on the availability of existing environmental documents, the City of Auburn determined that a limited scope EIS would be prepared. Elements of the environment scoped in the notice included air quality, environmental health (noise), land and shoreline use (specifically land use and aesthetics), and transportation (movement/circulation of people or goods). As part of the scoping process, the DEIS scope was revised to include water (water runoff, including stormwater management) and historical and cultural preservation.

Several existing environmental documents provide information on the affected environment and analysis of environmental impacts associated with potential or actual development within the city and, in some cases, the Downtown in particular. These existing documents include:

- City of Auburn Comprehensive Plan DEIS and FEIS (March 1986 and May 1996);
- SuperMall of the Great Northwest-Draft Supplemental EIS (June 1992);
- Auburn Thoroughbred Racetrack DEIS (March 1993);
- DEIS for the Auburn North CBD Analysis (November 1991);
- Environmental Classification Summary SR 18/C Street Interchange (April 1996);
- Preliminary Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the South Corridor Commuter Rail Project (November 1997); and,
- Tacoma to Seattle Commuter Rail Environmental Assessment (EA) (June 1998).



## Section 2.3 Significant Areas of Controversy and Uncertainty

There are no significant areas of controversy and uncertainty.



## Section 2.4 Issues to be Resolved

There are no major issues to be resolved.



## Section 2.5 Concise Analysis/ Description of Alternatives

This DEIS evaluates two alternatives: 1) The "No Action" alternative; and, 2) the "Downtown Plan" alternative. The following generally analyzes and describes each alternative.

### **"No Action" Alternative**

The "No Action" alternative is the current comprehensive plan, zoning regulation, other development regulations and downtown revitalization efforts. Under this alternative the existing comprehensive plan designations and zoning will be maintained. The Auburn downtown is primarily, though not exclusively, zoned for commercial use. Residential uses are present and allowed in the study area. A few industrial areas exist as well.

Main Street continues to be the focal point of Downtown Auburn's retail activity. Single family residential neighborhoods are predominant to the west of the BNSF railroad tracks as well as east of Auburn Way. Medical uses and the hospital are prominent along Auburn Avenue. A new commuter rail station with a transit center is located just south of West Main Street along the BNSF Railroad mainline.

The "No Action" alternative is a viable option. The existing comprehensive plan and development regulations, population and employment projections are consistent and compliant with the Growth Management Act (GMA), King County Countywide Planning Policies, and Vision 2020. The City of Auburn Comprehensive Plan includes downtown plan policies that provide general policy direction for downtown redevelopment. The zoning code provides for uses and development standards in the downtown area, many of which are aimed toward achieving pedestrian friendly building design and orientation. However, under the "No Action" alternative, only a portion of the downtown would maintain C-2 (Central Business District) zoning; much of the downtown planning area would remain zoned C-3 (Heavy Commercial). Efforts at encouraging downtown redevelopment are on-going. This includes the work of organizations such as the Auburn Downtown Association, the City of Auburn and the Chamber of Commerce; however, a comprehensive and detailed strategy is not laid out in existing plan documents.

Those development proposals not exempt under SEPA would

continue to be reviewed for environmental impacts on a case by case basis. Applicable transportation and stormwater standards would be required of development.

### **"Downtown Plan" Alternative**

The "Downtown Plan" alternative is reflected in this document. It provides a much stronger level of analysis and focus on Auburn's downtown with the goal of stimulating development and redevelopment more actively than the "No Action" alternative. Through the planning process ideas have been generated that identify impediments and allows for strategic redevelopment efforts. Many ideas that have been verbally discussed over time to improve downtown are now outlined into a cohesive document with estimates of costs and time. Specific redevelopment barriers are identified along with solutions to remove the barriers. Catalyst projects, to spur redevelopment, are identified. In addition, the Downtown Plan has a much stronger emphasis on business financing assistance, public-private partnerships and downtown's visual appearance than the "No Action" alternative.

Because of the Downtown Plan's emphasis on revitalization, a higher level of intensity development will likely occur than under the "No Action" alternative. Intensification of land use is a goal of the plan. Buildings are allowed to be taller than in the "No Action" alternative. However, much of the downtown planning area is downzoned from Heavy Commercial (C-3) to Central Business District (C-2) to assure appropriate land uses, namely those pedestrian oriented retail, service and office uses rather than auto oriented, are located downtown.

Specific strategies are outlined in the "Downtown Plan" alternative to accomplish redevelopment. More flexibility in addressing certain development requirements, namely in transportation and storm water, are provided. The "Downtown Plan" alternative also places additional emphasis on aesthetics and appearance of the downtown area as both a redevelopment strategy and to mitigate impacts. Stronger code enforcement is promoted to remove nuisances and blighting influences. Sensitivity of new development to historic resources is emphasized as is the role of public art in promoting a more desirable environment for people to work and shop. More pedestrian connections and pedestrian oriented development are foreseen. This will encourage additional pedestrian activity within and outside of the downtown area and will reduce the reliance on vehicular transportation. Bicycle routes and use are also encouraged.



## Section 2.6 Summary of Impacts

## Section 2.6 Summary of Impacts

The following summarizes impacts of the two alternatives based on elements of the environment scoped for this DEIS.

### 2.6.1 "No Action" Alternative

#### Land Use

Under this alternative, the existing plan designations and zoning will be maintained. This includes the existing downtown land use policies in the Comprehensive Plan as well as other policies related to downtown throughout the plan document. Existing zoning designations include:

- Single Family Residential (R-2)
- Two Family Residential (R-3)
- High Density Residential (R-4)
- Residential Office (R-O)
- Residential Office Hospital (RO-H)
- Light Commercial (C-1)
- Central Business (C-2)
- Heavy Commercial (C-3)
- Light Industrial (M-1)
- Heavy Industrial (M-2)
- Public Use (P)
- Institutional (I)

Downtown Auburn is primarily, though not exclusively, zoned for commercial use. Residential uses are allowed throughout the study area with the exception of certain industrial areas. Main Street continues to be the focal point of retail trade in Downtown Auburn. Single family residential neighborhoods exist west of the BNSF railroad tracks, as well as east of Auburn Way. Medical uses and the hospital are predominant land uses along Auburn Avenue.

Under the "No Action" alternative development and

redevelopment will likely continue as it has in the past. Generally this will mean a slow progression toward redevelopment of the downtown without a comprehensive needs analysis and implementation strategy. Under this scenario, much new business in downtown will result from the turnover of businesses within existing buildings rather than from new construction. Many strategies that have traditionally been discussed to improve downtown will likely not be implemented due to a lack of overall prioritization of efforts amongst stakeholders.

### **Scale and Character of Development**

Under the "No Action" alternative the scale and character of development is anticipated to change incrementally over the next twenty years. While existing zoning in the downtown generally allows four story buildings and provides incentives to limit on-site parking, the predominant downtown development pattern within the commercial areas is one and two story buildings. [NOTE: The Residential Office-Hospital District (RO-H) allows a maximum building height of 65 feet]. New development that has occurred has provided on-site parking resulting in large paved areas and an inefficient use of land in the downtown. From a practical standpoint, the development pattern results in lower intensity of development than could be achieved under current zoning.

Impediments to new development related to parking and stormwater management would mean that tenant turnover within existing buildings would be more prevalent than new development/buildings.

Also, much of the planning area would retain C-3 ("Heavy Commercial") zoning under this alternative. It is possible that these areas might be developed by certain automobile related uses incompatible with the downtown vision.

### **Transportation/Circulation**

The "No Action" alternative, while concentrating growth in the urban growth area consistent with the GMA, does tend to disperse housing, employment and other land uses throughout the City in a pattern that can be served most efficiently by the automobile. As a result, maintaining the current land use plans, policies and practices is expected to support the continued growth in automobile traffic and deterioration of travel conditions on Auburn roadways.

The traffic model results prepared for the Downtown Plan indicate that traffic congestion will become more severe and widespread than it currently is, even with completion of the proposed roadway

improvements. Residents and employees throughout the City will experience more delays and less reliable travel times as area roadways reach their physical capacity. Level of service (LOS) for transportation facilities would be subject to the requirements of the existing comprehensive plan. In downtown this is generally LOS D.

Bicycle use and pedestrian use would be encouraged in accordance with the city's adopted 1998 Nonmotorized Transportation Plan (which is city-wide in scope). Efforts to better link the Interurban Trail with downtown along Main Street would continue. Still, the Nonmotorized Transportation Plan deferred to the Downtown Plan (which was being prepared soon after) to address specific details about nonmotorized transportation in the downtown area.

Off street parking in the downtown would be required on a case by case development basis. In this respect, off-street parking requirements would continue to be an impediment to economic development and revitalization in downtown. Many parcels in downtown Auburn are small, making it difficult for developers to efficiently satisfy parking requirements due to land costs and ownership patterns that divides blocks into many small parcels. Code provisions to reduce parking requirements in the CBD do exist, but these code requirements have not in themselves significantly resulted in the removal of this impediment.

Rail traffic in the downtown consists of the Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railways. The Union Pacific railway is at the western edge of the Downtown area while the BNSF railway is within the downtown core. Sound Transit uses the BNSF tracks for its commuter rail service. BNSF's recent opening of Stampede Pass has resulted in increased train traffic Downtown and more traffic delays at crossing locations due to the length of the railroad cars and the slow speed at which they will be required to travel.

## **Historic Preservation**

The City of Auburn contracts with King County for historic preservation services. This would continue under the "No Action" alternative. While there is recognition of the historic nature of the community and Downtown Auburn, the small contract would not allow an aggressive effort to inventory historic resources nor to promote compatibility between new development and historic structures. With the "No Action" alternative design standards would not be in place to protect historic resources or the historic character of buildings.

City historic preservation policies would generally be guided by Chapter 10 of the Auburn Comprehensive Plan entitled "Historic Preservation". Chapter 10 includes eight historic preservation policies, only one of which (HP-5) specifically references the Downtown. HP-5 states that future development in the downtown area should be sensitive to the character of surrounding buildings and the historical context of the area. It adds that modifications to existing buildings shall consider the incorporation or restoration of historic architectural features.

### **Storm Water Management**

Traditional methods of stormwater management would be required. For example, a preferred technique for storm drainage treatment is biofiltration using methods such as grass-lined swales. This would be an impediment to downtown redevelopment since biofiltration techniques typically require more land area than is practically available in the downtown area, given its relatively small blocks and parcels. It would also be visually inappropriate.

Also, current City practice is to prefer retention systems when soil conditions are suitable for such application; however, soil and groundwater conditions in the Downtown Plan Study Area are generally not conducive for retention systems (except in some eastern portions). If a detention system is used for runoff control, the City's preferred method of storage is parking lot ponding or an open pond. This too is not conducive to downtown revitalization.

These limitations tend to discourage downtown redevelopment.

### **Air Quality**

Air quality in the downtown would likely gradually worsen due to the overall increase in air pollutants on a regional level. New development in the downtown core would generate additional traffic in the downtown and presumably more air quality impacts. Downtown would likely not be developed as a pedestrian friendly area so reliance on the automobile would be the likely form of travel to and within downtown. There would be more airborne dust from construction projects.

### **Noise**

The primary sources of noise would likely be traffic (vehicular and passenger/freight trains) and construction activity. Street work projects, commercial heating and cooling systems, and emergency vehicle activity also contribute to noise downtown.

These noises, especially train traffic noise, can create annoyance and speech interference during the day and to a lesser extent during the evening. Noise will particularly affect residential and office uses, as well as schools.

## **2.6.2 "Downtown Plan" Alternative**

### **Land Use**

The "Downtown Plan" alternative results in an increased focus on mixed-use development downtown. Areas where mixed-use development would be encouraged would be expanded outward from Main Street, particularly to the south toward SR-18 and west toward Sound Transit's Transit Center.

A significant part of the planning area would be rezoned from C-3 "Heavy Commercial" to C-2 "Central Business District". This would eliminate the possibility of automobile intensive uses to locate in the downtown area that tend to conflict with pedestrian movement. It would also subject a larger area to pedestrian oriented guidelines and development standards commonly associated with a central business district.

Cultural and entertainment activities and uses are encouraged. Uses and activities that provide more liveliness to the downtown after typical business hours are also strongly encouraged in the downtown.

New residential development in downtown is desired in the "Downtown Plan" alternative, again by encouraging mixed use. Increasing the downtown residential population is a goal expressed in the Downtown Plan. Existing residential neighborhoods within the downtown would be maintained and protected from higher intensity development. Efforts to promote and enhance the residential character of certain residential neighborhoods are pursued through design guidelines and policies seeking to protect less intensive residential uses from incompatible uses.

The "Downtown Plan" alternative also identifies and acknowledges the presence of other specific districts including the Medical Center, a Business Park/Light Industrial district, Auburn Way district, and a Transit Center district.

### **Scale and Character of Development.**

The permitted density and intensity of downtown development would be greater than that of the "No Action" alternative. The key difference between the "No Action" and the "Downtown Plan"

alternatives is that the "Downtown Plan" alternative provides for a number of development incentives. As it relates to scale and character of development specifically, this includes a performance based building height requirement. In other words, there is no specific maximum height requirement in the downtown area; however, certain performance techniques are required to ensure quality building design and building height to street width ratios. This assists developers by making projects more economically viable through the provision of additional floor space while still ensuring that the development satisfies quality building design principles.

As noted, the Downtown Plan also features design guidelines and recommends that design and streetscape standards be developed and adopted to mitigate impacts associated with greater development intensity and density. Public art and other pedestrian amenities are also key components of the Downtown Plan. These components will affect the appearance and character of downtown Auburn (see discussion of aesthetics below).

In addition, the "Downtown Plan" alternative promotes greater participation from the City of Auburn as a partner in catalyst projects. The "Downtown Plan" alternative proposes redevelopment of the "Tavern Block", the Truitt/Pastime sites, a mixed use project adjacent to the Transit Center, gateway treatments at the north and south points of entry to the downtown, and the development of joint city/private sector parking structures. With these catalyst efforts, there is greater potential for new commercial and mixed-use development in the downtown than with the "No Action" alternative.

Off-street parking requirements would be addressed by parking garages. This would eliminate the need for smaller, individual parking lots provided on a case by case basis. Land area that might typically be devoted to parking lots could be used for buildings or amenities.

## **Aesthetics**

The "Downtown Plan" alternative places a strong and maintained emphasis on physical design and aesthetics through the inclusion of design guidelines that address issues such as site planning and layout, building design, streetscape features and other site elements. More specifically, these guidelines address issues such as, but not limited to, building height, facade modulation, parking, building orientation, signage, utility equipment screening, roof forms, site furnishings and street trees and landscaping.

Building and streetscape design standards are recommended for adoption and are intended to improve the appearance and character of downtown. Further, as mentioned earlier, public art and gateway treatments are concepts advanced in the Downtown Plan to improve the quality and appearance of the Downtown. Means of implementing a facade improvement program will be investigated.

Code enforcement to remove blighting influences and nuisances would also be aggressively pursued to improve both the appearance and the development climate of downtown.

### **Transportation/Circulation**

Under the "Downtown Plan" alternative, the policies would allow for a change to the level of service standard in the downtown area. The "Downtown Plan" alternative accepts a lower level of service in the downtown than elsewhere in the city. This is intended to promote a vibrant downtown that focuses on improved pedestrian accessibility. It also acknowledges that downtowns do tend to have greater congestion than other parts of the city. Generally, the overall average level of service in downtown is proposed to be "E", except along certain corridors that must maintain the current City LOS standard (LOS "D"). When determining if the average LOS of "E" can be maintained, no three consecutive intersections on a corridor can be level of service "F".

A traffic accounting system is proposed to ensure that the development is consistent with the development densities proposed in the plan. Development densities will be monitored and accounted for during the project review process to ensure that development will not exceed allotted densities.

In terms of other transportation modes, the "Downtown Plan" alternative places a strong and concerted emphasis on developing bicycle and pedestrian opportunities and pathways. This is, in part, intended to minimize congestion by reducing the reliance on motorized vehicles within the downtown. However, this is also intended to enhance the appeal and attractiveness of the downtown by promoting design and development that caters to the pedestrian. Amenities and street standards are to be pursued to encourage these nonmotorized transportation modes.

A parking strategy is outlined in the "Downtown Plan" alternative. This strategy primarily pursues public/private partnerships to develop coordinated planning, construction and financing of public parking spaces. Potential parking garage sites are identified. Parking garages would concentrate parking at certain locations and mechanisms will be explored that would allow developers to

purchase capacity in public lots and garages to satisfy their parking requirements. This should help promote density and encourage development within the downtown, as well as make it easier for shoppers to park in the downtown area.

Transit activity in downtown Auburn could increase over the "No Action" alternative. Greater commercial and residential density could result in increased transit use and demand, and the need for more bus service downtown. Sound Transit commuter rail service would generally be determined on a system wide basis. Development activity in Auburn alone would not tend to influence Sound Transit's system-wide scheduling.

Railroad impacts would generally be similar to the "No Action" alternative although the increased development activity and increased rail traffic in downtown could increase the potential for rail conflicts with automobiles, pedestrians and bicyclists at crossing locations.

### **Water Runoff (Stormwater Management)**

Development envisioned in the "Downtown Plan" alternative may result in a marginal increase in impervious surface over the "No Action" alternative. Stormwater quantity and runoff quality will be affected as downtown development and redevelopment occurs. In some instances, this effect can actually be beneficial to water quality as certain redeveloped sites upgrade stormwater management facilities to meet the City's existing standards. This would result in a beneficial impact by improving water quality discharge to waters that may support salmon habitat and other wildlife.

The "Downtown Plan" alternative provides more flexibility and creativity to address stormwater management in the Downtown Plan area. As one example, the Downtown Plan supports the use of underground closed detention system with pre-approval from the City. This detention system type would not be visible from the surface nor would it be consumptive of developable surface land. This flexibility should promote development that traditionally has been discouraged due to stormwater management requirements.

## **Air Quality**

The "Downtown Plan" alternative could result in worse air quality in the downtown than in the "No Action" alternative. This would be attributable to the higher intensity of development that is allowed under the "Downtown Plan" alternative. Additional traffic may be generated in the downtown and more congestion (at least in terms of LOS) is allowed than under the "No Action" alternative. In addition, development incentives provided for in the "Downtown Plan" may result in development occurring sooner than it would under the "No Action" alternative. In this respect, air quality may be impacted sooner than it would under the "No Action" alternative.

## **Noise**

Traffic (vehicles and train traffic) and construction noise are the likely noise generators resulting from the Downtown Plan. The sources of noise are similar to the "No Action" alternative. Construction noise may be more prevalent given that more development activity is expected to occur. Noise associated with vehicular traffic may be higher than in the "No Action" alternative given higher traffic volumes than the "No Action" alternative.

In some respects, though, the land uses in the Downtown Plan tend to be less intensive in some areas than in the "No Action" alternative. As indicated, much of the study area is downzoned from "Heavy Commercial" to "Central Business District" under the "Downtown Plan" alternative. As a result, certain more intensive commercial land uses would not be allowed in the planning area under the "Downtown Plan" alternative".





## Section 2.7 Key Differences Between the Two Alternatives

## Section 2.7 Key Differences Between the Two Alternatives

The following two tables summarize the key differences between the two alternatives relative to permitted land uses and forecasted growth potential.

**Table F: Approximate Acreage in Generalized Land Use Categories**

	Public Facility	Mixed Use	Commercial	Medical/Office	Residential	Industrial
<b>No Action</b>	12	47	80	16	48	19
<b>Downtown Plan</b>	21	80	28	16	66	12

As Table F illustrates, the "Downtown Plan" alternative would provide more land area designated for public facility, mixed use and residential uses while the "No Action" alternative would emphasize commercial land use and provide slightly more acreage for industrial land uses.

**Table G: Estimated Growth Potential Under Each Alternative  
Forecast to Year 2020**

Land Use Type	No Action	Downtown Plan
<b>Residential</b>	126 additional units	811 additional units
<b>Commercial</b>	627 employees	766 employees
<b>Office</b>	381 employees	828 employees
<b>Industrial</b>	97 additional employees	97 additional employees
<b>Hotel</b>	0 additional rooms	150 additional rooms

As shown in Table G, implementation of the Downtown Plan alternative is estimated to result in a greater number of housing units and office employment, and a slightly greater retail commercial employment. In addition, implementation of the Downtown Plan is expected to attract an approximately 150 room

hotel to the downtown. Estimated growth potential for the "Downtown Plan" alternative is based upon a market analysis that was undertaken as part of the Downtown Plan update. The market analysis considered the implementation actions that are proposed for the Downtown Plan.

Implementation of the "No Action" alternative is expected to result in modest residential and office employment growth over time. The estimated growth potential for the "No Action" alternative is based upon the existing Comprehensive Plan. Some modifications were made to these estimates to take into consideration the influence of the Transit Center.

It is important to recognize that the estimated growth potential is different from development capacity. Growth potential is the estimated growth that will result from implementation of the alternative. Development capacity is the level of growth that could be achieved based on zoning and development regulations. The overall development capacity is greater under the "No Action" alternative from a regulatory standpoint. However, although the Downtown Plan allows for additional building height there are considerations (e.g. soil conditions) that will influence what can be built from an economical and practical standpoint. Therefore, the incremental development capacity between the two alternatives is not expected to constitute a significant difference.

Another key difference relates to the appearance of downtown. A much higher standard for design and aesthetics including the visual appearance of buildings and the streetscape and pedestrian oriented amenities is placed in the "Downtown Plan" alternative than in the "No Action" alternative. The removal of blighting influences and nuisances, implementation of building and streetscape design standards, introduction of street furniture and amenities and façade improvement are examples of strong emphasis on appearance in the "Downtown Plan" alternative.



## Section 2.8 Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

# Section 2.8 Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

**Table H: Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

Built Environment	
Land Use	
Impacts	
"No Action" Alternative	"Downtown Plan" Alternative
Continued physical deterioration of downtown buildings as there would be less potential for redevelopment and/or reinvestment in existing underdeveloped and underinvested properties. Less emphasis on pedestrian oriented design and land uses. New automobile oriented uses could locate in certain locations within the planning area.	Development intensity would increase. Redevelopment of existing sites and buildings and more reinvestment in existing uses would occur. Greater pedestrian oriented development with more non-motorized linkages. Fewer automobile oriented land uses.
Mitigation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design guidelines and standards are to ensure that new higher intensity building design is visually pleasing, particularly to the pedestrian, and is compatible with adjacent and surrounding land uses.</li> <li>Rezone a substantial portion of the planning area from C-3 (Heavy Commercial) to C-2 Central Business District to eliminate uses inconsistent with the concept of a pedestrian-oriented downtown.</li> <li>Encourage parking garages to avoid excessive number of small surface parking lots.</li> <li>Zoning and design standards requiring significant buffers to protect residential areas from incompatible uses.</li> </ul>	
Aesthetics	
Impacts	
"No Action" Alternative	"Downtown Plan" Alternative
Development would largely retain existing character/aesthetics. Low rise buildings, surface parking areas, uncoordinated signage, facades, and/or building design would remain.	Greater positive change in character/aesthetics through redevelopment. Taller buildings could be developed but would be well designed and oriented to the pedestrian. Structured parking would be preferred to surface parking. Public art, streetscape improvements, coordinated signage and façade improvements would be implemented.
Mitigation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Street right-of-way to building height ratios.</li> <li>Create gateways, landmarks and wayfinding system to encourage pedestrian use, define boundaries.</li> <li>Underground utilities.</li> <li>Design standards to improve the aesthetic quality of new buildings.</li> <li>Code enforcement efforts to remove blighting influences and nuisances that detract from the physical appearance of downtown.</li> <li>Including public art in all public projects.</li> <li>Streetscape and landscaping programs that provide more plant materials.</li> </ul>	

<b>Transportation</b>	
<b>Impacts</b>	
<b>"No Action" Alternative</b>	<b>"Downtown Plan" Alternative</b>
<p><b>Traffic Volumes/LOS</b> The existing citywide land use pattern is conducive to transportation trips by automobile. As with the rest of the city, downtown traffic congestion would worsen due to local and regional growth. Traffic congestion would worsen and certain intersections would exceed the City's current LOS standard of "D" over a twenty-year period without improvements.</p> <p><b>Transit</b> Demand for transit ridership would be expected to increase over time as Sound Transit adds more commuter service and as more development occurs downtown that may require additional transit service.</p> <p><b>Parking</b> Increased demand for parking. Parking would primarily be provided on surface parking lots resulting in an inefficient use of land downtown.</p> <p><b>Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities</b> Transportation projects within the 1998 Non-Motorized Plan would be pursued, however, the 1998 Non-Motorized Plan deferred to the Downtown Plan as the basis for detailed study of non-motorized transportation in the Downtown.</p> <p><b>Railroad</b> No additional freight or passenger service would occur as a direct result of the "No Action" alternative.</p>	<p><b>Traffic Volumes/LOS</b> Focusing land uses in the downtown that can more easily be served by transit or avoid multiple vehicle trips would benefit traffic citywide. In the downtown traffic congestion would become worse due to increased development. A lower LOS would be acceptable. Additional traffic could pose more conflicts with non-motorized transportation.</p> <p><b>Transit</b> Generally the same, although increased density downtown may require local transit agencies to respond to the need for increased bus service at a more rapid pace than under the "No Action" alternative.</p> <p><b>Parking</b> Increase demand for parking in the downtown area, more so than the "No Action" alternative. Development of parking structures rather than reliance on surface parking.</p> <p><b>Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities</b> More bicycle and pedestrian travel than under the "No Action" alternative due to emphasis on pedestrian connections within the downtown and to surrounding neighborhoods.</p> <p><b>Railroad</b> Same as "No Action" alternative.</p>

### **Mitigation**

#### **Traffic Volumes/LOS (primarily automobiles)**

- Continued implementation of programmed street improvements, including the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW grade separation project to improve safety and access to and from downtown.
- Establish a traffic accounting system to evaluate and monitor the progress of development and its consistency with the development densities identified in the Downtown Plan.
- Pursue and implement nonmotorized transportation strategies to encourage alternatives to automobile use.
- Coordinate with transit agencies and request additional transit service or modifications to service levels as needs are identified.

#### **Nonmotorized**

- To avoid conflicts with vehicular traffic, assess opportunities to improve bicycle facilities through lane marking and signage systems, especially in conjunction with planned traffic improvements.
- Continued implementation of planned pedestrian improvements.

#### **Parking**

- Pursue public/private opportunities to develop parking structures to provide an orderly and adequate parking situation in the downtown for visitors and shoppers.

#### **Transit**

- None, although transit—mainly busses—will also benefit from planned street improvements in the area of downtown that will promote access and facilitate transit circulation/needs.

#### **Railroads**

- Planned improvements including the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW Grade Separation project to allow for increased regional freight mobility by separating train traffic from vehicular traffic.
- Pedestrian safety improvements at the West Main Street at-grade crossing will be included as part of the third main line track installation.

### **Noise**

#### **Impacts**

<b>"No Action" Alternative</b>	<b>"Downtown Plan" Alternative</b>
Overall increase in noise could occur associated with new development/construction and traffic.	Greater construction related noise anticipated than under the "No Action" alternative. Traffic volumes associated with new development and commercial deliveries are expected to be greater than under the "No Action" alternative. More evening related noise might occur under this alternative due to its emphasis on encouraging nighttime uses and activities.

#### **Mitigation Measures**

- Design new structures to orient away from noise oriented facilities and uses and also apply appropriate sound mitigating construction standards. Require land use buffers between incompatible uses.
- Enforce restrictions on hours of construction activity.
- Code enforcement activities in the downtown to address nuisance related noise impacts.

## Historic and Cultural Preservation

### Impacts

#### "No Action" Alternative

No concerted pro-active historic preservation strategy could lead to premature demolition or inappropriate alteration of historic buildings. New development could be inconsistent with existing development's historical character. Improvements to existing buildings or facades would continue without a review process that ensures consistency with historical character of a building or buildings. Historical quality of buildings would likely deteriorate due to lack of reinvestment in properties.

#### "Downtown Plan" Alternative

Through design review, redevelopment of existing buildings and new development would respect and be compatible with existing Downtown historic resources and character. New development would build on, rather than detract from, the historic character of the downtown

#### Mitigation measures:

- Develop a historic preservation plan for downtown.
- Education and the provision of incentives (and removal of disincentives) for the preservation of downtown historic resources.
- Design standards intended to protect existing historical structures from incompatible adjacent development, ensure that the historical character of existing historical structures is not compromised by tenant improvements, and that encourage the removal of false facades and the restoration of historical architectural features.

## Natural Environment

### STORMWATER

#### Impacts

##### "No Action" Alternative

Existing stormwater requirements would discourage downtown development and redevelopment. Conventional requirements such as bio-swales and open ponding would consume surface land and limit efficient use of land. Existing buildings would be non-conforming with respect to stormwater quality and quantity standards.

##### "Downtown Plan" Alternative

Improved stormwater quality since redevelopment of non-conforming development would be encouraged and new development would be made compliant with existing stormwater standards. Chinook salmon, recently listed as threatened, would benefit from improved water quality.

#### Mitigation Measures

None

### Air Quality

#### Impacts

##### "No Action" Alternative

Overall decrease in air quality associated with construction and traffic under this alternative.

##### "Downtown Plan" Alternative

Greater construction activity and increased traffic would result in a decrease in air quality as well, probably more so than the "No Action" alternative.

#### Mitigation Measures

- Implementation and enforcement of existing air quality regulations including:
  - ✓ All point sources of air pollution shall require permits from PSCAA.
  - ✓ PSCAA requires that reasonable measures be taken to avoid dust emissions during construction. Such precautions may include spraying water or chemical suppressants on bare soils during dry windy weather. The City also uses SEPA to implement mitigation techniques (watering) associated with construction and cleaning of vehicles and street cleaning.
  - ✓ EPA and PSCAA requirements address the safe removal and disposal of asbestos containing materials.
- Emphasis on landscaping and street trees to filter suspended particulates.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle usage opportunities as an alternative to the automobile.
- Street and circulation improvements to reduce congestion.
- Strategy to reduce the need for continual circulation by traffic within the downtown to find parking.



## Section 3.1 Introduction





## Section 3.2 Land Use

## Section 3.2 Land Use

### 3.2.1 Existing Land Use Plans and Policies

The Downtown Auburn planning area is approximately 220 acres in size. It is located on the valley floor just north of SR 18 and east of the Interurban Trail. It is the site of the historic city center and is comprised of the "Main Street" commercial district, the Auburn Medical Center, City Hall and surrounding residential neighborhoods. The following paragraphs give a general description of the existing land use pattern in Downtown Auburn.

#### A. Generalized Land Use

##### Main Street Commercial

This is the historic retail and service center for Auburn. Businesses lining Main Street are primarily small independent retail shops. These shops are interspersed with professional office/service and restaurant uses.

##### Auto-Oriented Commercial

Auto-oriented commercial uses are primarily located fronting on Auburn Way and Auburn Avenue which run north-south through the planning area.

##### Medical Center District

The Auburn Regional Medical Center and numerous smaller private medical offices and related services are located just north of the Main Street commercial center and west of Auburn Avenue.

##### Residential Land Use

Downtown Auburn has four established residential areas located at the perimeters of the planning area. These districts are comprised of primarily single-family residential development. There are some duplexes and larger single-family homes that have been converted into multiple units. Apartments are scattered throughout the Downtown, and are primarily smaller, affordable housing units and senior housing units.

##### Industrial

The edges of larger industrial areas permeate the western boundaries of the Auburn Downtown planning area.

be encouraged to maintain a vibrant, active and competitive center for the City of Auburn.

- LU-80 The City should continue to support the development and rehabilitation of multiple-family housing in the Downtown, including housing targeted toward special needs (e.g. elderly and handicapped housing) populations.
- LU-81 The City shall maintain an ongoing downtown planning and action program involving the downtown business community and other interested groups. This activity should be guided by this document, the Auburn Downtown Plan and the Downtown Auburn Design Master Plan.
- LU-82 The City shall continue to give priority consideration to the maintenance and improvement of public facilities and services in the downtown area.

**Objective 10.2** To recognize areas within the downtown that have identifiable characters and land uses.

- LU-83 The area north of 1st Street N, west of Auburn Avenue, south of 5th Street N and east of the Burlington Northern tracks should be designated and managed as a medical and professional services area. New heavy commercial and industrial uses should be prohibited and existing ones amortized. Commercial uses supporting medical and professional uses should receive priority.
- LU-84 The area lying generally east of "D" Street SE and south of Main Street (not including the Main Street frontage) shall be designated for mixed residential and commercial uses.
- LU-85 The area lying generally between Auburn Way North and Auburn High School should be designated for multiple-family residential uses.
- LU-86 Automobile oriented uses within the Central Business District should be directed to Auburn Way North and the area lying south of the Safeway Superstore.

**Objective 10.3** To ensure that all new development and redevelopment in the downtown reflect the unique character of the area.

- LU-87 The City shall develop programs and ordinances to preserve and protect downtown's historic character. Development codes should be revised as needed to recognize the uniqueness of downtown through appropriate performance standards and design guidelines. A high level of visual amenity should be pursued, and no heavy outdoor uses or outdoor storage should be allowed.

LU-88 The downtown area shall be comprised of a mixture of uses consistent with the area's role as the focal point of the community. These uses shall be primarily "people-oriented" as opposed to "automobile-oriented", and shall include commercial, medical, governmental, professional services, cultural and residential uses.

LU-89 Regulations for the retail core of downtown should encourage retail uses, but should discourage uses that result in a high proportion of single use vehicle trips (such as fast food restaurants and drive-through windows).

**Objective 10.4** To emphasize pedestrian traffic and transit usage in the downtown.

LU-90 Emphasis should be given to enhancing pedestrian linkages between the Hospital area, the Main Street retail core, the Performing Arts Center, the southwestern portion of Downtown, and the parking area adjacent to the Safeway Superstore. An important element of this emphasis will be to reduce the pedestrian barrier effect of Auburn Way.

LU-91 The City should build upon past efforts to improve pedestrian amenities, through public improvements, sign regulations and development standards. The maintenance of public and private improvements should be given priority commensurate with downtown's role as the focal point of the community

LU-92 The City shall work with transit providers to increase the availability and effectiveness of transit in downtown and between downtown, other commercial and employment areas, residential areas, and the region at large.

LU-93 As regional transportation programs such as commuter rail are implemented, the City will strive to ensure that the downtown is a beneficiary. Siting of a commuter rail station shall take into account the conclusions and findings of the Auburn Commuter Rail Station Siting Study.

**Objective 10.5** To develop a parking program for the downtown that recognizes the area's historic pedestrian character, while providing sufficient parking for customers of all businesses.

LU-94 A strong Downtown shall be encouraged through improved parking, circulation, and the grouping of business outlets and governmental services. Parking standards should be developed which recognize the unique nature of downtown parking demand. The City should work with the business

community in public/private partnerships to develop a coordinated and effective approach to providing adequate parking and circulation.

LU-95 A strong Downtown shall be encouraged through improved parking, circulation, and the grouping of business outlets and governmental services. The development of public parking lots to serve the downtown should be guided by a Downtown Parking Plan.

LU-96 The City views adequate parking in the downtown area as a crucial step in implementing the downtown policies and the rehabilitation policies of this Plan. All business in the downtown area will be hindered if adequate parking in the downtown area is not available. However, parking needs coupled with rehabilitation needs in the downtown area require special policies:

a. Some flexibility in the general parking requirements of the City may be necessary to accommodate reuse of existing buildings and to accommodate new development. Such flexibility should be directed at seeking to pool parking resources through the formation of a Downtown parking LID when such parking cannot be provided by the business or through shared parking agreements.

b. Since rigid parking requirements will interfere with redevelopment of downtown, and the pattern of existing development restricts the amount of parking available, public development of parking in the downtown area is appropriate.

c. A comprehensive study of the parking needs of downtown should be made to determine the most efficient method of meeting the unique parking demands of the area.

d. Parking policy for the downtown needs to balance the impact of parking on downtown's pedestrian character, economic development and transit usage.

**Objective 10.6** To work with all interested groups on revitalizing the Downtown area.

LU-97 The City of Auburn should strive to maintain active working relationships with the Auburn Downtown Association, the Chamber of Commerce and other groups whose goal is the revitalization of downtown. The City will seek to become a partner with these and other groups, where feasible, in public/private partnerships that further the goal of downtown revitalization.

LU-98 The City shall continue to support legislation to improve fiscal leverage in urban rehabilitation programs.

LU-99 The City shall continue to support the redevelopment efforts of the private sector in the downtown area.

### **Housing Policies and Objectives**

**Objective 7.8** To respond to the housing needs of individuals and families that cannot afford or do not choose to live in traditional detached single-family housing.

HO-24 Encourage residential development in Downtown, particularly housing that is integrated with commercial development.

### **Capital Facilities Policies and Objectives**

**Objective 14.1** To site buildings in accord with their service function and the needs of the members of the public served by the facility.

CF-51 Downtown shall continue to be the business center of City government and the City shall seek to site all of its business functions in the downtown area.

CF-52 All "people oriented" City facilities should be located in high amenity sites. Les Gove Park and Downtown are particularly appropriate sites for services such as senior services, community center, library, museums, etc.

### **Transportation Policies and Objectives**

**Objective 16.10** To recognize the linkages between land use and transportation and to encourage urban design that eases the use of non-motorized travel modes.

TR-38 Development in Downtown Auburn should encourage non-motorized access and should include characteristics such as limited setbacks, awnings, pedestrian-oriented streetscape, and display windows.

### **Economic Development Policies and Objectives**

**Objective 9.1** Promote a diversified economic base capable of withstanding changes in interest rates, inflation and market conditions.

ED-3 The importance of Downtown Auburn as a unique retail environment and sub-regional center of commerce should be considered in the City's economic plan

## **Historic Preservation Policies and Objectives**

**Objective 20.1** To enhance and maintain the quality of historical resources in the region.

HP-5 Future development in the Downtown area should be sensitive to the character of surrounding buildings and the historical context of the area. Modifications of existing buildings shall consider the incorporation or restoration of historic architectural features. Comprehensive Plan Land Use and Zoning Designations

## **Urban Design Policies and Objectives**

**Objective 22.5** To promote the incorporation of artwork into new and existing public facilities to enhance the visual quality of the City.

UD-24 The City shall, when appropriate, encourage and facilitate the placement of artwork in new and existing neighborhoods and the downtown business area.

**Objective 22.5** To promote development that eases access by both pedestrians and transit users.

UD-25 Downtown is considered a pedestrian and transit oriented area. Codes in the downtown should encourage development which is more oriented toward these modes of transportation than towards the automobile.

## **Downtown Special Planning Area**

Auburn's downtown was designated a "Special Planning Area" in the Comprehensive Plan. This designation applies to specific areas identified as being appropriate for mixed, urban level development on a planned basis. The Comprehensive Plan states that uses and intensities within Special Planning Areas are to be determined for each area through individual planning processes. The Comprehensive Plan also calls for the development of the Downtown Area Plan to consider and integrate:

1. The 1987 Auburn Downtown Plan;
2. The 1990 Downtown Auburn Design Master Plan; and
3. The Commuter Rail Station Siting Study.

The recommended Auburn Downtown Plan contained in this document is intended to update and replace the first two documents listed above, once adopted.

## **Downtown Land Use Designations**

The 1995 City of Auburn Comprehensive Plan land use element identifies the character and uses of the various areas of the Downtown Plan study area.

## **Existing Zoning Designations**

The study area is currently covered by the following zoning classifications. Please refer to Section 1.3, Figure 2 (Existing Downtown Zoning Map) for the boundaries of each zone. These include Light Commercial District (C-1), Central Business District (C-2), Heavy Commercial District (C-3), Light Industrial District (M-1), Heavy Industrial District (M-2), Single-Family Residential District (R-2), Two-Family Residential District (R-3), High Density Residential (R-4), Residential Office District (RO), Residential Office Hospital District (RO-H), Public Use District (P-1) and the Institutional (I).

A summary of the intent of these zones is as follows:

**C-1 The Light Commercial District** is generally located west of D Street NE/NW along West Main Street, as well as in the north-eastern portion of the study area to the east of Auburn Avenue.

This classification provides for the location of a grouping of compatible uses that represent retail or professional enterprises. These small and moderate scale businesses should be oriented towards the leisure shopper and pedestrian oriented activities. Mixed-use buildings are allowable with no density restrictions. Additionally, apartments are allowable as a conditional use provided that 1,200 square feet of lot area is provided for each dwelling unit. The maximum building height is 45-feet, which may be exceeded if one additional foot of setback is provided from each property line for each foot the building exceeds 45-feet.

**C-2 The Central Business District** is generally located around the retail core of the downtown. This designation sets apart that portion of the City which forms the center for financial, commercial, governmental, professional, and cultural activities. Mixed-use buildings are allowable with no density restrictions. Additionally, multiple-family dwellings are allowable as a conditional use, with no density limitations. This district allows for a maximum height of four stories not to exceed forty-five feet. Setback requirements are five feet from the front and street side of the building. There are no requirements regarding lot coverage. Five feet of visual buffer landscaping is required along the street frontage.

**C-3 The Heavy Commercial District** covers much of the south central part of the study area, as well as extending north on C Street NW. This district provides for enterprises which involve retail

services, but with outside production or service features. This zone is intended to accommodate uses which are oriented to automobiles either as the mode of transportation or as the type of commercial service. Mixed-use buildings are not allowed, but multiple-family dwellings are allowable as a conditional use provided that 1,200 square feet of lot area is provided for each dwelling unit. The maximum building height is 45-feet, which may be exceeded if one additional foot of setback is provided from each property line for each foot the building exceeds 45-feet.

**M-1 The Light Industrial District** is primarily located in the northern part of the study area along the Burlington Northern Railroad tracks, between 5th Street NE and south of 3rd Street NE. This district is intended to accommodate a variety of industrial uses in an industrial park environment. While the M-1 zone is primarily intended for light industrial uses some commercial uses may be permitted. Regional shopping centers and commercial recreation may also be permitted. The only housing allowable in this zone is work release, pre-release or similar facilities offering alternatives to imprisonment under certain conditions and standards. The maximum building height is 45-feet. Structures may exceed 45-feet if one additional foot of setback is provided for each foot the structure exceeds 45-feet.

**M-2 The Heavy Industrial District** is located in the vicinity of the northern portions of D Street NW and between F Street NW and H Street NW, north of West Main Street. This designation is intended to provide for general manufacturing and processing and grouping of industrial enterprises. Other uses are disallowed if they will discourage use of adjacent sites for heavy industry. No housing is permissible in this zone.

**R-2 The Single-Family Residential District** is located in the south-eastern portion of the study area, between 4th Street SE and just south of East Main Street. This district provides for relatively small lot sizes (6,000 square feet) and allows for multi-family development as conditional uses provided that 6,000 square feet of lot area is provided for each dwelling unit, and there are no more than four dwelling units per structure. Accessory units, such as a guest cottage, are allowable.

**R-3 The Duplex Residential District** is located in the south-eastern portion of the study area, between 4th Street SE and State Route 18. This zone is intended to permit a limited increase in population density by permitting two dwelling units on a minimum-size lot while at the same time maintaining a desirable family living environment by establishing minimum lot areas, yards and openspaces. The minimum lot area for duplexes is 7,200 square feet,

with the exception of existing platted lots between 7,000 and 7,200 square feet in area which may be allowed to construct a duplex. The minimum lot area per dwelling unit is 3,600 square feet. The maximum building height is two and one-half stories not to exceed thirty feet.

**R-4 The Multiple-Family Residential District** is generally located in the vicinity of the City Park and Washington Elementary School in the north-eastern portion of the study area and in the southwest portion south of West Main Street between G Street SW and C Street SW. This district is intended to provide for multiple-family residential development and is further intended as a residential district of single, duplex and multiple-family residences. The minimum lot area is 7,200 square feet with a maximum building height of two and one-half stories, not to exceed thirty feet. Additionally, multiple-family dwellings that are adjacent to any property line of an RR, RS, R1 or R2 zone shall either set back 50-feet from the adjoining property line or limit the number of units per structure to three or four, in which case the minimum setback may be 30 feet.

**RO The Residential Office District** is located north of the hospital between 3rd and 5th Streets NE. This zone is intended primarily to accommodate business and professional offices, medical and dental clinics, banks and similar financial institutions at locations where they are compatible with residential uses. Some retail and personal services may be permitted if supplemental to the other uses allowed in the zone. This zone is intended for those areas that are in transition from residential to commercial uses along arterials or near the hospital. The minimum lot area for this zone is 7,200 feet and the maximum building height is two and one-half stories or thirty feet.

**RO-H The Residential Office Hospital District** is located in the vicinity of the hospital, north of 1st Street NE and south of 3rd Street NE. This designation is intended explicitly for the hospital area and is intended to be used for medical and related uses and those uses compatible with the medical community. As a conditional use restaurants and other retail sales operations that support the medical community are allowable. Multiple-family dwellings are allowable as a conditional use provided that 1,200 square feet of lot area is provided for each dwelling unit. The maximum building height is 65-feet.

**P-1 The Public Use District** is located between West Main Street and 2nd Street NW and F and D Streets NW in the north-western portion of the study area. This designation provides for the location and development of public uses that serve the cultural, educational,

recreational and public service needs of the community. Housing is not allowed in this zone. The maximum building height is four stories not to exceed 45-feet.

**I The Institutional Use District** is located at the Performing Arts Center/Auburn High School. This zone is intended to provide an area for educational, governmental, theological, recreational, cultural and other public and quasi-public uses.

**Downtown Parking Requirements.** Chapter 18.52 of the Zoning Code discusses parking requirements which are generally based upon the proposed use. There are also specific provisions for development within the CBD as follows:

18.52.030.B. The joint use of off-street parking facilities is not allowed for residential uses with the exception of those residential uses within the Central Business District (CBD) as defined in the Comprehensive Plan.

18.52.080 Within the CBD the parking spaces required in this chapter for commercial uses, may be satisfied through the signing of a binding, non-remonstrance agreement with the City. The agreement will ultimately be utilized by the City to support the construction of new public parking facilities that are required to meet the parking demand within the Central Business District.

In addition, the zoning code also includes parking standards for the Downtown area that recognize its urban, pedestrian-oriented characteristics. These standards include the following:

**Overall Parking Reduction.** For new development within the Downtown area, an overall 25% reduction in the number of required parking spaces is permitted.

**Re-Use/Re-Construction of Existing Building.** The provision of additional parking is not required for a change of use in existing buildings in the C-2 district. Whenever a new building replaces an existing one or there is an expansion of an existing building within the C-2 zoning district, the City's parking requirements shall apply only if there is an increase in floor area of twenty-five (25%) or more.

## **3.2.2 Environmental Impacts**

### **Land Use - Adopted Plans and Policies**

#### **"No Action" Alternative**

Under the "No Action" alternative, land use development in the downtown would continue under current codes, policies and regulations. These existing plans and regulations do provide standards and direction for Downtown revitalization and redevelopment. The existing Comprehensive Plan states that downtown Auburn should remain the commercial, cultural and governmental focal point for the community. Development and rehabilitation of multi-family development downtown is encouraged. Pedestrian-oriented development and transit use is also addressed and encouraged.

With the "No Action" alternative, a significant part of the Auburn downtown planning area would remain zoned C-3 (Heavy Commercial). Certain auto-oriented uses that typically are not conducive to a pedestrian-friendly downtown atmosphere could locate in the downtown under the C-3 zone. The Main Street commercial core and other parts of downtown are zoned C-2 (Central Business District). Non-commercial zoning is also present in the study area, including residential and industrial.

Building height is limited to 45 feet in the C-2 zone. The C-3 zone maximum building height is 45 feet with additional height allowed subject to performance standards. The Residential Office-Hospital (RO-H) zone allows a maximum height of 65 feet.

Design oriented development standards exist for buildings in the C-2 (Central Business District) zone. New development in the C-2 zone implementing these requirements will need to address standards such as pedestrian amenities and building and entryway placement. Still, these standards are limited, and are not comprehensive in terms of addressing building design often associated with pedestrian orientation and architectural detail.

Under the "No Action" alternative, individual proposals (not exempt under SEPA) would be reviewed under SEPA on a case by case basis. In the absence of an overall comprehensive strategy for downtown redevelopment, case by case review of individual projects could result in less consistent implementation of adopted policies than that afforded by the Downtown Plan with its approach of adopting specific implementing development regulations.

In addition, the existing codes and regulations do not strongly affirm the City's commitment to downtown redevelopment with an overall detailed strategy. In this respect, new development in

downtown has not been very active and the physical and economic conditions of downtown have deteriorated. It is quite likely this will continue over time under the "No Action" alternative.

### **"Downtown Plan" Alternative**

Under the "Downtown Plan" alternative amendments to existing codes, including new sections, will be necessary to ensure consistency with and to implement the Downtown Plan policies.

These code amendments would also be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan policies and direction. The "Downtown Plan" alternative calls for subsequent implementing code amendments that will be subject to review by State agencies prior to subarea plan adoption (RCW 36.70A.106). All amendments would be subject to the public notice and public participation requirements of the GMA to ensure a broad public involvement is attained. Early and continuous public participation has been pursued throughout this process.

Code amendments necessary to implement the "Downtown Plan" alternative are identified in the Downtown Plan. These code amendments are part of a comprehensive and coordinated strategy for downtown redevelopment. This includes eliminating a specified height requirement in the C-2 zone to allow property owners to better actualize the economic potential from their properties. Part of this is an effort to intensify land use in the downtown core and, as a result, the land use intensity should over time be greater under the "Downtown Plan" alternative than the "No Action" alternative. This intensity could result in bigger buildings that are not in character with the area if not mitigated.

To this extent, future regulations would be more effective in eliciting positive impacts as the regulations would be prepared and guided by a cohesive strategy for the revitalization of the downtown area. The application of policies and regulations to proposals in the downtown area would be prepared, reviewed and implemented with clear objectives in mind. Regulations can be applied consistently to all development proposals rather than relying on case by case review through SEPA. The code requirements will also communicate to the public and development community expectations the community has set for development in the downtown area and should remove elements of development uncertainty and risk.

In some areas, future development proposals would be subject to more flexible requirements (See following Transportation and Stormwater sections) that are addressed and discussed in this Downtown Plan. This should encourage development and the revitalization of Downtown Auburn.

In addition, the "Downtown Plan" alternative envisions a stronger code enforcement presence in the Downtown. This includes addressing poorly maintained or hazardous buildings, illegal uses, trash and other maintenance issues, and illegal structures and signage. This will help ensure a visually pleasing downtown and announce to individuals pursuing downtown redevelopment that their investments will be protected from nuisance related concerns.

In terms of land use, the "Downtown Plan" alternative would promote more mixed-use development in the downtown consistent with transit oriented development themes. Increasing downtown's residential population is a downtown plan strategy intended to promote and foster more activity, particularly nighttime activities. Redevelopment of key opportunity sites would result in more intensive development in terms of scale.

Finally, the "Downtown Plan" alternative is consistent with the multi-county regional vision set forth in Vision 2020. Vision 2020 calls for high density centers served by a multi-modal high capacity transportation system. Promoting development, including more residential development and other transit oriented development, around the Sound Transit Commuter Rail Station in downtown Auburn is consistent with this regional plan and vision and will have beneficial impacts for the regional planning vision.

### **3.2.3 Mitigation Measures**

Mitigation measures provided for by goals and policies in the "Downtown Plan" alternative include:

- Zoning and design guidelines and standards are to be prepared and adopted to ensure that new higher intensity building design is visually pleasing, particularly to the pedestrian, and is compatible with adjacent and surrounding land uses.
- Rezone a substantial portion of the planning area from C-3 (Heavy Commercial) to (C-2) Central Business District to eliminate uses inconsistent with the concept of a pedestrian-oriented downtown.
- Zoning code amendments to remove non-conforming and inconsistent land use over time.
- Encourage parking garages to avoid excessive number of small parking lots.

#### **Unavoidable Adverse Impacts**

None.





## Section 3.3 Aesthetics

## Section 3.3 Aesthetics

### 3.3.1 Existing Aesthetic Conditions

As discussed in Part 1, Section 1.4, the Downtown Plan Study Area is divided into three broad, yet distinct, subareas for the purpose of discussing aesthetics. These include:

1. Main Street, comprised of the entire block north and south of Main Street;
2. Other Commercial and Industrial Areas comprised of Industrial, C Street NW, A Street NW, Medical Center, Auburn Way, and South Central Downtown Districts; and,
3. Residential areas comprised of West and East Main residential districts.

Existing conditions for these three subareas, including detailed discussion of defining characteristics, site planning and layout, building design and streetscape features and site elements, are described in Part 1, Section 1.4 and will not be repeated here.

### 3.3.2 Impacts

#### **"No Action" Alternative**

Under the "No Action" alternative, there is no formally adopted set of comprehensive architectural design guidelines or design standards, nor are there downtown streetscape standards. In this respect, the "No Action" alternative does not strongly emphasize the physical appearance of development nor does it place emphasis on pedestrian-oriented design or on providing pedestrian amenities that would encourage non-vehicular use. At the very least, there would not be an overall strategy or concerted effort to improve the visual appearance of downtown buildings and streetscapes. The "No Action" alternative would perpetuate an existing development pattern generally lacking both distinctive and/or coordinated architectural features and high quality site development standards.

Development could continue under existing plan and regulations. New development, if it did occur, would generally be allowed up to a maximum of four stories (45 feet). However, given the market trends and historical development activity in downtown, from a practical standpoint this means that the downtown would retain its existing character and aesthetics, including low-rise development.

Most development would likely consist of remodeling of existing buildings more so than the introduction and development of new buildings. New development has been rare in the recent past due to impediments to development that have historically existed (discussed in Part I – the Downtown Plan). Building remodels would be done without specific guidance on how to retain the character of the downtown area or respect the historical and architectural character of buildings. False facades have been added to many of the core Main Street buildings and would likely continue. This has resulted in revisions to the building facades that may be inappropriate with the character of the area and/or insensitive to historic features of the building. New or replacement signage inappropriate for a pedestrian-oriented downtown and that lacks quality workmanship would also become increasingly prevalent.

Under this scenario, the quality of downtown development would be more predisposed to decline and the economic climate worsen. The absence of strong and continuous code enforcement would likely result in the continued presence of poorly maintained buildings, illegal uses, illegal structures or signs, and nuisances in the downtown. And, because of the high commercial vacancy rate in downtown, the lack of reinvestment into buildings would continue and the aesthetic qualities of downtown buildings would simply deteriorate. This deterioration leads to unsafe and/or unhealthy conditions.

### **“Downtown Plan” Alternative**

The “Downtown Plan” alternative would, over time, change the appearance of downtown Auburn in a positive manner. Perhaps the most significant aesthetic impact that could result from the Downtown Plan relates to building height. The “Downtown Plan” alternative proposes removing the maximum building height requirement in the Downtown planning area in lieu of a more prescriptive based approach. The “Downtown Plan” alternative proposes a maximum building height based on satisfying building design criteria. This includes maintaining a minimum 1:1 street width to building height ratio to avoid a “canyon” affect and to provide a sense of comfort for the pedestrian by providing sunlight and views of the sky. Therefore, taller buildings could result than under the “No Action” alternative. These taller buildings have the potential for adverse visual impacts if not mitigated.

Under the “Downtown Plan” alternative catalyst projects will be promoted and initiated. Areas of downtown typified by low scale buildings that have historically become rundown and/or vacant would redevelop, likely at a higher density, and foster a positive

image with quality design. Building envelopes for these sites would likely be greater than existing building envelopes. Land use would intensify in the downtown more so than under the "No Action" alternative.

The "Downtown Plan" alternative would have additional beneficial impacts on downtown appearance. The "Downtown Plan" alternative contains building design guidelines and recommends that these be formally implemented through the adoption of design standards. Design standards will help ensure that downtown development is performed in a manner consistent with the overall vision expressed in the Downtown Plan. Development will be sensitive to and compatible with human/pedestrian scale, adjacent development, and overall downtown development. Buildings will be designed and developed to retain the character and quality of a traditional downtown, with efforts to address building and site features such as blank walls, façade modulation, building stepbacks, parking location, vehicular access, storefront modules, building materials, building orientation, windows and doors, roofs, and colors.

In addition to design standards for buildings, standards for other elements of the built environment including streetscape, street furniture, pedestrian lighting and paths, and signs are recommended to improve the function and visual appearance of Downtown.

Public art built into the fabric of downtown, wayfinding signs and gateways will also create a distinct aesthetic identity for downtown. Landscaping and tree plantings in the street and on private property are proposed to add plant materials and improve the sense of experience in the downtown. All of these improvements, along with efforts to promote pedestrian linkages, will serve to actively enhance and build on the aesthetic quality of downtown.

In addition, the "Downtown Plan" alternative seeks to encourage the restoration of historic architectural features, including facades. A façade improvement program would be explored and, if feasible, implemented on Main Street to ensure compatibility of materials, signage and storefront configuration with the predominant materials, patterns and character of historic buildings, with special attention to adjacent historic buildings.

Overall, the aesthetic form and quality of the downtown is intended to change over time. Increased development intensity, such as building height and lot coverage, is allowed. This must be accomplished and will be mitigated by the imposition of standards addressing quality building and site design. Building design is oriented toward preservation of the historical character of the

community, protecting less intensive land uses, and maintaining an interesting appearance. Site design features are particularly oriented to the needs of the pedestrian so that walking (or even bicycling) opportunities are encouraged and made enjoyable.

### **3.3.3 Mitigation Measures**

Mitigation measures provided for by the goals or policies in the "Downtown Plan" include the following:

- Increased building height impact is reduced by maintaining a maximum street right-of-way to building height ratio.
- Gateways, landmarks and wayfinding system to encourage pedestrian use, define boundaries, and create a sense of welcome to the Downtown.
- Undergrounding of utilities.
- Improving signage quality, including discouraging sign types inappropriate to a downtown.
- Design standards to improve the aesthetic quality of new buildings.
- Facade improvements, including design standards and/or a facade replacement program that encourages removal of false facades and restoration of historic architectural features.
- Zoning and design standards requiring significant buffers to protect residential areas from incompatible uses.
- Code enforcement efforts to remove blighting influences and nuisances that detract from the physical appearance of downtown.
- Removal of inconsistent and non-conforming land uses.
- Including public art in all public projects.
- Expansion of a Downtown Public Art Program.
- Streetscape and landscaping programs to provide more plant materials directly affecting quality of life and quality of experience.

#### **Unavoidable Adverse Impacts**

None.



## Section 3.4 Transportation

## Section 3.4 Transportation

This section describes the existing conditions and compares and analyzes transportation impacts between the “No Action” and the “Downtown Plan” alternatives. Transportation is addressed very broadly in this section and includes not only roadways/traffic/level of service but also transit, pedestrian/bicycle circulation (non-motorized), parking, and railroads.

Certain items contained in this section are technical, and result from traffic analysis completed for the City of Auburn Downtown Plan. An existing City of Auburn 1996 Transportation Model (TModel2) was used as a starting point and updated with revised downtown land use data and assumptions. Land use outside of the downtown area remained constant for this analysis. Traffic counts within the downtown core were updated and included in the re-calibration process. Multiple scenarios were run to aid in the development of the Downtown Plan traffic analysis. Results from these scenarios are included in the Appendix.

To relate the Downtown Plan to areas outside the downtown core, modifications were also made to the existing City-wide model (1996 calibration) and analyzed for determination of impacts for areas outside the downtown core. Background information and raw data results are contained in the Transportation Appendix.

### 3.4.1 Existing Conditions

This section documents and describes existing transportation improvements, conditions, and/or services in and around the City of Auburn Downtown Plan study area that may be impacted by implementation of the “Downtown Plan” alternative. The discussion focuses on the roadway network/traffic/level of service, transit services, bicycles and pedestrians (non-motorized transportation), parking and railroad facilities.

#### Roadways

A roadway network consisting of several different types of facilities including freeways, surface arterials and local streets serves the City of Auburn. There are two state routes traversing near or in the City of Auburn’s downtown area (SR 18 east/west and SR 167 north/south). SR 18 is a four-lane freeway that passes along the southern portion of the downtown area and links to Interstate 5 to the west. Downtown Auburn’s access to SR 18 is provided at the C Street SW and Auburn Way interchanges.

SR 167 is a four-lane freeway that passes through the City of Auburn west of downtown Auburn and connects to Interstate 405 to the north and Highway 410 and SR 512 to the south. Access to SR 167 is provided at 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW and south at an interchange near the SuperMall. The distance to the downtown area from the SR 167 interchange is farther than those provided by SR 18.

Several principal arterial streets serve both regional and local traffic in Downtown Auburn and the balance of the City. The principal arterial roadways in Downtown include Auburn Way, and segments of C Street SW and A Street SE. The roadway network also includes a number of minor arterial streets. North/south minor arterials within the downtown area are Auburn Avenue/A Street SE (north of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SE). A Street NW/SW has been identified as a future minor arterial when it is extended to 14<sup>th</sup> Street NW. East/west minor arterials within the downtown area include: 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW/NE, Main Street, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW/Cross Street/4<sup>th</sup> Street SE. Downtown also includes several residential and non-residential collector arterials.

In addition to the existing roadway network described above, there are several downtown study area roadway improvements identified within the City of Auburn's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as well as in the 20-Year Long Range Plan. These are currently at various stages of development.

Truck routes are another important element of the City of Auburn roadway network. The transportation of freight to, from and within the City and downtown generates a significant volume of truck traffic. The existing system of truck routes focuses on the freeways and principal roadways in the area. A map of freight routes, including truck routes and rail lines, is included in the 1997 Auburn Transportation Plan.

### **Traffic Volumes and Level of Service**

The City of Auburn uses a traffic simulation model (TModel2) calibrated to 1996 traffic conditions. These traffic conditions take into account land use in 203 zones within the City as well as traffic counts on city streets. When examining the calibration for downtown Auburn alone, it was determined that this area should be re-calibrated using updated land use projections and traffic counts. This allows for a more accurate reflection of travel patterns and for a more detailed analysis of the downtown area. (For more information concerning the changes made to the city-wide model to construct the re-calibrated downtown model see the Transportation component in the Appendix.)

As expected, the highest traffic volumes in the Downtown Auburn area, using 1996-1998 average pm peak hour traffic volumes, are found on the regional freeways. SR 18 carried between 1,858 and 3,263 vehicles during the average pm peak hour through the downtown Auburn area.

Traffic congestion is perceived as a significant problem on the roadway network serving downtown Auburn. Congestion occurs when the volume on the roadway approaches its capacity. The ratio of volume to capacity is used as a measure of traffic congestion. When the volume (demand) exceeds the capacity of a roadway, the result is congestion. This capacity deficiency is most common during the pm peak traffic hours but may also occur when the capacity is reduced by accidents or construction activity.

Using the re-calibrated downtown Auburn model, no roadway segments and intersections are currently experiencing congestion over acceptable levels (LOS D being acceptable) during the PM peak hour.

### **Transit Facilities and Services**

The King County Department of Metropolitan Services (Metro) is the primary provider of public transit services to residents and employees in the City of Auburn. Metro Transit is part of the Department of Transportation in King County, Washington. Metro operates a fleet of about 1,300 vehicles including standard and articulated coaches, electric trolleys, dual-powered buses, and streetcars, that serves an annual ridership of more than 75 million within a 2,128 square mile area. Additional bus service is provided in Auburn by Sound Transit's Regional Express.

Approximately 10 Metro transit (bus) routes operate in the downtown Auburn area. Most of these bus routes run north/south along Auburn Way with the main transit stop in Auburn located on 1<sup>st</sup> and B Streets NE. Other routes within Auburn utilize Main Street throughout the downtown area (one route travels along Main Street to M street, the other two routes using portions of Main Street during their routes; one between B Street and Auburn Avenue, and another between B Street and Auburn Way).

The Sound Transit Station has been designed to accommodate both commuter rail and bus service. Once the station is complete, the Metro bus transfer hub will move from 1<sup>st</sup> and B Street NE to the Sound Transit Station. All routes traveling through or within Auburn will pass through this regional hub to facilitate transfer between bus and train. Bus service will be coordinated with commuter rail departures and arrivals.

Sound Transit operates commuter rail service from Tacoma to Seattle. Auburn is one of several transit stations along the commuter rail corridor. Service began in September 2000 with two daily weekday round trips. A service level of nine round trips is programmed over time. Over the next few years, Sound Transit's commuter rail service will extend north to Everett and as far south as Lakewood.

## **Parking**

The Downtown Plan (*Part 1*) includes detailed discussion of parking issues as part of the background on parking strategy policies. That discussion should be referenced for a more thorough discussion on existing parking conditions and issues affecting downtown Auburn and will not be repeated in detail here.

In summary, in 1996 the City of Auburn undertook a parking study to respond to concerns raised about downtown area parking. Concerns included localized parking shortages, difficulties developers faced in meeting parking requirements due to land costs and small lots, the lack of convenience for downtown shoppers, and the concept that parking requirements for downtown should be different than that of suburban mall type development.

With a few exceptions parking supply was not identified as a significant issue. The study did, however, find a need to reevaluate city parking requirements and found that the public sector had a role to play in addressing new parking demand.

Existing parking conditions consist of a myriad of small parking lots and on-street parking (most of which is subject to time limitations). The hospital has a large parking garage. Safeway has a large surface parking lot area. The City of Auburn owns several smaller surface parking lots around City Hall, some of which are available to the public for limited time periods.

Certain Downtown areas have localized parking shortages. This includes areas in the vicinity of the hospital and the post office. Additionally, the commuter rail component of the Transit Center opened in September 2000 with only 120 surface parking stalls. This is expected to contribute to parking scarcity in Downtown, particularly should ridership be higher than expected.

A Transit Center parking garage is being developed at the time of this plan's adoption. The garage, with approximately 500 to 600 spaces, is being built as a partnership between the City of Auburn, King County and Sound Transit. Approximately 110 stalls in the parking garage will be dedicated to the City for its use. It is possible that the City may create a Local Improvement District (LID) to allow developers to purchase rights to these parking

stalls to satisfy their parking requirements. A pedestrian bridge will be developed that allows for safe access between the parking garage and station platforms.

## **Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities**

### **Pedestrian**

Sidewalks exist in almost all areas of downtown Auburn. The Main Street core benefits from recent street improvements and is generally pedestrian-oriented in scale. This includes a wide boardwalk style sidewalk and amenities such as pedestrian-oriented lighting, landscaping and, in some locations, art and street furniture. Additionally, Main Street has mid-block pedestrian crossings. The B Street SE Plaza improvements offer a linkage between Safeway and the Main Street commercial district. Street furniture and public art are prominent in this plaza. Further, improvements behind the shops on East Main, as well as revisions to Main Street between Auburn Way and the B Street SE Plaza have contributed to the easy flow of pedestrian traffic in this area.

Given the traffic volumes and the width of the street, Auburn Way functions as a barrier to east-west pedestrian travel, and many crosswalks need restriping. Sidewalks are present along most of Auburn Way within the study area, except around 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets NW and near Cross Street. Frequent curb cuts discourage pedestrian use because of conflicts with automobile use and the frequent change in sidewalk elevation. These conditions create an uncomfortable pedestrian environment.

The rest of downtown is variable in terms of the quality of sidewalks and their condition. Certain areas are experiencing lift in sidewalks due to the confined root systems and root structure of certain street trees. Pedestrian plazas are uncommon—only two exist in the Downtown area. The plaza in front of Auburn City Hall is the most prominent plaza for pedestrians to sit and rest in Downtown. The B Street Plaza on East Main is the other, smaller plaza in Downtown.

### **Bicycles**

Downtown Auburn currently has two routes that are commonly used by bicyclists. These are: 1) the Interurban Trail; and, 2) Main Street. The Interurban Trail is a paved, 12-foot wide trail on the west edge of the Downtown Plan study area that provides a vital north/south route traversing the entire length of the City. It is adjacent to the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. The segment of the Interurban Trail in Auburn is slightly more than four miles long and is part of a 17-mile long regional trail that extends from the

City of Pacific to the City of Tukwila. This is an important connector to other valley communities for both commuting and recreational cyclists.

Many cyclists use Main Street as a connector to and from the Interurban Trail. Although there are no marked bike lanes on Main Street, traffic in the core area moves slowly enough that sharing the lane with vehicular traffic is not an uncomfortable experience for either the bicyclist or the automobile driver.

Main Street is also the primary east/west connection from the Interurban Trail and Downtown to the east part of the City. It is frequently used by bicyclists traveling toward SE Green Valley Road and Flaming Geyser State Park to the southeast, and toward the Green River Road to the northeast.

Access from other parts of the City into Downtown is more difficult. Arterial streets that pass through Downtown are heavily traveled and provide no bike lanes or wide right lanes suitable for bike travel. Local residential streets have low traffic volumes suitable for bicycling, but few streets extend for more than a few blocks due to dead ends, such as at railroad tracks. Bicyclists who need to travel across the City, through Downtown, are without good options other than Main Street.

## **Railroad**

There are two main railroad track rights-of-way that run north-south near or through the City of Auburn downtown. One railway track is owned and operated by Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) and the other is owned by Union Pacific Railroad (UP). The BNSF rail line traverses through the downtown core. In addition to serving a high volume of freight trains traveling through the City, the BNSF tracks are used in conjunction with Sound Transit's commuter rail program "Sounder".

Along the southerly boundary of the Downtown Plan study area is a BNSF rail line that generally runs east-west. This line is commonly referred to as the Stampede Pass line. With the reopening of Stampede Pass a few years ago, additional trains are now traveling through the City of Auburn, including through the Downtown, connecting with the BNSF mainline.

BNSF's Stampede Pass line joins the BNSF mainline via a 10 mile per hour curve at the southwest corner of Auburn's Downtown. Long trains in the 5,000 to 9,000 foot range combined with slow speeds result in blocking of several at-grade crossings simultaneously, causing large backups for vehicles, with few or no alternative routes available.

BNSF indicates that the Stampede Pass opening results in a maximum of eight to ten daily trains in the foreseeable future. It appears that the trains operate at or below this level unless one of the other east-west routes across the Cascade Mountains is blocked, which occurs occasionally during the winter. This increase in trains through the Auburn area, along with the location of the intersecting mainline curve in Downtown Auburn, results in up to five at-grade crossings simultaneously being utilized. With few alternative routes available, major delays and queuing on the arterial system in the Downtown area is expected without additional improvements.

The 1997 Auburn Stampede Rail Traffic Study found that grade separated intersections in all affected areas would be cost prohibitive. Thus, the Auburn Stampede Rail Traffic Study concluded that the most cost effective combination of projects to offset the impacts of the Stampede Pass rail operation in the downtown included the construction of two grade-separated intersections (at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW and M Street SE), extending A Street NW from 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW to 14<sup>th</sup> Street NW, and constructing a bypass route linking Auburn-Black Diamond Road to M Street SE.

## **Aviation**

There are currently no commercial airports within the City of Auburn. Nearly all the regional passenger air travel is accommodated by Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (Sea-Tac), which is located northwest of Auburn. Other local facilities for general aviation use include Auburn Municipal Airport, Renton Municipal Airport, and Boeing Field.

## **3.4.2 Environmental Impacts**

The following section compares and evaluates transportation impacts of the "Downtown Plan" alternative with the "No Action" alternative. However, prior to the specific discussion of impacts, the following discussion is intended to provide additional background information concerning the modeling analysis of roadway, traffic, and LOS.

### **Analysis Assumptions**

The City of Auburn Traffic Demand Model served as the basis for evaluating the "Downtown Plan" alternative's traffic impacts. Travel demand models are used to estimate future traffic volumes associated with specified land use scenarios. This model has been applied to both 6-year and 20-year land use forecasts developed

for the "Downtown Plan" land use alternative and provides an indication of future traffic conditions in each scenario. This analysis is assumed sufficient through the year 2005. The preponderance of the future analysis was completed using this time frame.

The complete modeling methodology, assumptions, and results are documented in the Model Development Paper, prepared for the City of Auburn by the Bucher, Willis, Ratliff (BWR) Corporation. The model was calibrated on the existing roadway system, using updated 1998 downtown land use information. This resulted in a "baseline" condition (1998 pm peak hour traffic). Then, the model was revised to include the infrastructure improvements (TIP and Long Range Plan projects) and land use changes for both the six (6) year and twenty (20) year projections. The travel demand model was then utilized to generate forecasts of future travel demand.

For each of the alternative analysis scenarios the Sound Transit regional commuter rail component was included.

### **A Street NW/SW Analysis**

To aid in the overall analysis of downtown traffic, additional modeling and analysis was performed on a programmed city street project that will aid in alleviating congestion in Downtown. Specifically, the City of Auburn will extend A Street NW from 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW to 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW to address congestion along C Street NW/SW, Auburn Avenue/A Street SE, and Auburn Way. This project's anticipated role in improving downtown traffic circulation was deemed significant enough to merit additional analysis prior to including it in the "Downtown Plan" alternative's modeling effort.

To take into account possible alternative roadway designs and their impacts as well as to determine the most appropriate design width to use in the city's modeling for the "Downtown Plan" alternative, four scenarios were considered for the A Street NW/SW roadway section between 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW and 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW. The four designs took into consideration different combinations of travel lanes and on-street parking within different segments of the roadway. The intent of the scenarios was to identify the most appropriate design alternative to include in the downtown traffic model.

Each scenario was run on the 2020 re-calibrated downtown model to produce the worst case event of the area. The modeling results showed minimal discrepancies between the four scenarios. Therefore, the A Street design selected for model projections involves two lanes (one lane in each direction) north of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW with no on-street parking, two lanes and parking on both sides

of the street between Main and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW, and three lanes (one lane in each direction and a continuous left turn lane) with on-street parking on the west side of the street south of Main Street (see Appendix for more information concerning the analysis and determination of the A Street configuration).

## **Future Year Assumptions**

Four main infrastructure projects were included in the traffic analysis for both alternatives. These include: 1) The extension of A Street NW from its existing terminus at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW to 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW (see discussion above); (2) a loop connecting the southern terminus of A Street SW, traveling under the fly ramp being constructed as part of the SR18/C Street Interchange and connecting to Division Street at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW. This allows quick access to SR 18, while also allowing movements to and from A Street and the transit center; (3) realignment of the intersection of 4<sup>th</sup> Street NE/NW and Auburn Way; and, (4) Auburn Way improvements.

The intersection of 4<sup>th</sup> Street NE/NW and Auburn Avenue will be realigned from an offset intersection to a true intersection. The Auburn Way improvements will include access control and signal modifications.

Overall, then, the key difference in the traffic model between the "No Action" alternative and the "Downtown Plan" alternative is the land use assumptions within the downtown core area.

Table I shows the intersections and their node capacity for the 1998 baseline as well as the "No Action" and "Downtown Plan" alternatives analysis for both the 6-year and 20-year time frames. Node capacities are slightly different than intersection Level of Service (LOS). Node capacities are based on the total number of vehicles entering and exiting an intersection, whereas intersection LOS takes into account how many of these vehicles are turning left, turning right, or going through that intersection. A node capacity of 81-90 would approximately correspond to an intersection LOS of D.

Table J summarizes the Auburn Travel Model results for the 1998 calibrated Downtown Model as well as the six-year and 20-year analysis, including pm peak hour vehicle miles-traveled (VMT), pm peak hour vehicle hours traveled (VHT) and average pm peak hour speed. The table also shows how those figures differ from the 1998 baseline traffic conditions.

**Table I: City of Auburn Node Capacities at Downtown Intersections**

Intersections	1996 Calibrated Downtown Model	2005 Downtown Model		2020 Downtown Model	
		Existing Trends	Downtown Plan	Existing Trends	Downtown Plan
<i>C Street SW @SR-18 EB ramps</i>	40	64	65	93	95
<i>C Street SW @ Main Street</i>	34	60	61	74	79
<i>Division Street @ 3rd Street SW</i>	33	74	75	95	96
<i>A Street SE @ Cross Street</i>	44	79	81	90	91
<i>Auburn Avenue @ Main Street</i>	40	62	64	70	70

NOTE: The City of Auburn's acceptable Level of Service in Downtown (LOS D) corresponds to node capacities at or below 90.

**Table J: City of Auburn pm Peak Hour VMT, VHT, and Average Speed**

	VMT	VHT	Average Speed
1998 Calibrated Downtown Model (baseline)	884,881	55,944	28.56
6-year Existing Trends	1,200,925	74,534	16.11
Change from 1998 baseline	35.73%	33.23%	-43.59%
6-year Downtown Plan	1,201,536	74,365	16.16
Change from 1998 Baseline	35.80%	32.93%	-43.42%
Change from 6-year Existing Trends	0.05%	-0.23%	0.31%
20-year existing trends	1,317,546	105,096	12.54
Change from 1998 Baseline	48.91%	87.86%	-56.09%
20-year Downtown Plan	1,318,487	105,359	12.51
Change from 1998 Baseline	49.01%	88.33%	-56.20%
Change from 20-year Existing Trends	0.07%	0.25%	-0.24%

VMT=Vehicle Miles Traveled

VHT=Vehicle Hours Traveled

### **"No Action" Alternative**

#### **Roadway/Traffic/Level of Service**

The principal feature of the "No Action" alternative is the dispersed housing, employment and other land uses throughout the city that lends itself to being efficiently served by the automobile more so than other modes of transportation. As a result, maintaining the

current land use plans, policies and practices is expected to support the continued city-wide use and growth in automobile traffic and the deterioration of travel conditions on Auburn roadways.

As indicated in Table I, if the current land use trends continue, peak hour VMT and VHT are projected to significantly increase, with average speeds slowing to half the 1988 baselines.

The model results indicate that traffic congestion will become more severe and widespread than it currently is, even with completion of the proposed roadway improvements and expansions. Residents and employees throughout the City will experience more delays and less reliable travel times as area roadways reach their physical capacity.

Downtown will also be increasingly congested. The City's LOS standard of "D" (for the Downtown area) would be applied with mitigation imposed under SEPA. Downtown intersections that will exceed the LOS standard in the 20-year time frame include: C Street SW at SR-18, eastbound ramps, Division Street at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW, and A Street SE at Cross Street (see Appendix for more information concerning the 6-year and 20-year model projections).

### **Parking**

Under the "No Action" alternative parking would likely continue to be provided by development on a case by case basis (although Sound Transit is constructing a parking garage with spaces owned by the City that could possibly be allocated to developers through a Local Improvement District [LID]). Existing codes do provide for the reduction of off-street parking requirements in the downtown but generally developers would continue to face difficulties meeting parking requirements due to land costs and ownership patterns that divides blocks into many small parcels. New developments that can provide surface parking would be using valuable land area that could more appropriately be used for buildings/floor area. The difficulty in satisfying off-street parking requirements discourages downtown redevelopment and tends to encourage continued tenant turnover in existing buildings.

In addition, multiple surface parking lots detract from the appearance of downtown. Large numbers of individually owned surface parking lots requiring curb cuts have resulted from this development pattern and are incompatible with a pedestrian-oriented, densely developed downtown.

## **Transit**

The "No Action" alternative should not have a direct effect on the number of bus routes in the Downtown area. A recent factor affecting transit routes has been the development of the Sound Transit commuter rail station. This has led to the rerouting of existing routes to service the commuter rail station. Although local jurisdictions are allowed input into the transit routing and scheduling process, routes and schedules are primarily set by individual transit agencies (e.g. Metro, Pierce Transit and Sound Transit).

Commuter rail transit is included in the "No Action" alternative with the initiation of Sound Transit's Sounder Service from Seattle to Tacoma. Auburn is one of several stations along the Tacoma to Seattle route that will eventually be expanded to include service to Everett and Lakewood. The parking garage will serve as a park and ride facility.

Existing Comprehensive Plan transportation element policies encourage the continued development of public transit systems including working with Metro to explore opportunities for improved bus service in Auburn as well as exploring linkages to the south with Pierce Transit.

## **Pedestrian/Bicycle**

### **Pedestrian**

Under the "No Action" alternative, the existing pedestrian network would likely remain. Sidewalk infrastructure to support pedestrian movement is essentially in place with a few exceptions. Absent, however, are strong pedestrian linkages within the downtown and from surrounding areas into downtown. Further, pedestrian-oriented amenities that typically complement and encourage pedestrian use are not present in a significant way outside of the Main Street corridor.

Under the "No Action" alternative, the primary guide for pedestrian improvements is contained in the City of Auburn's 1998 Nonmotorized Transportation Plan. Downtown is designated in the Nonmotorized Transportation Plan as one of Auburn's primary pedestrian-oriented areas. The Nonmotorized Transportation Plan notes that parts of downtown vary greatly in their ability to serve pedestrians and defers to the Downtown Plan process for potential improvements such as shelter and shade, seating, sidewalks, pedestrian corridors and traffic revisions.

## **Bicycle**

Under the "No Action" alternative, bicycle improvements would also be guided by the adopted Nonmotorized Transportation Plan. The Plan identified the need for access into Downtown and the Transit Center from A Street SE and the southeast part of the City. The City has purchased property to construct a separated trail along this route as part of the A Street SW extension project. In addition, the planned extension of A Street NW to 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW is to be designed with bicycle facilities, creating a longer north/south route that will access both the Downtown and North Auburn Central Business District.

**Overall, for pedestrian and bicycles,** the "No Action" alternative continues to have the potential for pedestrian/bicycle conflicts with motorized vehicles and trains. Transportation improvement projects such as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW grade separation, the pedestrian bridge crossing at the commuter rail station garage, grade crossing improvements at Main Street, the inclusion of bike lanes into road projects and other pedestrian improvements are identified to address some of the existing and anticipated motorized/nonmotorized conflicts.

## **Railroad**

Under the "No Action" alternative, freight and commuter rail traffic would continue on the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe (BNSF) and freight traffic would continue on the Union Pacific (UP) mainlines.

In some respects, the additional traffic downtown attributable to growth in general will likely increase the possibility for train/vehicular conflicts and accidents. However, anticipated projects that would occur under either the "No Action" and "Downtown Plan" alternatives, such as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW Grade Separation, should provide railroad safety improvements and safeguards. Pedestrian safety improvements at the West Main Street grade crossing will be included when the third mainline track is installed. The work is covered under an existing agreement between Sound Transit and BNSF. Also, at the Sound Transit station, there will be a mid-station pedestrian bridge between the platform on the west side and the platform and parking garage on the east side.

The Stampede Pass rail traffic should not have adverse impacts on Auburn downtown due to noise or vibration. Under the "No Action" alternative, zoning along the railroad mainline is either commercial or industrial. These designations are generally compatible with railroad uses. The closest residential area is located to the west of the BNSF tracks where the commuter rail station has

been constructed. Sound Transit's parking garage, however, is being constructed along the east side of the commuter rail station. It will serve to deflect some noise between the railroad line and new residential areas located east of the station.

However, the Stampede Pass opening could affect downtown by making it less desirable to visit and shop, especially until grade improvements are made. Potential downtown visitors may perceive downtown as being less safe and/or less desirable due to delays caused by the additional Stampede Pass train traffic. Additionally, mixed-use development may be more difficult to achieve as increased train traffic may discourage pursuit of residential development in the proposed area.

## **"Downtown Plan" Alternative**

### **Roadways/Traffic/Level of Service**

Roadway improvements in the "Downtown Plan" alternative are similar to those identified in the "No Action" alternative.

The "Downtown Plan" alternative envisions and promotes higher intensity development in comparison to the "No Action" alternative. With the projected increase in retail, other commercial space and residential units within the downtown core area, trips that might normally be attributed to other areas of the city (e.g. shopping, dry cleaners, office uses such as lawyers, accountants) can be moved to the downtown area. This allows for trip-chaining (multiple stops along the same trip). On a citywide basis, the result is only a slight increase in the overall VMT and VHT over the "No Action" alternative (as seen in Table I), while providing retail and commercial core usage.

Under the "Downtown Plan" alternative, a lower level of service (LOS) will be acceptable in the Downtown than elsewhere in the City. LOS within the Downtown will be calculated on an average of corridor segments and not individual segments. Essentially the "Downtown Plan" alternative provides for an overall LOS in the Downtown area that can operate at an average LOS of "E" and still be acceptable. Exceptions to the LOS of "E" are Auburn Way, Auburn Avenue/A Street SE and C Street NW, which must be maintained at the current LOS of "D". In part, allowing a LOS of "E" recognizes that density is desirable and related congestion is an acceptable impact to achieve a vibrant downtown. In addition, it is in recognition that the city has already expended and programmed a considerable amount of funds into road improvements to serve the downtown area. Traffic impact fees, if adopted, will give consideration to waiving this requirement in the downtown area.

The Downtown Plan Model calculations show that the average LOS will be retained over the six year analysis period (through 2005). To ensure that new development is consistent with the development densities envisioned in this plan and to monitor how development affects the downtown average LOS standard, a traffic accounting system will be established and will be applied during project review. This accounting system will be used to closely monitor how development densities decrease the LOS standard set for the downtown. Should a development proposal reduce the LOS standard below the minimum established by the Downtown Plan, then mitigation will be required.

Given the lower LOS standard, the "Downtown Plan" alternative could result in more traffic congestion than under the "No Action" alternative in the Downtown area in particular.

### **Transit**

The "Downtown Plan" alternative envisions higher density development over time. Should this be accomplished, it is possible that Metro, Pierce Transit, and/or Sound Transit's Regional Express may identify the need for additional transit service to Auburn's downtown. Also, the lower LOS standard set for the Downtown area under the "Downtown Plan" alternative might encourage more transit use as individuals look for acceptable alternatives to personal vehicles and increased congestion when visiting and/or shopping in downtown Auburn.

Increased traffic congestion in the downtown area could affect transit service by causing delays, but it is unclear as to what degree.

The frequency of commuter rail service (Sounder) by Sound Transit would not be affected by the "Downtown Plan" alternative. Those decisions are made on a broader system-wide basis by participating agencies.

### **Parking**

Under the "Downtown Plan" alternative more density is expected to result in more parking demand by customers, residents and employees. New development will be required to provide parking. The "Downtown Plan" alternative assumes a more coordinated and flexible approach to meeting parking requirements than the "No Action" alternative. Specifically, the "Downtown Plan" alternative seeks to promote public and/or private garages as a source of parking in Downtown, relieving individual owners the burden of supporting and maintaining parking lots.

Encouraging the development of parking structures is intended to reduce the impact of large areas devoted to parking. Garages

encourage better overall design of development within downtown and also encourage customers to only park once rather than make multiple vehicular trips. Garages also allow for better control over the total supply of parking. Too much parking in downtown discourages transit-oriented development by consuming land and, in some instances, disrupting pedestrian linkages and walkways across properties.

The "Downtown Plan" alternative calls for the consideration of specific mechanisms to enable the City of Auburn to raise capital for parking structures. Once built, developers would be able to "buy" parking capacity in garages to satisfy their parking demand. Potential sites are identified in the "Downtown Plan" alternative to facilitate this effort.

One impact associated with parking garages could be their appearance, although the plan policies do emphasize that such structures should include architectural detailing consistent with the Downtown location. Additional traffic near and around parking garages could also cause an impact both in terms of congestion on the streets and conflicts with pedestrians or bicyclists.

Overall, the parking strategy set forth in the "Downtown Plan" alternative addresses the parking needs associated with growth and also is a component to the overall Downtown Plan strategy to identify and remove impediments to redevelopment.

## **Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities**

### **Pedestrian**

Pedestrian use and activity is expected to increase and will be better accommodated in the "Downtown Plan" alternative than in the "No Action" alternative. At the core of the "Downtown Plan" alternative is an emphasis on creating a pedestrian-oriented downtown through the provision of pedestrian connections within Downtown Auburn and to and from outlying neighborhoods. Building design and the provision of amenities consistent with pedestrian orientation are encouraged. This emphasis is much stronger in the "Downtown Plan" alternative than in the "No Action" alternative. Encouraging walking around the downtown and avoiding multiple vehicle trips within downtown is a prominent Downtown Plan theme. As a result, more people are expected to be walking within the downtown area under the "Downtown Plan" alternative than in the "No Action" alternative.

To accommodate this, the Downtown Plan specifically discusses the preparation of street design standards intended to establish standards for sidewalk corridors. These include furnishings to

improve pedestrian comfort, and curb cuts to minimize conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. Street design standards will ensure a balanced function of streets for both pedestrians and automobiles. The focus on pedestrian enhancements and safety will also make downtown Auburn less automobile dependent. Downtown art, street lighting and tree planting programs are all discussed in the Downtown Plan to promote amenities that will encourage pedestrian travel.

## **Bicycle**

Bicycle use is also expected to increase in the "Downtown Plan" alternative relative to the "No Action" alternative. The "Downtown Plan" includes policies specifically aimed at improving opportunities for bicycling in and through Downtown. This includes strategies and policies aimed at developing a bicycle link from the Main Street Core to West Auburn High School and the Interurban Trail.

To facilitate both **bicycle and pedestrian** use in the downtown area, gateways, signage improvements, and wayfinding techniques will be implemented in the "Downtown Plan" alternative to better direct pedestrians and bicyclists to and within the downtown area. These land marking and signage systems will promote safe and convenient bicycle use and pedestrian travel.

As with transit use, with the increase in pedestrian and bicycling activity, there is a possibility for more pedestrian/bicycle conflicts with automobiles and trains unless pedestrian and bicycling routes are clearly identified. To the extent that more traffic and pedestrian/bicycle activity is expected, the possibility of such conflicts is greater.

## **Railroad Facilities**

The "Downtown Plan" alternative will not result in additional freight or passenger service over the "No Action" alternative. To this extent, there are no anticipated differences in impacts between the "No Action" alternative and the "Downtown Plan" alternative. Freight and passenger service should not be affected by the "Downtown Plan" alternative.

In some respects, the additional traffic downtown resulting from the "Downtown Plan" alternative could pose the possibility for greater train/vehicular conflicts and accidents than under the "No Action" alternative.

From the standpoint of impact upon downtown, additional train traffic and traffic delays associated with the opening of Stampede

Pass could be an impediment to Downtown redevelopment if the perception or reality exists that increased train traffic makes downtown a less desirable place to invest or if customers perceive travel to downtown as too dangerous or cumbersome due to train traffic.

However, programmed improvements should provide railroad safety improvements and safeguards while enhancing access that mitigates these concerns. Again, these projects include the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW Grade Separation project to allow for unimpeded access into downtown. Pedestrian safety improvements at the West Main Street at-grade crossing will be included when the third main line track is installed. The work is covered under an existing agreement between Sound Transit and BNSF. Also, a mid-station pedestrian bridge is being constructed between the platform on the west side of the Sound Transit Commuter Rail station and the parking garage.

### **3.4.3 Mitigation Measures**

#### **Traffic (primarily automobiles)**

- Continued implementation of programmed street improvements, including the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW grade separation project to improve safety and access to and from downtown.
- Establish a traffic accounting system to evaluate and monitor the progress of development and its consistency with the development densities identified in the Downtown Plan.
- Pursue and implement nonmotorized transportation strategies to encourage alternatives to automobile use. Examples include: creating pedestrian linkages within downtown and to and from the periphery of the downtown; implementing gateways, signage improvements, and wayfinding techniques to better direct pedestrians and bicyclists to and within Downtown; and providing appropriate streetscape amenities such as benches that foster pedestrian use.
- Coordinate with transit agencies and request additional transit service or modifications to service levels as needs are identified.

#### **Nonmotorized**

- To avoid conflicts with vehicular traffic, assess opportunities to improve bicycle facilities through lane marking and signage systems, especially in conjunction with planned

traffic improvements. (These lane marking and signage systems will promote safe and convenient bicycle use and pedestrian travel).

- Continued implementation of planned improvements, including: pedestrian safety improvements at the West Main Street at-grade crossing that will be included as part of the third main line installation, and construction of a mid-station pedestrian bridge between the east and west platforms of the Sound Transit Commuter Rail station.

### **Parking**

- Pursue public/private opportunities to develop parking structures to provide an orderly and adequate parking situation in the downtown for visitors and shoppers.

### **Transit**

- None. An exception is that transit—mainly busses—will also benefit from planned street improvements in the area of downtown that will promote access and facilitate transit circulation/needs.

### **Railroads**

- Planned improvements including the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW Grade Separation project to allow for increased regional freight mobility by separating train traffic from vehicular traffic.
- Pedestrian safety improvements at the West Main Street at-grade crossing will be included as part of the third main line track installation. The work is covered under an existing agreement between Sound Transit and The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway.

### **Unavoidable Adverse Environmental Impacts**

None.





## Section 3.5 Noise

## Section 3.5 Noise

### 3.5.1 Existing Conditions

The human ear responds to a wide range of sound intensities. Human response to noise is also subjective and can vary greatly from person to person. Factors that influence individual responses include the intensity, frequency, time and pattern of the noise, the amount of background noise present before the intruding noise and the nature of the work or activity that the noise affects.

The decibel scale used to describe sound is a logarithmic rating system that accounts for the large differences in audible sound intensities. This scale accounts for the human perception of a doubling of loudness for each 10 decibel increase. Therefore, a 70 decibel sound level is twice as loud as a 60 decibel sound level. In the outside environment, such as near roads, a change of two or three decibels would not be noticeable to most people, while a five (5) decibel change would be perceived under most listening conditions.

Normal conversation ranges between 55 and 65 dBA when the speakers are 3-6 feet apart. Quiet urban nighttime noise levels range in the low 40's dBA; noise levels during the day in a noisy urban area are frequently as high as 80 dBA. Noise levels above 110 dBA become intolerable and can result in hearing loss. Table K indicates the magnitude of typical noise levels.

**Table K: Sound Pressure Levels of Representative Sounds and Noises**

Source	Decibels	Description
Large rocket engine (nearby)	180	
Jet takeoff (nearby)	150	
Car alarm	130	
Jet takeoff (60 meters)	120	Pain threshold
Subway train	100	
Heavy truck (15 meters), and Niagara Falls	90	Constant exposure endangers hearing
Average factory	80	
Busy traffic	70	
Normal conversation (1 meter)	60	
Quiet office	50	Quiet
Library	40	
Soft whisper (5 meters)	30	Very Quiet
Rustling leaves	20	
Normal breathing	10	Barely audible
Hearing threshold	0	

In general, several factors can create changes in noise levels and patterns in a downtown area. These include:

- Extent of urban development and construction activity;
- Design of transportation facilities;
- Increases in traffic volumes; and
- Nature of employment activities.

Downtown Auburn is an urbanized area. The main sources of noise in the Auburn Downtown are vehicular traffic (including delivery traffic), public transportation and railroad activity, commercial operations such as heating and cooling systems and entertainment uses and activities. Noise within residential downtown areas is typified by normal residential activities such as yard equipment and traffic. Many of these areas abut higher intensity zones and uses so they are also subject to commercial and industrial related noise.

In terms of existing regulations, Auburn City Code (ACC) 8.28.010 states that any person who sets in motion or operates any machine or device, motorcycle, automobile or any other vehicle in such a manner that the same makes any noise which disturbs any neighborhood or which is an annoyance to the public is guilty of a misdemeanor.

### **3.5.2 Impacts**

#### **"No Action" Alternative**

Development activity that occurs under the "No Action" alternative will increase employment and residential growth in the downtown subarea and, consequently, ambient noise levels.

Temporary noise from construction related activities such as demolition, excavation, building construction, paving, landscaping and the operation of miscellaneous heavy equipment will occur. Construction noise can create annoyance and speech interference during the day. Residential uses and schools (West Auburn High School) are particularly affected.

Increase in development will cause the ambient noise level to increase. Again, surrounding residential areas and schools would be particularly sensitive to increases in general traffic noise. Other typical noises from new development include moving and idling vehicles (delivery trucks), voices from increased pedestrian activity, and truck maneuvering for loading and unloading.

There will be greater potential for noise impacts around the transit center and the new interchange to impact surrounding development since new development is likely to occur proximate to these facilities.

However, as indicated earlier, historical development trends in the Auburn downtown have not been extensive. Therefore, the amount of new construction activity is not expected to be significant under the "No Action" alternative.

### **"Downtown Plan" Alternative**

In some instances, the Downtown Plan is not expected to increase noise above what would occur under the "No Action" Alternative. Noise impacts associated with certain activities such as programmed street construction projects, train activity (commuter rail and freight), and vehicle traffic associated with the commuter rail station will likely be the same under either alternative.

However, it is likely that there will be an overall increase in noise under the "Downtown Plan" alternative. Since the development activity and intensity envisioned in the "Downtown Plan" alternative is greater than that expected in the "No Action" alternative, then the noise impacts would be greater. More temporary construction related noise activity is particularly likely.

For example, the "Downtown Plan" alternative envisions more development of properties within the Downtown with specific catalyst projects identified. Construction related activities such as demolition, excavation, building construction, utilities installation, paving, landscaping and the operation of miscellaneous heavy equipment will occur. Construction noise can create annoyance and speech interference during the day.

Because of the expected increase in development and development intensity, traffic volumes will likely be greater as will pedestrian activity and commercial deliveries. These can contribute to greater noise impacts than might be expected in the "No Action" alternative.

The "Downtown Plan" alternative places an increased emphasis on evening activity. Noise associated with expected increase in nighttime activity will be more obvious because the ambient noise level during nighttime hours is lower than it is during the day.

Finally, since the Downtown Plan promotes greater residential use in the downtown and more development and street activity in general, there is more of an opportunity for conflicts between noise and residential uses than under the "No Action" alternative.

### **3.5.3 Mitigation**

- Design new structures to orient away from noise oriented facilities and uses and also apply appropriate sound mitigating construction standards.
- Require land use buffers between incompatible uses.
- Enforce restrictions on hours of construction activity.
- Code enforcement activities in the downtown to address nuisance related noise impacts.
- Development of parking garages in downtown to ensure that adequate parking is available and to avoid traffic circulation associated with individuals looking for parking spaces.
- Emphasis on pedestrian-oriented design and paths as well as bicycle circulation to reduce reliance on motorized vehicles.

### **Unavoidable Adverse Environmental Impacts**

None.



## Section 3.6 Historic and Cultural Preservation

## Section 3.6 Historic and Cultural Preservation

### 3.6.1 Existing Conditions

The City of Auburn contracts with King County Office of Cultural Resources for historic preservation services. City historic preservation policies would generally be guided by Chapter 10 of the Auburn Comprehensive Plan – “Historic Preservation”. Chapter 10 includes eight historic preservation policies, only one of which (HP-5) specifically references the Downtown.

Historic buildings, both commercial and residential, are a primary asset within the Downtown Plan study area. Distinctive architecture, significant events and important persons and historic movements are embodied in buildings and places throughout the Downtown Plan Study Area.

Existing conditions related to historical character of the Downtown Plan Study Area are described in detail in *Part 1* and will not be repeated again in this section. In summary, historic resources in Auburn are grouped into three categories:

1. Historic Landmarks;
2. Potential Landmarks; and,
3. Historically Significant Buildings.

Detailed information about these three types of historic resources, including a map identifying their location, is included in *Part 1* of this document.

In summary, there are two “Designated Landmarks” in the Downtown Plan study area. These are buildings that are officially recognized and protected as Auburn Landmarks.

“Potential Landmarks” are significant historic homes and commercial buildings that contribute greatly to a unique and distinctive sense of Downtown. These are buildings that are worthy of protection and/or restoration. Work conducted during the course of the Downtown Plan has identified 19 potential landmarks that appear to be eligible for landmark designation due to clearly significant historical associations, architectural character and relative lack of change over time.

"Historically Significant Buildings" contribute to the character of districts within the Downtown Plan area. The Downtown Plan identifies 147 historically significant buildings that are, or should be, included in the City's historic resource inventory. Some may be eligible for landmark designation.

Overall, the Downtown has lost some of its historical character due to inappropriate remodeling of buildings, inappropriate land uses, new development not sensitive to historical buildings, and the destruction or damage of certain buildings due to fire or other causes.

(NOTE: The historic resource map (Figure 6) in Part 1, Section 1.3 shows properties of historic and architectural interest. Further research and consideration of properties not yet inventoried will likely result in a modification to this listing of properties.)

## **3.6.2 Environmental Impacts**

### **"No Action" Alternative**

Under the "No Action" alternative the City of Auburn contracts with King County Office of Cultural Resources for historic preservation and cultural resource services. This relationship would continue under the "No Action" alternative.

Downtown development would occur as it has in the past without a concerted strategy to protect historical structures through landmarks preservation or through a design review process to ensure compatible development. There would not be an aggressive nor focused effort to inventory historic resources, nor would there be an effort to promote compatibility between new development and historic structures. No design standards to reinforce historical character would be in place.

There would likely not be a comprehensive historic resources inventory to determine the historical significance of properties or to determine what could be placed on a register for incentives. There would be no strong pursuit of developing incentives for historic preservation. Improvements to existing buildings or facades would continue to occur without a review process for consistency with the historical character of the building or surrounding buildings.

Specifically, most development activity to accommodate new businesses would likely consist of remodeling to existing buildings. Remodeling of buildings would be done without overall guidance

on how to retain or enhance the downtown area's historical character. False facades, typically inconsistent with the area's historical character, have been added to many of the core Main Street buildings and would likely continue. Inappropriate new or replacement signage would continue.

Because of the high vacancy rate in downtown, the lack of attentiveness and reinvestment into buildings would continue and the historical quality of downtown buildings would continue to deteriorate.

### **"Downtown Plan" Alternative**

The City's contract with King County for historic preservation and cultural resources services would continue.

In the "Downtown Plan" alternative there would be a concerted effort and program to identify and protect cultural resources in the Downtown area. The "Downtown Plan" alternative offers a policy framework that recognizes and supports the identification, evaluation and active protection of its heritage. This policy directive is much stronger and specific than the "No Action" alternative and it is expected that sensitivity to historic resources is much greater in the "Downtown Plan" alternative.

Redevelopment of existing buildings that builds on the historical character of the community would be actively pursued, and new development would be designed to ensure its compatibility with existing historic resources in the Downtown. Signage, building color, materials, and facade elements would be reviewed for individual projects to ensure consistency with the building's original design and with the historical character of downtown.

Education and incentives for the restoration of historic buildings and properties are promoted and a comprehensive historic preservation plan for downtown Auburn is sought.

Residential neighborhoods are recognized in the Downtown Plan as having historical character. Neighborhoods close to the Transit Center and in the midst of commercial development will come under more pressure for removal and replacement of existing houses, or the division of the larger houses into multiple units. Downtown Plan policies address these situations and recommend that they be approached with great care to ensure that valuable resources are not lost forever. Code amendments to provide for new development consistent with the existing development pattern are also promoted.

Overall, the "Downtown Plan alternative would result in the appropriate upgrading of buildings that would strengthen their appearance and create a stronger link to the past. Careful historic restoration would make some properties eligible for landmark designation and related financial incentives. A facade improvement program would provide an incentive for property owners and businesses to upgrade their buildings to promote downtown's historical character.

### **3.6.3 Mitigation Measures**

Mitigation measures provided by goals and policies in the "Downtown Plan" Alternative include:

- Identify, evaluate and actively protect historic structures in the downtown area. Develop a historic preservation plan for downtown.
- Education and the provision of incentives (and removal of disincentives) for the preservation of downtown historic resources.
- Develop a facade improvement program.
- Implementation of design standards intended to protect existing historical structures from incompatible adjacent development and also to ensure that the historical character of existing historical structures is not compromised by tenant improvements.
- Implementation of design standards to encourage the removal of false facades and the restoration of historical architectural features.

### **Unavoidable Adverse Environmental Consequences**

None.



## Section 3.7 Stormwater

## Section 3.7 Stormwater

### 3.7.1 Existing Conditions

Auburn Way North and A Street SE divide the Downtown Plan area into two distinct drainage areas (see *Part 1* for a map of these stormwater areas). The western portion ("west half") comprises approximately 57 percent of the Downtown Plan area and is located in Subbasin E of the City of Auburn Comprehensive Drainage Plan. The eastern portion, or "east half," comprises approximately 43 percent of the Downtown Plan area and is partly in Subbasin B (32 percent of the total Downtown Plan area) and partly in Subbasin C (11 percent of the total Downtown Plan area).

Based on estimates developed in 1990, the percent impervious value for the Downtown Plan drainage area is approximately 65 percent (percent impervious is the percentage of surface area occupied by buildings, structures, pavement, walkways and other impervious surfaces, which generate high volumes of stormwater runoff during rainfall events). A percent-impervious value of 65 percent is moderately high, which is common for high-density development like that currently in the downtown area. By comparison, a typical percent-impervious value for a suburban residential area is approximately 40 percent.

From data collected in 1996, 1997, and 1998, groundwater depth typically ranges from five (5) feet in the west portion of the Downtown Plan area to 25 feet in the far east portion. Groundwater elevations vary seasonally, with elevations as much as eight (8) feet higher in the spring than in the fall. (Pacific Groundwater Group, 1997).

In the west half of the "Downtown Plan" Study Area, the general direction of surface water flow is to the north and to the west, through the Subbasin E drainage system. Lateral storm drain pipelines collect runoff and convey it northward to a storm trunk pipeline, which discharges to an open channel immediately east of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. This open channel conveys the runoff in a northward direction, parallel to the railroad tracks, and ultimately into Mill Creek at Outfall MC7. Currently, there are no regional stormwater facilities for storage or water quality treatment of runoff from the west half of the Downtown Plan area.

## **Assessment of Stormwater Needs**

The City's code requires stormwater storage and treatment for all new development. In addition, redevelopment that involves additions, alterations or repairs of greater than 50 percent of the assessed valuation of the structure is required to bring the structure and property into conformance with current City storm drainage standards. The only exemption from the standards is for redevelopment of properties that includes wholly interior improvements within an existing structure.

City stormwater quantity and quality requirements for new development and redevelopment are contained in Chapter 6 of the *City of Auburn Design and Construction Standards*. The requirements include criteria for pumping, drainage, conveyance, detention, retention, and water quality treatment.

The standards require a retention or detention system so that the peak rate of runoff from a site is not increased by a proposed development. A retention system stores runoff and percolates it into the soil, which can remove pollution and recharge groundwater. A detention system stores runoff and then releases it to the downstream conveyance system at a rate that matches the pre-development conditions. The City prefers retention systems when soil conditions are suitable for such application. Soil and groundwater conditions in the Downtown Plan Study Area are generally not conducive for retention systems, except in some eastern portions of the area. If a detention system is used for runoff control, the City's preferred method of storage has been parking lot ponding or an open pond.

The City also requires water quality treatment of runoff to remove oil and other contaminants that come from paved surfaces of a site. The City's preferred techniques for storm drainage treatment are biofiltration methods such as grass-lined swales. Biofiltration techniques typically require more space than is available in the downtown area, with its relatively small blocks and parcels.

The City will consider alternative water quality treatment options for small and/or developed sites. Alternative water quality options for sites with space constraints and less than 20,000 square feet of impervious area will be evaluated, where biofiltration techniques are not feasible. A below-grade manhole structure that provides oil-water separation and sediment removal from stormwater runoff may be an option. This alternative is allowed only with prior approval from the city engineer and is judged on a case-by-case basis by the City.

## **3.7.2 Environmental Impacts**

### **"No Action" Alternative**

Under the "No Action" alternative additional development and redevelopment will occur consistent with the existing code requirements. In some respects, the existing code serves as an impediment to redevelopment. As indicated earlier, alterations or repairs greater than 50 percent of the assessed valuation of the structure are required to bring the structure and property into conformance with current City storm drainage standards. The only exemption from the standards is for redevelopment of properties that includes wholly interior improvements within an existing structure. Because of construction costs, even relatively small exterior renovations or remodels may trigger the requirement to bring the property up to the City's stormwater management standards. This is one reason more building renovations are not carried out. Rather, incremental remodels take place.

In addition, requirements for bioswales or open ponding also tend to work against redevelopment of the downtown since they tend to be consumptive of surface land that is necessary for buildings. This is particularly true in the downtown area since there is limited land for surface storm drain facilities.

The impact to stormwater quantity and quality would still be addressed through the City's existing standards. As indicated, the impact is more likely to inhibit development than to have a direct impact on stormwater quality or quantity.

### **"Downtown Plan" Alternative**

The Downtown Plan proposes relatively high-density development. As development occurs at the level envisioned in the Downtown Plan, buildings, parking lots and garages, sidewalks, and streets will increasingly cover most of each developed parcel. This will result in a slight increase in impervious surface over existing conditions, and a resulting increase in the volume of runoff during rainfall events. Stormwater runoff quality could also be affected as transportation, commercial, and residential activities intensify unless appropriate treatment methods are employed.

The City's Comprehensive Land Use Map (March 1998) was used as the primary resource for calculating the percent-impervious value for the future land use condition in the Downtown Plan area. The projected future land use percent-impervious value for the Downtown Plan area is 71 percent (up from 65 percent in 1990).

The Downtown Plan consciously promotes administrative flexibility in the application of stormwater standards to development projects. It thus removes a barrier to certain renovation and redevelopment projects and should result in redevelopment of sites that might otherwise not redevelop. Underground large-diameter pipes can be used with pre-approval from the City. This type of detention system would not be visible from the surface, and would therefore be more consistent with promoting the development envisioned in the Downtown Plan, provided a site has sufficient area for a below-grade detention system. Other non-traditional standards are also encouraged. Further, the Downtown Plan provides the City Engineer with the flexibility to waive stormwater standards when an alternative is proposed that is consistent with the vision of the Downtown Plan and provides a comparable level of water quality and quantity control.

Impacts to stormwater quality could be beneficial under this alternative. By allowing for flexibility and encouraging redevelopment, more development in the Downtown area compliant with the city's existing stormwater management requirements will result. Buildings not currently in conformance with the City's standards could redevelop into ones that are. Stormwater systems will be improved. Water quality will be improved. To this extent, certain wildlife habitat, including endangered species such as the Chinook salmon, will benefit over existing conditions as downtown makes progress toward satisfying water quality standards.

### **3.7.3 Mitigation Measures**

None. Under the "Downtown Plan" alternative development will need to satisfy the City's stormwater quality and quantity standards and requirements.

### **Unavoidable Adverse Environmental Impacts**

None.



## Section 3.8 Air Quality

## Section 3.8 Air Quality

### 3.8.1 Existing Conditions

Air quality is generally assessed in terms of whether concentrations of air pollutants are higher or lower than ambient air quality standards set to protect human health and welfare.

Ambient air quality is a function of many factors including climate, topography, meteorological conditions and the production of airborne pollutants by natural or artificial sources. The major airborne pollutants of interest in the Puget Sound region include carbon monoxide, particulate matter, ozone, and the ozone precursors, hydrocarbons and oxides of nitrogen. The regulated pollutants are commonly referred to as criteria pollutants.

A summary of these major airborne pollutants follows:

- Carbon monoxide - Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless toxic gas formed by the burning of fuels containing carbon. Motor vehicles are the principal source of CO emissions in urban areas. Maximum concentrations usually occur near roadway intersections and other areas of traffic congestion as they decrease rapidly with distance from the source.
- Particulate matter - Particulate matter (PM) enters the air from industrial operations, vehicular traffic, and other sources, such as burning woods and other materials. Most of the particulate matter generated by motor vehicles consists of re-suspended road dust. Two common classifications for particulate matter are total suspended particulates (TSP) and inhalable particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>), which only includes particles with a diameter less than or equal to 10 micrometers.
- Ozone - Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) in the lower atmosphere is a harmful air pollutant and contributes to the formation of smog. It is a secondary pollutant formed by the reaction of hydrocarbons and oxides of nitrogen in the presence of strong sunlight. Thus, minimizing emissions of these precursor pollutants reduces ozone levels. The Puget Sound area currently complies with ozone standard, though by a slim margin.

- **Hydrocarbons - Hydrocarbons (HC)** are a key component in the formation of ozone. These compounds are emitted or evaporate into the atmosphere from a variety of sources particularly the storage and combustion of fuels in motor vehicles.
- **Oxides of Nitrogen - Oxides of nitrogen (NOX)** are another precursor to the formation of ozone. They are produced as a result of high temperature fuel combustion and subsequent atmospheric reactions. Common sources of NOX are diesel fueled motor vehicles, power plants, refineries and other industrial operations.

Air quality standards are established at the national level by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), at the State level by the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) and at the regional level by the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA). These agencies establish regulations that govern both the concentrations of pollutants in the outdoor air and contaminant emissions from air pollution sources. Although their regulations are similar in stringency, each agency has established its own National ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) identify criteria pollutant concentrations that are not to be exceeded over specified time periods. Primary air pollutants are defined for the protection of public health and safety and secondary standards are intended to protect the natural environment. Table L below shows the primary and secondary NAAQS for the major airborne pollutants of interest.

**Table L: National, State, and Local Ambient Air Quality Standards**

Pollutant	National		Washington State	Puget Sound Region
	Primary	Secondary		
<b>Carbon Monoxide</b>				
8-Hour Average	9 ppm	ns1	9 ppm	9 ppm
1-Hour Average	35 ppm	ns1	35 ppm	35 ppm
<b>Ozone</b>				
1-Hour Average	0.12 ppm	0.12 ppm	0.12 ppm	0.12 ppm
<b>Particulate Matter (PM 10)</b>				
Annual Arithmetic Average	50µg/m3	50µg/m3	50µg/m3	50µg/m3
24-Hour Average	150µg/m3	150µg/m3	150µg/m3	150µg/m3
<b>Particulate Matter (TSP)</b>				
Annual Arithmetic Average	ns1	ns1	60µg/m3	60µg/m3
24-Hour Average	ns1	ns1	150µg/m3	150µg/m3

Source: Puget Sound Air Pollution Control Agency, 1993  
 NS1 No Standard Established

Weather directly affects air quality. A few times each year, poor dispersion persists in the Puget Sound region for a day or longer and these conditions are often associated with higher pollutant

concentrations. During temperature inversions of late fall and winter, emissions from motor vehicles (which operate less efficiently in cold weather) and wood stoves tends to increase. These factors combine to cause the highest CO and particulate concentrations.

Non-attainment areas are geographical areas where air pollutant concentrations exceed NAAQS for a pollutant. The central Puget Sound region is designated as being in attainment or unclassifiable for all criteria pollutants. On-going monitoring throughout the central Puget Sound region indicates that the overall ambient air pollution concentrations, particularly for CO, have been decreasing during the past decade. The decline is due primarily to improved emission controls on motor vehicles that account for a significant

portion of CO emissions in the region. However, there are other factors that have the potential to counteract this downward trend. Each year there are more automobiles on the regions' roadways, and people in the area are making more trips and traveling greater distances.

The major impacts to regional air quality are attributable to regional growth and development. Certain land uses, in particular, have more of an impact on air quality than others.

Regulatory control of air quality in the Auburn downtown area and broader Puget Sound region is largely the responsibility of the Department of Ecology and the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA). Any new point source of pollution would require PSCAA review and approval. Identified regional air quality problems, such as automobile emissions, are typically addressed on a regional level and are not expected to impose any specific requirements on the downtown Auburn area.

### **3.8.2 Impacts**

#### **"No Action" Alternative**

Under the "No Action" alternative development would occur. While much of this development may be more oriented toward renovation of existing buildings, new development is still likely. Development would generate dust from excavation and grading that would contribute to ambient concentrations of suspended particulate matter. If demolition is involved, additional impacts are possible, including the release of asbestos.

Construction activity would require the use of heavy trucks and smaller equipment such as compressors and generators. These

engines would emit air pollutants that would temporarily degrade local air quality, although these emissions and resulting concentrations would be far outweighed by emissions normally found within and around the project area.

Construction activity and construction equipment associated with any development activity could delay traffic in the downtown and decrease air quality due to more traffic congestion. Also, some odor bearing air contaminants such as those related to asphalt paving could also occur. This impact would be short-term.

Growth in the downtown under the "No Action" alternative would result in additional traffic related pollutants due to increased traffic. However, there are traffic improvements programmed for downtown under both alternatives. These improvements will improve traffic flow in the downtown area. As opposed to current congestion levels, this could result in an improvement to air quality even if traffic overall increased.

### **"Downtown Plan" Alternative**

Many of the same impacts associated with the "No Action" alternative would be applicable to the "Downtown Plan" alternative. This includes construction related air quality impacts as well as air quality impacts associated with traffic congestion. Given that the potential for redevelopment activity and increased development is greater in the "Downtown Plan" alternative than is the case with the "No Action" alternative, then so too is the potential impact to air quality greater.

While it is expected that the "Downtown Plan" alternative will increase the pace of redevelopment downtown, existing regulations should adequately address air quality issues. In addition, other features of the "Downtown Plan" alternative address air quality issues as well. For example, the "Downtown Plan" alternative offers a land use development pattern that is more conducive to demand management and non-motorized travel. Specifically, the "Downtown Plan" alternative emphasizes pedestrian pathways and bicycle paths, including those that provide linkages with perimeter residential areas into the downtown to encourage non-motorized travel. Transit use is encouraged and supported.

## **3.8.3 Mitigation Measures**

Mitigation should include implementation and enforcement of existing air quality regulations including:

- All point sources of air pollution shall require permits from PSCAA.
- PSCAA requires that reasonable measures be taken to avoid dust emissions during construction. Such precautions may include spraying water or chemical suppressants on bare soils during dry windy weather. The City also uses SEPA to implement mitigation techniques (watering) associated with construction and cleaning of vehicles and street cleaning.
- EPA and PSCAA requirements address the safe removal and disposal of asbestos containing materials.

Mitigation measures provided for by goals or policies in the Downtown Plan include:

- The Downtown Plan emphasizes landscaping and street trees. This can improve air quality by providing filtering of suspended particulates.
- The Downtown Plan emphasizes non-motorized vehicle use including improving the pedestrian orientation within and into downtown as well as pursuing opportunities for bicycle usage as an alternative to the automobile.
- The Downtown Plan identifies street and circulation improvements programmed in the downtown to reduce congestion.
- The Downtown Plan includes a parking strategy to address parking needs. This will reduce the need for continual circulation by traffic within the downtown to find parking as it becomes scarcer with more development.

### **Unavoidable Adverse Environmental Impacts**

Since projects will be in compliance with PSCAA requirement and other applicable standards, no unavoidable adverse impacts are anticipated.



# **Distribution List**

## **Copies Sent**

The list below indicates those agencies, organizations and individuals who have received copies of the Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS.

## **Federal Agencies**

Federal Railroad Administration  
Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
US Army Corps of Engineers  
US Fish and Wildlife Service

## **State Agencies**

Department of Ecology, Environmental Review Section (2 copies)  
Department of Ecology, Growth Management  
Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Department of Natural Resources  
Office of Community Development (3 copies)  
Washington State Department of Transportation  
Department of Corrections  
Inter-agency Committee for Outdoor Recreation  
Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission  
Department of Social and Health Services  
Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

## **Regional Agencies**

Puget Sound Clean Air Agency  
Puget Sound Regional Council  
Sound Transit

## **Indian Tribes**

Muckleshoot Indian Tribe  
    Planning and Public Works  
    Fisheries  
    Cultural Resources Division

Tribal Council

## **Media**

Auburn Reporter  
South County Journal

## **Libraries**

King County Library System, Auburn Branch

## **King County**

Honorable Chris Vance  
King County Office of Regional Policy and Planning  
King County Office of Cultural Resources  
Metro Transit

## **City Agencies**

### **Mayor, City of Auburn**

Chuck Booth

### **Auburn City Council**

Jeanne Barber

Trish Borden

Stacey Brothers

Pete Lewis

Fred Poe

Sue Singer

Rich Wagner

Auburn Planning Commission (7 members)

Auburn Downtown Task Force

City of Auburn Planning Director

City of Auburn Public Works Director

City of Auburn Finance Director

City of Auburn Parks Director

City of Auburn Fire Chief

City of Auburn Police Chief

City of Auburn City Attorney

## **Schools**

Auburn School District

**Utilities/Transportation**

Puget Sound Energy

AT&T Broadband(cable)

Qwest (Phone)

RST

**Businesses, Community Organizations and Interest Groups**

Auburn Chamber of Commerce

Auburn Downtown Association

Auburn Regional Medical Center

Safeway Corporation

**Notice of Availability**

A notice that the Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS is available has been sent to the following organizations and agencies.

**Federal Agencies**

Housing and Urban Development

**State Agencies**

Superintendent of Public Instruction

Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission

**Regional Agencies**

Pierce Transit

**Media**

Daily Journal of Commerce

The News Tribune

Puget Sound Business Journal

Seattle Post Intelligencer

Seattle Times

**King County**

King County Executive's Office

King County Housing Authority

**City Agencies**

City of Algona  
City of Bonney Lake  
City of Federal Way  
City of Kent  
City of Pacific  
City of Sumner

**Schools**

Kent School District  
Green River Community College

**Businesses, Community Organizations and Interest Groups**

1000 Friends of Washington  
Washington Environmental Council  
Members of Auburn Downtown Association / Business Improvement Area

**Interested Party List**

Individuals who have expressed interest in the City of Auburn Downtown Plan Process are on file with the City of Auburn Planning and Community Development Department. This list is available for public inspection during regular city business hours. All individuals on the interested party list have been sent notices of availability.



**Part Four**  
**Auburn Downtown Plan/Final EIS**  
**Addendum to DEIS (April 2001)**

**FINAL**

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**AUBURN DOWNTOWN PLAN**



**Auburn, Washington**

This Final Environmental Impact Statement has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 43.21 Revised Code of Washington (RCW); Chapter 197-11 Washington Administrative Code (WAC); and Auburn City Code (ACC) Chapter 16.06, Environmental Review Procedures.

**City of Auburn**

**Planning and Community Development Department**  
**25 West Main**  
**Auburn, Washington 98001**

**April 2001**

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King County Department of Transportation, Metro Transit Division	
Mr. Patrick Mullaney from Foster, Pepper & Shefelman, PLLC,	
Attorneys at Law	
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**NOTE:** Changes to the integrated Downtown Plan/DEIS that have been made in response to comments are minor and are largely confined to the responses described in WAC 197-11-560(1)(d) and (e). Therefore, in accordance with WAC 197-11-560 (5) the FEIS consists of the integrated Plan/DEIS and an addendum (this document) that includes responses to comments.

The FEIS therefore consists of the integrated Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS issued December 7, 2000, except as modified by the revisions identified in this addendum document.

# **Fact Sheet**

## **Description of Proposal**

The proposal is to adopt a Subarea Plan for Downtown Auburn. The Auburn Downtown Plan primarily addresses land use, economic vitality, urban design, stormwater management, historic resources and transportation. This is a non-project action and will result in a subarea plan amendment to the City of Auburn Comprehensive Plan.

## **Location of Proposal**

The proposal encompasses the Downtown Auburn area. The Auburn Downtown Plan study area is generally defined by the boundary of the Union Pacific Railroad and Interurban Trail on the west, State Route 18 on the south, and F Street SE/NE on the east. The northern boundary is defined as 2<sup>nd</sup> Street NW from the Interurban Trail to D Street NW, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW/SE from D Street NW to Auburn Avenue, and 4<sup>th</sup> Street from Auburn Avenue to F Street NE.

## **Proponent and Lead Agency**

City of Auburn  
25 West Main Street  
Auburn, WA 98001-4998  
(253) 931-3090

## **Responsible Official**

Mr. Paul Krauss, AICP, Director, Planning and Community Development Department  
City of Auburn  
(253) 931-3090

## **Contact Person**

David Osaki, AICP  
City of Auburn  
Planning and Community Development Department  
25 West Main Street  
Auburn, WA 98001-4998  
(253) 804-5034

## **Permits/Licenses/Agreements Required**

The Auburn Downtown Subarea Plan requires adoption by the City Council.

## **Authors and Principal Contributors**

The FEIS has been prepared under the direction of the City of Auburn Planning and Community Development Department. Research, analysis and document preparation on the Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS that has also been incorporated into this document were provided by the following firms:

## **SUMMARY**

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) includes letters received during the SEPA public comment period (December 7, 2000 to February 5, 2001) on the integrated Downtown Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and responds to the comment letters received during that time frame. The DEIS analyzed the probable significant adverse impacts of the Auburn Downtown Plan and identified mitigation measures as warranted.

This document serves as an addendum to the integrated Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS. To the extent that the comments received on the Draft EIS resulted in minor changes and technical corrections then this addendum, identifying modifications, along with the Draft EIS, constitute the Final EIS (WAC197-11-560(5)).

### **A. Summary of Proposed Action**

The proposal is the adoption of a Downtown Auburn Subarea Plan. The Auburn Downtown Plan primarily, though not exclusively, addresses issues such as land use, economic vitality, urban design, stormwater management, historic resources and transportation in the context of promoting Downtown Auburn revitalization and redevelopment. This is a non-project action and will result in a subarea plan amendment to the City of Auburn Comprehensive Plan.

Downtown Auburn has been the heart of Auburn, both physically and culturally, since the community was founded in 1891. Like many American communities' downtown areas, Auburn's downtown declined in the 1960's and 1970's as the suburbs grew and retail activity went elsewhere. Forces have continued to have a detrimental impact on Auburn including the development of the retail strip along Auburn Way, a decline in the quality of the downtown housing stock, and minimal private investment in quality development or building maintenance. Downtown Auburn merchants have difficulty competing with nationwide and regional trends including automobile oriented "big box" retail developments that have located just outside of the downtown and, more recently, the growth in e-commerce.

While this has been going on there has been significant recent public investment in the downtown. This includes the SR 18/C Street interchange and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Grade Separation project which will provide access to downtown over the BSNF tracks, the transit center with commuter rail and local and regional express bus service, and the reconstruction of A Street SW. In the past, streetscape improvements have been made downtown. Given these public investments, which often provide a stimulant for private investment, there is a need to plan for downtown growth and redevelopment. This has created the impetus to prepare this Downtown Auburn Plan.

The proposal encompasses the Downtown Auburn area. The Auburn Downtown Plan study area is generally defined by the boundary of the Union Pacific Railroad and

Interurban Trail on the west, State Route 18 on the south, and F Street SE/NE on the east. The northern boundary is defined as 2<sup>nd</sup> Street NW from the Interurban Trail to D Street NW, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW/NE from D Street NW to Auburn Avenue, and 4<sup>th</sup> Street from Auburn Avenue to F Street NE.

The Auburn Downtown Plan was initiated in response to several factors including, but not limited to:

- The existing Downtown Auburn Design Master Plan adopted in 1990 needed to be updated to continue Downtown Revitalization
- The opening of Stampede Pass Rail line raised many concerns over the impacts that such opening would have on the success of Downtown.
- Multiple large projects were proposed for Downtown including transportation projects and the construction of the new multi-modal transit center.
- Private investment in the Downtown has traditionally been scarce.

Through the planning process the assets and challenges characteristic of Downtown Auburn were identified. Identified amongst the many assets was the sense of the "Heart of the City" that Main Street engenders, the recent street and streetscape improvements along Main Street, the presence of large employers like the Auburn Regional Medical Center and the City of Auburn, entertainment venues such as the Performing Arts Center and Auburn Avenue Theater and the Transit Center with commuter rail service.

Challenges for Downtown Auburn include a retail district interrupted by heavy volume streets and an excessive number of taverns, underutilized and visually unappealing buildings and properties, insufficient reinvestment into downtown businesses and properties for many years, and major streets that do not convey the impression of a downtown. There are also many auto-oriented uses in an area that functions best when it is pedestrian oriented.

The Auburn Downtown Plan identifies a multitude of implementation methods. These include proposed projects, revising implementing development regulations and pursuing other programs and strategies that will take steps toward accomplishing the goals for Downtown. Some implementation steps will require coordination and cooperation between the public and private sectors; others will require considerable effort by City staff to accomplish. The capital projects vary widely in their costs, but, overall, substantial funding will be needed to complete all of the projects. The Auburn Downtown Plan does not attempt to resolve funding issues but, rather, sets the tone and approach for subsequent implementing capital facility financing decisions.

Major strategic steps for accomplishing the goals of the Downtown Plan are identified in the Plan. These include: Building out from the center of the downtown; linking the various districts within downtown to one another and improving their own individual identities; making improvements on key streets that might include landscaping, sidewalks, signage, crosswalks and gateways; implementing catalyst projects on key sites that will stimulate further development; improving the quality of development by instituting design standards; and improving the image of downtown as a great place to do business and invest.

An extensive list of policies and actions are suggested in the Downtown Plan. Many are related to physical improvements, others suggest new programs or approaches that might include the actions of the private sector. Policies address ways to strengthen the Main Street retail district, diminish blighting influences, intensify land use, and integrate major proposed public facilities into the fabric of downtown. Street and transportation improvements form a vital component of the policy section, as does a new strategy for combining public and private properties and funding to develop parking facilities in Downtown. A new approach to managing stormwater is also proposed.

Other policies propose to expand public art in Downtown, protect residential neighborhoods from commercial uses and other intrusions, preserve and maintain historic properties, and develop architectural design standards based on a set of guidelines presented in the plan.

Overall, then, the goal of the Downtown Plan is to strengthen the downtown community, economy and image by building on existing assets, facilitating catalyst projects in key locations and stimulating infill and redevelopment, and constructing high quality infrastructure.

## **B. Summary of Alternatives Considered**

Two alternatives were considered as part of the environmental review process. These include: 1) The "No Action" alternative; and, 2) the "Downtown Plan" alternative. The following generally summarizes and describes each alternative.

### **"No Action" Alternative**

The "No Action" alternative is the current comprehensive plan, zoning regulation, other development regulations and downtown revitalization efforts. Under this alternative the existing comprehensive plan designations and zoning will be maintained. The Auburn downtown is primarily, though not exclusively, zoned for commercial use. Certain residential uses are, however, present and allowed in the study area. A few industrial areas exist as well.

Main Street continues to be the focal point of Downtown Auburn's retail activity. Single family residential neighborhoods are predominant to the west of the BNSF railroad tracks as well as east of Auburn Way. Medical uses and the hospital are prominent

along Auburn Avenue. A new commuter rail station with a transit center is located just south of West Main Street along the BNSF Railroad mainline.

The "No Action" alternative is a viable option. The existing comprehensive plan and development regulations, population and employment projections are consistent and compliant with the Growth Management Act (GMA), King County Countywide Planning Policies, and Vision 2020. The City of Auburn Comprehensive Plan includes downtown plan policies that provide general policy direction for downtown redevelopment. The zoning code provides for uses and development standards in the downtown area, many of which are aimed toward achieving pedestrian friendly building design and orientation. However, under the "No Action" alternative, only a portion of the downtown would maintain C-2 (Central Business District) zoning; much of the downtown planning area would remain zoned C-3 (Heavy Commercial). Efforts at encouraging downtown redevelopment are on-going. This includes the work of organizations such as the Auburn Downtown Association, the City of Auburn and the Chamber of Commerce; however, a comprehensive and detailed strategy is not laid out in adopted planning documents.

Those development proposals not exempt under SEPA would continue to be reviewed for environmental impacts on a case by case basis. Applicable transportation and storm water standards would be required of development.

### **"Downtown Plan" Alternative**

The "Downtown Plan" alternative is reflected in this document. It provides a much stronger level of analysis and focus on Auburn's downtown with the goal of stimulating development and redevelopment more actively than the "No Action" alternative. Through the planning process ideas have been generated that identify impediments and allows for strategic redevelopment efforts. Many ideas that have been verbally discussed over time to improve downtown are now outlined into a cohesive document with estimates of costs and time. Specific redevelopment barriers are identified along with solutions to remove the barriers. Catalyst projects, to spur redevelopment, are identified. In addition, the Downtown Plan has a much stronger emphasis on business financing assistance, public-private partnerships and downtown's visual appearance than the "No Action" alternative.

Because of the Downtown Plan's emphasis on revitalization, a higher level of intensity development will likely occur than under the "No Action" alternative. Intensification of land use is a goal of the plan. Buildings are allowed to be taller than in the "No Action" alternative. However, much of the downtown planning area is downzoned from Heavy Commercial (C-3) to Central Business District (C-2) to assure appropriate land uses, namely those pedestrian oriented retail, service and office uses rather than auto oriented, are located downtown.

Specific strategies are outlined in the "Downtown Plan" alternative to accomplish redevelopment. More flexibility in addressing certain development requirements, namely in transportation and storm water, are provided. The "Downtown Plan"

alternative also places additional emphasis on aesthetics and appearance of the downtown area as both a redevelopment strategy and to mitigate impacts. Stronger code enforcement is promoted to remove nuisances and blighting influences. Sensitivity of new development to historic resources is emphasized as is the role of public art in promoting a more desirable environment for people to work and shop. More pedestrian connections and pedestrian oriented development are foreseen. This will encourage additional pedestrian activity within and outside of the downtown area and will reduce the reliance on vehicular transportation. Bicycle routes and use are also encouraged.

Therefore, the "Downtown Plan" alternative sets forth goals and policies that address the issues listed above as well as others that have emerged.

### **C. Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

In August 1998, the City of Auburn issued a Determination of Significance (DS) and request for comments on the scope of the EIS. The scoping process included public notification of affected agencies and request for public input on the particular issues that should be addressed in the EIS.

The following summarizes impacts/mitigation measures of the two alternatives based on elements of the environment scoped for this proposal.

## Built Environment

<b>Land Use</b>	
<b>Impacts</b>	
<b>"No Action" Alternative</b>	<b>"Downtown Plan" Alternative</b>
Continued physical deterioration of downtown buildings as there would be less potential for redevelopment and/or reinvestment in existing underdeveloped and underinvested properties. Less emphasis on pedestrian oriented design and land uses. New automobile oriented uses could locate in certain locations within the planning area.	Development intensity would increase. Redevelopment of existing sites and buildings and more reinvestment in existing uses would occur. Greater pedestrian oriented development with more non-motorized linkages. Fewer automobile oriented land uses.
<b>Mitigation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design guidelines and standards are to ensure that new higher intensity building design is visually pleasing, particularly to the pedestrian, and is compatible with adjacent and surrounding land uses.</li> <li>• Rezone a substantial portion of the planning area from C-3 (Heavy Commercial) to C-2 (Central Business District) to eliminate uses inconsistent with the concept of a pedestrian-oriented downtown.</li> <li>• Encourage parking garages to avoid excessive number of small surface parking lots.</li> <li>• Zoning and design standards requiring significant buffers to protect residential areas from incompatible uses.</li> </ul>	

<b>Aesthetics</b>	
<b>Impacts</b>	
<b>"No Action" Alternative</b>	<b>"Downtown Plan" Alternative</b>
Development would largely retain existing character/aesthetics. Low rise buildings, surface parking areas, uncoordinated signage, facades, and/or building design would remain.	Greater positive change in character/aesthetics through redevelopment. Taller buildings could be developed but would be well designed and oriented to the pedestrian. Structured parking would be preferred to surface parking. Public art, streetscape improvements, coordinated signage and façade improvements would be implemented.
<b>Mitigation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Street right-of-way to building height ratios.</li> <li>• Create gateways, landmarks and wayfinding system to encourage pedestrian use, define boundaries.</li> <li>• Underground utilities.</li> <li>• Design standards to improve the aesthetic quality of new buildings.</li> <li>• Code enforcement efforts to remove blighting influences and nuisances that detract from the physical appearance of downtown.</li> <li>• Including public art in all public projects.</li> <li>• Streetscape and landscaping programs that provide more plant materials.</li> </ul>	

<b>Transportation</b>	
<b>Impacts</b>	
<b>"No Action" Alternative</b>	<b>"Downtown Plan" Alternative</b>
<p><b>Traffic Volumes/LOS</b> The existing citywide land use pattern is conducive to transportation trips by automobile. As with the rest of the city, downtown traffic congestion would worsen due to local and regional growth. Traffic congestion would worsen and certain intersections would exceed the City's current LOS standard of "D" over a twenty-year period without improvements.</p> <p><b>Transit</b> Demand for transit ridership would be expected to increase over time as Sound Transit adds more commuter rail service and as more development occurs downtown that may require additional transit service.</p> <p><b>Parking</b> Increased demand for parking. Parking would primarily be provided on surface parking lots resulting in an inefficient use of land downtown.</p> <p><b>Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities</b> Transportation projects within the 1998 Non-Motorized Plan would be pursued, however, the 1998 Non-Motorized Plan deferred to the Downtown Plan as the basis for detailed study of non-motorized transportation in the Downtown.</p> <p><b>Railroad</b> No additional freight or passenger service would occur as a direct result of the "No Action" alternative.</p>	<p><b>Traffic Volumes/LOS</b> Focusing land uses in the downtown that can more easily be served by transit or avoid multiple vehicle trips would benefit traffic citywide. In the downtown traffic congestion would become worse due increased development. A lower LOS would be acceptable. Additional traffic could pose more conflicts with non-motorized transportation.</p> <p><b>Transit</b> Generally the same, although increased density downtown may require local transit agencies to respond to the need for increased bus service at a more rapid pace than under the "No Action" alternative.</p> <p><b>Parking</b> Increase demand for parking in the downtown area, more so than the "No Action" alternative. Development of parking structures rather than reliance on surface parking.</p> <p><b>Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities</b> More bicycle and pedestrian travel than under the "No Action" alternative due to emphasis on pedestrian connections within the downtown and to surrounding neighborhoods.</p> <p><b>Railroad</b> Same as "No Action" alternative.</p>

## **Mitigation**

### **Traffic Volumes/LOS (primarily automobiles)**

- Continued implementation of programmed street improvements, including the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW grade separation project to improve safety and access to and from downtown.
- Establish a traffic accounting system to evaluate and monitor the progress of development and its consistency with the development densities identified in the Downtown Plan.
- Pursue and implement non-motorized transportation strategies to encourage alternatives to automobile use.
- Coordinate with transit agencies and request additional transit service or modifications to service levels as needs are identified.

### **Non-motorized**

- To avoid conflicts with vehicular traffic, assess opportunities to improve bicycle facilities through lane marking and signage systems, especially in conjunction with planned traffic improvements.
- Continued implementation of planned pedestrian improvements.

### **Parking**

- Pursue public/private opportunities to develop parking structures to provide an orderly and adequate parking situation in the downtown for visitors and shoppers.

### **Transit**

- None, although transit—mainly busses—will also benefit from planned street improvements in the area of downtown that will promote access and facilitate transit circulation/needs.

### **Railroads**

- Planned improvements including the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW Grade Separation project to allow for increased regional freight mobility by separating train traffic from vehicular traffic.
- Pedestrian safety improvements at the West Main Street at-grade crossing will be included as part of the third main line track installation.

## **Noise**

### **Impacts**

#### **"No Action" Alternative**

Overall increase in noise could occur associated with new development/construction and traffic.

#### **"Downtown Plan" Alternative**

Greater construction related noise anticipated than under the "No Action" alternative. Traffic volumes associated with new development and commercial deliveries are expected to be greater than under the "No Action" alternative. More evening related noise might occur under this alternative due to its emphasis on encouraging nighttime uses and activities.

# COMMENTS AND RESPONSES TO THE AUBURN DOWNTOWN PLAN DRAFT EIS

This section responds to comments received during the 60-day SEPA comment period (December 7, 2000 through February 5, 2001) on the Draft Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Written comments were received from the following:

Letter Received From	Date of Letter
Co-signed by Robert E. West Jr., President, Auburn Downtown Association; Landon Gibson, III - Chairman of the Board and CEO, Auburn Area Chamber of Commerce; Dennis Garre, Chair, Economic Restructuring Committee, Auburn Downtown Association.	February 5, 2001
Mr. Gregory Griffith, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Washington State Office of Community Development.	February 5, 2001
Mr. Gary Kreidt, Senior Environmental Planner, King County Department of Transportation, Metro Transit Division.	January 10, 2001
Mr. Patrick Mullaney, Foster Pepper & Shefelman, PLLC, Attorneys at Law (representing the Safeway Corporation).	February 5, 2001

The Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS was prepared as an integrated GMA/SEPA document. The comments in the above referenced letters focused almost exclusively on policy or descriptive issues within the integrated GMA/SEPA document rather than on the proposal's environmental impacts. Nonetheless, all comments are being responded to in this document.

February 5, 2001

B Sanders, Associate Planner  
City of Auburn, Planning Department  
25 W Main  
Auburn, WA 98001

RE: Auburn Downtown Association and Auburn Area Chamber of Commerce response to a request for comments regarding the Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS

As you know the Auburn Downtown Association and Auburn Area Chamber of Commerce have been involved in reviewing the Auburn Downtown Draft Plan/Draft EIS (Plan) throughout the last several months. This joint document from the two organizations represents our initial response to the request for comments as the Plan begins its movement through the adoption process.

Our consensus is that the Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS is comprehensive, well thought out and documented. The scope of projects addressed is broad, with few omissions, and a good deal of study has obviously been directed towards potential mitigation of the more troublesome issues. We understand that a great challenge lies ahead in terms of prioritization and funding of the many projects under consideration, and accept our responsibility in helping to guide this prioritization process in a way that takes into consideration the needs and concerns of a disparate group of downtown Auburn stakeholders.

We have used Table E: Actions by Task Force Priority on page 163 as a guide to help keep our comments focused and in a framework familiar to all respondents.

*Policies, Regulations and Programs*

It is critical to move aggressively forward in the category of *Policies, Regulations and Programs*. Clear cut Guidelines, Codes, Standards and processes must be established, documented and disseminated to the public ahead of the new development wave. It is critical that an equal degree of effort be put forward in the creation of incentives and removal of disincentives for both new development and redevelopment in our downtown. Through its building department the City should explore development of a rehabilitation code for buildings constructed prior to 1970. The rehabilitation code should strive to maintain the viability of a building within the constraints of its original construction while protecting the safety and well being of the inhabitants. The City should use the rehabilitation codes and capital improvement incentives to promote the improved quality of downtown structures through an active program of owner education.

Brochures and other appropriate documentation should be created that will make it known to potential investors that the City has taken substantial steps to make a number of the costly and complex issues surrounding downtown development manageable, particularly in terms of the overall permitting process, street improvements and storm water management. Additionally, the City should continue to explore—and implement—administrative processes that expedite and facilitate approvals and permits for desired redevelopment projects.

Numbers 1, 2 and 3 on our most critical needs list are the JC Penny building, parking structures and Class A office space. These 3 projects belong in column 1, with a 0-3 year projected completion date, as they will serve as major catalyst projects that spark intense economic growth in downtown Auburn. 4

The question came up as to whether or not an opportunity for public/private funding of a parking structure might present itself around the needs of the Truitt Building/Past Time Tavern redevelopment project already underway, the Auburn Regional Medical Center's new 4-5 story building planned for the old Price Hilton site and the current and future needs of City Hall and a new Public Safety Building for additional parking. (Interestingly enough, although it appears to loom large on the current City and Council agenda, the proposed new Public Safety Building is barely alluded to in the Draft Plan. It has been rumored that the project will come with a \$20-30 million price tag, so its lack of prominent inclusion in the Plan has the potential to create some credibility problems early on.) 5

Additional locations and partnerships that might be investigated in terms of a combination Class A office building/parking structure might be Wells Fargo Bank at their current drive through, 1<sup>st</sup> and Auburn Way. And the John Brekka property at 1<sup>st</sup> and D Street, currently a surface parking lot. 6

In terms of the JC Penny building, it is now and has been for a number of years the number one blight on our downtown landscape. There is no lack of interest in the building on the part of legitimate buyers with legitimate redevelopment plans for its use. The problem appears to be that there are no codes in place to prevent a speculator with enough money from buying a prominent building in downtown Auburn only to abandon it for an undefined number of years while he or she waits for the market to inflate its value to some astronomical level. The JC Penny building is not the only building within the Plan's geographic boundary that has sat empty for a number of years. Potential resolutions to this problem, including zoning codes and expanded public/private partnerships with the City, require in-depth exploration and *prominent inclusion* in the final adopted Plan. 7

Under the *Policies, Regulations, Programs* category, Façade Improvement and Local Lender Program(s) should be moved forward to column 1 in order to drive and not follow Auburn's redevelopment efforts. As you know the Auburn Downtown Association's Economic Restructuring Committee initiated this process in mid to late 2000, setting up two luncheon meetings with Community Development Officers and decision makers for all but 2 of the largest banks around, both local and regional. Although US Bank was not able to attend either meeting they were contacted and expressed interest in being part of the process. In our follow up conversations with these institutions it was made clear that what is required in order to garner their support for such a program are well defined plans and clear, in depth definition of the scope of all projects under consideration. However, of equal importance to their evaluation of the merits of creating such a funding program is the identification of all the partners involved in the projects, including what each brings to the table, what role they would play, (i.e., money, project management, management of paperwork), and a willingness to streamline the permitting process and create flexibility of redevelopment codes where appropriate. The ADA and Chamber are ready to continue spearheading efforts to create a façade improvement and low interest loan and/or revolving fund program. In terms of moving forward, our questions and concerns parallel those of the lending institutions; most specifically, how can we work with the City in facilitating establishment of such a fund in a timely fashion. 8

An infill project at the corner of the Safeway site shows up in the 6-9 year column but in reality probably more appropriately belongs in column 1, 0-3 years. In addition, the Plan's drawing of what that infill might look like resembles a small retail shopping area. It is our understanding that the Auburn Way Safeway is proposing developing a gas station at that site. Unless resolution of this issue is reached by final adoption of the Plan it would be best not to include any drawings. 9

Based on their priority placement in the 3-6 year column, we have concerns about the \$400K allocated to bike paths and/or facilities. This particular project would be more appropriate in the 6-9 year column. Top priority should go to those projects that help make downtown Auburn a great place to live, work, play and *critically important*, succeed in business. When those projects are completed, and downtown Auburn is 10

vital and prosperous, the addition of bike paths and amenities will be seen as a reflection of that prosperity.

Although expansion of A Street NW and SW is placed in the appropriate column, 0-3 years, the Plan's description of the project focuses on Phase I, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW to Main Street. We believe that Phase II of the project, continued expansion of A Street north from Main Street to 15<sup>th</sup> is a critical component in the revitalization of downtown. Based on the much broader scope of Phase II it warrants expanded coverage in the document in terms of priority and funding. 11

The placement of the Performing Arts Center linkage project in the later stages of the 6-9 year column is appropriate. Again our preference is to see those improvements closest to the center of the Plan's geographical area completed first. Unquestionably the PAC brings positive recognition to our area. The question remains however as to how directly that recognition relates to the revitalization of the downtown core. Many of the elements discussed earlier in this response, i.e. low interest and/or revolving loan funds, flexibility of building codes, addition of incentives and removal of disincentives to redevelopment of our older buildings, would create a more direct impetus to increasing after hours activities in downtown. The Auburn Avenue Dinner Theater is an example of entrepreneurial excellence that brings jobs, people, recognition and *revenue* downtown without additional costs to taxpayers. The projected \$500K price tag for PAC linkage appears excessive when compared to the \$150K projected for Cross Street improvements. A portion of the \$500K might better be applied towards the creation a pedestrian link from Cross Street to Main, particularly if the Cross Street location is developed into a hotel/convention center complex. 12

There are two areas we have red flagged as requiring more study: the Plan's proposed heavy use of trees throughout the downtown area and the omission of any consideration of technological needs and amenities.

- **Trees**

Although focus groups are attracted to pictures and drawings of trees, it is unlikely that adequate consideration is given to trees as *gifts that keeps on giving*. The cost of maintenance—pruning, removal of leaves, ongoing cleanup of clogged drains, repair of root damage to surrounding brick and concrete—never stops. It is critical that the cost of various types of greenery be fully researched, with comparisons made between initial costs and long term maintenance costs projected out over a 10 to 20 year period. A Street Tree Plan should be compatible with the Signage Improvement and Assistance Program in so far as trees can grow and not block signs. We would like to see a more conservative mix of shrubs and trees that would serve the same beatification purpose and be more financially viable over a long period of time. 13

- **Technological Amenities**

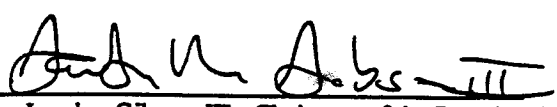
Completely omitted from the Draft Downtown Plan is any consideration of technological needs, i.e., fiber optics capabilities or cyber centers, both critically important in terms of a creating desirable Class A office space and high tech investment. We think this issue is important enough to warrant additional study and significant inclusion in final Plan. 14

A realistic approach must be found that ensures both *approval and implementation* of the Plan once it is adopted. One possible reality based approach is to compare the level of commitment and expectation projected by the Plan as finally adopted in terms of adherence to and enforcement of all Codes, Guidelines and Standards – for example those involving building, health and safety code enforcement, street, sidewalk and alley maintenance and cleaning and parking enforcement – to the level of commitment now exercised in enforcing current codes in those areas. If there is a *reality gap* then consideration must be given to lowering expectations, raising performance levels, or scaling back the scope of the plan. 15

We appreciate the document's basic premise "that the Auburn Downtown Plan uses an implementation-based approach that is focused on getting things done," and especially the 32 "Action Steps" contained in the Implementation Strategies, pages 163 to 196. Clearly the execution of these steps will require extensive city staff time and resources. We encourage the use of any and all resources necessary to accomplish these tasks in the shortest time possible. 16

The emphasis given in the Plan to the importance of building a solid working partnership between the City, the Auburn Downtown Association and the Auburn Area Chamber of Commerce will prove to be a critical element in *getting things done*. Each of our organizations takes seriously its role in this process and we look forward to a partnership that encourages free flowing communication in terms of seeking recommendations and input into the decision making process and the setting of priorities. 17

Sincerely,

  
Robert E. West, Jr., President  
Auburn Downtown Association  
Landon Gibson, III - Chairman of the Board and CEO  
Auburn Area Chamber of Commerce  
Dennis Garre, Chair, Economic Restructuring Committee  
Auburn Downtown Association

Letter dated February 5, 2001 from Mr. Robert E. West Jr., President, Auburn Downtown Association; Mr. Landon Gibson, III - Chairman of the Board and CEO, Auburn Area Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Dennis Garre, Chair, Economic Restructuring Committee, Auburn Downtown Association.

1. Thank you for your comment.
2. The draft Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS addresses building code issues for historic/older buildings. Proposed Policy 27-2 (page 110) entitled "Develop New Incentives" calls for the development of incentives and for the elimination of disincentives to encourage the preservation of historic character and significant historic resources and the renovation and occupancy of such buildings. Permit fee reductions, adoption of the State Historic Building Code, and increased zoning code flexibility for historic properties are identified as worthy of consideration.
3. Comment noted. The draft Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS Downtown Image Program discussion within Section 1.6 (Implementation Strategy) on page 168 is revised as follows (new language; ~~deleted language~~),

#### **"DOWNTOWN IMAGE PROGRAM"**

This element will propose a multi-pronged Public Relations program which will be used to recruit investment and improve the image of downtown as a place to visit, shop, live and work. A consultant would prepare the program for the city, Chamber and ADA to implement.

An image program should use a variety of media to convey information on downtown to interested parties. This might include brochures, web sites, press releases, presentation materials for speaking engagements, and city and downtown gateways. Incentives to developers or property owners to make building improvements or create new, high quality developments should be clearly described.

#### **Benefits**

- Creates positive investment climate...

#### **Steps Required**

1. Determine roles...
2. Determine funding sources
3. Hire consultant to design program

**4. Identify development incentives created or encouraged by the Downtown Plan. Select media to relay this information to potential developers and property owners.**

**5. Implement**

With reference to City codes, the draft Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS Implementation Strategy discussion on "Marketing and Implementation Philosophy" (Section 1.6.1) already identifies the need to amend codes as warranted to promote flexibility in redevelopment efforts.

4. Priorities identified in Table E, Section 1.6.2 (Implementation Actions on page 163) were developed by the Auburn Downtown Task Force and are meant as a recommendation. The prioritized listing does not, nor is it intended to, preclude an earlier implementation of projects identified in later time frames should earlier implementation opportunities present themselves.
5. Parking garages are identified as one element of an overall strategy to address parking needs and encourage downtown redevelopment. Figure 14 (page 191) identifies potential public/private parking garage location sites but, as that text states, the designation does not infer the support of the property owner or the cost-effectiveness of a particular site. To this extent, the draft Auburn Downtown Plan/DEIS does not detail (nor would it given its level of discussion) whether current site-specific projects such as the Auburn Regional Medical Center expansion or the proposed mixed use development project at the former Pastime-Truitt site present opportunities for private-public funding for parking garage structures.
6. Page 192 of the Draft Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS discusses Class A Office Space. While this section mentions sites such as the west side of Auburn Way South near the intersection with Cross Street as possibly appropriate and easy to access for Class A office space purposes, it also notes that many "other sites" within the downtown core would also be viable Class A Office Development sites.
7. The draft Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS recognizes that the JC Penney building is a challenge to downtown revitalization. The draft Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS devotes considerable attention to the site's redevelopment. Part 1.5.1, Main Street Corridor, notes the JC Penney building is a major physical and psychological gap in the retail district and Figure 18 (page 131) identifies the JC Penney site as a catalyst project. Further, the JC Penney property redevelopment is discussed in detail as an implementation measure within Part 1.6 and identified possible techniques to stimulate redevelopment of the building.
8. The priorities identified in Table E (section 1.6.2, page 163) were developed by the Auburn Downtown Task Force. Table E is not intended to preclude the

implementation of projects identified in later time frames to an earlier date should the opportunity present itself.

9. The Auburn Downtown Plan concept expressed by the Safeway infill project is that intensification of land uses will improve the appearance and function of Auburn Way. The draft Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS (page 141) states, "...*Potential* projects include the addition of a building to the corner of the Safeway parking lot..." (*emphasis added*). The graphic/language is not intended to preclude other development options at this location that are consistent with this concept.
10. Encouraging bicycle/pedestrian orientation and movement is a key strategy in the draft Auburn Downtown Plan/DEIS. This strategy complements the plan's emphasis on encouraging pedestrian oriented architectural design/development. The West Main Street non-motorized improvements, in particular, will encourage greater non-motorized access and customers into downtown from the Interurban Trail. The project's inclusion in the draft Auburn Downtown Plan/DEIS acknowledges its (non-motorized project improvement's) role in encouraging non-motorized transportation alternatives to and from downtown. Increasing and enhancing non-motorized opportunities to and from areas surrounding downtown is a specified mitigation measure in the DEIS to address motor vehicle related traffic impacts.

Further, the draft Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS proposes to extend the downtown pedestrian-oriented concept and design principles along West Main Street toward the Interurban Trail recognizing, in part, that this is a major gateway into Downtown Auburn. Non-motorized improvements along this street segment are consistent with implementing this Downtown Plan vision.

Finally, the funding amount and time frame identified in the draft Auburn Downtown Plan/DEIS for the West Main Street bicycle and pedestrian improvements are consistent with the City's adopted Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program.

11. A Street NW/SW is given prominent discussion in the Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS. It is specifically identified as an implementation strategy in Section 1.6. To provide greater emphasis on that portion of the project north of Main Street, additional text has been added to the project's descriptive implementation strategy narrative (page 181) as follows,

**"A Street NW and SW**

A Street SW/NW is planned to be improved as a minor arterial in the City of Auburn Transportation Plan, with a new extension between 3<sup>rd</sup> NW and 14<sup>th</sup> NE, thus linking downtown with the northern retail area of the City. **Extension of A Street NW will provide a much-needed continuous north/south route through downtown and relieve some**

traffic pressures on C Street NW, Auburn Avenue and Auburn Way North. From Main Street to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW, the existing A Street NW will be upgraded. The street is narrow in this older neighborhood location and design and reconstruction work should be sensitive to the adjacent properties.

~~In addition,~~ A Street SW will be the front door to the Transit Center...

...

Improvements north of Main Street, the loop portion south of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW, and pedestrian amenities have not yet been funded. The portion of A Street from Main Street to 14<sup>th</sup> Street NE is included on the 2001-2006 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)."

Also, revise the estimated cost text to state,

#### **"Estimated Cost**

~~Funded, except for  
streetscape and loop~~

A St. SW - construction complete, Main to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW  
except for landscape and pedestrian amenities - \$150,000.

A St. NW, West Main to 10th Street NW - \$4.2 million"

12. Decisions about future project funding and timing that are not currently programmed in the City's Capital Improvement Program will be subject to evaluation during the City's capital budgeting process.
13. The draft Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS currently includes policy language relative to trees and compatibility with signage. Proposed Policy SS2.9 (page 123) relating to design guidelines in other commercial/industrial areas notes that there should be the sensitive placement of trees and landscaping to reasonably avoid competition with signage.

With respect to the tree maintenance related comments, additional language has been added to the Downtown Tree Planting Program discussion in Section 1.6 (Page 173).

#### **"DOWNTOWN TREE PLANTING PROGRAM**

Street trees are another key element which will improve the overall character of downtown Auburn. A repeating vertical element that helps to define the street, trees also increase property values while adding to the attractiveness of businesses and adding to the overall cohesiveness of the downtown streetscapes.

A comprehensive tree planting program should include extensive planning and preparation to minimize long term costs and maintenance and to maximize benefit to the downtown. Specific attention should be given to selecting low-maintenance species; identifying situations where ground covers, vines or shrubs are more appropriate than trees; and using design and construction techniques that provide a healthy environment for root growth, thus reducing the chance for damage to surrounding hard surfaces.

### **Benefits/Problems Solved**

...

#### **Coordination**

A street tree program should be implemented in coordination with the street lighting program, street design standards and streetscape improvements. A street tree program would be implemented over time in coordination with public and private development.

#### **Steps Required**

- 1. Research issues of cost and maintenance associated with a street tree program.**
- 2. Identify potential locations for trees and/or other vegetation**
- ~~1-~~ **3. Prepare street tree plan**
- ~~2-~~ **4. Planning Commission review and recommendations**
- ~~3-~~ **5. City Council review and adoption**
- ~~4-~~ **6. Implement in phases over time**

14. The document has been revised in several locations to take note of the Qwest central office facility as a downtown/technological asset for the purposes of attracting Class A office space. Page 34, Section 1.3.2. existing assets has been revised to state,

"Just off Main Street, near the core of Downtown, are a number of other assets that will play a key role in Auburn's future. ...The Transit Center and A Street SW are recent major assets to the core area of downtown. A Street SW, the SR18/C Street Interchange and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Grade Separation project will improve access to downtown and alleviate traffic congestion that results from increased rail activity. Finally, Qwest has a central office facility (where calls are switched) located in downtown Auburn at Second Street SW and Division Street. Certain types of businesses, including Class A Office Space, particularly benefit from access to high speed communications infrastructure frequently associated with these facilities. Generally, closer proximity to a central office facility often means higher quality telecommunication services."

In addition, Proposed Policy 4-1 on page 68 has been expanded to include language that the City of Auburn will pursue opportunities to develop high-speed technological communication infrastructure that could support or attract desired businesses to Downtown as follows,

**"Policy 4-1 Coordinate utilities with development**

Coordinate water service, sanitary sewer and storm water facilities, electrical and fiber optic facilities with increasing development Downtown. **Pursue opportunities to develop technologically advanced high speed communication infrastructure that supports or could attract desired businesses to Downtown Auburn.**"

The discussion on Class A office development also makes reference to use of the Qwest central office as a possible recruitment asset. Page 34, Section 1.3.2, Existing Assets, has been revised to add the following language,

**"Class A Office Development**

The Downtown Market Analysis identified demand for Class A office space in downtown. Like the hotel, sites on the west side of Auburn Way near the intersection with Cross Street are appropriate and easy to access. Many other sites within the downtown core would also be viable Class A Office development sites. **Class A office development typically has technological communication needs. As indicated earlier, the presence of the Qwest central office in this area could be used to help market and attract Class A Office development.**"

- 15. Comment noted.
- 16. Comment noted.
- 17. Comment noted.



STATE OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

420 Golf Club Road SE, Suite 201, Lacey • PO Box 48343 • Olympia, Washington 98504-8343 • (360) 407-0752

Fax Number (360) 407-6217

February 5, 2001

Ms. B Sanders  
City of Auburn Planning Department  
25 West Main Street  
Auburn, Washington 98001

In future correspondence please refer to:

Log: 020501-22-KI

Re: Review Comments on Auburn Downtown  
Plan

Dear Ms. Sanders:

The Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP) is in receipt of the Auburn Downtown Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). On behalf of the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) I have taken the opportunity to review the Plan and DEIS to assess effects of the document on cultural resources (including archaeological, historic, and traditional cultural places) in the planning area.

As a result of my review, I am writing to express support for the Downtown Plan Alternative and implementation of the Plan as it pertains to historic properties. As made clear in the Plan, Downtown represents the "heart" of the community. The goal of revitalization is commendable since a healthy and attractive downtown signals a vibrant and dynamic community. The Downtown Plan for Auburn is also commendable for its attention to preservation of historic resources. The downtown area of any community represents an important concentration of historically and architecturally significant properties. Therefore, a historic preservation component is indispensable in any planning document. My review of the Downtown Plan for Auburn clearly indicates historic preservation as a key element in the City's revitalization strategy.

From this point, I recommend the City's adoption and implementation of the Plan. Implementation should include identified historic preservation tasks. Please feel free to contact OAHP for assistance toward attaining Auburn's historic preservation goals and policies.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Plan and DEIS. Should you have any questions, I may be reached at 360-407-0766 or [gregg@cted.wa.gov](mailto:gregg@cted.wa.gov).

Sincerely,

Gregory Griffith  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

GAG

Cc: Holly Gadbow  
Julie Koler

**Letter dated February 5, 2001 from Mr. Gregory Griffith, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Office of Community Development.**

1. Thank you for your comment. As you indicated, historic preservation is a key element of the city's overall downtown revitalization strategy.
2. Your comment recommending adoption and implementation of the plan is noted as well as your agency's offer to provide technical assistance in the future.



King County  
Department of Transportation  
Metro Transit Division, Design & Construction Section  
Environmental Planning and Real Estate  
201 South Jackson Street, MS KSC-TR-0431  
Seattle, WA 98104-3856  
(206) 684-1418  
(206) 684-1900 FAX

January 10, 2001

Ms. B Sanders, Associate Planner  
City of Auburn  
25 West Main St.  
Auburn, WA 98001-4998

**Auburn Downtown Plan Draft EIS**

Dear Ms. Sanders:

King County Metro Transit Division and Transportation Planning Division staff have reviewed the Auburn Downtown Plan Draft EIS and have the following comments.

From a transit service and facilities standpoint, the draft should include more information regarding transit operations, particularly in terms of the downtown streets that would support transit service. Some specific comments are as follows:

Page 58 (Improve Key Streets) - This section should be expanded to include an identification or discussion of the key "transit" streets in downtown Auburn. When the new Commuter Rail transit center is ready for use within the next several years, it will be necessary to shift some transit service onto different streets through downtown in order to access this facility. Key "transit" streets in downtown Auburn would include 2<sup>nd</sup> St. SW, 1<sup>st</sup> St. NW, and A St. NW & SW. } 1

Pages 69 - 73 (Street Improvement/Transportation Policies) - This section on transportation policies/goals does not include public transit. On page 73 there is mention of the new Commuter Rail Transit Center, but no discussion of the transit routings through downtown to access this facility. Perhaps a new policy regarding transit improvements on key streets would be appropriate. (KC Metro staff could provide input to assist in the development of that policy.) } 2

Pages 76 - 79 (Sidewalk Corridors) - This description of optimal functions for different sidewalk zones should also mention modifications necessary to accommodate bus zones, which would include adequate width and clearance for accessibility, landing pads, and passenger waiting shelters. (KC Metro staff could provide input to assist in the development of those recommendations related to bus zones.) } 3

Should Auburn staff seek further information regarding these comments, please contact either Doug Johnson (206-684-1597) or Paul Alexander (206-684-1599). Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this proposal.

Sincerely,

Gary Kriedt, Senior Environmental Planner

**January 10, 2001. Mr. Gary Kreidt, Senior Environmental Planner,  
King County Department of Transportation.**

1. The Draft Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS has incorporated additional language identifying 2<sup>nd</sup> St. SW, 1<sup>st</sup> St. NW and A St. NW/SW as key transit streets within part 1.4 Section "C. Improve Key Streets" (page 58-59). The following will be added as a final paragraph to this section on page 59,

**"Finally, there are also key streets related to transit. The development of the commuter rail station and the rail station's transit center will necessitate shifting some transit service onto different streets through downtown. Key transit streets identified by Metro relating to bus service to the commuter rail station include 2<sup>nd</sup> Street SW, 1<sup>st</sup> Street NW and A streets NW/SW."**

Also, the "Existing Conditions - Transit Facilities and Services" discussion in Section 3.4 (page 251), Transportation, will be revised as follows to reflect these key streets,

"The Sound Transit Station has been designed to accommodate both commuter rail and bus service. Once the station is complete, the bus transfer hub will move from 1<sup>st</sup> and B Street NE to the Sound Transit Station. All routes traveling through or within Auburn will pass through this regional hub to facilitate travel between bus and train. **Certain key transit streets Metro has identified resulting from this movement of the bus transfer hub include 2<sup>nd</sup> Street SW, 1<sup>st</sup> Street NW, and A Streets NW/SW.** Bus service will be coordinated with commuter rail departures and arrivals."

2. The Draft Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS has been modified to include a new proposed policy (proposed Policy 8-3, page 75) addressing the need for street and streetscape standards to consider public transit routes and infrastructure needs of public transit providers. New Policy 8-3 will read as follows,

**"Policy 8-3 Public Transit Routes and Infrastructure Needs  
Street and streetscape standards for the Downtown shall take into consideration public transit routes and infrastructure needs of public transit providers."**

3. To ensure public transit infrastructure needs are considered when downtown street design standards are developed, the street design standards' elements itemized in Section 1.6, "Implementation Standards", "Downtown Street Design Standards" (page 170), has been revised to include reference to "Public transit infrastructure" as follows,

"Downtown street design standards should be revised to ensure that future street improvements, both publicly and privately funded will implement the Downtown Plan and Urban Design Vision.

Element of street design standards include:

- Sidewalk corridors, including furnishings
- Curbs/curb ramps
- Driveways
- Driveway apron design
- Street corner specifications
- **Public transit infrastructure needs**
- Other street development standards

...

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February 5, 2001

VIA FACSIMILE  
253-931-3053

Mr. David Osaki  
Department of Planning/Community Development  
City of Auburn  
25 West Main  
Auburn, Washington 98001-4998

Re: Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS comments

Dear David:

I write on behalf of our client Safeway. Safeway would like to thank the City of Auburn for the opportunity to comment on the Auburn Downtown Plan and Draft EIS (the "Plan"). Safeway commends the effort that has gone into the Plan and the vision that Auburn has set for itself.

Given Safeway's longstanding relationship with the community and presence at its Auburn Way location, Safeway was pleased to learn that the City had designated its store as a "Key Anchor" in the Plan. The Safeway store was the only Key Anchor designated in the southern downtown area, and it will serve as an amenity for the mixed-use/residential neighborhood that is proposed immediately west of the store. Also, as pointed out in Draft EIS Appendix Tables III-2 and III-4, while retail food stores comprise on 0.7% of Auburn's downtown business mix, these stores provide a significant percentage of Auburn's retail sales tax collection.

Safeway is working with the City to add a fueling facility to its Auburn Way location. Fueling facilities are a national trend in the grocery industry and are necessary to serve the needs of Safeway's customers and to remain competitive with other grocery retailers.

Pages 141 and 193 of the Plan suggest possible infill development of the Safeway site. Such development would present a potential conflict with Safeway's desire to add a fueling facility and could impact the Safeway's ability to serve as an economic anchor for the downtown area.

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Oregon

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Washington

SPOKANE  
Washington

Mr. Paul Krauss  
February 5, 2001  
Page 2

Safeway looks forward to working with the City to create an attractive downtown area that promotes the goals of the State's Growth Management Act and provides Safeway customers with the services that they require.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Plan and Draft EIS.

Sincerely,



Patrick J. Mallaney

Cc: Barb Richardson, Safeway

**February 5, 2001 letter from Mr. Patrick Mullaney from Foster, Pepper & Shefelman, PLLC, Attorneys at Law**

1. Comment noted.
2. Comment noted.
3. The Auburn Downtown Plan/Draft EIS graphic on page 141 and implementation discussion on page 193 reflect a general plan concept that intensification of land uses along Auburn Way will improve its (Auburn Way's) appearance and function. The text on page 141 that accompanies the graphic states, "Intensifying land uses will also improve the appearance and function of Auburn Way. *Potential* projects include the addition of a building to the corner of the Safeway parking lot...". (*emphasis added*) Thus, a building at this location is identified as a "potential" project. The graphic/language on page 141 and the implementation discussion on page 193 are not intended to preclude the possibility of other land use options at this location consistent with the plan's concept.

## **DISTRIBUTION LIST**

### **FEIS (ADDENDUM) COPIES SENT TO**

The following list identifies those agencies, organization and individuals that have been sent copies of this addendum.

#### **Federal Agencies**

Federal Railroad Administration  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
US Army Corps of Engineers  
US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10

#### **State Agencies**

Department of Ecology, Environmental Review Section (2 copies)  
Department of Ecology, Growth Management  
Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Department of Natural Resources  
Office of Community Development  
Washington State Department of Transportation  
Department of Corrections  
Inter-agency Committee for Outdoor Recreation  
Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission  
Department of Social and Health Services  
Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team  
State Archeology and Historic Preservation Office (Mr. Gregory Griffith)

#### **Regional Agencies**

Puget Sound Clean Air Agency  
Puget Sound Regional Council  
Sound Transit

#### **County Agencies**

King County Department of Transportation, Metro Transit Division (Mr. Gary Kreidt)  
Honorable Les Thomas  
King County Office of Regional Policy and Planning  
King County Office of Cultural Resources

#### **City Agencies**

##### **Mayor, City of Auburn**

Chuck Booth

**Auburn City Council**

Jeanne Barber  
Trish Borden  
Stacey Brothers  
Pete Lewis  
Fred Poe  
Sue Singer  
Rich Wagner

Auburn Planning Commission (7 members)

Auburn Downtown Task Force

City of Auburn Planning Director

City of Auburn Public Works Director

City of Auburn Finance Director

City of Auburn Parks Director

City of Auburn Fire Chief

City of Auburn Police Chief

City of Auburn City Attorney

City of Sumner, Community Development Department

**Business, Community Organizations, and Interest Groups**

Auburn Downtown Association

Auburn Chamber of Commerce

Safeway Corporation

Mr. Patrick Mullaney, Foster, Pepper, Shefelman (Representing Safeway Corporation)

**Private Citizens**

Jeff Revegno

Michelle Chang

Amanda E. Vedrich

**Indian Tribes**

Muckleshoot Indian Tribe

Planning and Public Works

Fisheries

Cultural Resources Division

Tribal Council

**Media**

Auburn Reporter

South County Journal

**Schools**

Auburn School District

**Libraries**

King County Library System, Auburn Branch

## **NOTICE OF FEIS AVAILABILITY**

A notice of issuance and availability of the Auburn Downtown Plan Final EIS has been sent to the following.

### **Federal Agencies**

Housing and Urban Development

### **State Agencies**

Superintendent of Public Instruction

Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission

### **Regional Agencies**

Pierce Transit

### **Media**

Daily Journal of Commerce

The News Tribune

Puget Sound Business Journal

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Seattle Times

### **King County**

King County Executive's Office

King County Housing Authority

### **City Agencies**

City of Algona

City of Bonney Lake

City of Federal Way

City of Kent

City of Pacific

### **Schools**

Kent School District

Green River Community College

### **Businesses, Community Organizations and Interest Groups**

1000 Friends of Washington

Washington Environmental Council

Members of Auburn Downtown Association / Business Improvement Area

Auburn Regional Medical Center

**Utilities/Transportation**

Puget Sound Energy

AT&T Broadband (cable)

Qwest (Phone)

RST