



# Neighborhood Centers Strategy Report

Land Use and Environment  
Committee

April 25, 2024

# Intent of this Briefing

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- Present the report – not seeking formal approval of the document
- Receive feedback from Committee Members on possible work priorities for options identified in the report
- Determine next steps



# Why plan for neighborhoods?

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- Neighborhood centers are small walk, bike, and transit-friendly business clusters within neighborhoods that serve the day-to-day retail service needs of residents and foster community interaction
- City has had a policy of encouraging development of centers for over 20 years, but centers have not developed as envisioned

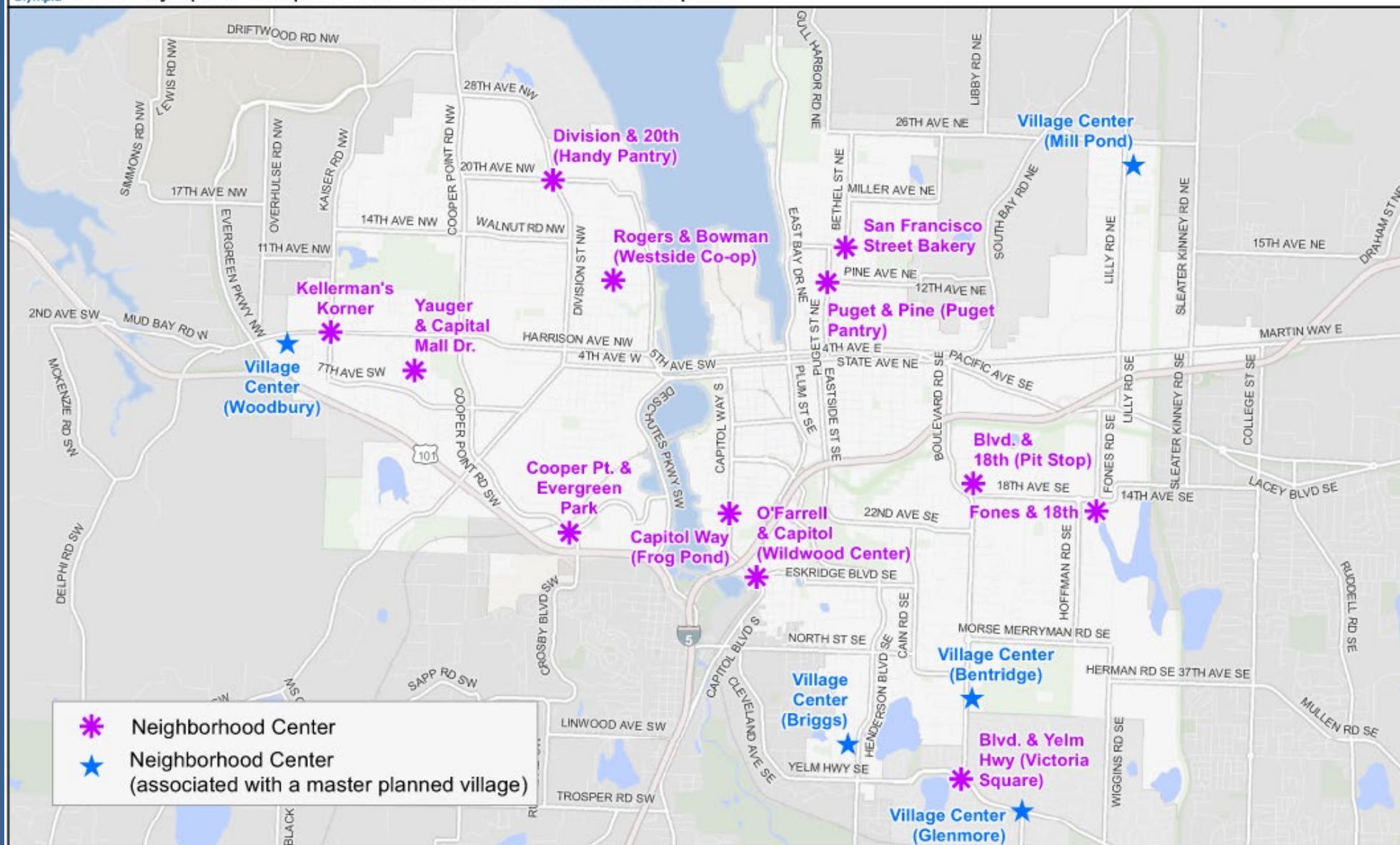
# Report Scope of Work

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- Evaluate current status of existing centers – neighborhood characteristics, market conditions
- Analyze challenges and opportunities for each center
- Public engagement – survey, popups, workshop all informed the recommendations finalized in the strategies report
- Evaluate policy/regulatory framework
- Identify near and long-term actions



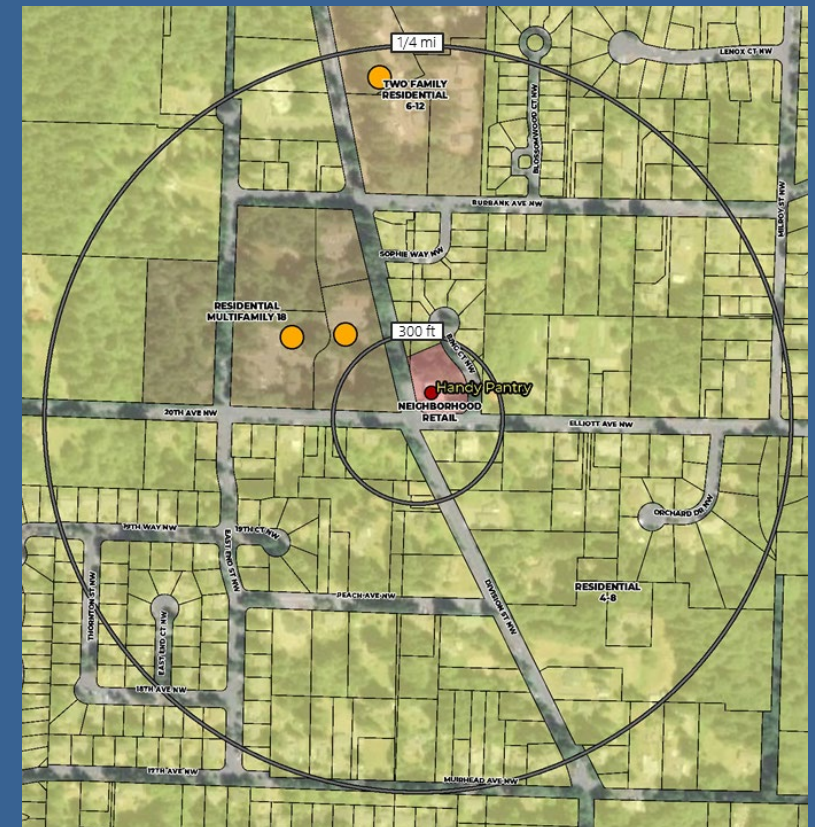
From Olympia's Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map



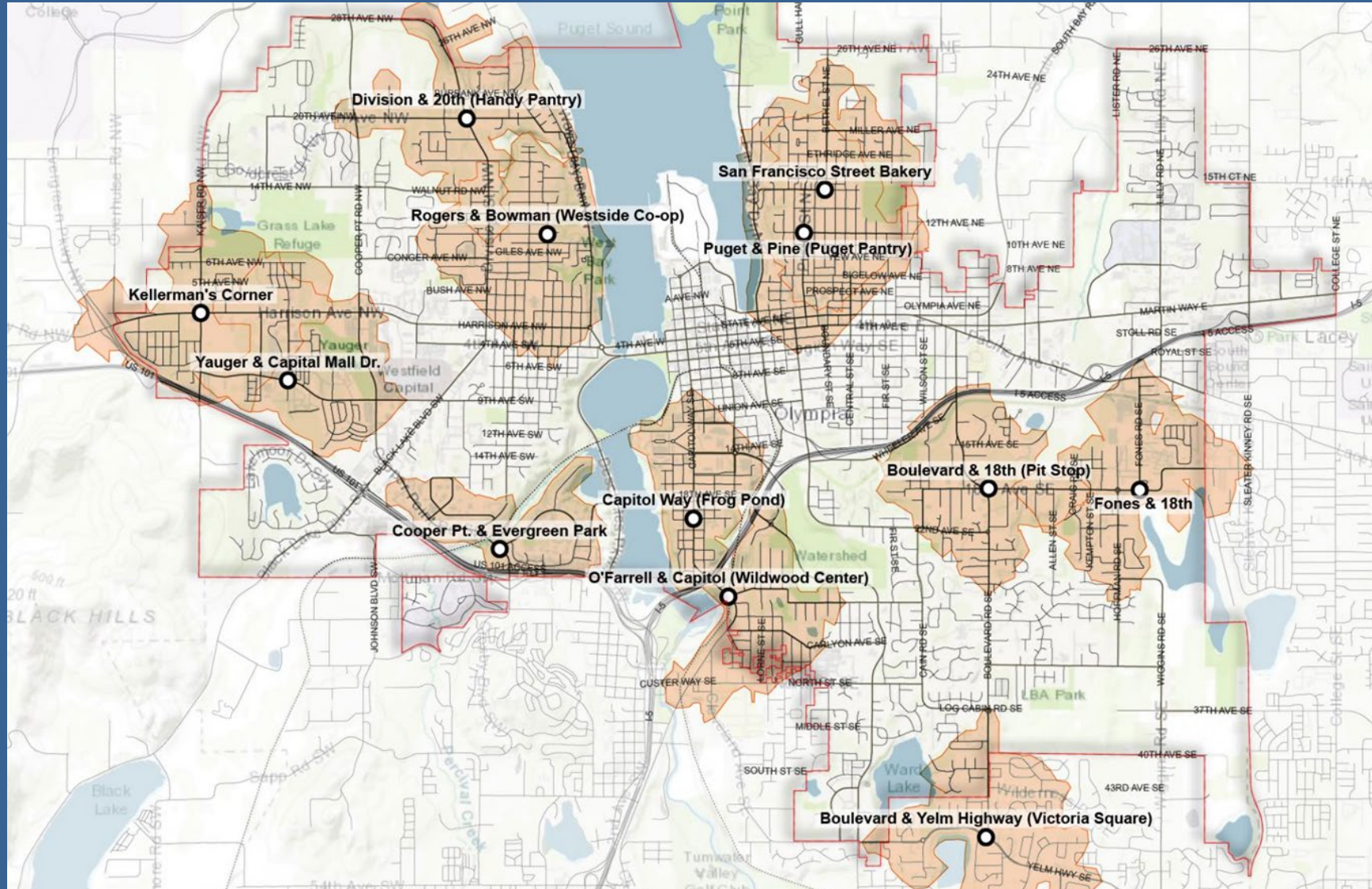


# Scale of Neighborhood Centers

- One block (300' +/-)
- 5-minute walk (1/4 mile)
- Primary pedestrian market area = 1/2 mile
- Some centers depend on wider market area and are accessed by auto



# 15-Minute Neighborhood



# Key Findings and Recommendations

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- Successful neighborhood center businesses rely on customers from across the city (and beyond)
- Financial feasibility and land availability are the main obstacles to new development
- Permit small commercial uses (SCUs) in residential zones within approximately 300 feet and/or update the Neighborhood Retail zone and other regulations to remove barriers to neighborhood commercial use
- Provide economic development programs: matching grants, ROW allowances, support the Transportation Master Plan



# Comprehensive Plan

Section 4 of the report covers policy recommendations and updates to the comprehensive plan.

- Land Use & Environment Chapter Goal and Policies revisions. Example:  
PL21.3: Support housing, a food store, a café or bakery, and a neighborhood park or civic green at all neighborhood centers. Allow churches, schools, and convenience businesses and services that cater primarily to neighborhood residents. Prohibit auto-oriented uses such as car sales, and those businesses that do not benefit from pedestrian traffic. Vary the specific size and composition of such centers for balance with surrounding uses. ~~Where practical, focus commercial uses on civic greens or parks.~~ Limit the size of commercial uses to the scale and demand for services of the surrounding existing or emerging neighborhood.
- Provides recommendations for Neighborhood Center Criteria. Example: Transit Access - A transit stop with 12-hour service.
- Evaluation of whether to retain or remove current center designations based on current performance; acknowledging public feedback that other areas may benefit from small commercial uses even without full Neighborhood Center designation.

# Zoning Code

Section 5 provides recommendations to Olympia Municipal Code to increase flexibility.

- Create new permissible use type Small Commercial Uses (SCUs) in Chapter 18.04 – Residential Districts. Narrowly defined and limited in space, could feasibly be accomplished without a Comprehensive Plan amendment.
- Rezone individual parcels within designated centers to Neighborhood Retail; modify NR zoning development requirements. Requires Comprehensive Plan amendment.
- Creation of a new overlay district is discussed by not recommended.
- Challenges posed by requirements in parking and landscaping chapters, as well as in Engineering Design and Development Standards (EDDS).

# Citywide Programs

Section 6 provides recommendations to support healthy businesses.

- Restoration and tenant improvement grants.
- Make permanent pandemic-era programs such as the Simplified Sidewalk program that allowed for ROW “streateries.”
- The City should consider prioritizing planned improvements – including roadway redesigns, roundabouts, crossings, and sidewalk and bikeway improvements – that would make neighborhood centers more friendly to multimodal users.

# Neighborhood Specific

Section 7 provides site-specific actions to enhance viability and better serve local neighborhood communities.

- Common theme of improving sidewalks and multi-modal transportation options.
- Site specific rezones and clean-up opportunities to spur development.
- Identifies for NC designation removal at Kellerman's Corner, Yauger & Capital Mall Drive, and Cooper Point Road locations.
- Additional sites are not currently meeting criteria but may have future potential; removal of NC designation would put businesses at risk of existing non-conformance if designation is removed.



# Next Steps

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- Strategies report is a guiding document – not specifically looking for adoption of the document
- Report provides guidance for prioritizing Neighborhood Center focused updates in the Olympia 2045 Update
- Outlines text amendments in Olympia Municipal Code that may reduce some barriers and result in more successful centers
- Provides examples of possible economic development opportunities

*What does the community and City Council want to focus on?*



# Questions?

Casey Schaufler, Associate Planner  
Community Planning and Development  
[cschaufl@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:cschaufl@ci.olympia.wa.us)



## APPENDIX

The following material is provided as reference information only and is not intended as part of the presentation.

# 2022 Low Density Neighborhood Achieved Density

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Zoning Type	Units (Address Points as Residence)	Acres	Achieved Density
R 1/5	33	36.26	0.91
R-4	33	21.83	1.51
R-4CB	22	118.97	0.18
RLI	1264	665.39	1.90
R 4-8	8733	3606.98	2.42
R 6-12	3836	1322.49	2.90
<u>Total</u>	13921	5771.92	2.41



# Neighborhood Center Briefings and Events

- September 16, 2021 – Land Use & Environment Committee
- January 10, 2022 – Olympia Planning Commission
- March 14, 2022 – Council of Neighborhood Associations
- April 15, 2022 – Thurston Chamber Business & Econ. Dev Committee
- July 13, 2022 – Virtual Open House
- July 16, 2022 – Neighborhood Pop-up Events
- July 18, 2022 – Olympia Planning Commission
- July 21, 2022 – Land Use & Environment Committee

- August 8, 2022 – Council of Neighborhood Associations
- August 12, 2022 – End of Engage Olympia online survey

## Upcoming Events:

- Olympia Planning Commission – May 6
- Virtual Open House – May 16 (tentative)
- City Council – May 21
- Possible brief with CNA – TBD