



City of Des Moines, Washington
Economic Development Strategy

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Prepared by

Ravenhurst Development, Inc.
Urban Advisors, Ltd.
O'Connor Consulting Group
Fergan Research
GVA Kidder Mathews
Carlson Architects



City of Des Moines, WA Economic Development Strategy

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Introduction

The city of Des Moines faces some unique challenges, but also has unique opportunities when crafting an economic development strategy.

The elements that typically drive the economic engine in a community, namely employment and retail sales, are largely absent in Des Moines. When grouped with the four surrounding communities, Des Moines has 11% of the total population, but only 5% of the employment and 3.8% of the retail sales for the area. Because of land constraints, there is very little land available for new commercial or industrial development, so it would be almost impossible to bring the employment and commercial elements up to typical municipal levels.

At the same time, it is a community with a wealth of physical benefits. It has excellent highway connections on the east edge of town, and a prime waterfront along the west edge, with countless view properties in between. It is blessed with two wonderful waterfront parks, Saltwater State Park and Beach Park, and has the only public marina between Seattle and Tacoma. The city has a traditional “main street” in Marine View Drive, surrounded by waterfront condominiums and desirable single-family neighborhoods. These are the basic building blocks that most communities would love to start with.

But Des Moines has not taken advantage of these assets. For many years, the city’s energies were diverted by the controversial third runway at Seatac Airport, and in recent years, tax initiatives and economic difficulties at the State level have reduced funding to all Washington cities. Without a strong local tax base, balancing the budget is an annual problem. As a result, the city has not had the focus or the resources to improve itself.

This economic development strategy is intended to redress this history. It articulates goals and identifies programs that can both create jobs and generate sales, and it suggests ways to maximize the benefit of the resources and natural advantages the city enjoys.

The Basic Strategy

The economic development strategy has three basic elements: 1) to encourage retail and industrial development, so that the tax base is as strong as possible; 2) to use some of the new tax revenues to fund projects that improve the community resources – the parks, the waterfront and the main street, and 3) to encourage both single-family and higher density residential development as we create a more desirable community.



In this report, each of the three strategic components is first expressed as a community objective that can be discussed and endorsed by the City Council. The statement is followed by a description of the program goals and the program elements consisting of policies, initiatives, potential zoning changes and suggested tasks. These goals and policies are intended to provoke thought and amplification by city staff and Council members. It is not our intention that these statements should be transferred wholesale into formal policy documents, but moreover, given the nature of some of the recommendations it is unlikely that they would be adopted without change.

The three economic development objectives are stated as follows:

Objective 1: Improve the livability and image of the City of Des Moines by creating a vibrant “main street” on Marine View Drive, and a pleasant and viable community waterfront through the marina and in Beach Park.

This objective discusses the issues and opportunities facing Marine View Drive, the Marina and Beach Park and recommends programs, initiatives and tasks that could be implemented to achieve an exciting waterfront community.

Objective 2: Encourage commercial development and industrial job creation as a means to provide municipal revenues to support the livability projects.

This section makes recommendations regarding Marine View Drive commercial development, commercial development in Pacific Ridge, and programs for the Business Park district.

Objective 3: Encourage residential development to stimulate single-family home ownership and support a vibrant downtown community.

This third section discusses Pacific Ridge residential programs, downtown residential programs, and development in the single-family neighborhoods.

While budgeting decisions are outside our purview, we believe the revenue creation tools must come first, therefore a strong emphasis is placed on zoning changes that will encourage immediate residential, industrial and commercial development. These recommendations may be more generous to the development community than some in the city might prefer, but without private investment in Des Moines, there will never be any funding available for the kinds



of programs that can truly change the character and image of the community, and satisfy the clear desires of the resident population.

There is some irony in the plan. Many communities do battle with big-box retailers, as they feel they practice poor social values and rob business from the small local retailers. We will not comment on the social value question, and there are very few retailers within the Des Moines city limits from whom to rob business. The downtown core does not have an extensive line-up of established retailers. In Des Moines, there is an opportunity instead to use the tax revenues from these big-box retailers to strengthen the very community features that they are often accused of destroying. The retail sales tax revenues (or some portion thereof) can be earmarked for downtown revitalization and improvements to the waterfront, to strengthen rather than erode the community's commercial core.

The three programs reinforce one another. Improved community assets attract new residents and increase property values. Greater home ownership and higher incomes stimulate community pride and involvement, reduce crime and provide the customers for the more numerous retail businesses and main street restaurants. The businesses in turn provide the tax base for further community investment. It is a simplistic model, but because of the current conditions and opportunities, Des Moines can make significant progress on each of these three elements.



Objective 1: Improve the livability and image of the City of Des Moines by creating a vibrant “main street” on Marine View Drive, and a pleasant and viable community waterfront through the marina and in Beach Park.

A. Marine View Drive Programs

1. Program Goals

- Attract small, locally-owned businesses to the downtown providing a range of goods and services for the local community. In terms of land use character, national and regional retailers that serve a larger trade area should be encouraged to locate on Pacific Highway, while the unique and eclectic businesses should find a home on Marine View Drive.
- Create a diverse architectural character along the street, combining new development with the renovation of existing buildings, and allowing for a mix of building styles, parking configurations and signage types.
- Encourage business and property owner participation by establishing clear roles for both the Chamber of Commerce and the Boosters. Encourage more open and direct communication the City organization, property and business owners and the effected public.
- Concentrate retail and service businesses along Marine View Drive, even if it results in fewer commercial businesses along 7th Ave. Make Marine View Drive as strong as possible as a retail main street.
- Connect the waterfront and Marine View Drive areas by coordinating activities and special events, by improving physical connections and by cross-promoting the two distinct areas.
- Change the public image of Des Moines from Pacific Highway to Marine View Drive and the waterfront .



2. Program Elements

a) Policy

To support community organizations in marketing and promoting downtown activities and business patronage.

To facilitate the permitting process and provide fair and constructive project reviews and inspections.

To promote public safety and a welcoming environment in the downtown.

b) Initiatives

Improve the project review and permitting environment. Assign a planner/permit specialist as the lead City contact for MVD development. Establish permit processing time limits and goals. Create or strengthen customer feedback process to flag problematic issues or decisions. Appoint an ombudsman or schedule regular developer “gripe” sessions.

Develop a Marine View Drive pedestrian enhancement program. Identify program elements such as replacing cobra head lighting with pedestrian-oriented sidewalk lighting, providing small pocket parks and benches, weather protection, improved crosswalks and other features.

Identify potential public and private “gathering place” opportunities. Select one or two of them and apply the program elements described above to improve the space. Cooperate with private building owners by granting sidewalk permits, allowing outside seating, providing city bike racks, funding awnings or canopies, limbing trees for better views or other simple improvements to encourage socialized loitering.

Create a building enhancement program. Identify properties that would benefit from storefront , signage or façade improvements. Identify derelict properties



that should be renovated rather than torn down. Devise a mechanism for identifying, scoring and allocating funding for these projects.

Identify funding sources for downtown initiatives. Funding could come from the city's General Fund, be earmarked from increases in retail sales taxes, be funded through a local Business Improvement District, or be funded through State and Federal "Main Street" and urban development programs.

Selectively provide municipal parking areas to support the retail district. Reduce the economic impediments to property development by solving the parking problem ahead of time.

Work with the Chamber of Commerce and Boosters. Collaborate on the development of common goals and distinct priorities for each organization. Help establish a focused program for each organization. Determine the appropriate roles for the City in supporting the programs for each organization.

Support a clear program of downtown marketing and special events. Provide leadership to the community and the civic organizations in identifying, refining, building and funding a small number of annual special events.

Focus on blighted and abandoned properties. Create penalties and incentives for property clean-up. Consider a notification system and maintenance standards. Clean and lien non-responsive properties.

c) Tasks

Complete a property inventory and review for the six-block MVD district. Consider including the KDM/8th Avenue intersection. Base maps, photographs and a preliminary inventory have been prepared and are attached in the report appendices.



Use these materials as a discussion tool for public involvement as well as staff review. Look for blighted properties, renovation or redevelopment candidates, community parking sites, parcel anomalies and special conditions. Use this inventory to identify two or three priority parcels, then find specific actions to advance these projects.

Invite significant property owners to meet with the City Manager on some systematic basis. Start with John White, Scott Andrews, Mark Stegin and King Yee. Find out what they want to do.

Using the Parcel inventory, conduct a block by block parking count. Identify the parking shortfalls and surpluses. Using Highline Community College students conducting field checks, measure parking utilization in private lots. Identify possible parcels for municipal parking lots or sharing opportunities for existing under-utilized parking lots. (New mixed-use developments cannot afford the cost of providing parking at current code requirements. Creative parking solutions will be necessary if new development is desired.)

Study the north and south gateways into the downtown core, particularly the KDM and 8th Ave intersection. The yacht club boat storage and auto repair facilities reflect poorly on the downtown, and some creative visionary thinking might be helpful. Longer term, you might consider relocating all boat storage out of the downtown area: as long as it is permitted, the revenues from boat storage will dictate the highest and best use for some of these properties.

Celebrate downtown revitalization with annual Mayor's awards.

Hold developer breakfasts or regularly scheduled open meeting times for property owners and developers to meet casually with the city planners and permit specialists. Take away their excuses and help them develop their properties.



d) Zoning Changes

Revise permitted land uses. Review the permitted and prohibited uses for Pacific Ridge C1 compared to the downtown. Many of the uses should be reversed, to encourage neighborhood-oriented businesses on Marine View Drive, and more regional uses on Pacific Highway.

Eliminate the requirement that signs and buildings should have a “contemporary northwest nautical” character. The downtown district should have a unique set of design codes and building standards not replicated elsewhere.

Reduce the mixed-use building parking requirements. Either reduce the residential parking from 2.2/unit to below 1.5/unit, or allow for shared parking between residential and commercial uses, or eliminate the commercial parking requirements altogether, or some combination of the above. Allow parking to be accommodated offsite.

Consider eliminating the third floor building setback. The small building envelope already makes development difficult.

Consider disincentives for surface boat storage within a defined area downtown.

B. Waterfront Programs – Marina and Beach Park

1. Program Goals

- To derive the maximum community benefits from the city’s waterfront resource, in terms of community access and enjoyment, marina revenues and commercial opportunities.
- To preserve and restore the historic character of Beach Park, while upgrading the facilities as a venue for community events and functions.



- To make prudent long-term investment in the marina and the park, balancing the varied needs of the community.
- To integrate the marina and park areas into one seamless waterfront district.
- To promote the waterfront district as a unique asset of Des Moines, and to create a positive community image from the successful execution of the waterfront master plan.
- To provide a wide range of settings and experiences in the waterfront district, including providing a continuous waterfront promenade.
- To connect the waterfront to other districts in the city at the north and south ends, as well as at the west end of the major streets through downtown.
- To develop new “customers” arriving through the waterfront gateway, either by passenger ferry or as visiting boaters, and to provide an attractive facility and a pleasant experience for these visitors.
- (The Marina Master Plan will continue to exist, with its own priorities for service levels and priorities, investment and revenue projections.)
- (Similarly, the Beach Park redevelopment plan will continue to evolve and will exist as a separate document.)
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2. Program Elements

a) Policy

Because the marina and Beach Park are each within the jurisdiction of a responsible city department, we are reluctant to suggest specific policies for these areas. Our comments should instead be taken in the context of the greater Economic Development strategy, and not as a commentary on the existing departments.



Having said that, the scale of waterfront improvements that we envision should not fall under a single department, but require the coordination of multiple city departments. A new management structure reflecting this diversity of goals should be considered.

For example, for capital budgeting purposes, marina operations, investment and revenues, including lease revenues, should be segregated from the capital investment decisions regarding the waterfront improvement and beautification plans. The marina should be self-sustaining with respect to boating services, but cannot be expected to shoulder promenade, park and landscape improvements.

b) Initiatives

Consider Beach Park, the marina, Anthony's and the Yacht Club as one integrated waterfront district. Treat it as the community's most valuable resource. Imagine how it might be developed for community benefit if there were no marina, then take these ideas and try to implement them given the existing conditions.

Undertake a critical review and fresh look at the existing marina master plan. Evaluate the plan and its elements in the context of a broader "waterfront" strategy, which serves both boaters and city residents. Review the capital investment priorities in light of both marina revenue potential and non-boating community benefit.

Identify and enhance the strongest public gathering spaces. There is an opportunity at the end of 227th, another by the fishing pier and a third at the Beach Park water's edge.

Initiate discussions with the Yacht Club. Explore the sharing of boat launch facilities. Consider programs that can change the visual character of the south downtown and south waterfront areas.



Consider the Beach Park facilities first as a community resource, and second as a business opportunity. The building complex has charm and utility, but is a difficult business proposition and is unlikely to generate positive net revenues.

c) Tasks

In the marina master plan review, consider the following:

- Conduct a cost/benefit analysis on the seawall relocation to determine whether changing the alignment makes economic sense, and whether the proposed alignment creates an attractive and usable upland environment with public benefit features.
- Review the site plan to determine whether the north and south ends of the marina can be better integrated with a simpler plan.
- Rationalize the parking configuration and street alignments.
- Consider moving the dry storage to the east edge of the complex.
- Consider moving the boat repair yard offsite or to the east edge of the complex to open up the middle and the water's edge.
- Consider placing the south park at the water's edge rather than along 6th. Evaluate the potential for a commercial use on the current park site; keep the water side for the public.
- Create a strong boardwalk or promenade, running the full length of the waterfront, including connections into Beach Park. Hold a design competition for gazebos along the promenade, where architect and contractor teams would design and build a covered lookout for some fixed and modest sum (such as \$10,000).
- Consider opening the west ends of the boat sheds to create more visual interest along the proposed boardwalk.

Don't sign any new commercial leases until an updated master plan is prepared.



In Beach Park, focus on the core facilities. As the budget allows, make improvements to the structural integrity of the buildings, the heating, lighting and restrooms.

Find users before making costly improvements; don't redevelop the buildings on spec. Find community organizations that can use the buildings on a regular, long-term basis. Allow the Chamber or other organization to market the facilities for one-time users. Share the resource with the surrounding communities; they are better customers than regional conferences.

Make the stream relocation the highest priority. Make the outdoors the strongest asset by improving the waterfront environment, upgrading the landscaping and pathways, and improving the traffic flow if possible. A loop for bus drop-off and pick-up would help address the parking deficiency.

d) Zoning Changes

None proposed for this district.

Objective 2: Encourage commercial development and industrial job creation as a means to provide municipal revenues to support the livability projects.

A. Marine View Drive Commercial Development Programs

(Many of the Marine View Drive initiatives were discussed under Objective 1. The programs here are specifically tailored to attract investment monies and new retail tenants.)

1. Program Goals

- To facilitate the rehabilitation and renovation of existing commercial buildings on Marine View Drive, with a



priority to encourage the occupancy of vacant or under-utilized spaces.

- Without compromising life safety issues and the building code, to remove obstacles to new development, so that the Stegin property and other vacant parcels can be developed with new buildings.
- To create a permitting environment that is straightforward, predictable and stable.
- To institute permitting and building codes that do not add unnecessary costs to projects, so that property owners can achieve a satisfactory return on their investment while keeping rents as low as possible.
- To demonstrate to property owners and investors that the City is making a true long-term commitment to MVD revitalization, so that they are more willing to make their own long-term investments.

2. Program Elements

a) Policy

Resolve to retain existing businesses along Marine View Drive, and to address their particular concerns and issues when problems arise.

b) Initiatives

Described in the earlier MVD section.

c) Tasks

Meet with property owners Mark Stegin and King Yee. Review the conceptual plans and pro forma analysis included in the appendices of this report. Discuss the reasons the properties have not been redeveloped (in Stegin's case) and attempt to bridge the gaps, to the extent they are not market-related.



Write to or meet with QFC. Encourage them to maintain or improve their presence in Des Moines.

Work with local banks and the CRA programs to earmark funds for “main street” businesses.

Make sure the local lending community is aware of and in support of your MVD programs.

d) Zoning Changes

Discussed in earlier MVD section.

B. Pacific Ridge Commercial Development Programs

1. Program Goals

- To spur development of the Pacific Highway South (PHS) commercial frontage (PR-C1 zone) with highway–related businesses and national retailers serving a broader customer base.
- To facilitate the immediate development of the PR-C2 properties with “big box” national retail stores. Open the new retail stores within three years.
- To turn around a decade of no new projects, through changes to the zoning codes and to the City’s objectives for PHS.
- To create land use requirements that are appropriate for office buildings and uses with high employment levels, thus increasing the effective stock of land for office development.
- To enact these changes without reducing the densities allowed under the City’s GMA planning.



2. Program Elements

a) Policy

The Pacific Ridge commercial zoning codes are intended to produce a pedestrian-oriented, urban environment to support the Pacific Ridge residential community. This view of the district should be changed, since the residential vision cannot be supported by the current (or future) real estate market.

Commercial uses on Pacific Highway should be auto-oriented, as there is no other commercial land outside of Marine View Drive available for these uses, and it reflects the character of the highway just north and south of the short Des Moines segment.

To make Pacific Highway into the poster child positive image for the City of Des Moines is an almost impossible task. It is better to let the market dictate the improvements in this corridor, and invest City resources and priorities in the downtown and along the waterfront, where a dynamic positive change is possible.

b) Initiatives

Given a modified approach to the district, business and job retention, and existing business expansion, should be given a high priority.

c) Tasks

Changes to the zoning code are the most important task for this component of the plan.

Continuing the effort to work with both Seatac and Kent on annexation or land swaps remains a valid effort, but it is not likely to produce immediate results.



d) Zoning Changes

Use design guidelines rather than the building code to enforce quality design and curb appeal.

An effective design review process allows for flexibility while retaining controls.

Eliminate the 35' minimum height requirement.

This effectively mandates multi-story buildings, and desirable uses are excluded by the requirement.

Increase the permitted surface parking area to at least 50% of the land area.

Rents in Des Moines cannot yet support the cost of structured parking, so office buildings cannot be built economically. Elimination of this requirement could actually increase employment in the City.

Allow building setbacks from Pacific Highway for landscaping and parking.

An 80' setback would allow for a 10' landscape strip, one double bay of parking, and generous sidewalks around the building. To produce successful retail stores, the building setback should increase as the posted traffic speeds on the roadway increase.

Modify the list of permitted and prohibited uses.

The current list prohibits or limits automotive uses, single story retail, fast food and gas stations, but allows them on Marine View Drive. The programs should be reversed.

Reduce the minimum size of permitted hotels.

While it may be appropriate to restrict immoral behavior, there are better tools than the zoning code for this purpose. A minimum room count of 80 would accomplish the same social objectives as a 125 room hotel, and might spur some hotel development in the corridor. The conference facility requirement should also be eliminated. Given your location, hotel taxes should be a material component of the City's revenues, and legitimate hotels should be encouraged.



C. Industrial District Programs

1. Program Goals

- Reconcile the prior conflicts with the Port of Seattle, and move forward jointly in a manner that will allow for the immediate development of the Des Moines Creek industrial properties, in as intense a manner as the current market will allow.
- Practice appropriate levels of environmental stewardship, equivalent to the standards applied elsewhere in the city.

2. Program Elements

a) Policy

To strive for uses that produce a high number of quality jobs, but not to defer development of viable industries in the business park with lower employment densities.

b) Initiatives

Forge a new relationship with the Port of Seattle to pursue mutually-beneficial economic objectives. Agree to goals that balance the objectives of both Port and City.

Support civic and political activities to speed the funding and construction of the 509 freeway extensions.

c) Tasks

Negotiate and execute the Interlocal Agreement, to include the following:

- Agreement on jurisdictional authority.



- A schedule of milestones and timeline for completing critical tasks.
- Agreement on general site plan parameters, including density, height, bulk and property setbacks.
- Identification of permitted uses.
- SEPA review, documentation and approval.
- A street vacation methodology.
- Resolution of park and open space set-aside requirements.

Amend the Business Park zoning codes to allow the agreed-upon uses and site planning parameters.

Review and approve a revised Port master plan.

Amend the Des Moines Creek Technology Park EIS as needed.

d) Zoning Changes

The necessary zoning changes will result from the negotiated interlocal agreement and site planning discussions.

Objective 3: Encourage residential development to stimulate single-family home ownership and support a vibrant downtown community.

Despite its convenient location, natural attributes and favorable housing economics, Des Moines has seen very little new residential development over the past ten years. This appears to be due to a shortage of available residential land, and a zoning code that restricts the housing types that are favored by the current marketplace. A residential market overview, prepared by the O'Connor Consulting Group, is provided in Section 3.

A. Pacific Ridge Residential Programs

The City has invested significantly in the planning and documentation of the Pacific Ridge Neighborhood Plan. Unfortunately, the vision is more ambitious than the market can support, and the effect has been to stifle



rather than promote the redevelopment of the district. These plans should not be discarded, instead they should be reviewed and adjusted to the extent that the City wants to move toward more immediate development in the Pacific Ridge district.

1. Program Goals

- Encourage home ownership and new residential construction in the Pacific Ridge neighborhood.
- Create a positive zoning environment for the redevelopment of the large trailer park parcels in the district.
- Achieve the highest residential densities that the market will allow, to accommodate population growth within the city and to reflect the goals established in the King County Growth Management plan.

2. Program Elements

a) Policy

The policies articulated in the Pacific Ridge Neighborhood Plan remain valid.

b) Initiatives

Develop a work plan and public involvement process to review the Pacific Ridge Neighborhood Improvement Plan and adjust the plan to reflect current market realities.

Conduct a developer workshop to solicit recommendations to encourage higher-density, ownership housing.

Continue crime prevention programs and initiatives targeting the transient hotels.

Put in place zoning and building regulations that are market-based, to stimulate investment in the district.



c) Tasks

Debate the appropriate vision for the Pacific Ridge community within City Council.

Consider hiring a housing market consultant to evaluate the market in detail and determine the appropriate housing types, unit sizes and price points for Pacific Ridge and other Des Moines neighborhoods. The study would be at a greater level of detail than could be performed under this Economic Development scope of work.

d) Zoning Changes

Consider allowing single family home construction in the district. Prohibiting new single-family homes pushes the neighborhood towards rental apartments and does not change the basic character of the neighborhood.

Allow construction of townhouse and medium-density, for-sale housing types in the district.

Reduce the minimum height requirement to 24'. Maintain the maximum height allowance at 120', although it is unlikely that any buildings over 65' will be constructed in the next ten years.

Allow the 120' height to apply to apartments as well as condominiums.

Eliminate the structured parking requirements for buildings with more than ten units. A fairly high landscape requirement or limits on lot coverage can be maintained to discourage large parking lots, or other parking and site design requirements can be imposed.



B. Downtown Residential Programs

1. Program Goals

- To stimulate high-quality, high-density residential development in the downtown, which has easy pedestrian access to the City's two greatest assets - the waterfront and the Marine View Drive.
- To expand the customer base for MVD businesses, by increasing the population density within walking distance.
- To facilitate high-density housing in a defined area of the City, so that the balance of the community can remain single-family in character while responding to the GMA planning targets.
- To increase densities without creating unfair view blockage beyond that allowed under the current zoning.
- To provide the infrastructure to support significant population increases in the downtown in terms of utilities, transit, public safety and pedestrian environment.

2. Program Elements

a) Policy

Consider the downtown as a pedestrian-oriented environment, applying the urban design elements appropriate for such a neighborhood.

Consolidate commercial activity on Marine View Drive, effectively making Sixth and Seventh Avenues primarily residential in character.

Support upper-story residential uses in mixed-use buildings, particularly on Marine View Drive.



Require that new developments provide sufficient parking within the project, but utilize on-street parking as a resource that is considered in the analysis.

b) Initiatives

Evaluate changes to the zoning and building codes to stimulate residential development. The three areas of greatest potential are to increase permitted building heights, reduce parking requirements and selectively eliminate ground-floor commercial requirements.

Re-think the downtown parking strategies, consider public parking lots for commercial use and on-street parking for residential guests and visitors.

Lobby Metro and Sound Transit for greater public transit service and connections. Improve bus service directly to downtown Seattle and Tacoma or to Sound Transit light rail stations.

To the extent the improvements are not universally adequate, **make the sidewalk environment a high priority.** This includes paving, pedestrian crossings, paving transitions, lighting, amenities such as landscaping, benches and weather protection.

Improve the pedestrian connections between the downtown and the marina floor. Connect downtown to the bike trail and walking trail systems.

Consider finding an alternate location for boat storage facilities outside of the downtown. Change the zoning in the new location to facilitate the move. Work with the Yacht Club and marine services firms to consolidate boat service facilities somewhere practical and convenient, but not on Sixth and Seventh.



c) Tasks

Engage a design firm to undertake a view corridor study of the downtown, to evaluate the impact of potential zoning changes. The work can be done using the “Sketch-up” software program, and should be completed for under \$10,000. See the “Height Study Memorandum” in Section 4.

Study mixed-use economics, using the Yee and Stegin properties as examples. Conceptual plans and financial analysis is attached in Section 6. Work with the property owners to determine whether zoning changes or city incentives might be enough to spur development of these sites.

d) Zoning Changes

Consider changes to the maximum height allowance for downtown buildings. Based on simple view corridor analysis, attached in Section 6, it appears it would be possible to increase building heights by ten feet to 45', in the areas from the mid-block alley between Marine View Drive and Seventh to the mid-block alley between Seventh and Sixth, without intruding into the view blockage areas already permitted.

Consider reducing the parking requirements for multi-family properties from 2.2 per unit to 1.5 or lower. The letter attached in Section 6 reviews parking requirements in other similar jurisdictions.

Eliminate the requirement for ground floor commercial space in buildings fronting on Seventh and Sixth. Allow single purpose residential buildings in this area. Other design criteria to create an attractive ground floor and sidewalk presence might be imposed.



C. Single Family Residential Programs

1. Program Goals

- Allow for higher neighborhood densities without altering the basic single-family character of the residential neighborhoods.
- Create more options for housing types within residential districts.
- Encourage affordable solutions for home ownership options within the community.

2. Program Elements

a) Policy

A residential housing vision and policies should be determined through community discussion and Council debate. This was done for Pacific Ridge; a less formal process could be undertaken for other neighborhoods.

b) Initiatives

Engage in City Council debate and resolve whether additional population in the community is a positive economic benefit for the city. Determine whether the focus should be on retirees, families and/or young professionals, and ensure the housing types that they prefer are available in the community and encouraged by zoning and building regulations. See the Residential Memorandum in Section 4 for additional information.

c) Tasks

Investigate higher-density home ownership project models, such as townhouse developments, clustered housing and cottage housing models.



Review special zoning and code provisions that support these building types. Shoreline and Kirkland both have special zoning sections that apply to some of these project types. Talk to developers that specialize in these products. Start with www.cottagecompany.com.

Identify neighborhoods with vacant land, or under-utilized properties such as old rental properties or trailer parks. Target these areas for rezoning to higher residential densities.

Evaluate accessory dwelling units as part of this broader residential analysis.

d) Zoning Changes

Rezone some residential areas to zoning that allows for between eight to ten units per acre.

Specifically allow townhouse and cottage housing development within these districts. Write new code to regulate these building types.

