

# REVITALIZING URBAN TRANSIT CORRIDORS

## Strategic Thinking about Corridor Development

### RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE URBAN CORRIDORS TASK FORCE

#### BOLD MEASURES FOR A BOLD VISION

##### Strategies to Achieve the Thurston Region’s Urban Vision

Creating the kind of dynamic urban centers called for in local and regional plans is difficult, especially when that entails the retrofit of old highway arterials into people-oriented places. It takes more than “smart growth” policies to attract mixed-use redevelopment and infill investments. It takes a different way of thinking about growth, one in which growth is an asset to help achieve important community objectives.

Regional policy makers recommend a suite of measures to help jurisdictions nurture transformational growth along this region’s premier transit corridor, and to shape its form and location in priority districts. The recommended measures will not be easy or quick. Their success will take education, public support, and new partnerships.

**GOVERNMENT MUST BE A MORE EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTNER IF THIS REGION’S URBAN VISION IS TO BE REALIZED.**

The cornerstone of this package is a multi-jurisdictional, Corridor Development Partnership. This Corridor Partnership may redefine some roles of Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater in community development activities along the Martin Way/ 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue/ State Avenue/ Capitol Way/ Capitol Boulevard corridor. It augments traditional regulatory roles with tools better suited to market realities of urban infill and redevelopment in this region.

The time to act is now. The current economy provides a window of opportunity for jurisdictions to reassess their approach towards community development and become more strategic in realizing the goal of truly urban, walkable, people-oriented places to complement other lifestyle choices in the Thurston region.

#### ACHIEVING OUR URBAN VISION

Adopted land use and transportation plans envision the emergence of dynamic urban centers offering an array of “car-lite” lifestyle choices not currently available in Thurston County. This is an ambitious goal for a region our size. Achieving this takes more than vision and regulations. It takes proactive, strategic measures on the part of local governments, and new public/private partnerships. It requires new ways of thinking about the value of urban investments and development, and that takes political leadership and courage. It will take bold measures to make our urban vision real.

**SUMMARY OF MEASURES TO ACHIEVE URBAN VISION**Modest Measures

1. Property Inventory
  - a. Vacant commercial property statistics
  - b. Publicly-owned property statistics
2. Community Development 101
  - a. Public outreach effort
  - b. Engage development community
3. Land Use Analysis
  - a. Land-to-building value analysis
  - b. Economic capacity to support neighborhood business districts
4. ID Priority Investment Districts
5. Select Priority Districts for Further Focus

Moderate Measures

6. Strategic Investment Strategy
  - a. Critical infrastructure
  - b. Place-making needs
7. Refine Regulatory Tools
  - a. Form-based code
  - b. Planned action EIS
  - c. Streamline development process in corridor districts
8. Refine Impact Fee Strategy
  - a. Unincorporated area fees
  - b. Location-efficiency differentiation in fees
  - c. Dwelling unit size differentiation
9. Land Acquisition Strategy
  - a. Public-to-public land swap strategy
  - b. Public land aggregation strategy

## 10. Urban Growth Boundaries

- a. Evaluate restoration of short- and long-term boundaries

Mighty Measures

## 10. Pursue Legislative Agenda

- a. Identify and address regulatory barriers

## 11. Community Lending Pool

- a. Establish locally-determined pool with local lenders

## 12. Corridor Development

## Partnership

- a. Create multi-jurisdictional, public / private partnership to engage in proactive corridor development activities

This work was conducted by the Urban Corridors Task Force. The Task Force was a joint subcommittee of the Thurston Regional Planning Council and its Transportation Policy Board. Its mission was to establish an objective understanding of background conditions along the region's key urban corridors, identify and understand barriers to achieving adopted land use visions, and make recommendations for how to address those barriers. Task Force members looked at the relationship between transportation and land use in these corridors, and worked to understand the market factors that influence the viability of infill and redevelopment projects in this region. This phase of their work concluded in November 2011.

Urban Corridors Task Force

City of Lacey	Virgil Clarkson, Andy Ryder
City of Olympia	Stephen Buxbaum, Doug Mah
City of Tumwater	Pete Kmet (Chair)
Thurston County	Sandra Romero (Vice-Chair)
Intercity Transit	Ed Hildreth
North Thurston Public Schools	Mike Laverty, Chuck Namit
TPB Citizen Representatives	Mike Beehler, Jackie Barrett-Sharar
TPB Business Representatives	Doug DeForest, Renée Sunde

For detail on the recommended measures, see <http://www.trpc.org/regionalplanning/landuse/pages/uctf.aspx>

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