VISION AND STRATEGIES

DOWNTOWN MONTESANO PLAN

CROSSROADS OF THE OLYMPIC PENINSULA
Downtown Montesano will be the social, civic and commercial heart of the city—a place where residents, young and old come to shop at a variety of stores and linger with friends. A destination where visitors will come to walk the historic streets and stay to enjoy the inviting atmosphere. A mix of residential, commercial and government uses create a sense of community and bring heightened activity to the downtown while demonstrating sustainable development patterns through the efficient use of public and private resources.

Downtown Plan Steering Committee
April 15, 2010
Acknowledgements

The vision in this document would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of numerous volunteers and elected officials. Their role and contributions to this project are gratefully acknowledged.

CITY OF MONTESANO
Hon. Ron Schillinger, Mayor

CITY COUNCIL
Chris Hutchings
Rocky Howard
Pat Herrington
Doug Streeter
Lyle Powell
Rich Klinger

PLANNING COMMISSION
Ken Albert
Candi Bachtell
Laura Keehan
Doris Torkelson
Will Foster

CITY STAFF
Mike Winczewicz, Community Development Director
Debbie Wisdom, Deputy Clerk

STEERING COMMITTEE
Will Foster, Chair
Laura Keehan
Ken Albert
Candi Bachtell
Josh Loveall
Dan Olsen
Ron Schillinger, Mayor
Doris Torkelson
Mike Winczewicz

CREÄ AFFILIATES TEAM
Anindita Mitra, Project Manager
Adam Brown, Planner
Fenty Muliadi, Architect Intern
Mary Thompson, Historic Preservation
Adriana Thomson, GIS
Hough Beck and Baird, Landscape Architects
Mayfly Engineering, Civil Engineering
# CONTENTS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significance of Location</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Plan?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging the Public</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Strengths and Challenges</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document Contents</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 2. THE DOWNTOWN PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Limits</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Districts and Land Use</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Square District</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street District</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic District</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Entertainment District</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Mixed Use District</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateway District</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form and Height</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic District</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space and Water Quality</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulation</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streetscape</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stormwater</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewer</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid Waste Collection</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 3. GOALS AND PRINCIPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G1. Emphasize Connection to Natural Setting</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G2. Celebrate Downtown’s Unique Characteristics</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G3. Enhance Walkability</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G5. Strengthen Community</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G6. Promote the Montesano Identity</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G7. Develop Tourism</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G8. Develop Facilities that Increase Activities in Downtown</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G9. Steadily Transform</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G10. Develop Sustainably</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 4. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short Term Strategies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Term Strategies</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Term Strategies</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX A: HISTORIC PRESERVATION

APPENDIX B: LIST OF PLANTS

APPENDIX C: POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Obligation Bonds</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue Bonds</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Improvement Districts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loans</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. **Introduction**

The City of Montesano retained CREÄ Affiliates, LLC in spring 2009 to facilitate the development of a plan for Downtown Montesano that will bring new life and energy to the town’s popular center. Developing Downtown Montesano into a vibrant and thriving destination requires a plan that is detailed and focused, and most importantly, a plan that embodies the community’s vision for the area.

In setting out to do so, this Downtown Plan is based on an extensive public outreach effort that used a variety of tools, techniques and a number of forums to seek input, and routinely publish plan and project updates.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF LOCATION**

Montesano lies along the northern slopes of the Chehalis Valley, at the confluence of the Chehalis with the Wynoochee River. Montesano means “Healthy Mountain.” Around 30 miles west of the State Capital, Olympia, it lies on Interstate 12, an important route that connects the Capital to a maritime commercial hub, Aberdeen. Montesano is about 10 miles east of Aberdeen and is the County Seat for Grays Harbor.

Interstate 12 is an important route that connects the valley to Interstate 101. US 101 stretches along the coast to the Olympic Mountains in the north and the beach communities in the Long Beach Peninsula and the Oregon coast towards the south. In Montesano, State Route 107 provides a popular shortcut connection to US101 heading south.

**WHY PLAN?**

The purpose of the Downtown Plan is to capture the passion and commitment of Montesano residents and businesses and to transform that into actions that will preserve and enhance the character of their historic downtown. By setting aspirations, the Plan is also a tool for advocacy and building momentum for greater community involvement in securing the downtown’s future.

It sets the foundation for this process by articulating a clear vision that emerged from broad community participation and input.

The Plan can be used by elected officials and the community for decisions related to public infrastructure investment (such as roads, parks and utilities), and in the review of new private development proposals. The document presents a coherent strategy for the gradual evolution of the downtown area, and is thus a guide for developers and designers seeking to get involved in Montesano’s future by participating in renovation and development projects in downtown.

Furthermore, this Plan and its Supplementary Report is a record of community conditions. By highlighting issues, such as the sensitivity of the area’s ecological surroundings and population trends, it provides the foundation for policies that respond to these concerns. As a result, the Plan will become an important resource for policy and regulatory updates. Any Comprehensive Plan update should reflect the community sentiments and goals summed up in this report. It will be important to ensure that the City’s Zoning Code is consistent with the vision described in the Downtown Plan. Zoning requirements and any associated Design Guidelines are tools to ensure that the vision is realized as future developments and public investments occur.
This document also demonstrates how principles of sustainable development can be systematically woven into the review of socio-economic and ecological conditions for their long-term impacts. As such, this plan offers a prototype for the integration of sustainable development principles into traditional land use planning and urban design strategies.

The Downtown Plan is not a redevelopment plan. Rather it shows how an area can continue to evolve slowly and gracefully by building on its strengths, focusing on quality building and public spaces, and leveraging local skills and resources.

Lastly, this document provides a Phased Implementation Strategy for carrying the vision forward. This Plan is therefore, in many ways a living document and should be reviewed and revised on a periodic basis (around 5 years, or sooner if necessary).

All over the US, small towns are witnessing a resurgence as the population group referred to as Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) are moving back to small towns after their retirement. Connected by sophisticated telecommunications technologies, Montesano too, can begin to plan for these residents who are bringing fresh energy, vigor and resources into small towns across the country.

**ENGAGING THE PUBLIC**

The manner in which Downtown Montesano’s planning was managed offers a method that other small towns with limited resources can pursue for revitalizing their center cities. The planning process was designed around extensive and continuous community input. A variety of low-budget tools were deployed to reach out to community members and seek their participation.

Community feedback was sought through a number of public meetings, an online survey, press releases to local papers, city newsletter article, and an electronic social media site (registered 94 members in May 2010). In addition, CREÄ conducted one-on-one interviews with local stakeholders.

The project Steering Committee provided consistent leadership for the duration of the planning process. Consisting of the Mayor, Planning Commission and local business owners, it also included a few members of the Council and the Community Development Director. On occasions, Steering Committee meeting presentations were made virtually. Steering Committee members also advocated for the plan and relayed news and updates of the planning process to local groups, such as the Chamber, Library, local clubs and church groups, among others.

Prior to adoption, the document will be reviewed by the Planning Commission, City Council and the Mayor.

**DOWNTOWN STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES**

The planning for downtown can build on the many positive attributes and features that the area boasts; its excellent location and visibility, abundant and clean water resources, low cost of living and strong community. Montesano has retained its charm and small town scale despite new development at its outskirts. Furthermore, lying on the southern slopes, most properties are afforded extraordinary views of the Valley and Hills. The City has benefitted from stable leadership and a number of volunteer groups that help
keep civic engagement alive. There is an obvious pride in community and a strong sense of camaraderie.

However, in order for this plan to be successfully implemented the City will need to determine how it will raise the much needed funds to implement many of the necessary capital improvements and build new public facilities and amenities. With a small staff and limited revenue, the City may need to rework its budget allocations and determine new revenue sources to realize the improvements envisioned in this document.

In these circumstances, volunteers are an invaluable, yet a rapidly diminishing resource in Montesano. With the younger population moving out after high school due to a lack of adequate jobs or higher education opportunities, this traditional source for volunteers is small. Creating jobs and investment opportunities will not only help broaden the business mix in downtown, but improve local sales tax revenues and offer more incentives for the young generation to remain and build a family in Montesano. In the meantime, the senior retired community would be a great group to attract to Montesano. Not only is this group active in local events and activities, they bring abundant time commitment and moderate resources to help jump start programs such as this Downtown Plan Implementation.

DOCUMENT CONTENTS

This document is organized into five Chapters. Chapter 2 outlines the Vision Statement and describes how the boundary limits were defined for this plan. It also includes a relatively detailed narration of the many elements of the Downtown Plan as they relate to the vision. Chapter 3 contains the Goals and Principles that are the foundation of the Downtown Plan. Each Principle is supported by a list of Actions. Chapter 4 prioritizes the strategies from Chapter 3 into a Phased Implementation Strategy.
2. The Downtown Plan

VISION

The Vision for Downtown Montesano sets a foundation for revitalization of the area. In order to achieve the vision, the city needs a clear plan supported by explicit direction for policy, programs and capital investment. This direction is illustrated in the following details of the Downtown Plan. In the next Chapter, the key goals and supporting principles are described. Detailed actions tied to each principle show how the vision might be realized in the plan.

“Downtown Montesano will be the social, civic and commercial heart of the city - a place where residents, young and old, come to shop at a variety of stores and linger with friends. A destination where visitors come to walk the historic streets and stay to enjoy the inviting atmosphere.

A mix of residential, commercial and government uses create a sense of community and bring heightened activity to the downtown while demonstrating sustainable development patterns through the efficient use of public and private resources”

Downtown Steering Committee

April 2010
DOWNTOWN LIMITS

Montesano shops and businesses once stretched for several blocks on either side of Main Street in continuous rows of buildings. Now only fragments of the earlier bustling retail environment remains. To re-establish the former vibrancy of the downtown area, redevelopment efforts should be focused into a concentrated segment of the center city.

The initial study area for the downtown plan extended from Spruce Avenue to Highway 12 and from a half block west of 4th Street to a half block east of Academy. A walk through of downtown Montesano with the Steering Committee, followed by a workshop and discussions yielded two alternative delineations of downtown limits.

To finalize the ideal limits of Downtown Montesano the following characteristics of successful downtowns were considered:

- Location and Access
- Walkable distances
- Adequate properties to redevelop/re-imagine
- Good mix of uses
- Large parcels to attract new investment and vigor
- Infrastructure availability
- Manageable terrain
- Variety of buildings and streets
- Clear destination

Downtown Montesano is ideally located immediately off the exit from Highway 12.

The final area encompasses about 62 acres (or 0.1 square miles) of a variety of building types and streets. It includes the main civic anchors in the City including the Courthouse, post office, city hall, transit center and the library. It includes some homes as well as large areas for potential redevelopment.

The downtown area includes Fleet Park as well as vacant property that could potentially be converted into another park. Overall, the size of downtown appears manageable and compact, yet with a few underdeveloped or vacant properties that could accommodate new developments. Some of these parcels that are along the railroad are visible from Highway 12. Their character sets the tone for visitors.

Lastly, the downtown area encompasses the remnants of intact historical commercial buildings surrounding Fleet Park and along Marcy Avenue.
2-2: Preferred Downtown Limits
DISTRICTS AND LAND USE

The Downtown Montesano limits established through this project encompasses about 62 acres. By walking through the area, many different districts become evident. The character of these districts can be strengthened through unique public improvements as well as tailored design guidelines. In doing so, the development of the downtown area can be orchestrated to accommodate diverse uses and building types. Making the buildings appear more cohesive in each district will further enrich the experience of the downtown area.

The intention of the districts is not to segregate buildings by use, but to suggest a dominant character and scale for each district. For instance, retail and housing are encouraged in each of the districts in downtown, even though it is apparent that retail is a predominant use in the Main Street District and housing is predominantly in the Residential Mixed Use District.

Recognizing the rich pattern of unique districts that are woven together by distinct streetscapes is a fundamental concept of this plan. These districts are discussed below.

2-3: Preferred Downtown Districts
TOWN SQUARE DISTRICT

Fleet Park, a treasured public amenity, anchors the Town Square District. This District emphasizes the central nature of the Park in the development of the downtown area, and the importance of the buildings and streets surrounding the park in the area’s overall character and vitality.

Fleet Park is often used during large community gatherings and other events. Surrounding the park are historic buildings along Marcy and Pioneer Avenues.

Facade: New developments in the area should be geared largely towards infill with some opportunities for redevelopment such that the architecture of new buildings are carefully modulated to “fill in the gaps.”

Use: As studies of other parks have shown, for a park’s continued success, buildings surrounding the park must have windows and doors that overlook the public space to ensure continuous activity throughout the day, and hopefully at night as well. Therefore, while it is likely that the upper storeys will house offices, interest in residential use should also be supported.

Height: For the Park’s continued success, the surrounding buildings should exhibit a minimum height of 16-17 feet, and horizontal modulation of up to 20-25 feet in length. Facing the park, façades should be continuous and highly articulate. To respect the historic importance of this district and its role in framing the view of the Courthouse along First Street, it is suggested that the height of the district be limited to 30 feet north of Marcy Avenue (and 40 feet elsewhere in the district).

Alleys: The district has a complete network of alleys that should be maintained as service and parking access as well as utility corridors. Alleys that spill onto the Park should be realigned so as to not affect the continuity of façades along the Park.

Lighting: Opportunities should be seized to either underground or relocate power lines to the alleys. This district could be lit with historic pedestrian lights that are about 12-16 feet tall and can accommodate banners.

Parking: Since this district is small and focussed on building cohesion, parking requirements should be minimized and not required onsite. Should property owners request onsite parking, these should be located along the alley. Public parking can be provided in vacant lots on Fleet Street and supplemented with parking that serves the Civic District during non-office hours.

Art: The low volume of slow traffic along most streets in the district allow for public art on the asphalt. The four corners of the park could be enlivened with public art painted onto the asphalt. Over time, this could be made permanent with pavers.

Walkability: Largely focussed on pedestrians, this district should emphasize crosswalks, initially with paint and over time with paver patterns. Other techniques involve gradually introducing awnings over the sidewalks, improving lighting, introducing seating and encouraging artwork and continuing the tradition of historic markers.

2-4: Views towards and around Fleet Park
2-6: Town Square Design Strategies

- Develop a drive-through plaza north of Fleet Park
- Preserve alley access for service, vehicles, and parking
- As buildings are renovated or redeveloped, reinstate continuous street edge to face the park and emphasize corners
- Create bulbouts along Marcy and Pioneer avenues for safer pedestrian crossing
- Consider removing the asphalt to expose the historic brick layer
- Highlight crosswalks with paint or pavers
- Introduce historic pedestrian lighting
- Create interest through neighborhood art at key intersections
- Convert first street to two-way travel and allow parking along the northbound lane only
- Realign alley access away from Fleet Park
MAIN STREET DISTRICT

The Main Street District is the celebrated historic commercial stretch of downtown Montesano. Once lined with two to three storied richly articulated buildings with awnings, little remains of its earlier glory.

Facade: The Main Street District includes a concentration of retail and banking establishments. While some of the historic structures have retained their upper floors, most contemporary structures are single story. It is recommended that new development help re-establish the taller structures and maintain a minimum of 26’ tall façades. The lower 14 feet of this façade would be richly articulated and designed for ample stretches of glazing to create ground level pedestrian interest. The character of this district can be greatly enhanced with no side setback requirements, creating a continuous street frontage.

Use: While upper storey residential should be allowed anywhere in downtown, this district may not be the best candidate, due to its proximity to the highway and the high volume of traffic along Pioneer Avenue and Main Street. Upper floors could instead be used for office space or other non-residential uses. This is another district where flex commercial spaces should be mandated for the street level.

Height: It is recommended that this district have a minimum height mandate of 26 feet for any new building with a maximum height of 40 feet. This will allow a ground floor height of 14 feet and two additional floors of varying heights, depending on their use.

Alleys: The pedestrian quality of Main Street depends on continued alley access to adjacent establishments. Along Pioneer Avenue, businesses do not have access to an alley. Buildings between Marcy and Pioneer Avenues should be designed for “double frontage,” such that both the back and front of the building are designed well to frame the street. South of Pioneer, given the depth of the block, it is possible that new development reintroduces an interior alley or service courtyard. Delivery, recycling and solid waste services to these establishments should be planned for as buildings are renovated or redeveloped.

Lighting: Representing the core of the retail area in downtown, this district should be well lit and generally festive in appearance. The tradition of holiday lights greatly lends to this ambience. Lighting, in general should contribute to the perception of safety in the downtown area and not create occurrences of deep shadow and contrasting well-lit areas.

Parking: This district should minimize the amount of paved parking surfaces. The width of streets should be maximized for on-street
Occasionally larger properties could be permitted a row of onsite parking across the rear of properties (along an alley) or longitudinally across the length of the properties. Maintaining a variety of time limits for on-street parking will ensure that the more frequented destinations will have parking available. Back-in parking should be assessed along Main Street for its potential for safe exit and entry into vehicles.

Art: It is envisioned that Main Street will capture the visitor’s attention, not only for its improved appearance but also with a landmark focal point created at its intersection with Broadway Avenue. This is seen as a large sculptural element that is lit up at night to catch the attention of those on the Highway 12 as well as those entering or exiting Highway 107. With widened sidewalks along Main Street, there should be many opportunities for integrating art; in the pavement, on poles or as a part of the lighting strategy.

Walkability: Main Street south of Wynoochee benefitted from some recent streetscape improvements. North of Wynoochee, it is recommended that the streetscape be redone to include large trees and a pedestrian-friendly environment. The intention is to occasionally close through-traffic along a section of Main Street to host large community events. To accommodate the large crowds that these events might draw, it is recommended that Main Street north of Pioneer Avenue be redesigned for rolled curbs or even curbless sidewalks. The intersection of Main Street with Pioneer Avenue is one of the busiest pedestrian crossings. As pedestrian traffic increases at this intersection, steps should be taken to maintain safe crossing, including repainting the crosswalks, maintaining the corner curb ramps, bulblouts, and lighting.
CIVIC DISTRICT

The Civic District encompasses the public buildings along Broadway Avenue and Main Street. This district is in very good condition, with a number of well kept historic residences and public structures. It is likely that over time this district will see a number of buildings converted into support services for the Courthouse and City Hall. In the meantime, it remains a well-kept mix of residential and public uses.

Facade: Most buildings in this district are recessed from the street. This appearance should be maintained as new structures are built. With an eclectic mix of architectural styles, new buildings will have to elegantly respond to the rich architecture of historic homes and the contrasting appearance of the newer public buildings.

Use: As traffic to these buildings increase, the area may also experience a growth in the restaurants and office support businesses. These should be allowed, though their appearance and site planning should be carefully reviewed to maintain the attractive appearance of this district.

Height: The Civic District lies along the top edge of the Downtown area. The public buildings in this area are fairly tall. Since the properties in this district are large, there may be an inclination to build taller structures. It is recommended that new buildings do not exceed the prominent parapet height of the Courthouse Building (estimated at 35’ height). Furthermore, properties a half block on either side of First Street should be lowered to protect the views of the Courthouse along First Avenue.

Alleys: North of Broadway the properties have no alleys. The alleys south of Broadway provide an important corridor for parking access and utility relocation and should be maintained.

Lighting: Until its after hour retail presence begins to dominate, this district should be treated primarily as a residential area with low noise and lighting levels.

Parking: This area is well serviced by large parking lots and ample on-street parking. As the need for parking grows, efforts should be made to manage employee parking in a manner that frees up on-street spaces and parking lot stalls for retail and public sector visitors. New retail and office buildings should accommodate any onsite parking towards the rear of buildings. There is a need for better signage to direct visitors to parking lots in this district.

Art: The intersection of Main with Broadway offers an extraordinary opportunity for civic scale public art. Located within a roundabout, this sculpture should incorporate night lighting that is carefully controlled to act as a beacon down Main Street, but designed to protect glare into residences along Broadway.

Walkability: This area is very walkable with good quality sidewalks and street trees. Its pedestrian qualities can be enhanced with occasional public seating and trash/recycling receptacles. Crosswalks need to be highlighted with either paint or pavers. Some directional signage would be useful in directing visitors to destinations of local interest, such as the Historic Museum, public restrooms, visitors center etc.
2-8: Urban design strategies for the Civic District
ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT

Community members expressed a desire for after hour activities and entertainment in the downtown area. These could be a movie hall, a public stage and theater, a community center, pubs, more restaurants and so on.

Wynoochee Avenue has several large yet underutilized buildings that lend themselves to building programs that require high ceilings, such as stages and theaters. This area also has little traffic and could very well accommodate the surge traffic that occurs with large events. Furthermore, its proximity to the railroad does not make it attractive for housing. These few blocks are ideally suited for redevelopment into a vibrant after-hours and weekend district. Visibility from the highways will attract traffic headed to and from the coast to this district.

East of Main, it is likely that several existing uses might decide to relocate to other areas of town that are less pedestrian friendly.

By Sylvia Street, there are several vacant properties and a large city-owned property south of the tracks. This area could be designed into a potential railroad stop. Sylvia Street could be connected across the tracks to the Gateway District, so that the area can handle the volume of traffic typically projected for a small transit station.

Façade: Given the larger buildings anticipated for this area, this area also has a suggested minimum height of 26 feet. While specialized theaters may require additional height, it is recommended that most new buildings maintain a 40-foot height limit. To help activate the street, it is recommended that appurtenances such as upper storey balconies, signs, and terraces be allowed. These will lend interest to the facades by creating shadows and other variations.

Use: Ground floor uses could vary from theater and entertainment related uses to pubs, restaurants and so on. These should be generally transparent to allow for continual supervision of street activities from inside.

Height: While it can be expected that sections of new performance arts buildings may exceed the desired 40 foot height limit, it is suggested that in general, buildings should fall within this limit. This will help retain the view of the valley and hills from Broadway Avenue.

Alleys: West of Main, the alleys provide valuable service access to buildings. However, should larger performance buildings require larger footprints, it is likely that some of these alleys will be closed. In such cases, alternate utility alignments and access to service areas should be planned for.

Lighting: Given that this district will be active primarily after hours, lighting will be important to maintain the perceptions of safety. Innovative lighting use should be permitted in the district, including backlit signs, colorful signs, and so on.

Parking: This area should provide both daytime as well as after hour...
parking. Should the train station at Sylvia Street ever be realized, some properties in this area can be used for long term parking.

Several properties east of Main Street could be developed to accommodate short term RV parking.

All parking lots should be designed to reduce and treat runoff while shading parked cars with trees. In some instances, parking structures are being designed to accommodate solar panels on their roofs, allowing parking lot owners to earn income through electricity generation as well.

Art: This district could accommodate art in a number of forms; street artists, prose in the landscape, video art, art sculptures in the street or wrapped around buildings. This L-shaped corner offers an opportunity for locating art, or it could be configured into an attractively landscaped roundabout or otherwise enhanced with lighting.

Walkability: This district must provide safe pedestrian areas since most activities will be at a distance from parking lots. Buildings along the railroad must be designed to afford continuous visibility to assure pedestrian and personal safety in that area. Further east, pedestrian flow can be improved if Wynoochee Avenue is physically connected to Pioneer Avenue.

2-10. Images of arts, theater and tourist districts from across the country.
2-11: Design Strategies for the Arts and Entertainment District
RESIDENTIAL MIXED USE DISTRICT

Within the eastern stretches of the Downtown area, several large 2-3 storey apartment buildings lend a distinct residential feel. Over time, a few churches and single family homes have been converted to commercial use, primarily offices.

More recent higher density residential projects have been designed as suburban prototypes that contribute little to a pedestrian environment. While it is desired that new higher density residential developments occur in this area, clear design guidelines need to ensure that they are designed to be more urban and responsive to the street environment.

A new park would help build community in this area, thus making it safer and more attractive to new developers.

Facade: As new buildings are introduced, efforts should be made to reduce the impacts of the scale of large apartment buildings. Introducing vertical modulation, creating variety in the roof lines, introducing windows proportionate to the facade, can all lend a more human and varied scale to larger residential structures. While it is not recommended that the sidewalk be redeveloped into a hardscaped dominated environment, new buildings could be designed such that there is better visibility from the apartments to the street. Furthermore, the entrances into the buildings could be made more prominent along the street.

Use: While the trend to convert buildings to non-residential purposes will continue, there is no obvious need to require non-residential uses on the ground floor. Ground floor residential units, must be designed to allow for privacy and safety.

Height: This area also has a recommended height limit of 40 feet. However, north of Broadway, some of the historic buildings are fairly tall. Should these need to be renovated in a manner that will extend their height beyond the 40 foot limit, this should be allowed.

Alleys: This area is rich with alley access. These allow for services and utilities to be managed from the alleys, leaving the main streets free of the visual clutter of overhead light poles and garbage disposal areas. The alleys should be seen as important pedestrian connections as well. Therefore buildings edges that front the
alleys should be designed to allow for visibility of the alley and reflect other principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.

**Lighting**: Lighting needs to be managed carefully in this district due to its predominant residential nature. Sidewalks and building entries need to be well lit. Fixtures designed to meet “dark sky” criteria can minimize the diffusion of light into the residential units.

**Parking**: It is recommended that a central public lot and on-street parking will count towards the parking requirements for these buildings (thus reducing the cost of development), but it is likely that some onsite parking will also have to be provided. These parking lots should be accessed via the alley to retain the primary streets for pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

**Art**: Envisioned as a quiet residential district, public art is not seen as an integral part of new development or streetscape improvement.

**Walkability**: Even today, this district makes for a pleasant walk. Rich landscapes, complimented with well kept sidewalks make this district walkable. Lighting, well marked crosswalks and seating can further improve the walking experience.
GATEWAY DISTRICT

The Gateway District is important for many of its characteristics that are distinct from other areas of downtown. It is symbolically a gateway to the city, since beyond this stretch is the Chehalis River basin.

This area needs to be improved in a manner that enhances the connection to downtown, while at the same time introducing distinct directional signage and warm welcoming signs that resonate with the rich natural setting. Part of this area is prone to flooding, which may limit development opportunities.

Facade: The appearance of buildings in this district should be attractive. While it is unlikely that this area will be pedestrian in nature, good quality materials and construction quality will help create a positive gateway experience.

Use: Cradled between the highway and the railroad, noise will be a significant issue for new developments. While a motel exists today, it is likely that uses in the future will largely consist of those with minimal view and sound requirements. Nevertheless new buildings should be designed to lessen the surrounding sound impacts.

Height: A height limit of 30’ will allow an appropriate intensity of development.

Alleys: Given the narrow width of the district, it is unlikely that it will accommodate alleys.

Lighting: The area lighting should be controlled to highlight key features, such as the gateway sculpture and sign, the railroad tracks and any pedestrian space.

Parking: On either side of the tracks there is ample land. It is ideally situated for large parking, for instance for recreational vehicles.

With First Street and Sylvia Street extended to this area, this area can afford accessible and safe seasonal parking during busy tourist seasons.

Art: Given that the wetlands under the freeway are an important element of the local ecology, it is recommended that the natural features of the wetlands be restored and perhaps a boardwalk and interpretive trail introduced along with tasteful art to give visitors a sense of the local ecology.

Walkability: This area does not appear very safe for walking. To improve the walkability of the area, the sidewalks along highway 107 should be widened and a vegetative buffer created to protect pedestrians. Furthermore, pedestrian crossings over the railroad tracks at First Street and Sylvia Street will improve the connectivity of this area to the rest of downtown, but should be designed for safety.

2-15: The area by the highway presents an exciting opportunity to create a gateway experience into downtown.
2-16: Urban design strategies for the Gateway District

- Future train stop is accessible from the transit center and highway
- One-way connection from Main Street can alleviate future traffic
- Clean up and plant attractive landscaping along the railroad
- Improve railroad crossing
- Improve pedestrian crossing
- New public works building
- Create a new gateway park
- Create new gateway sign
- Delineate Brumfield Avenue
- An excellent location for large public art
- Improve pedestrian and bike connection to the river
FORM AND HEIGHT

Downtown Montesano rises gradually with the terrain above the Chehalis Valley. Future development should respect and reflect this natural progression of building heights.

Buildings along Broadway are noteworthy in that they are taller than other buildings nearby and their quality suggests that the area is a plausible nominee for a Historic District designation. Many public buildings line Broadway, thus providing a natural northern edge to Downtown.

Largely historic and well preserved, the Plan recognizes the value of allowing these properties to remain and perhaps be enhanced in the future. The recommended height for this district reflects the general height and bulk of the many historic residences along Broadway.

The County Courthouse is a spectacular example of Romanesque Revival architecture. It is nearly 23 meters or 70 feet tall. To preserve the striking views towards the Courthouse along First Street, it is recommended that development be limited to a 30 feet height limit as shown in the diagram below.

The rest of downtown could be built up to 40’ with the exception of any regulations that are established with a successful Historic Designation of any section of Downtown.

To restrain development in the floodplains south of the railroad tracks, that area is recommended for a height limit of around 30 feet.

DENSITY

Proposed density for downtown is not linked to its height limits. Density is better dictated by the availability and capacity of public infrastructure, such as water, sewage disposal and stormwater drainage. Density of development for residential areas is described in terms of dwelling units per acre. For commercial development it is generally defined in terms of Floor Area Ratio.

2-17: Distribution of Minimum and Maximum Height Limits
HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Within Downtown Montesano, much of the historic fabric has been gradually eroded. Some concentration of historic structures remains along Marcy Avenue and around Fleet Park. Structures along Marcy have the following noteworthy characteristics:

- Masonry Construction
- Stucco
- Cornices
- 1-2 Stories
- Storefronts – large ground floor windows
- Flush to the street
- Larger buildings on corner lots

As design guidelines are prepared for the Main Street and Town Square Districts, they will need to reflect these traditional attributes.

Since these buildings are few and far between, establishing a commercial historic district in Downtown may be unlikely.

On the other hand, a concentration of historic homes around Broadway, while beyond downtown, could be a draw for tourists. There is a strong likelihood of establishing a historic residential district along that stretch of the street.
ECONOMY

Montesano seeks to grow at a modest rate, allowing for the gradual and thoughtful integration of new development, businesses and housing into the downtown area. The concern that new development is growing faster outside the downtown limits must be addressed by thoughtful zoning updates that will attract developers and entrepreneurs to invest and invigorate the downtown.

As new developments occur, it will be important to ensure that the architecture and site use blends well into the existing fabric of the downtown grid system and builds on the vision and values embedded in this plan.

It appears that some of the immediate needs should address a pent-up demand for local services for residents within and surrounding Montesano. While the downtown has a healthy customer base within a 5-mile radius, allowing more residences in downtown, such as upper storey residential units, row houses or town houses will increase the available customer base and persuade more businesses to invest within the downtown area. Having more people live in downtown will also improve the perceived safety of the area.

It appears that to maintain a healthy flow of tourists to downtown, there is a need for an administrative and marketing specialist who could organize and advertise local events, sales etc. This person could also be the one stop shop for developers and other entrepreneurs desiring to invest in the city.

In the meantime, the city could take advantage of free social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook and others to establish an attractive internet and wireless presence, and maintain a loyal clientele.

To guide the chance visitor, a well located and visible Visitor Center or booth, with maps and lists of local businesses, destinations and events can ensure that their stay in downtown is prolonged and memorable. Improved directional signage and interpretive signs that would support self guided tours are other ways to securing a visitor’s interest. The city’s high quality historical buildings are another economic draw. Their location needs to be better advertised and occasional tours could be organized of the interior of the homes.

Lastly, this plan points to a number of beautification opportunities in downtown. From clean up of properties and railroad right of way by the off-ramp, to façade improvement programs, Montesano can build on its reputation as an emerging yet distinct market opportunity in Grays Harbor County.

NEW MASTER PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

There are opportunities for master plan developments along the underdeveloped properties by the railroad. Envisioned as the Arts and Entertainment District, this area could provide a much needed well designed entertainment and recreational destination. Some early ideas could be a drive-in or outdoor movie theater during the summer months. Repurposed industrial buildings could be converted to an indoor stage or a puppet theater; along with ice skating, or roller skating rinks. For activities to engage young adults, some of this area can be redesigned into mini-golf parks, basketball or tennis courts, or perhaps a skateboard park.

Till the investment is secured to purchase and redevelop the properties, the city could look into short-term rental arrangements and provide low-cost recreational alternatives in the interim. As properties become available, the city could also purchase a few for long term parking, particularly near the transit center. This could include design considerations required for Recreational Vehicle parking.

HOUSING

While affordable housing will be important in supporting employees of downtown businesses, it will most likely occur beyond the downtown limits. Housing is relatively inexpensive in Montesano. New housing or re-fabrication of upper storey floors to housing use, on the other hand, will be less affordable. As interest in new row housing, apartments and town homes grow, design standards should be updated to ensure ground floor privacy, low lighting levels, designing for noise, and parking standards. The city can support more residential development by offsetting the cost of visitor parking through shared parking lots. New developers could also be drawn to a new park in the Residential Mixed Use District.
OPEN SPACE AND WATER QUALITY

Montesano’s most unique draw is its scenic natural environs. As it develops, it must protect and enhance its physical, visual as well as functional connections to its natural environment.

VIEWS

The low slung buildings and a street grid that create unimpeded views towards the Chehalis River create a spectacular setting for the downtown area.

CONNECT WITH NATURE

The Downtown Plan ties into this natural setting by maintaining existing connections while suggesting new ways to connect, for instance through new bike and walking trails.

Sylvia Creek is within a short bike ride of downtown and offer the potential for new trails to directly connect the urban area to the rich forested hilltops around Lake Sylvia. Leveraging this connection with nature, while providing proximity to urban amenities is a strategy used by other successful downtown areas such as Leavenworth, Long Beach and Winthrop.

REDUCE IMPACT ON WETLANDS

As Downtown develops, it can set up policies to gradually reduce its impacts on the sensitive ecology of the Chehalis River. The wetlands are important elements of a larger fragile ecosystem. By cleaning up underground pollution sources, as well as making sure that stormwater runoff from downtown streets is not only reduced with new development but also cleaned before it drains into the wetlands by the river,
OPEN SPACE

Fleet Park provides a critical open space in downtown. There are vacant properties in the Mixed Residential District that could be converted into a much needed park and open space to serve the residents and businesses in that area of downtown. This park, in contrast to Fleet Park should be designed for the needs of downtown residents, who most likely will represent either young adults or retired households. An off-leash area, places to read, sit, enjoy a light picnic or perhaps a public chess set are possible amenities that this park might provide. Some parks are equipped with active outdoor gym for use by adults and the elderly.

Montesano has a rich history based on open space preservation and stewardship dating back to its origins as the First Tree Farm in the United States. This ethic towards natural space preservation is a model for other cities in the region and needs to be celebrated and expanded if possible.
CIRCULATION

PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

In order to become a safe and walkable Downtown, Montesano will need to understand and incorporate key pedestrian destinations (existing and planned) and incorporate the predicted flow of pedestrian traffic between these businesses in its streetscape design, with particular attention to pedestrian curb ramps, crosswalk demarcation, lighting, wayfinding signs and landscaping.

The concept for a pedestrian plan is represented below.

Figure 2-23: Proposed pedestrian network
BIKE NETWORK

Montesano has an avid bicycling group in town. In addition, numerous cross-country bicyclists head to the Pacific Coast through Montesano. Biking is also popular among local children who freely bike to downtown as necessary.

Attracting the urban as well as the outdoor biking community to town is a relatively easy economic development strategy to implement. However, like all strategies, it will require physical improvements that will enhance this experience. An important consideration will have to be made to steer the bicycle enthusiasts onto streets that reduce their conflict with pedestrian and traffic flow of the resident population. Amenities that bikers seek are well marked signs that describe distances to known destinations, location of public restrooms, and ample means to secure their bikes as they use downtown businesses.

A tentative bicycle network is represented in the drawing below.

2-24: Tentative bicycle network in downtown
FUTURE CITY TRANSIT NETWORK

Currently there is limited County transit service to Aberdeen and Olympia. The transit Center is well designed and centrally located in downtown.

A freight railroad also connects these three towns, yet there is no stop in Montesano. It is possible that at some date in the future, private or government interests might see an opportunity in providing the occasional passenger train connections between these towns and south Puget Sound. Initially as an entertaining experience, it could eventually evolve into a commuter route. Recent experience with the Woodinville Wine train in the Puget Sound area is an example of how this transition might occur.

When the Montesano population reaches a point that it can support transit, the City may establish a local transit route as indicated in the map. What is important to remember as the Downtown continues to evolve are the recommended locations for bus stops. Should any redevelopment occur around these possible locations shown below, it would be important to have new developments respond to this possible future use along their building fronts.

PARKING PLAN

Like other small town areas across the country, parking remains a perceived issue that relates less to the actual quantity of available spaces and more to the management of existing capacity.

Access to parking is as important as availability of parking. Wayfinding signs that direct visitors to large parking lots ease their experience of the town and allow them to park easily while spending more of their time walking and exploring the area.

The City has developed a timed parking system that limits the time allowed for parking near “in and out” destinations such as banks while allowing for extended hours beyond. Near the outskirts of downtown there is no time limit for parking.

This is an effective system that allows for ample parking spaces where needed.

While the City could locate public parking lots at critical locations, it is suggested that these be located beyond key pedestrian districts such as Town Square or Main Street.

Instead placing these parking lots in areas

2-25: Tentative transit network
of heaviest visitor traffic, such as near the Courthouse and the proposed Arts and Entertainment District may accommodate the need while having limited impact on the physical environment of these districts.

There is a latent demand for Recreational Vehicle parking that can be accommodated near the railroad tracks. These large lots have the capacity to host these large vehicles safely with limited impact on the aesthetics or congestion of the downtown area.

All parking lots should be designed for pedestrian safety as well as aesthetics. Furthermore, the pedestrian plan should be coordinated with the parking plan to ensure that people walking to and from their cars have a pleasant experience. Included in this experience are four season protections such as awnings or overhangs to provide pedestrians some respite from the rain or snow. If also tied into planned locations for benches, the experience of walking a block or two to a parking spot is made very pleasant.

The Parking Plan needs to ensure that adequate consideration has been given to the access of those physically challenged and to the convenience and operation of delivery trucks.

### STREETSCAPE

Some say streets are where life occurs. They provide the setting in which the visitor gets her first taste of Montesano.

The quality and uniqueness of a street environment are critical factors in making a city memorable.

Therefore the design of a downtown’s streets must be done with an eye to timelessness, walkability and safety.

In standardizing streetscapes across the country, each city loses out on the opportunity to create unique environments that feed local businesses and draw visitors back time and again. Perhaps one of the extreme examples of the success of a street capital project is Lombard Street in San Francisco. Taking advantage of an extremely steep incline the street is redesigned into a unique zig-zag pattern that has not only appreciated the value of adjoining properties but also attracts millions of visitors each year.

Montesano’s streets will be gradually upgraded for safety and quality factors. As they are upgraded, each street discussed in this section can be redesigned to establish a new frame of reference for adjoining businesses and pedestrians.

Streets can be designed less for fast moving free flowing through traffic and more for creating enjoyable walkable environments that are known to increase shopping as well as the quality of leisure within a community.
GATEWAYS

Downtown Montesano has a major gateway along Highway 107 by the Highway off and on-ramps. This area is in a floodplain zone and is sparsely developed. It is in need of immediate attention and significant physical improvements since it has the potential to draw visitors downtown from the Highway 107 shortcut.

Much of this area is governed by regulations related to railroad right-of-way as well as conditions that govern the right-of-way along interstate highway off-ramps.

However, the City owns the land immediately north and south of the off-ramp, a portion of which could be used to create a gateway to Montesano. Additional ideas proposed for this property include restoring its functions and appearance as a natural wetland and providing natural trails and signage to allow visitors the opportunity to experience the native ecology of the Chehalis Basin.

Private property west of Main Street could also participate in this historic gesture and a portion of the property right of way could be used to create an appropriate gateway experience into Montesano.

2-27: View from west-bound highway off-ramp in Montesano

2-28: Gateway Design, Location Unknown

2-29: Gateway Design, Location Unknown

2-30: Concept for gateway in Montesano. Courtesy Street Lundgren and Foster Architects
Pioneer Avenue East is the Old Highway through Montesano. It handles the highest amount of traffic of all Downtown Streets and continues to play an important regional role connecting adjoining areas such as the Wynoochee Valley, to downtown. It is also an important cross-country bicycle route.

Pioneer Avenue has a narrow width of 55 feet. Therefore there is limited opportunity to widen the pedestrian area to accommodate more seating or landscaping.

In this situation, many cities are setting a new “Build to Line” that requires new buildings to be set back a specific distance from the public right of way. This public space is then being landscaped by property owners to urban standards that include continuous paving that blends with the sidewalk, signs, café tables and perhaps general seating for tourists.

Given the current volume of traffic it currently handles and the likely increase in traffic volumes in the future, it would be prudent to maintain a continuous paved area of 40 feet. This would allow for 2 travel lanes in the future in both directions. In the meantime, on-street parking helps moderate traffic flow and also activates the sidewalks, while providing parking close to popular destinations.

Pedestrian crossings across Pioneer Avenue should be striped boldly to engineer the safety of pedestrians crossing the busy street. Bulbouts at intersection will further protect pedestrians by increasing visibility and minimizing crosswalk lengths. Streetlighting should brighten these crosswalks and the street names to ease way finding and reduce accidents.

Given its popularity with bicyclists, it is important that travel lanes are marked as sharrows (see photo below) to warn drivers of potential bicyclists on the street.

When local transit is provided within the city, Pioneer Avenue is an excellent candidate for a transit route. As such, this plan describes potential transit stops so that future development and streetscape improvements can accommodate this future function.

2-31: Looking east on Pioneer Avenue by Fleet Park

2-32: Intersection of Main Street with Pioneer Avenue

2-33: Photo of a sharrow; a lane shared with bicycles
**MAIN STREET**

Main Street lives up to its name within the Downtown’s street network. It marks the first experience of every visitor to Montesano. Gradually sloping upwards towards the City Forest, its northern views are characteristically framed by the rich natural tapestry beyond. Towards the south, the background of the hills provides a delightful setting.

Main Street is about 80 feet wide. North of Pioneer its expanse is dominated by wide asphalt and angled parking. South of Pioneer, it has seen some street upgrades and landscaping.

Local sentiment sees Main Street as an opportunity to capture the interest of the occasional visitor by creating an environment that can be activated by planned events.

While there is interest in retaining the angled parking, this could be restriped for back in parking. This form of angled parking allows for safe movement from the car to the trunk for loading and unloading, limiting the number of people who may use the right-of-way rather than the sidewalks for this purpose. This also allows cars better visibility when emerging from the parking spaces.

Currently sparse, the width of the street allows for trees with generous canopies. The design of the streetscape should focus on high pedestrian traffic and event circulation. In such situations, curbless sidewalks offer the safest alternative.

Traffic can be occasionally limited with plastic or metal temporary bollards and signs.

2-35: View south along Main Street
Clockwise from left:
2-36: Pedestrian street in Burlington, Vermont
2-37: Another view of pedestrian street in Vermont
2-38: Wide sidewalk in Denver, Colorado. Courtesy D. Kaspersky
2-39: Sidewalk in Vancouver, British Columbia
2-40: Main Street Streetscape
MARCY AVENUE

A walk through site reconnaissance shows that Marcy Avenue holds the most number of historically relevant commercial buildings in Downtown. It presents the greatest potential to become a richly landscaped, pedestrian-dominated streetscape.

There is very little traffic flow along the street currently. Additionally, the street extends for only 7 blocks and terminates at 4th Street towards the west and at Church Street at its eastern edge. Marcy connects important anchors such as Fleet Park, the Transit Center and several banks.

This street can be redesigned into a curbless environment with generous seating areas and street furniture. Adjacent to Fleet Park the street can be reconfigured to appear contiguous to the Park, along the lines of a traditional public plaza.

If feasible, the City might consider removing the asphalt surface to expose the historic brick pavers that lie underneath portions of the street. This layer would need to be carefully restored to its original character. While expensive, such street improvements have lent to memorable street experiences that can be directly attributed to local economic development and tourist attraction.

With the projected slow moving traffic, the generous walking strips can be activated with local vendors, community information posts, seating walls and so on.

2-41: View of Marcy Avenue

2-42: Left, clockwise from top: Pedestrian friendly streets in Cambridge, UK; Santa Monica, California; Denver, Colorado; and Santa Barbara, California.

2-43: Cross section of Marcy Avenue
**FIRST STREET**

First Street connects three important districts in Downtown; the Arts and Entertainment District to the Town Square and the Civic Districts.

With the County Courthouse at its northern terminus, First Street is an important north-south street in Downtown. To honor the spectacular viewshed created by the building and to avoid competing with the building’s architecture the streetscape design for First Street should be modest and low scale.

To further enhance the view, any streetscape enhancement should include undergrounding utilities. Lighting at night should continue to draw one’s attention to the Courthouse building. Streetlighting along First should be pedestrian level. Additional ground level lighting could highlight the rain gardens.

It is lined with buildings with varying architectural styles and age. New buildings along First Street should be carefully modulated to build a richly articulated façade and character on either side of the street, to compensate for the proposed low-lying and sparse landscape.

To leverage First Street’s location, the street should be converted back to a two-way street. Visitor traffic to the Courthouse should be directed up First Avenue in order to experience the grand vista it offers.

Rain gardens that capture street runoff and filter it in continuous runlets or a series of connected waterfalls will lend much interest and add an element of play in the street environment.
WYNOOCHEE AVENUE

Wynoochee Avenue is located near the highway. As such it presents the first impression of Montesano to a visitor or tourist. Improving conditions and appearance of Wynoochee Avenue is therefore fairly important.

Wynoochee is a short street and offers attractive viewsheds that can be improved over time. It terminates on the west at Pioneer. Its eastern end can be redeveloped and redesigned into an attractive roundabout with a focal point sculpture or landscape.

Some of the light industrial businesses that remain along Wynoochee most likely will gradually chose to relocate to an area with fewer pedestrians and bicyclists.

The blocks surrounding Wynoochee have the potential to evolve over time into an attractive central spine for a new Arts and Entertainment District.

Underground stormwater pipes along Wynoochee play an important role in the quality of stormwater runoff from the downtown area. These sections can be daylighted and new bioswales can treat the stormwater before it is released into the wetlands. These bioswales can become attractive elements of the Wynoochee Avenue streetscape.

From left
2-50: Street in Vancouver, BC
2-49: Green treatment of large parking lots. Courtesy

2-48: An alternative street cross section for Wynoochee Avenue

2-47: Looking east along Wynoochee Avenue from its intersection with Sylvia Avenue
2-51: Introducing bioswales along Wynoochee Avenue
STORMWATER

The City is initiating a citywide stormwater study. Results and recommendations that emerge from that study will guide new development in downtown. While stormwater quantity and quality in downtown has not yet raised ecological issues or economic impacts, as future development occurs further upland, it will likely contribute to an increase in runoff quantity. Since downtown lies close to the outfalls, it plays an important role in the location of critical infrastructure that could include natural treatment of stormwater or storage facilities to control the volume and intensity of flow during a storm event. This plan provides a solution for natural treatment of stormwater along Wynoochee. New downtown development could be encouraged to incorporate onsite solutions to reducing stormwater runoff including green roofs, permeable pavements, onsite bioswales and other low-impact development solutions, including rainwater harvesting techniques.

ENERGY

Grays Harbor Public Utility District (PUD) has in place a number of cash back programs for green retrofits and new construction. These include rebates for energy efficient water heaters and windows among others. By making this information available to all new development, there is the possibility of gradually building Montesano’s reputation as a green town. Green development is a hot commodity, particularly among the Baby Boomers population (ages 55+). Other ways to build a green reputation is by the city collectively opting to purchase only carbon free energy from the PUD. New energy sources such as district heating (from biomass or waste generated from forest slash) could be gradually put in place, with the anticipated reconstruction of Highway 107 and other downtown streets.

Newer technologies may make generating electricity feasible from water flowing over the spillway of the dam at Lake Sylvia.

WATER

While Montesano has abundant deep water wells for drinking water purposes, over the years several of these have become contaminated. Efforts should continue to maintain the high quality of drinking water. The threat of groundwater contamination through the leakage of toxins from old gasoline tanks must be contained. A number of funding sources exist that can be used to assist property owners in their site clean up. These should be aggressively pursued to allow new development as well as redevelopment to occur in downtown.

While water availability is an advantage in Montesano, efforts should be made to ensure new development is water wise. Low flow faucets and showerheads, jet water closets with smaller cisterns can greatly reduce the need for water. Timed irrigation networks and efficient dishwashers and clothes washer can further reduce the need to use treated water for non-potable purposes.

SEWER

Waste water treatment plants are being used for a number of waste recovery programs. Starting from district radiant heating and hot water plants to the generation of gas to power vehicles, sewer plants are central to energy strategies in Europe.

SOLID WASTE COLLECTION

All of downtown is served by a solid waste collection service. Currently the same provider collects solid waste as well as recyclables. Compost is not separated from traditional waste. Incentives to recycle more and reduce landfill waste can lead the downtown area to greater sustainability and reduced landfill dump fees. The city may want to investigate the environmental and economic impacts/benefits of incinerating its waste, and potentially converting that heat to energy.

Several alleys are tight for waste collection trucks to pass through. It is recommended that new development accommodates at least 14-foot clearance for garbage collection trucks in the alleys. In parking lots, garbage containers should be well concealed. There may be opportunities to coordinate with and use the metal recycling facility at the Satsop Development Park and biomass facility at Shelton.
3. Goals and Principles

The following goals were developed with the help of the Downtown Steering Committee. Ranging from regional connections to local economic development efforts, these goals illustrate the broad spectrum of interventions that are necessary to achieve the City’s vision for its Downtown.

G1. Emphasize Connection to Natural Setting

Montesano is ideally located within the basins of the Chehalis and Wynoochee Rivers along the Chehalis Valley hills in southwest Washington. Small farms and stands of timber surround the city.

Goal: This plan will offer bold solutions that will strengthen the relationship between the heart of the city and the surrounding natural landscape.

Principles

- Connect downtown with its surrounding natural destinations

  Action: Develop a wayfinding signage system to destinations beyond Downtown

  Action: Develop a citywide bicycle plan that ties the downtown to critical regional bike destinations and routes.

  Action: Strengthen pedestrian connections to Lake Sylvia, and Swiss Meadows and Rivers

  Action: Develop public access to wetland under freeway overpass, and further south to the Chehalis River banks

- Where possible restore and replenish the natural features that are unique to Montesano such as its wetlands (with Ospreys and other visiting birds) and mountain creeks (with beaver dams)

  Action: Under City leadership identify funding sources and secure grants, donations and other funds to enhance the wetlands under the freeway.

  Action: Develop interpretive trails and signage that will engage and enlighten visitors to Montesano’s unique ecology and natural setting.

- Recreate and retain native natural features as feasible for public education and engagement.

  Action: Adopt the list of adaptive and drought tolerant plantings recommended in this document

- Maintain view of the hills and the Chehalis Valley along north-south streets.

  Action: Establish policies that protect views to the Chehalis River from Fleet, First, Main, River and Sylvia Streets.

  Action: Adopt standards that maintain lower building heights around the railroad tracks to avoid blocking views of the river from Marcy and Broadway Avenues.

- Support regional efforts to recognize and preserve city’s heritage land uses such as small scale timber, agriculture and open space

3-1. View down Main Street 2009
G2. CELEBRATE DOWNTOWN’S UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

Much remains of Downtown Montesano’s original armature: small walkable blocks, a grid street pattern, a historic park and many historic buildings.

**Goal:** This plan will maintain and amplify the positive attributes of Montesano’s downtown in a manner that promotes contemporary lifestyles and culture.

**Principles**

- Promote building rehabilitation and historic preservation
  
  **Action:** Adopt the IEBC. This will provide the flexibility necessary to incrementally improve historic buildings in downtown without requiring full life safety measures.

  **Action:** Develop Downtown Design Standards. Standards are used to guide both rehabilitation and new construction to create a visually compatible downtown area.

  **Action:** Establish one or two Historic Districts within and around downtown.

- Encourage development that is sympathetic to the existing character and scale of downtown Montesano

  **Action:** Revise the zoning code and develop design guidelines that maintain the scale and character of downtown Montesano.

  **Action:** Review and revise zoning parameters for the Major Public Use, General Commercial, Moderate Density Residential and the High Density Residential Districts for consistency with the character desired for these districts as described in this document.

  **Action:** Adopt an overlay district with unique design guidelines for each district.

  **Action:** Review and revise standards for sidewalks and streets for recommendations in this report that are tailored to each street.

  **Action:** Develop a Map and Booklet that speaks to these district delineations and alignments.

  - Publish the map as stand-alone directional maps, posted on store windows, business bulletin board or at the Visitors Booth/Center.

  **Action:** Support these districts with banners or with district names inlaid in the sidewalk or as street signs.

- Maintain the small walkable grid pattern with new development

  **Action:** North of Wyonohee Avenue discourage developments that block either alleys or road access.

  **Action:** Adopt an ordinance that requires alley realignment at both ends for development that blocks alleys that lead to Fleet Park.

  **Action:** As a part of a comprehensive street improvement plan, incorporate landscape design standards for streets described in this report.

3-2. Looking west at Main Street and Mary Avenue (2009) at a glimpse of the elegant architecture that once marked downtown development.
Support biking, walking and transit over increased motorization of downtown streets and paving of valuable commercial properties for parking lots.

Action: Consider clearly marking bike lanes or sharrows (shared bike and car lanes) in the downtown area.

Action: Provide bike racks.

- The city may seek funds for the initial bike racks at critical locations.
- Revise code to require all developments above a certain size to provide bike racks at predetermined locations.

Action: Prior to streets completely deteriorating, consider having them redesigned for landscapes described in this section.

- Seek upcoming federal and State grants for improving the non-motorized capacity of each street (bike lanes and sidewalks, lighting, signage etc).

- Build support among the local Chamber and business owners to establish a Local Improvement District to set up a financing mechanism for streetscape improvements.
G3. ENHANCE WALKABILITY

Small downtowns have maintained their character by preserving the qualities that make them accessible, walkable and pedestrian friendly. Highly walkable environments promote a healthy lifestyle. They use less land for parking since more trips are made by foot or bicycle. Therefore more land is available for buildings and public amenities.

Goal: Montesano will reinforce all those characteristics that reduce the need for driving within downtown, and create an environment that makes walking safe and pleasurable.

Principles

- The design of the pedestrian space must create safe and attractive walking environments.
  
  Action: Develop a comprehensive pedestrian circulation plan tied to the parking and transit strategies for the Downtown.
  
  Action: Plant appropriate street trees and provide street furniture
  
  Action: Extend street tree and street furniture installations throughout Downtown
  
  Action: Introduce pedestrian scale lighting that minimizes shadows
  
  Action: As much as possible, underground overhead electrical and other utilities to reduce visual clutter along a street

- Encourage building improvements that enhance the pedestrian experience
  
  Action: Introduce lighting over major crosswalks

  Action: Paint crosswalks with bold stripes in the interim.

  Action: Utilize decorative pavers, painted asphalt or colored concrete to highlight crosswalks.

  Action: Review and revise local zoning codes for recommended setbacks along select streets

  Action: Review vending laws to encourage more vending and local street performances, particularly in city parks and plazas

  Action: As much as possible, underground overhead electrical and other utilities to reduce visual clutter along a street

  Action: Discourage drive-up facilities that create many curb cuts and frequent conflict between pedestrians and vehicles

  Action: Discourage fast flowing traffic through downtown to increase pedestrian safety and reduce injuries.

  Action: Adopt a Street Improvement Plan that calls for the repaving of selected streets with pavers as a traffic calming technique

  Action: Remove asphalt to expose the historic brick (as in downtown Seattle) or repave selected street surfaces with pavers as a traffic calming technique. Marcy Avenue, with its modest traffic flow, is an ideal

  Action: Work with property and business owners to retrofit existing buildings with appropriate awnings or marquees to create sheltered walkways on all pedestrian streets

3-4. Walkable downtown Winthrop, WA
candidate for this type of street improvement

Action: Adopt a Street Improvement Plan that calls for removing the curbs and creating curb less streets with continuous pavement

Action: For certain streets, remove the curbs and create curb less streets with continuous pavement. These streets could be closed using temporary bollards for special occasions. Main Street is an excellent candidate for this type of street treatment, north of Pioneer Avenue.

Action: Ensure that vegetation on improved streets is attractive and luscious to create a calming effect on traffic flow

Action: As streets are refurbished, consider extending the sidewalks and narrowing the road width to discourage fast driving. Create bulb outs at intersections to increase safety by reducing the length of asphalt crossing for pedestrians.

Action: Introduce a roundabout at Main and Broadway. In addition to being a beacon at night, this will help slow traffic.

- Promote appropriately scaled signage oriented to pedestrians

Action: Provide directional signage to city and regional destinations and points of interest

Action: Place streetlights such that street signs are visible at night, or mount lights over building mounted street signs for visibility

3-6. Directional signs in Sequim, Washington
G4. MAINTAIN PARKING ACCESS

There is a shortage of parking downtown in appropriate locations during peak usage. Front-in diagonal parking along Main Street creates visibility problems and invites accidents. Traffic moves too fast in densely parked areas. Numerous dangerous situations discourage walking downtown.

Goal: Improvements to downtown will simultaneously promote pedestrian activity and safety, alter traffic patterns and reallocate parking to the perimeter of the downtown core.

Principles

- Provide parking opportunities for the varied uses and activities throughout the week in downtown

Action: Explore alternate parking solutions on Main Street

Action: Provide on-street handicapped parking

Action: Maintain short-term parking for delivery and utility vehicles at regular intervals

Action: Provide parking spaces for recharging stations for electric vehicles

Action: Create additional parking spaces in small, scattered lots at the perimeter of the downtown core

- As properties become available along the perimeters of downtown, the City should purchase and revamp select ones for long term parking to serve business owners and employees

Action: Create shared parking lots (publicly or privately operated) to reduce onsite parking requirements and the cost to development

- Revise codes to align parking requirements to the vision in this document

Action: Remove onsite parking requirements for properties in Main Street and Town Square districts

Action: Develop standards for onsite parking, to encourage alley access and reduce curb cuts along streets

Action: Develop site standards for parking lots to reduce their storm water runoff impacts and increase shade

Action: Create and market RV parking facilities