



Request For Proposals:

City of Sequim Downtown Plan

Submittal Deadline: July 2, 2010

The City of Sequim, having withstood the construction of the US 101 Bypass around the city in 1999 and an influx of national retail stores on the city's west end, is focusing on the preservation and enhancement of the community's heritage in the downtown core. Sequim's resident population is 5,715 (2009 - OFM) with an estimated additional 1,300 persons residing in the city, and approximately 20,000 residing outside the city but within easy travel to local shops, restaurants, recreation facilities and cultural amenities.

Sequim is nestled between Port Angeles (15 miles to the west) and Port Townsend (31 miles to the east) on the North Olympic Peninsula. With the vast array of natural beauty and recreational opportunities, coupled with a desirable annual rainfall of about 16", the community has become a focus for an "active" retirement location.

BACKGROUND

Early irrigation ditches (1890's) provided the Dungeness Valley with the water needed to become a thriving agricultural region. This agricultural heritage was a strong influence in the development of the city's 1996 Comprehensive Plan with the community vision directing that growth may be accommodated "...while maintaining its friendly small town and rural atmosphere". The 2006 Comprehensive Plan update reiterated the importance of Sequim's heritage and the importance of maintaining this building block through the development of a downtown plan. The major goal of this plan will be to produce an action plan that will guide the public and private sector. These actions should:

- Enhance the role of the downtown core as a unique small retail and cultural center, which complements, but offers an alternative to the city's west end chain retail zone;
- Provide a variety of mixed-use residential and commercial development in the downtown area for a range of homeowners and tenants;
- Preserve the downtown as walkable/pedestrian friendly areas of diverse businesses;
- Promote a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly downtown core that offers cultural activities such as theater, music, art and sculpture.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project includes an overall future land use concept including vision, marketing, plan refinement/design guidelines, and implementation plan of infrastructure and buildings. The downtown planning effort will involve a full public participation process to give the citizens and business-owners the opportunity to influence how future redevelopment/development of the downtown will occur.

The Downtown Plan will focus on a small geographic area expanding in all directions from the intersection of Washington Street and Sequim Avenue. Washington Street was the previous route for US 101 prior to the development of the Sequim Bypass (1999). This major corridor for all North Olympic Peninsula traffic resulted in linear commercial/retail development for approximately 2½ miles.

The construction of the Sequim Bypass (101 Alternative Route) set the stage for the City's application for a State Rural Economic Vitality (REV) grant to improve selected streets and provide pedestrian amenities within the downtown. The REV Grant was received in 2001 and provided street and pedestrian amenities in the downtown. Streets and sidewalks were reconstructed, crosswalks were added to help people cross Washington Street, and the adjacent streets (Bell Street to the south and Cedar Street to the north) were resurfaced and improved with sidewalks, curbs, and landscaping for nearly three blocks. Signage was developed to direct the visitor to other local points of interest.

National chain development began on the west side of the city in 2003. Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Petco, Office Depot, Costco, Discount Tire, Quality Inn, Applebee's and others have created a regional shopping draw. The focus for the downtown core area will be to maintain the existing shops and enhance this area with other unique, tourist-oriented shops that provide an alternative shopping experience.

The core area is comprised of 1 to 2 story buildings. The ground floor of these buildings is primarily retail shops offering regionally unique items. Mixed with these shops are businesses offering other typical retail shopping (paint, auto parts, etc.) and services (real estate, insurance, etc.). Second floor residential units exist in a few of these downtown buildings.

Cedar Street and Bell Street have shown a slow conversion from single-family residence to home business to stand-alone retail developments. New development has also occurred on these streets with a bakery and yarn shop established. Vacant and underutilized parcels exist within the core area and will be a key component to this effort.

Accommodation of mixed use structures has been supported from the standpoint of creating a resident vibrancy. A height limitation of 35' has been the focus of discussion regarding the limitations this limit has for true mixed use structures. Building mass and scale should be addressed as part of the bulk and dimensional element.

Architectural design standards are implemented city-wide for all new commercial construction and multi-family structures 5 dwelling units and greater. It is recommended that due to the uniqueness of the downtown and specific pedestrian amenities that refined design standards be reviewed for this downtown plan. The city produced a Streetscape Manual (1997) focusing on elements located within the public right-of-way of commercial areas. Those elements included road characteristics (profile), street trees and plantings, street furniture, public lighting and signage. This Downtown Plan should integrate/update applicable standards found in the Streetscape Plan.

PLAN SCOPE / ELEMENTS

The city is not looking for a traditional Downtown Plan that involves hundreds of pages of text outlining an idealized vision for our downtown. We want the proposals to reflect innovative thinking and propose a process that will result in a practical and realistic plan to make progress towards the community's vision for downtown. We desire a proposal that involves a realistic appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of our downtown and an assessment of what development opportunities will be economically feasible in Sequim's downtown over the next 5 to 10 years. The plan scope includes the following general considerations as well as plan elements.

General Considerations

Comprehensive Plan Framework

The Downtown Plan will need to be consistent with the goals and policies established in the City of Sequim's Comprehensive Plan (2006 Update). As noted earlier, primary focus is on maintaining the rural character and small-town atmosphere while providing a vibrant, safe and pedestrian friendly core.

Market/Economic Feasibility Component

We consider this component to be critical to successful plan implementation. The successful team should comprise urban design strength as well as a team member with a specialty in market analysis, demographic analysis and economic feasibility. This analysis will identify existing and potential land uses and services which are likely to fulfill unmet needs in the downtown core. This element is important to ensure that our plan is not simply an idealized vision, but a practical blueprint that is likely to be implemented by property owners in the downtown. The economic feasibility elements will identify priority city incentives or infrastructure that is required to support private sector investment.

Public Participation Strategy

Key to any effective planning effort is the early and consistent involvement of the stakeholders and citizens. A comprehensive strategy to engage our citizens and business owners should include:

- Identify key stakeholders, business owners, agencies, organizations or special interest groups;
- conduct community visioning/workshops;
- integrate community “common threads” into action plans;
- review concepts of the draft plan with downtown stakeholders; and
- provide one or two updates to the Planning Commission and City Council.

Funding Options to Implement the Plan

As with any plan, implementation is a key component which may require a variety of funding sources. A successful proposal will have identified a variety of concepts to explore as possible funding options for the plan implementation which may include public/private partnerships.

Plan Elements

Study Area Boundaries

A study area will need to be defined encompassing not only the existing downtown core, but will need to anticipate what areas will be included in a 20-year timeframe.

Land Use & Building Form

The primary land use goal is to preserve Sequim’s historic and cultural values, its agricultural heritage and scenic character while maintaining a friendly small town atmosphere. Land use mechanisms, in the form of new zoning districts or overlays, will be developed consistent with the results of the market feasibility and will include analysis of:

- residential density;
- land/zoning/uses;
- bulk/dimensional requirements (height, setbacks, lot coverage, etc.) including building mass and form;
- identification of new or in-fill development opportunities and type of suitable uses;

- attractive graphics to illustrate the aforementioned concepts and analyses representation.

Circulation & Parking

This element is linked closely to land use and is an important factor in considering the ambience for the downtown. The Downtown Plan will review and recommend a strategy for downtown circulation and parking. The circulation and parking strategy will address vehicles, transit, pedestrian and bicycle needs and will build on existing and ongoing improvement projects. This element will incorporate a multi-modal approach to the following:

- review existing traffic grid and provide alternatives;
- encourage non-motorized transportation with the objective of creating a safe, pedestrian-friendly environment;
- transit linkages;
- parking options/incentives for off-site parking;
- maintain transportation levels of service.

Housing

Housing is an important element of this plan because it provides a consistent source of people who, in-turn, provide additional economic vitality to the downtown businesses. Typically, higher density residential is more acceptable in the downtown core and will be based on existing stock and anticipated housing. At a minimum, this element will include:

- providing a mix of housing opportunities for all income groups;
- supporting mixed use developments;
- investigating the feasibility for high density residential nodes supported by pedestrian connectivity to the downtown core;

Green Space/Plazas/Pedestrian Amenities

To maintain the “small-town” character, the social fabric will need to be addressed. Pedestrian gathering places, areas for rest and conversation and landscaped plazas, etc. are essential and will include:

- providing pedestrian plazas, walkways, connectivity throughout downtown and adjacent neighborhoods;
- maintaining human-scale structural development and storefronts;
- supporting alley conversion from vehicle to pedestrian use;
- creating community gathering places.

Character/Aesthetics:

- maintaining/enhancing existing scenic views;
- recommending downtown design standards;
- enhancing social and cultural values through public art.

IMPLEMENTATION

A key deliverable of the plan is a detailed action plan including proposed Sequim Municipal Code amendments. All actions called for by the Downtown Plan should be identified in a streamlined list or table. Actions should be assigned responsible parties, timelines for implementation and potential funding sources. The implementation program will likely be developed collaboratively by the city staff and consultant team.

PROJECT BUDGET

A specific budget for this project has not been established by the City. It is important to note Sequim is a small city with a General Fund budget less than \$8 million. The city will collaborate with the preferred team to craft a scope and budget that works.

GENERAL PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND SCHEDULE

General consultant responsibilities include mapping, research, analysis, report writing, presentations, meeting facilitation, and report printing. Staff responsibilities include data collection, meeting set up, and assistance with presentations, meeting facilitation, and report drafting. Adjustments to responsibilities may be made depending on budgetary constraints.

The Downtown Plan is preferred to be completed and approved by the Sequim City Council by the end of the first quarter 2011. The following is a generalized activity schedule. This schedule however is flexible and recommended revisions to the schedule by the consultant will be welcomed. The city and consultant will prepare a detailed work program at the beginning of the project. This will be discussed with selected consultant and a final produced by the consultant.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

The responses to this RFP should include:

- Firm/team information including, but not limited to, scope of capabilities, applicable resources, key personnel assigned to the project, and potential sub-consultants, qualifications and experience;
- Relevant experience including project description, client name, address and phone numbers, exact responsibility of consultant on project, and whether experience is firm experience or individual experience.
- Your approach to the overall assignment including any creative ideas or thoughts on how to structure the work to accomplish our desired goals;
- A description of your approach to the public participation/involvement element;

- Firms must submit a detailed scope of services, outlining tasks, schedule and hours indicating how they propose to undertake this project.

Proposals should include a matrix which shows the individual team members hourly rates, their time allocated by activity, and the total hours anticipated to complete the project.

- Firms must include a project schedule and statement identifying that this project can be completed by the anticipated deadline.

Proposals are due in the City offices by 4:00 PM on July 2, 2010. Please provide one original and seven copies of the proposal.

ANTICIPATED CONSULTANT SELECTION TIME SCHEDULE

The City of Sequim anticipates reviewing all proposals, selecting firms for interviews and starting the project based on the following tentative schedule:

Shortlist of Firms: July 12, 2010

Interviews: Week of July 19, 2010

Notification of Selected Firm/Team: July 26, 2010

Contract Negotiation Completion: August 9, 2010

Project Start Date: August 16, 2010

Project Completion Date: January 31, 2011

PROJECT CONTACT

For further information on this project, please contact:

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