

STANWOOD/CAMANO SDAT: DESTINY BY DESIGN



JULY 2012

AIA Communities by Design
ENVISION. CREATE. SUSTAIN.





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INTRODUCTION

In December of 2011, the Greater Stanwood/Camano Region of Washington submitted a proposal to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for a Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) to assist the community and its citizens in addressing key issues facing the community. The issues included downtown revitalization, water management, transportation, and economic development. The AIA accepted the proposal and, after a preliminary visit by a small group in March 2012, recruited a multi-disciplinary team of volunteers to serve on the SDAT Team. In July 2012, the SDAT Team members worked closely with local officials, community leaders, technical experts, non-profit organizations and citizens to study the community and its concerns. The team used its expertise to frame a wide range of recommendations, which

were presented to the community in a public meeting. This report represents a summary of the findings and recommendations that were presented to the community.

THE SUSTAINABLE DESIGN ASSESSMENT TEAM (SDAT) PROGRAM

The Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) program focuses on the importance of developing sustainable communities through design. The mission of the SDAT program is to provide technical assistance and process expertise to help communities develop a vision and framework for a sustainable future. The SDAT program brings together multidisciplinary teams of professionals to work with community stakeholders and decision-makers in an intensive planning process. Teams are composed of volunteer professionals representing a range of disciplines, including architects, urban design professionals, economic development experts, land use attorneys, and others. Today, communities face a host of challenges to long-term planning for sustainability,



including limited resources and technical capacity, ineffective public processes and poor participation. The SDAT approach is designed to address many of the common challenges communities face by producing long-term sustainability plans that are realistic and reflect each community's unique context. Key features of the SDAT approach include the following:

- **Customized Design Assistance.** The SDAT is designed as a customized approach to community assistance which incorporates local realities and the unique challenges and assets of each community.
- **A Systems Approach to Sustainability.** The SDAT applies a systems-based approach to community sustainability, examining cross-cutting issues and relationships between issues. The SDAT forms multi-disciplinary teams that combine a range of disciplines and professions in an integrated assessment and design process.
- **Inclusive and Participatory Processes.** Public participation is the foundation of good community design. The SDAT involves a wide range of stakeholders and utilizes short feedback loops, resulting in sustainable decision-making that has broad public support and ownership.
- **Objective Technical Expertise.** The SDAT Team is assembled to include a range of technical experts from across the country. Team Members do not accept payment for services in an SDAT. They serve in a volunteer capacity on behalf of the AIA and the partner community. As a result, the SDAT Team has enhanced credibility with local stakeholders and can provide unencumbered technical advice.
- **Cost Effectiveness.** By employing the SDAT approach, communities are able to take advantage of leveraged resources for their planning efforts. The AIA contributes up to \$15,000 in financial assistance for each project. The SDAT team members volunteer their labor and expertise, allowing communities to gain immediate access to the combined technical knowledge of top-notch professionals from varied fields.



The SDAT program is modeled on the Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) program, one of AIA's longest-running success stories. While the R/UDAT program was developed to provide communities with specific design solutions, the SDAT program provides broad assessments to help frame future policies or design solutions in the context of sustainability and help communities plan the first steps of implementation. Through the Design Assistance Team (DAT) program, over 500 professionals from 30 disciplines have provided millions of dollars in professional pro bono services to more than 200 communities across the country. The SDAT program leverages the pivotal role of the architectural community in the creation and support of sustainable livable communities.

The following report includes a narrative account of the Stanwood/Camano SDAT project recommendations, with summary information concerning several principle areas of investigation. The recommendations are made within the broad framework of sustainability, and are designed to form an integrated approach to future sustainability efforts in the community.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The greater Stanwood/Camano Region is connected through a shared history of agricultural lifestyle, small town aesthetics, the ebb and flow of the Stillaguamish River, proximity of the Puget Sound, and a common school district. The development patterns of the past two decades combined with the current energy and consumption levels of American culture have resulted in an imbalance in this small region. The current trend toward a suburbanized model of community threatens to eliminate the very reasons people are attracted to the area: small town character, sense of authority, strong community, proximity to a beautiful rural setting, and a strong sense of place.

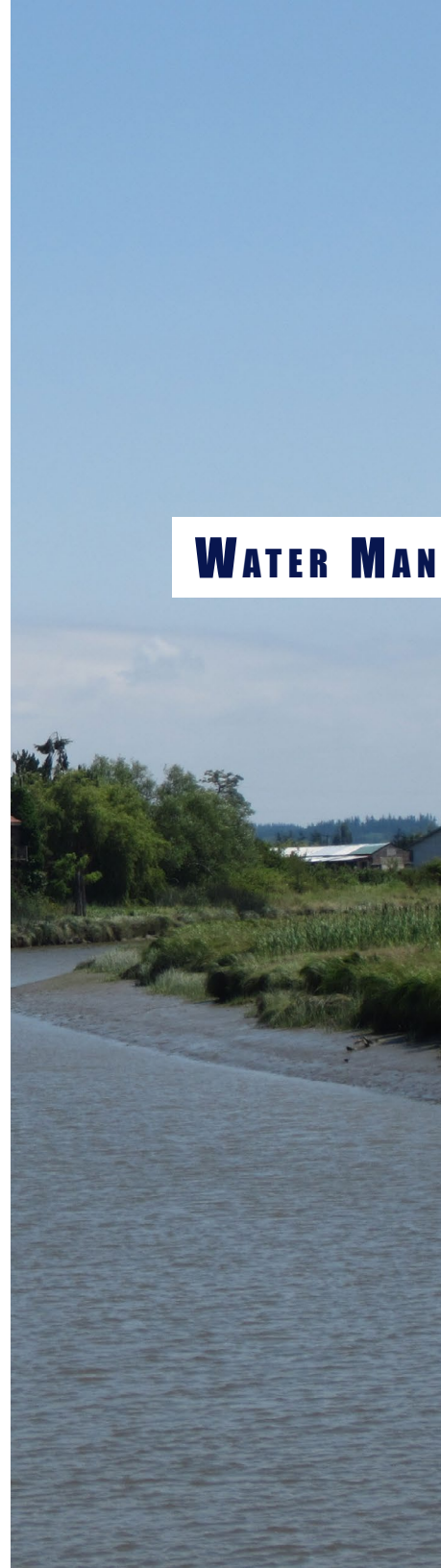
The Stanwood/Camano Region SDAT steering committee asked for a process that would: 1) evaluate the successes of the 2003 local design charrette, refreshing and updating the approach; 2) expand review throughout the 532 Corridor; and 3) consider possible sustainable initiatives affecting businesses and residents throughout the area. Accordingly, the AIA put together a team to address the following issues:

- Water Management and Flooding Mitigation
- Downtown & Village Revitalization
- Economic Development Strategies
- Sustainable Urban Design
- Transportation and Connectivity

The SDAT project represents a new initiative. It was designed to engage the whole community and build collective ownership of an action plan for the future of the region that could produce immediate results. In July 2012, the SDAT Team shared its

main recommendations in its final presentation to the community. This document expands upon those recommendations with additional detail and offers resources and information to help the community with its implementation of the plan. The report outlines some long term goals, but it also provides suggestions on how to get started tomorrow.

WATER MANAGEMENT



INTRODUCTION

Flood damage in the United States continues to escalate. From the early 1900's until recent years, flood damages have increased six-fold and now average over \$6 billion dollars annually. These damages have occurred despite the investment of billions of dollars in structural flood control projects and the application of many other structural and non-structural measures over this span of time. Even with flooding as an ever looming threat in many communities, development within those communities continues to intensify, especially in at-risk areas. To further compound the problem, stormwater runoff from areas not traditionally subject to flooding is causing marginally protected structures to suddenly become susceptible to damage during even moderate rain events. Overall, the conditions in most of the nation's floodplains and watersheds have worsened, flood events have intensified, the human suffering and misery from flooding has escalated out of proportion, and the cause can be laid squarely at the feet of unwise development patterns, reduction of natural channel conveyance by allowing fill to be brought into the floodplain and a federal disaster response system that generally strives to put things back to their pre-disaster status, as quickly as possible.(www.floods.org)

Stanwood, Washington, "the northernmost City of Snohomish County", finds itself in a constant battle to fight off of the floodwaters of the Stillaguamish ("the Stilly" to the locals) and the Snohomish rivers, with sandbag barriers, determination and a lot of community willpower.

It is a common occurrence for the phone tree to be activated and to see the majority of the town's people, shovel in hand, filling sand bags to protect their town and their assets. "When you're in a town like this, you're kind of all family. You stick up for each other." Allen Carpenter told the reporters from the HeroldNet. Stanwood High School student, Kevin Downs expresses his own and the sentiments of his friends,

"Sandbagging makes us feel good because we're helping our community." ("Sandbags battle record-setting flood"; HeraldNet; Dec 12, 2010)

It's all about community in Stanwood. A community that does not want to give up "the fight" and move up on "the Hill" where there is relative safety from floodwaters, a community that does not want to throw in the towel on their agrarian way of life and a community determined to be sustainable and resilient no matter what Mother Nature (and the current economy) throw at her.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Due to its location on the delta of two major rivers, the proximity to Skagit Bay, and the runoff from the Hill area, Stanwood is virtually surrounded on all four sides by water.

Reports from the farmers in the area and a field analysis of “the Hill” yields findings that generally support the community’s assumption that development in the Douglas Creek Basin, particularly on the Hill, has exacerbated flooding in the farming area north of the City. Detention ponds in the Pioneer Hills development are overgrown to the point that the outlet structures cannot be seen and the entire pond system appears to be ineffectual. Obviously, cleaning of the ponds in Pioneer Hills is needed. Additionally, exploration of the effectiveness of the detention facilities within all upstream developments in the Douglas Creek basin must be explored and corrective measures must be implemented immediately.

Additionally, the catch basin below Pioneer Hills on Pioneer Avenue must be cleaned since it is obviously full of debris. All upstream contributors in the Douglas Creek basin (i.e. all stormwater pipes and traps) must be inspected and cleaned, as applicable. Obviously, routine maintenance of these facilities is a must.



If future flooding persists north of the City, regional detention in the area of 80th Avenue along Douglas Creek or just west of Pioneer Avenue should be explored. While this may be a costly venture, it could be the only thing that keeps the farmfields north of the City flooding on a routine basis.

It also appears that the pavement on the west side of Pioneer Highway, just below the Pioneer Hills detention pond, is threatened if erosion continues. Pavement failure at this location would virtually cut off a major arterial source for this community. Repair of this roadway, after a major pavement failure, could be quite costly and also could impact economic development for the City and, possibly, for the entire region.

Any drainage projects identified in the Stanwood Urban Growth Area Drainage Needs Report from December 2002 (Snohomish County Public Works Dept., Surface Water Management Division) that have not currently been addressed need to be attended to immediately. Since it has been 10 years since the last Drainage Needs Report has been performed, it is recommended that an up-to-date Drainage Needs Report be undertaken in the near future.

Within the City of Stanwood (both Old and New Stanwood), a combination of elevation and floodproofing needs to be extensively explored.

- **Floodproofing:** Floodproofing is any combination of structural or nonstructural changes or adjustments incorporated in the design, construction, or alteration of individual structures or properties that will reduce flood damages. Floodproofing of non-residential structures may be permitted as an alternative to elevation; however a floodproofing design certification is required. FEMA's Floodproofing for Non-Residential Structures can provide technical information for building owners, design engineers and contractors on the proper wet and dry floodproofing techniques. Advances in building science make it increasingly possible to prevent or to reduce future flood damage. Flood resistant building materials can be used to reduce the damage caused by floodwaters. Building materials are considered flood-resistant if they can withstand direct contact with floodwaters for at least 72 hours without being significantly damaged. "Significant damage" means any damage that requires more than low cost, cosmetic repair (such as painting). Flood-resistant materials should be used for walls, floors, and other parts of a building that are below the flood level. Both FEMA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have published lists of these materials. (Louisville/Jefferson County MSD)

SHORT TERM SOLUTIONS/FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Stanwood must look at increasing lot sizes for single family residential lots. Low density development must only be allowed when it is vertical and in no case should the footprint of the proposed development (including accessory structures) exceed 30% of the square footage of the lot. Further, in no case should the maximum lot coverage, including pools, sidewalks, driveways and other pervious features exceed 50% of the lot coverage.

- **Elevation:** Elevation can be defined as the raising of a structure on piers, posts, walls, or foundations. In cases of elevation, and due to the alluvial soils within the area, it is recommended that a structural engineer design and sign any drawings / plans for a permit application and that this requirement be written into current Ordinances. When flood vents are warranted, engineered flood vents or SmartVents should be utilized per the recommended specifications of the applicable vent. A certification for each vent installed must be supplied prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. This can also be required as a part of the next regulatory update.

Downtown and in the village centers, these new low-footprint structures could be addressed with architectural controls, for example within an overlay district, in keeping with the existing structures already in place.

Currently, the northern boundary of the UGA primarily stops at Douglas Creek. Any future development within the Douglas Creek Basin, any future expansion of the UGA northward, and any development in the town / village centers should be included in an overlay district that includes an engineering analysis that strictly adheres to the No Adverse Impact floodplain management principles.

No Adverse Impact (NAI) is a concept / policy / strategy that changes the focus from building within the environment to "do no harm". It ensures that the development actions of any public or private property owner do not affect the property and rights of others. NAI encourages local decision making to ensure that the impacts from future development are identified, assessed on a watershed wide basis and mitigated (within the same watershed), if necessary, to reduce or prevent future flood losses, to alleviate human suffering and to reduce or eliminate costs associated with flood events.



Additionally, all development within this area should include an engineered No Rise Certification. A No Rise Certification must be

supported by technical data that demonstrates through hydrologic and hydraulic analyses performed in accordance with standard engineering practice that the proposed project would not result in any increase in flood levels within the community during the occurrence of the base (100 year) flood event. The community could take it a step further and require no impact (no increase) in floodway elevations or in floodway data widths if they choose to do so. Every higher standard implemented by the community should ensure less flooding for the community's residents and business owners.

No Adverse Impact Floodplain Management and an engineered No Rise Certification can be achieved by any combination of the following:

- Low Impact Development (see Low Impact Development - A Design Manual for Urban Areas; Fay Jones School of Architecture; University of Arkansas Press.)
- Green Infrastructure
- Pervious pavement or asphalt (materials that can transmit fluids vertically through its surface)
- Use of underground cisterns to catch rain water (rain water harvesting / rain water reuse) – this is a great way to keep water out of the aquifer and can also take care of that “first flush” of rainwater during a rain vent
- Not allowing fill to be brought into the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) and not elevating with the use of fill materials
- Best management practices

Further, it is recommended that future conditions floodplain modeling be adhered to, taking into account:

- Maximum buildout within the watershed
- Sea Level Rise
- Climate Change (to include storm frequency and storm intensity)

Finally, all designed finished floors elevations should be one foot above the design flood elevation (DFE) at the time of development/redevelopment or for rehabilitation that constitutes substantial improvement (in excess of 50% of the value of the structure). The design flood elevation is that elevation, in excess of the base flood elevation, and adopted by the community on a designated flood hazard map, at which height the future floodplain modeling indicates the area will flood during the occurrence of the 100 year flood event. Obviously, two feet or three feet above the DFE assures an extra safety factor.

Since, over time, a higher level of protection (a higher margin of safety) might be required within the community, the design flood elevation needs to be looked at every 3-5 years to make sure it meets the protection needs of the community.

FLOOD FIGHTING

According to the City of Stanwood Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan, Phase II, (KCM, June 1997), the recurrence interval of a flood event from the Stillaguamish River that replicates the November 24, 1990 flood event "would not be

expected...more frequently than once every 30 years. In fact, flood-fighting practices at Stanwood are so effective that they would likely be able to protect against floods with even higher recurrence intervals than 30 years." The report indicates that "the Skagit River would have flooded Stanwood an average of roughly once every 20 years since 1940" had it not been for upstream breaches during two 1990 events.

Obviously, the most cost effective recommendation would be to continue the same flood fighting efforts the City has done for years.

ACCESS TO THE WATER

Passive and active recreation involving the water is currently underutilized. This issue will be covered elsewhere in the report.

LONG TERM SOLUTIONS

Numerous recommendations from either the 1967 Corp. of Engineer study or the 1997 City of Stanwood Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan, Phase II could be explored.

Of vital importance is the immediate need to look at the City's protection system from flooding events. An evaluation of the dikes, levees and berms that protect the City is crucial for continued protection.

Funding sources for any of these recommendations will require looking at creative funding strategies to include:

- grants (state / federal)
- public / private partnerships
- coalitions
- financing and revenue options (requires administrative action by the City)
- stormwater fees / increased stormwater fees

STORMWATER FEES

While most feel that stormwater fees are a tax, this commonly used funding source is based on each individual property owner's impervious footprint on the landscape. In short, the more structure, concrete and asphalt you generate within your property, the more you pay for the "usage" of your community's stormwater system. This fee does not have to be onerous on the community's residents and for a typical single family home could be less than \$10.00 a month.

The fees generated from a stormwater utility can be used for capital improvement projects such as:

- stormwater infrastructure (ponds and pipes) repair / replacement
- dike / levee / berm / seawall repair and replacement
- other structural stormwater related projects that the City needs to undertake

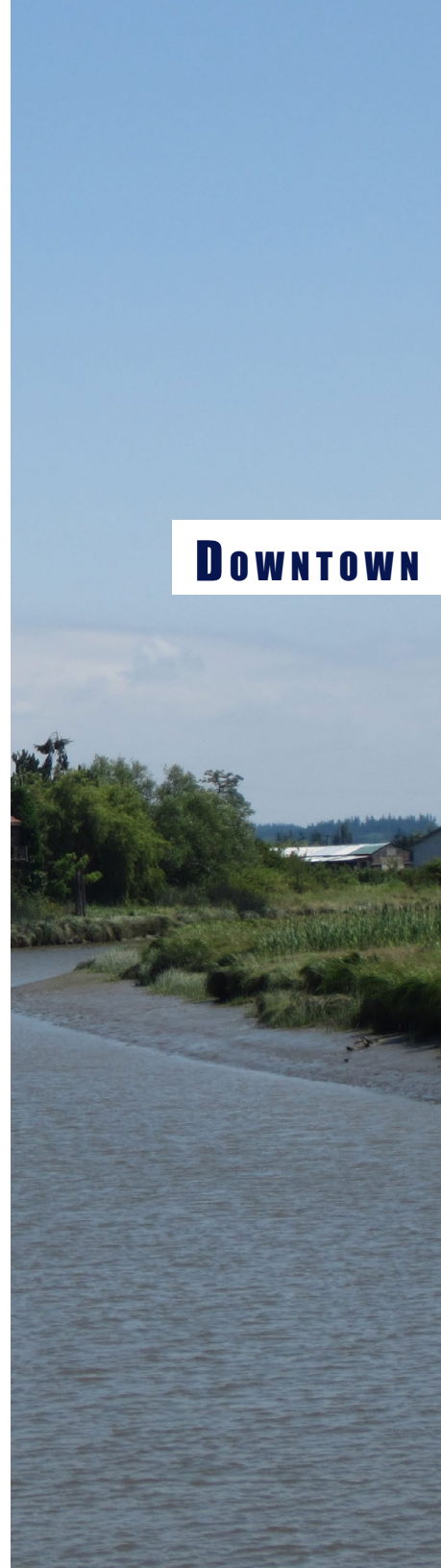
CONCLUSIONS

There is no simple formula for fighting the flood problem in Stanwood. Regulatory changes and increased compliance issues may likely drive development to areas

outside the areas subject to the higher regulatory standards. Other solutions are costly and current funding is limited, even on "good days". Again, implementation of monetary solutions such as a storm water utility may drive residents and business owners to areas outside the City where this fee may not be assessed.

The people of Stanwood have a keen aptitude for figuring out what works for them, even if that insight may be short-termed, at best. What works today can be deceptive, however, and they are learning that unnerving lesson as the waters begin to rise higher and higher after each storm event. There is no chance of a sustainable and resilient Stanwood without safe homes to live in and safe places to work. Reluctantly, the governing body in Stanwood, and the citizens of Stanwood, have to push past the confusing social and economic forces that have kept them gripped with fear for far too long and make some forward thinking decisions in relation to long-term solutions to their propensity to flooding.

DOWNTOWN & VILLAGES

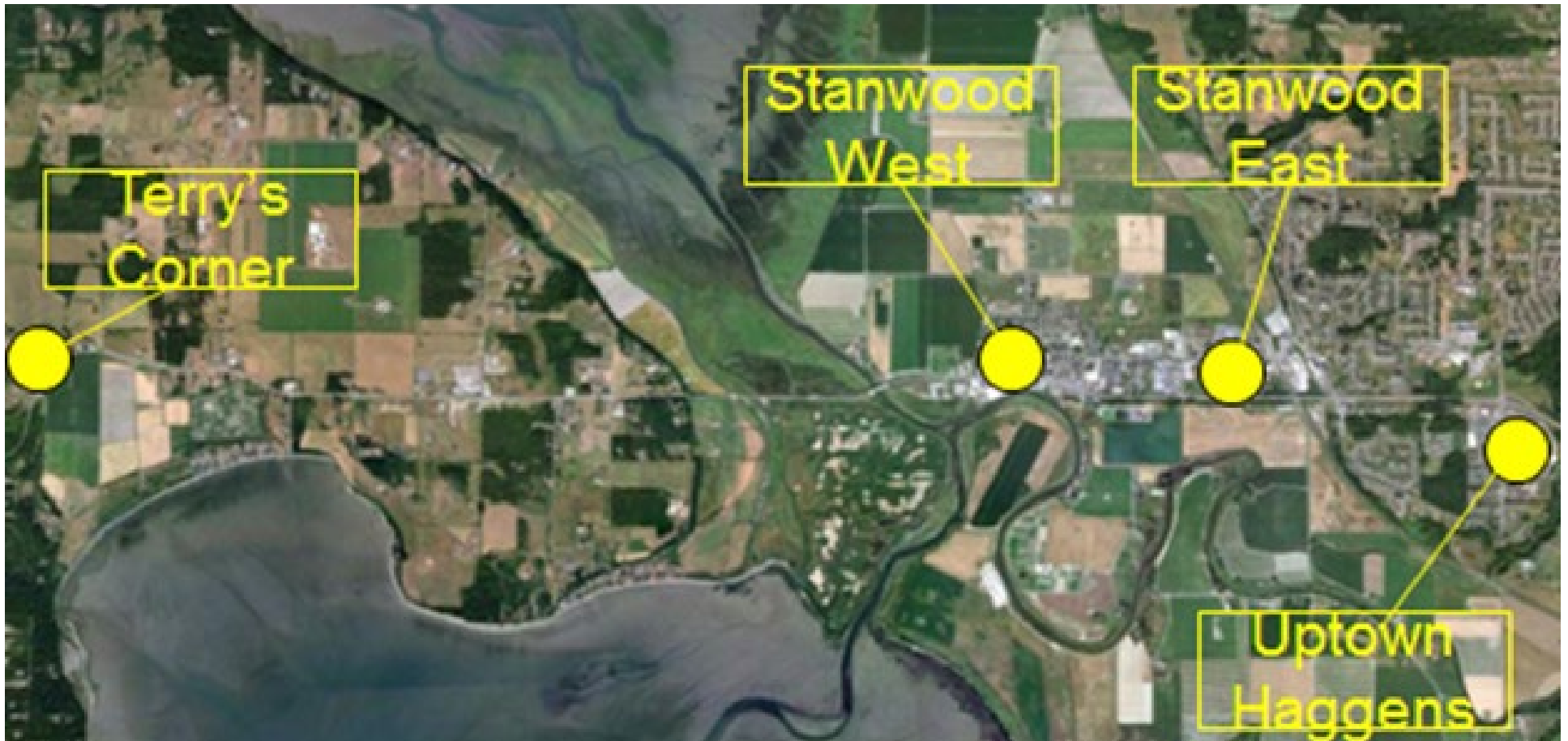


Washington State Route 532 extends ten miles, from Interstate 5 through Stanwood to Terry's Corner on Camano Island. In this short distance the corridor spans beautiful and diverse pastoral rural areas, rich productive farmland, three well-defined village/downtown centers, an amazing diversity of bays, rivers, floodplain and other water features, commercial sprawl, and pockets of suburban housing.

The rural and agricultural areas, the water, and the village and downtown centers define the corridor. These features provide the corridor with a strong sense of place,

and afford the focal points and economic anchors for the corridor. The economic and community health of the State Route (SR) 532 corridor, especially Stanwood and northern Camano Island, is built on this three legged stool (rural and agricultural, water, and village/downtown centers). Threaten any leg and the stool teeters. Strengthen the legs and the community becomes more stable and stronger.

The employers that Stanwood and Camano Island most need are footloose businesses that can locate anywhere they choose. The best opportunity to attract them is to build



on the unique strengths of this region: water, rural character, and defined downtown centers.

There are clear opportunities for SR 532 village and downtowns centers to become more vibrant and strengthen their sense of place, their critical mass, and their land use mixes. Stanwood, as the commercial heart of SR 532, can provide opportunities for those who can't or don't drive (especially the young and the elderly), create an anchor point for tourists and visitors, and serve as the community heart of the corridor. In serving as an anchor, Stanwood can support Camano's role as a strong place to live and play and provide the services needed to support the role of home-based businesses on the island. Each village and downtown center can build on their unique strengths and opportunities.

UPTOWN

The Stanwood Haggen shopping plaza, known to some as Uptown, is a commercial area without a real name, never a good sign for an area that might become a community focal point. It is built around a retail center designed to meet the needs of automobiles and not pedestrians.

Uptown could, however, become a true village center. Many of the ingredients of a good village already exist in Uptown. It contains a critical mass that could, potentially, be transformed into a real village with an identity, and a name. A large grocery store,

medium density housing, a presence on Route 532, and adjacent high, middle, and elementary schools are all contributing features.

Uptown does not, however, have a presence on the water, the distance between the commercial area and the three schools reduces the chance of a real synergy between civic and commercial life, and it totally lacks a pedestrian friendly circulation system and indeed any circulation system that is not dominated by huge dead areas of parking.

This area can be dramatically improved by

- Developing a street grid by building roads through the commercial center (avoiding all existing buildings).
- Orienting some high school uses and access towards the commercial center
- Improving sidewalks and developing double tree belts. Double tree belts have both trees between the sidewalks and the street AND trees between the sidewalks and parking lots.
- Encouraging buildings to be built to the back edge of sidewalks, instead of having large parking lots between the road and sidewalk and the buildings.

Uptown can and should be improved to become a critical village center, one that will likely keep its focus on large volume shopping (e.g., Haggens). It should not, however, become Stanwood's downtown. It is still essentially a free-standing suburban commercial center and not a village, and it would be more productive to invest any limited public dollars downtown.

There has been discussion of the YMCA locating in this area, at the intersection of 72nd Avenue NW and 268 Street NW, just north of Highway 532. While this could be a very effective site for a free-standing YMCA, it would create very little synergy to support a commercial area. The SDAT strongly recommends that the YMCA locate in East or West Stanwood or the midtown area between the two. IF the YMCA does locate on this site, the building should be built up to the intersection, with parking behind it, and with very strong pedestrian and bicycle connections to Haggens and to the High School.



Buy locally.



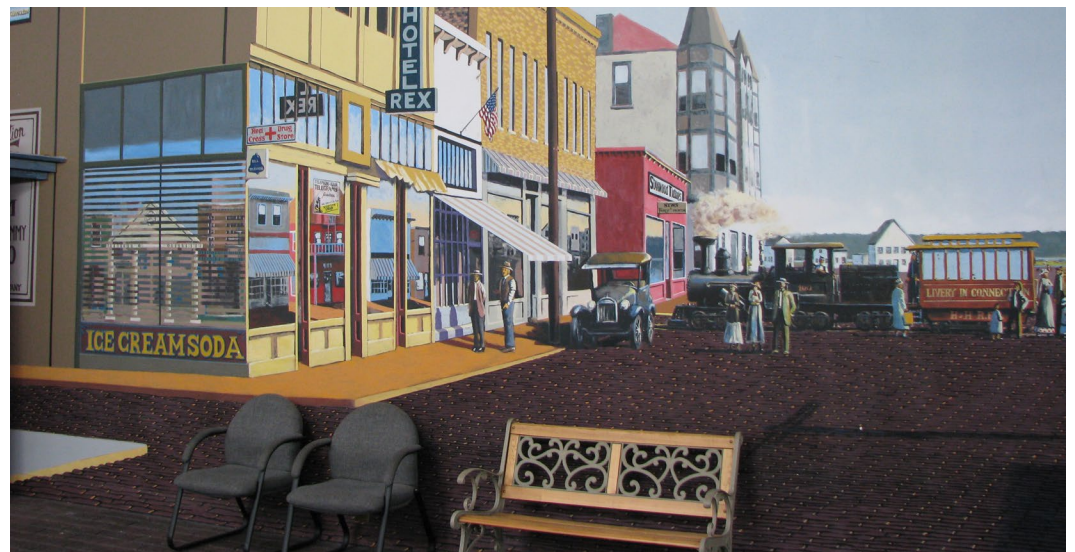
Haggens: Great shopping, but does not a village make.



Employment.



Uptown housing at medium urban density.



A mall longing to be a downtown?

TERRY'S CORNER

Terry's Corner is a great village that serves well as the gateway to Camano Island. Given the lack of critical mass, the availability of shopping opportunities in Stanwood and elsewhere on Camano Island, Terry's Corner is unlikely ever to be a significant commercial center. It can and does, however, serve a niche function and is the commercial gateway to Camano Island. The commercial center, the park-and-ride lot, and the associated transit stop complement each other and help provide a definition for Terry's Corners and for all of Camano Island.

Terry's Corner is already a great size for a small village center. There is certainly no disadvantage with it growing provided it keeps its pedestrian scale, but that is not at all critical for the sense of place that Terry's Corners provides, and given market demands it is not that likely. It would certainly be desirable, however, to attract a few more commercial office tenants to fill spaces within the existing Terry's Corners. Efforts to strengthen it might include:

- A commitment, and related zoning, to not permit new commercial development between Terry's Corner and Stanwood.
- Encouraging any new Camano Island government and nonprofit offices or schools to locate at Terry's Corners. This would support Terry's Corners' role at the primary gateway and most important island crossroads. Such encouragement, however, needs to acknowledge that Terry's Corners is some distance from the southern part of the island and some kinds of services need to be located closer to their clients.
- Encouraging Island County government to prioritize economic development incentives for Camano County at Terry's Corners.

EAST AND WEST STANWOOD

Stanwood's twin downtowns (East Stanwood and West Stanwood) are the primary commercial centers of Stanwood and the Route 532 Corridor. Although the downtowns are ignored by some residents of both Stanwood and Camano Island, the downtowns are the glue that hold together a broader sense of community. The downtowns provide a unique sense of place, a local identity, and the only place where rural and agriculture, water, and a downtown center can all meet.



East Stanwood with its traditional downtown, access to the train station, and theoretical access to neighborhoods up the hill



West Stanwood with its traditional downtown and easy access to some neighborhoods and theoretical access to the water.



East and West Stanwood are (in theory) very easy to get to, and yet they are distant from the consciousness of many Stanwood and Camano Island residents and visitors. Customers and visitors should be drawn from:

1. Nearby neighborhoods and State Route 532
2. The midtown area between East and West Stanwood.
3. Retaining people who are already downtown and creating new downtown anchors.
4. Visitors to the water at the edge of downtown.

Improving access from each of these areas will make downtown more attractive and accessible.



NEARBY NEIGHBORHOODS AND STATE ROUTE 532

East Stanwood and West Stanwood can become far more successful simply by removing physical and psychological barriers to access. Visitors and customers should be drawn from:

1. The neighborhoods within walking (1/2 mile) and bicycling (1 mile) distance. Improving these connections, especially to East Stanwood, can be extremely effective. Currently many of those connections are so unfriendly that the walk is not very desirable.
2. Stanwood neighborhoods east of downtown in easy driving distance of downtown. Currently those neighborhoods have an unfriendly gateway, reducing their desire to visit downtown.
3. State Highway 532. The highway goes by the edge of the downtowns, but for most users downtown is in a different world. Building those connections, taking advantage of the sense of place that a downtown can offer is critical.



Downtown has a unique identity, building on its history, rail access, waterfront, adjacent agricultural land, and downtown synergy. These need to be capitalized on to attract and retain users.



Linkage between East Stanwood and the majority of Stanwood's residential areas. Not a very desirable way to come to downtown.



MIDTOWN AREA BETWEEN EAST AND WEST STANWOOD

East and West Stanwood are not and should not become a single retail and service-focused downtown. The region is not large enough to support this amount of retail and service development. Efforts to grow the two downtowns together, either on State Route 532 or on Main Street, have only resulted in strip development without the character of the downtowns. That said, there are certainly opportunities for greater office and residential development between the two downtowns that can help connect and strengthen the downtowns.

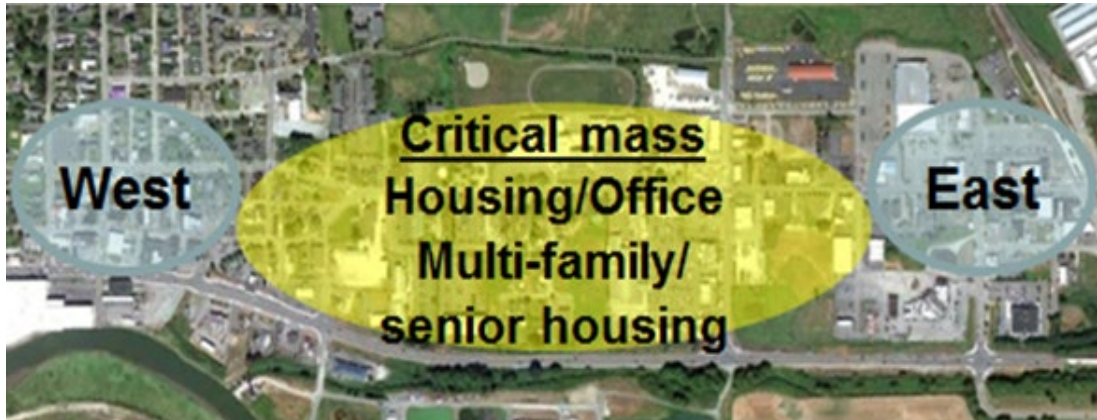


Centerville Square and Stanwood Towne Center are comfortable shopping areas but they are not the center of the community or its heart and soul. Building on the soul of East and West Stanwood, not trying to replace it, is a far more productive investment.

Currently, there is no definition of this midtown area, just a collection of different uses without a story. The Washington design assistance team, that visited Stanwood a few years ago, identified this same problem. Unfortunately, this problem remains today.

New retail and service sector development in midtown would only compete with the downtowns and create more individual destinations; destinations that will only promote additional sprawl. Additional non-retail and service development, however, would be extremely desirable. This area can create an anchor of development that will support the downtowns. Dense housing, office development, and potentially a hotel and or the new YMCA would revitalize midtown and create a presence that would provide new customers for the downtowns, especially customers who might walk to the downtowns instead of drive.

- Increase allowable height limits significantly.
- Eliminate most other density restrictions limiting development (parking requirements, minimum setbacks, floor area ratio, etc).
- Focus on maximum setbacks from Main Street and minimum heights.
- Allow dense housing, office use, hotels, and institutional uses, but not retail or services.
- Encourage mixed income housing with a strong workforce housing component and work with appropriate state and county officials to find resources (e.g., HUD Community Development Block Grant funds, federal affordable housing tax credits).
- Encourage new senior housing.



RETAINING PEOPLE WHO ARE ALREADY DOWNTOWN AND CREATING NEW ANCHORS

East and West Stanwood already have a critical mass of customers who come downtown. Unfortunately, many, if not the majority, of those customers come for a single purpose (eat a meal, take a train, purchase a supply) and then leave. Retaining these customers and making it more desirable for them to visit multiple businesses can be very effective.

There are several other steps Stanwood can take to support these efforts:

1. Encouraging new anchors either in downtown or adjacent to the downtown that will draw in potential visitors and customers would create the synergy that is possible in a downtown and not in free standing commercial areas.
 - o Encourage the development of a new hotel in or immediately adjacent to East or West Stanwood. Stanwood is underserved by hotels, even with the Hotel Stanwood.
 - o Encourage the new YMCA to be located adjacent to East or West Stanwood. The core of both downtowns do not have available land for a YMCA, but there are sites within a ¼ mile walking distance. A YMCA in downtown would be a game changer and could dramatically improve the vibrancy of downtown. If the YMCA would consider a two story option, it would open up even more possible sites.
2. Adopt Local Infrastructure Project Area Financing (LIPA), authorized in Snohomish County (Chapter 318, Laws of 2011) to prioritize projects that support the downtowns. This is a new

program to allow public investments to pay for infrastructure to leverage development, with the bonds paid back from the increased taxes (tax increment) that result from that investment.

3. Redesign Main Street so that it is a true Main Street, and not a highway referred to as Main Street. This would transform the pedestrian experience and make it more desirable to walk from midtown to either downtown.

- YMCA
- Hotel: train access
- Civic uses

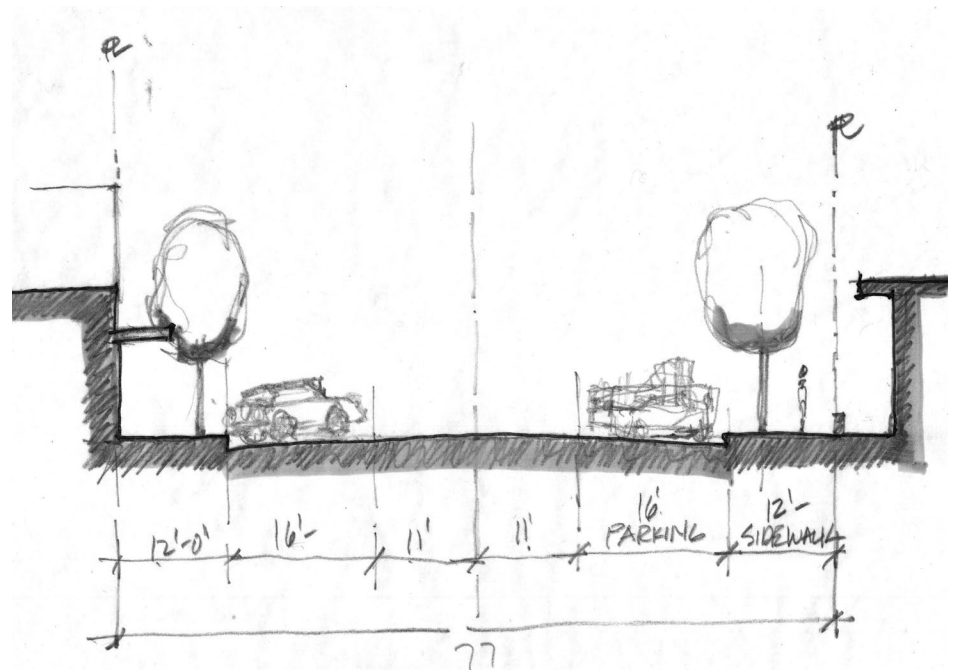


East Stanwood (above) and West Stanwood (below), 500' easy walk, 1,000' walkable circle. Possible site for a YMCA or other large anchor marked.



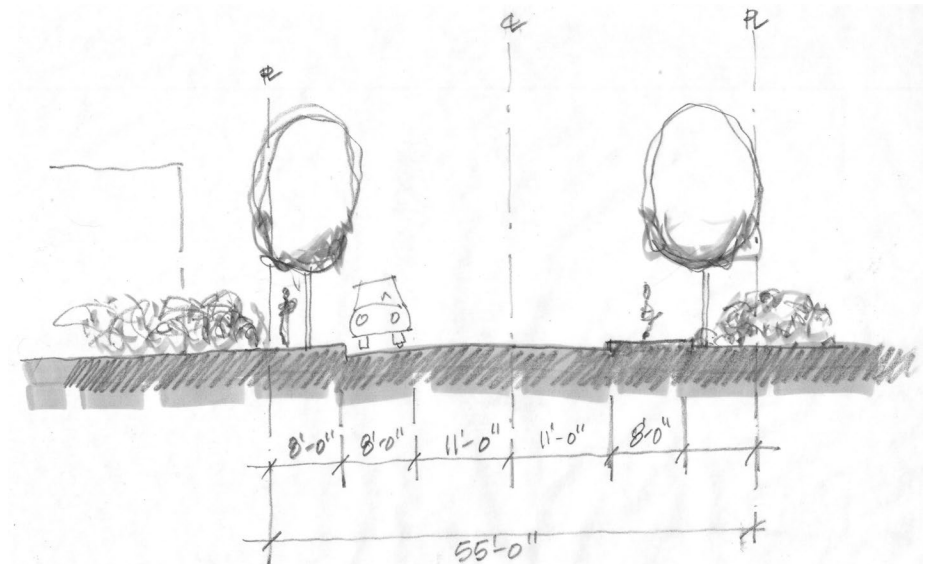
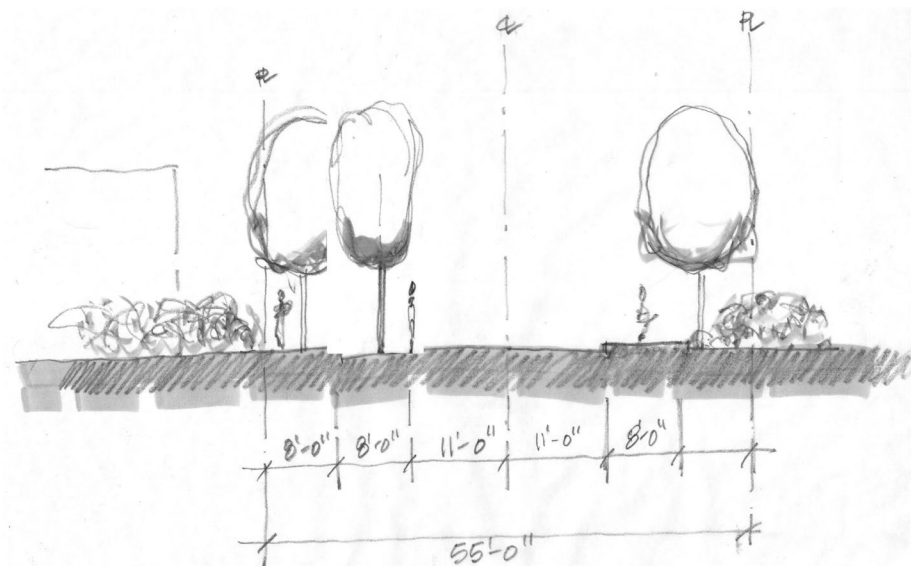
ABOVE: Main Street, East Stanwood works well. Angle parking provides ample parking and is far more valuable to businesses than off street parking. The parking also makes the pedestrian experience more desirable, shielding pedestrians from the noise and danger of cars.

BELOW: In East Stanwood, however, it would still be desirable to narrow the travel lanes, which has the benefit of slowing the speed of traffic, and use the extra real estate used to widen sidewalks.





One block west of East Stanwood Main Street starts feeling like a highway, with wide lanes, a turn lane, and no parking to shield pedestrians. It makes it an undesirable pedestrian experience. Transforming the entire street would improve the experience, but the first block (shown above) is especially important if the YMCA, a hotel, or any other large anchor where ever to transform this large lot into part of East Stanwood.



Between the two downtowns, Main Street does not have the volume or turn movements to require a turn land and does not need such wide travel lanes. The extra real estate can be transformed into a tree belt between the sidewalk and the road. In places where there is demand for on-street parking, some of this extra real estate could be used for that.

VISITORS TO THE WATER AT THE EDGE OF DOWNTOWN

One of the greatest assets of East and West Stanwood, especially West Stanwood, is the potential for great connections to the water. The downtowns have the disadvantages of being near the water, being in the floodplain, and yet water access is all but invisible for most downtown users. There are two critical opportunities for improved access to the water:

1. West Stanwood riverfront park--Developing a park on public land on the water on an existing City owned site.
2. Stanwood western gateway river greenway--Developing a park and possibly resort complex on the water adjacent to the bridge to Camano Island.

The West Stanwood downtown riverfront park can be developed on a small city owned parcel that includes frontage both on the river and on State Route 532. City Council has already been discussing this site for a part and it seems eminently doable. IF this is developed simply as a park, however it be a wonderful resource, but one that has no significant benefit to downtown.



There are two critical improvements necessary for the West Stanwood riverfront park to serve downtown:

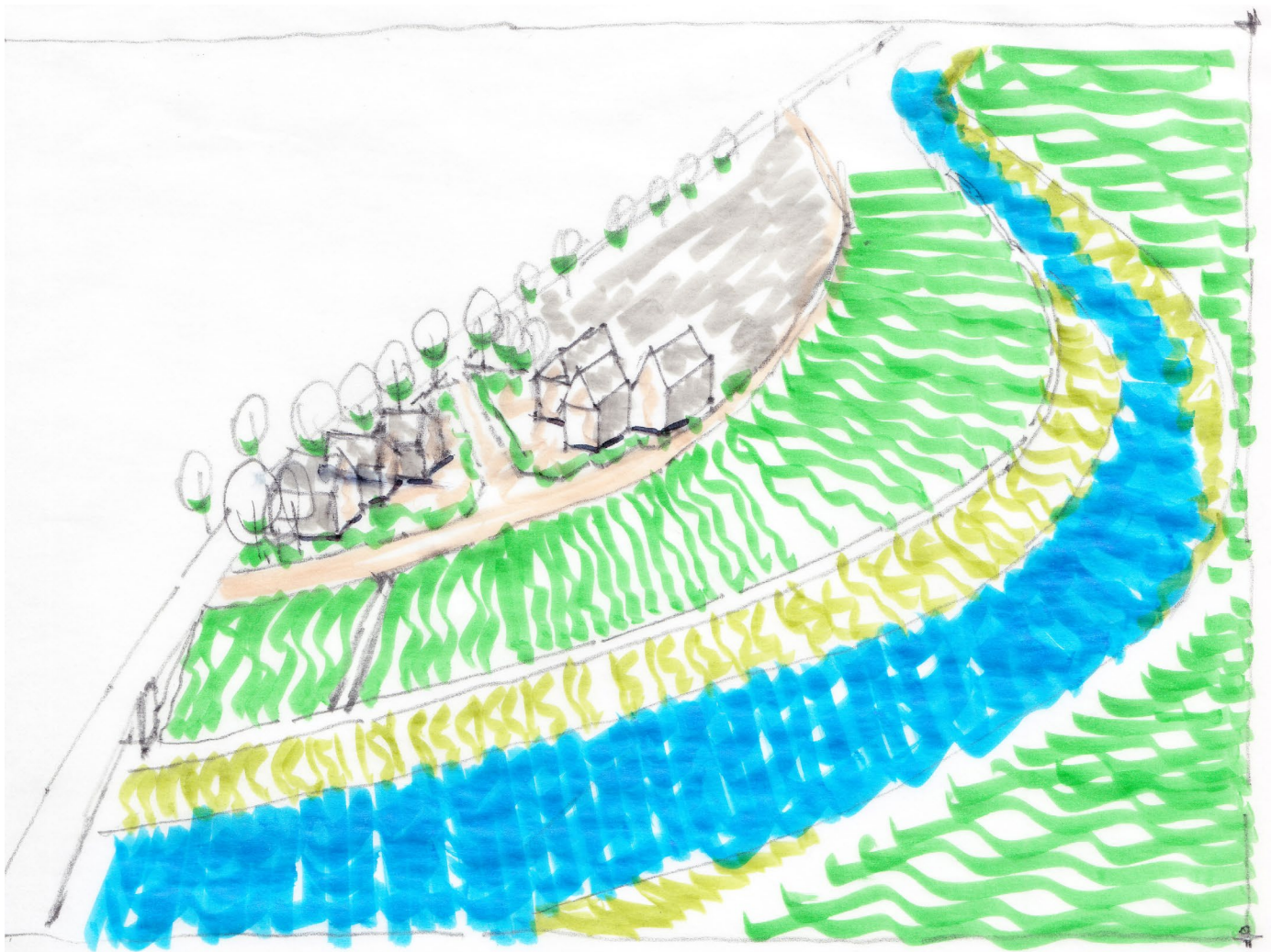
1. Close Camano Street at State Route 532 and convert the street to a park with a visual corridor to the riverfront park and the river. (This is described elsewhere in this report in more detail.) {ERIN: Can you provide that reference}
2. Reopen Augusta Street where it dead ends so that it runs from 270 Street to State Route 532 and includes a visual corridor to the riverfront park and the river.



A Stanwood western gateway river greenway has also been discussed within Stanwood. This area provides a wonderful opportunity for both a large waterfront park and a hotel/resort complex. The two uses, with good design, are totally compatible and each can support the other.

As with a downtown park, however, this should not be designed as an isolated park and hotel complex, where everyone arrives by car and never leaves the site. Design components should include:

1. The entire area between the railroad and the river should be pristine, used only for limited public access and for natural resource restoration.
2. A multi-use trail should run from the Camano Gateway Bridge through the side, using the railroad right-of-way if possible and otherwise running immediately north of the railroad.
3. The multi-use trail should be extended northeasterly from the site into the heart of downtown, with a safe crossing to bring it across State Route 532.
4. A hotel or resort complex on the top of the bank away from the river with low impact development stormwater features and natural resources restoration as a buffer between the complex and the multi-use trail.



Economic Development



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN STANWOOD

As development on portions of Route 532 have taken on a sprawl character, the identity of downtown Stanwood has become even more important. Downtown represents the civic heart of Stanwood and, in order to be a vibrant civic center, it needs a strategy appropriate to its scale, buildings, and businesses. In our SDAT public presentation, we showed slides of generic highway shopping strips from around the country; the area around Rt 532 and 72nd Ave NW is in danger of becoming such a place.



The east and west “villages” of downtown are about a mile apart, a distance not likely to be bridged by infill retail or mixed-use development. We think it is therefore appropriate to treat them as two distinct commercial centers with differentiated economic strategies – and the space between them emphasize infill housing.

Developing (or reinforcing) individual economic identities of the two villages begins by examining the two districts’ customers and functions.



CUSTOMERS

Stanwood’s small population and its relatively isolated location (it is on the way to Camano Island, but it is otherwise off the beaten path) mean downtown’s pool of nearby customers is small. These customers fall into four main “types”, plus one potential group for the future:

- **Stanwood Locals.** People who live in Stanwood are likely to use downtown businesses for their convenience needs – groceries, drug store purchases, cleaner/laundry, casual dining, and other goods or services where they are not inclined to drive a great distance. Because proximity is important, these kinds of purchases are less price-sensitive than “comparison” items, where customers like to shop around.
- **Camano Locals.** Residents of Camano Island use downtown Stanwood for limited purposes. They have limited on-island retail options, so they buy some convenience goods in Stanwood, if they are passing through. Based on SDAT participant interviews, they also come to downtown Stanwood occasionally as a destination for dining or for a few specialty retail shops. However, Camano residents are more likely to cluster their shopping trips and make regular visits to big-box stores and shopping centers off-island. They find (once they are in their cars) that they are inclined to bypass downtown and continue on to Haggen’s, or onto the Freeway to Everett or beyond. Though SDAT interviewees did not represent the entire Camano Island population, residents reported making many purchases online in order to avoid lengthy drives to regional shopping centers.
- **Seasonal Visitors.** The Stanwood/Camano region is a popular location for second homes, used both seasonally and on weekends. While the SDAT did not interview these part-time residents, the nature of such consumers is that for retail purchases, they are likely to look for local arts, products, and foods. They likely dine out more frequently than locals, and they are likely less price-sensitive than locals. Typically, seasonal residents/visitors would prefer to spend money on experiences, rather than things.
- **Seniors.** Because people in retirement have already accumulated all the “stuff” they need, they tend to spend money on experiences (like the seasonal visitors), rather than things. In their retail preferences, they often buy gifts for grandchildren and, therefore, some things that appeal to younger families (e.g., toy and children’s clothing stores) also align with seniors’ shopping preferences. At the same time, many seniors, especially in Stanwood, are on fixed incomes and are therefore particularly price sensitive.
- **Train Riders and Train Commuters.** With the Amtrak train stopping in downtown Stanwood, many residents and business owners talk about the potential customers the train could deliver downtown. (There is a wonderful local ritual reported to the team by Wayne’s Corner Café: the engineer on the morning train frequently calls ahead for Wayne’s sticky buns, and the restaurant then delivers a full tray as the train passes through.) The Amtrak station, however, is not yet a traffic generator for downtown shoppers or commuters, though this group of customers may grow in the future.

These customers can have some overlap among the categories, but the distinctions can be useful in thinking about different customers’ needs, preferences, and behaviors. Most of the groups are inelastic because there is a fixed number of people, although it is possible to capture a larger portion of their spending in Stanwood. Visitors – both seasonal homeowners, renters, and those visiting other attractions in the Stanwood/Snohomish region – represent a category that can be expanded.

THE “BLACK SOCKS PROBLEM”

One particular dissatisfaction with downtown Stanwood came up repeatedly and the SDAT named it the “Black Socks problem.” (As one resident noted, “you can’t buy a pair of black socks downtown.”) This really describes a variety problem: Given some effort, many items can be found among downtown’s stores (e.g., pharmacies like Rite Aid now fill a “general store” role), but some retail staples are just not sold downtown or not available in the brand or price point desired.



Stanwood shares the variety problem with many historic downtowns, and it is the result of structural changes in retailing. While most downtowns had a department store at one time, retailing has gone through many decades of consolidation. When a historic downtown sells apparel, it is often in a distinct segment that doesn't directly compete with Macy's, Target, or online sellers like Zappos. Successful downtown apparel retailers often carve out a more specialized niche, such as bridal, consignment, sporting goods, uniforms, or special occasions outfits and accessories.

SALES VOID

Sales void (or sales leakage) quantifies the amount of local purchasing power that is being spent at retail locations outside the local area. For categories that include retail trade and food and drink, the Stanwood area (including northern Camano Island) has

households on purchases made outside the polygon area in the map, below. ¹



The aggregate sales void represents retail opportunities for specific product categories: where there is sales leakage, it may be possible to recapture some spending. Based on the trade area shown in the map, the following chart represents sales leakage (or surplus) for common retail and service categories (see the chart on the next page.)

¹This map represents a rough approximation of trade area for the purposes of this SDAT engagement. A trade area determined by a more rigorous market analysis might differ.

	NAICS ²	Demand	Supply	Retail Gap ³
Industry Summary		(Retail Potential)	(Retail Sales)	
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	44-45,722	\$198,945,276	\$166,306,642	\$32,638,633
	NAICS	Demand	Supply	Retail Gap
Industry Group		(Retail Potential)	(Retail Sales)	
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	442	\$4,824,139	\$2,736,146	\$2,087,993
Electronics & Appliance Stores	4431	\$3,188,382	\$1,341,312	\$1,847,071
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	444	\$7,193,791	\$2,764,734	\$4,429,056
Grocery Stores	4451	\$33,710,808	\$38,300,001	-\$4,589,193
Health & Personal Care Stores	446,4461	\$7,081,739	\$2,413,153	\$4,668,586
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	448	\$5,900,370	\$679,436	\$5,220,935
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	451	\$1,365,043	\$983,881	\$381,162
General Merchandise Stores	452	\$21,761,236	\$14,384,567	\$7,376,670
Florists	4531	\$246,678	\$56,519	\$190,159
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	4532	\$1,551,289	\$528,263	\$1,023,026
Used Merchandise Stores	4533	\$247,710	\$596,107	-\$348,397
Full-Service Restaurants	7221	\$13,894,710	\$10,177,817	\$3,716,893
Limited-Service Eating Places	7222	\$10,945,691	\$10,140,172	\$805,519

Source: ESRI

²NAICS is the North American Industry Classification System, which assigns a two- to six-digit code to all business types.

³A positive (green) Retail Gap represents available household spending “leaking” outside the defined geography; a negative (red) Retail Gap represents a sales surplus – i.e., retail sale that exceed potential because shoppers are coming from beyond the defined geography.

We attribute the surplus in groceries to sales at Haggen's (plus sales at other, smaller local food stores). "Used merchandise" – the other category in which there is a sales surplus – includes all pre-owned retail goods, including second-hand and consignment stores, as well as antiques.

It is theoretically possible to recapture some sales from the categories that show leakage. The most effective way to do this is to avoid a scattershot approach (e.g., trying to recapture sales from any of these categories) and, rather, developing new businesses (and customers) in a focused, strategic way. It is also possible to establish new categories of commerce in Stanwood (or specialized niches of existing categories) that attract customers from outside the trade area.

STRATEGIES

Stanwood's east and west downtowns offer some convenience goods and services, and these functions can and should continue. Based on our observations and interviews, however, east and west downtown are not well-positioned to become full-service convenience and retail shopping centers, primarily because customers are accustomed to driving to alternative locations. The planned public market will greatly expand food offerings and could become a regional destination, in addition to its convenience to locals.

We recommend pursuing two business development strategies, both of which can coexist with current downtown functions and which have the potential to attract additional destination-driven customers to downtown Stanwood:

- Agrarian urbanism: Focus existing and new food-related businesses on locally-produced products, including locally-manufactured food items.
- Art (especially art glass): Cultivate an art-glass presence in Stanwood to reflect the nearby Pilchuck Glass School and the cottage-industry glass producers around the region.

Both of these strategies seek to establish new segments downtown – an ambitious goal that can be achieved incrementally. These strategies can establish the east and west villages as destinations, adding to the limited buying power available from local households.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

From a business development perspective, pursuing these strategies can be approached from three directions: Stanwood can work with existing businesses to expand or adapt their product mix to align with the downtown strategies, it can recruit new businesses downtown from elsewhere in the region, or it can attract and seed entrepreneurs to open new businesses. Community-based entrepreneurship – often combined with a crowd-funding component – is a growing trend in establishing new businesses where there is not enough incentive for the market to act on its own.

Community-owned businesses (such as food cooperatives) have been around since the 19th century. But they have gained new momentum since the economic downturn over the last five years, and they are now receiving a further boost with the dramatic rise of crowd-funding. Not all community-owned businesses are cooperatives; some are for-profit stock corporations (owned by local investors), and some are forged by informal alliances of local investors.⁴ The concepts and tools of community-owned businesses can be used to tackle any of following business initiatives:

- **Pilchuck Glass Gallery:** Downtown Stanwood hosts several fine arts galleries, and galleries tend to be stronger as a cluster than as standalone businesses. (Their customers are primarily visitors, and the cluster acts as an attractor.) With the Pilchuck School nearby and having a recognizable name among people interested in art glass, Stanwood should create a formal association with the school and the glass medium by establishing a Pilchuck gallery downtown. The school could take a financial position in the gallery, or it could be artist-owned (as the recently-opened Stanwood-Camano Arts Guild gallery).⁵
- **Food manufacturing:** As local foods become big business (regionally-produced products are often sought out by markets like Whole Foods), Stanwood can capitalize on its “agrarian urbanism” ideal by fostering small-scale food manufacturing. This could be in concert with the four-season market project, or a standalone business. As an example, the Mt. Townsend Creamery (mttownsendcreamery.com) in Port Townsend, Washington, began in 2005 with capital provided by a few local Port Townsend investors. Today, the Creamery has a “tasting room” at Pikes Place Market and a presence at several farmers’ markets and at specialty food stores.

- **Community-owned general store:** If local desire is strong – and there is the will to do it – it is possible to solve the “black socks problem”, although it is not likely to be solved by recruitment of an apparel or general-merchandise retailer. (With competition from big-box and online stores, apparel and general merchandise are not likely to be profitable enough to motivate an entrepreneur.) Despite the decline of small-format downtown department stores nationally, several small towns around the country have reestablished community-owned general-merchandise stores. As in Stanwood, they are often motivated by local shoppers’ desires to purchase day-to-day retail items closer to home. Examples of such community-initiated retailing include The Merc in Powell, Wyoming, which opened in 2002. To do it, Powell residents raised 400,000 in startup capital by selling \$500 equity shares to community members.⁶ Saranac Lake, New York, opened The Community Store (community-store.org) in 2011, raising capital in a similar manner. Both stores sell a mix of soft and hard goods, including brand-name apparel. The Merc is run as a cooperative; The Community Store is run as a mission-driven, for-profit business.

⁴Port Townsend, Washington, has been a pioneer in cultivating informal alliances with local investors who take equity positions in local startup businesses. Port Townsend’s “LIONS” – Local Investment Opportunity Networks – have been profiled in Michael Shuman’s book, *Local Dollars, Local Sense* (2012) and in other articles and publications.

⁵As a general principal, the galleries should be located as close together as possible, making it more likely that a visitor will stop into each of them. Right now, there are galleries on the east and west ends of downtown. A gallery map could help encourage patrons to explore all of them. Over time, it would be beneficial to cluster the galleries in one of the downtown villages.

⁶The store has been written about in multiple places, including:
- Smithsonian Magazine: http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/For_Sale_By_Owners.html
- Institute for Local Self-Reliance: <http://www.ilsr.org/community-owned-stores-anchors-older-main-streets/>

- Self-catered, self-service lodging: If Stanwood wishes to increase its visitor traffic, it would benefit from offering additional lodging options. Downtown offers a handful of rooms at the Stanwood Hotel. Other local lodging is provided by a few scattered bed and breakfasts, primarily on Camano Island. While Stanwood's tourism trade cannot support a new hotel at this point, it is possible to add rooms incrementally, and at small capital expense. Long a popular lodging option in European cities, recently some American small towns have started to offer self-service/self-catered upper-story lodging for visitors looking for a convenient, inexpensive option. The Roadrunner Inn (theroadrunnerinn.com) in Fredericksburg, Texas, is one example: it offers three studio-style apartments above downtown retail stores. Guests pick up their key at the store and the rooms are serviced between guests.

CROWDFUNDING

With large banks typically unwilling to lend to startup businesses (or, unable to lend because their money is tied up in other investments), many communities have turned inward to raise capital from people who know the local market. Investment networks like Port Townsend's "LIONS" are actually a new twist on a very old practice of local people investing in local businesses. More recently, web-based platforms like Kickstarter and Indiegogo have popularized and democratized the movement to make crowdfunding accessible to the masses, locally and worldwide. Where Powell's The Merc and Saranac Lake's Community Store were marketed person-to-person and one share at a time, crowdfunding websites allow a broader reach by serving as a financial intermediary and by providing infrastructure.⁷ Even with crowdfunding, traditional relationships remain important, as the most successful crowdfunding

campaigns get substantial early commitments from local business leaders in order to provide momentum and ensure the success of the effort.

The fields of crowdsourcing, crowdfunding, and community-initiated economic development is evolving rapidly. Stanwood leaders can research examples and trends online. Two recent books provide excellent overviews of the trends and tools:

- Local Dollars, Local Sense, by Michael Shuman (2012), and
- Locavesting, by Amy Cortese (2012).

Additionally, a 2010 article on the subject by SDAT team member Joshua Bloom is available on the website of the National Trust Main Street Center.⁸

CONCLUSIONS

Downtown Stanwood faces challenges similar to many historic downtowns around the country, and it faces challenges unique to Stanwood. Its unique challenges include geographic isolation from major north-south routes, and a physical separation between two downtown villages. But Stanwood is fortunate to have preserved its downtown buildings largely intact. This physical setting is economically important, too, because it establishes a unique environment, different from the strip development and shopping centers available elsewhere.

⁷*Recent changes in the 2012 federal JOBS act will give crowdfunding (esp. equity investments by individuals in startup businesses) a legal footing with minimal regulatory interference.* <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/224003>

⁸*Main Street News:* <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/main-street-now/2010/marchapril/community-owned-businesses.html>

The SDAT believes sustainable economic development goals for downtown Stanwood include augmenting convenience retail where there is a demonstrated local need, and expanding destination offerings in the categories of glass arts and locally-produced foods. This report describes a few examples and tools for growing these categories. It is important to recognize that “business development” is one pillar of advancing these strategies. The growth will simultaneously need the support of a marketing program (advertising, social media, brochures, tourism partners), and it will need to be accompanied by physical enhancements – to both the historic buildings and to the 1960s and more recent retail development – to create the attractive setting that will attract additional customers to downtown Stanwood.

URBAN DESIGN



SHAPING THE FUTURE THROUGH URBAN DESIGN

One third of Stanwood's built environment projected to exist by 2025 has not yet been constructed. According to its 2004 comprehensive plan, Stanwood's current population of 6200 is projected to increase to 8840 by 2025, entailing an additional 1000 housing starts for a city with 2500 existing housing units. This represents an incredible opportunity to shape Stanwood's future and identity—but only if compelling design vision and corresponding planning measures are implemented to coordinate growth. How might Stanwood strategically direct this growth to achieve the kind of city that many residents would like to see? Growth, then, can be a real opportunity if smartly managed.

One third of Stanwood's built environment projected to exist by 2025 has not yet been constructed. This represents an incredible opportunity to shape Stanwood's future and identity—but only if compelling design vision and corresponding planning measures are implemented to coordinate growth.

Yet, like most American cities, Stanwood over time has engaged an extensive range of planning tools from economic development studies, to zoning code updates, hydrological modeling, comprehensive plans, and community-inspired design efforts like this one facilitated by the American Institute of Architects. Those accumulated planning recommendations, along with citizen comments voiced at last July's planning workshops, evidence a deep awareness within the community for best design and planning practices. Nonetheless, until an integral urban design vision based upon solid principles of placemaking and backed by incentives for directing

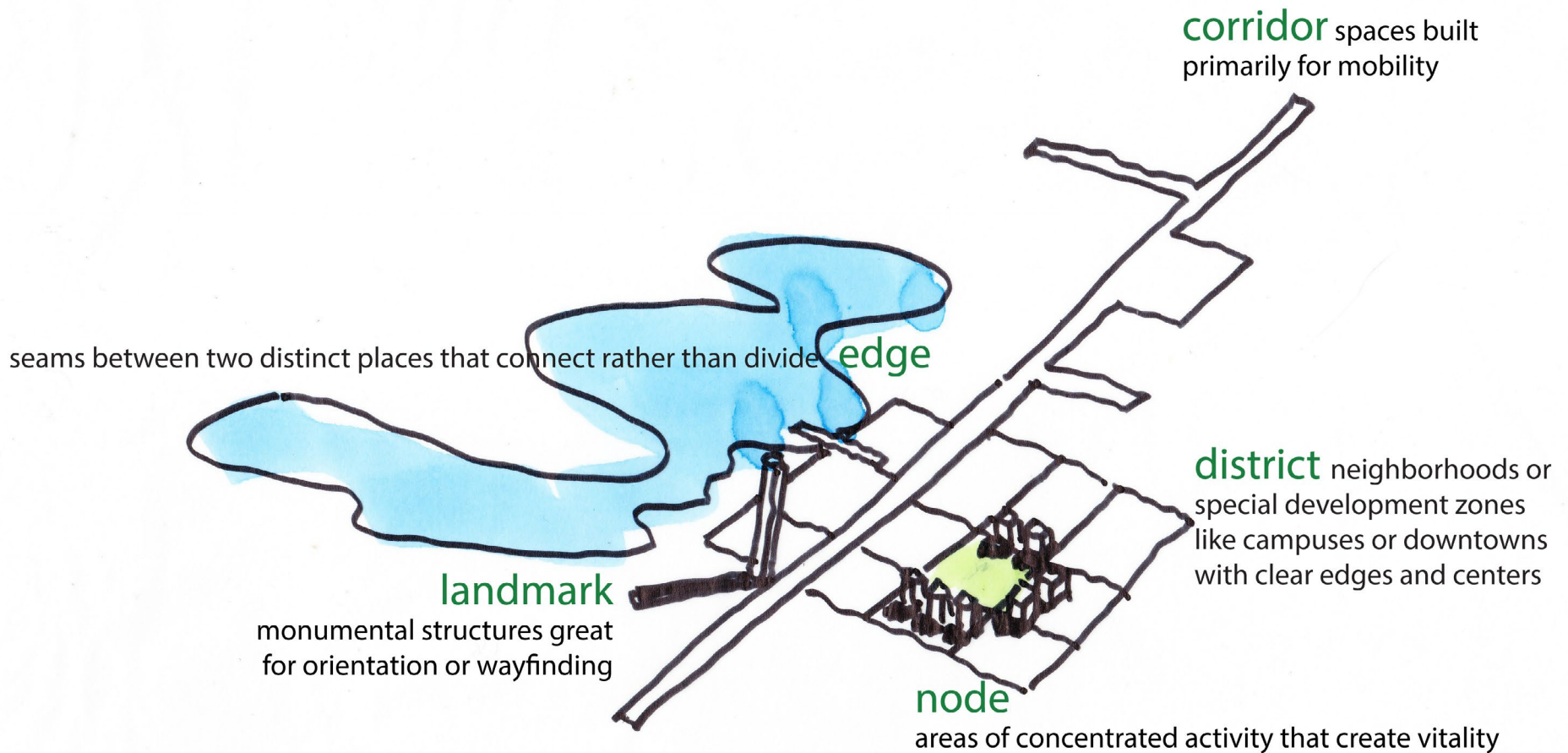
growth toward intended outcomes is enforced, Stanwood will continue to experience growth indifferent to the larger whole. An effective urban design vision begins with the role of identity in structuring an imageable community—one with a strong and memorable identity.

All communities are essentially built from the same ordinary components, but not all places project a strong identity. Much like sentences with verbs, nouns, adjectives, conjunctions, etc., imageable places emerge from a vocabulary of individual components—buildings, infrastructure, and landscapes—arranged such that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Indeed, sprawl and the absence of a sense of place are directly attributable to the absence of good design and townmaking principles, keeping in mind that zoning is not a substitute for planning and design. Zoning is based on the separation of parts rather than their integration. Stanwood's growth can be harnessed to create a highly memorable place if one guiding principle is enforced: every new component of the built environment should repair the city. Every ongoing investment in growth, whether residential, commercial, or infrastructural, should be treated as a resource to make the area whole, creating a unified image.

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THE FIVE BASIC ELEMENTS IN CREATING CITY IDENTITY

In his classic, *The Image of the City*, renowned planner and author Kevin Lynch outlines five basic elements and their roles in making imageable cities. The distinct function of each element and its integrity within the larger whole shapes the image of place and one's perceptions of space. The five archetypal elements are: 1) **nodes** or areas of concentrated activity and vitality; 2) **edges** or seams between two distinct places that connect rather than divide; 3) **corridors** or spaces built primarily for mobility; 4) **districts** or neighborhoods and special development zones, like campuses, with clear peripheries and centers; and 5) **landmarks** or signature structures that offer powerful orienting, signifying, and wayfinding functions. Stanwood's built environment manifests exemplary moments in each category and the following recommendations rely on concepts in these essential elements to convey simple principles and action steps for artfully growing the city.



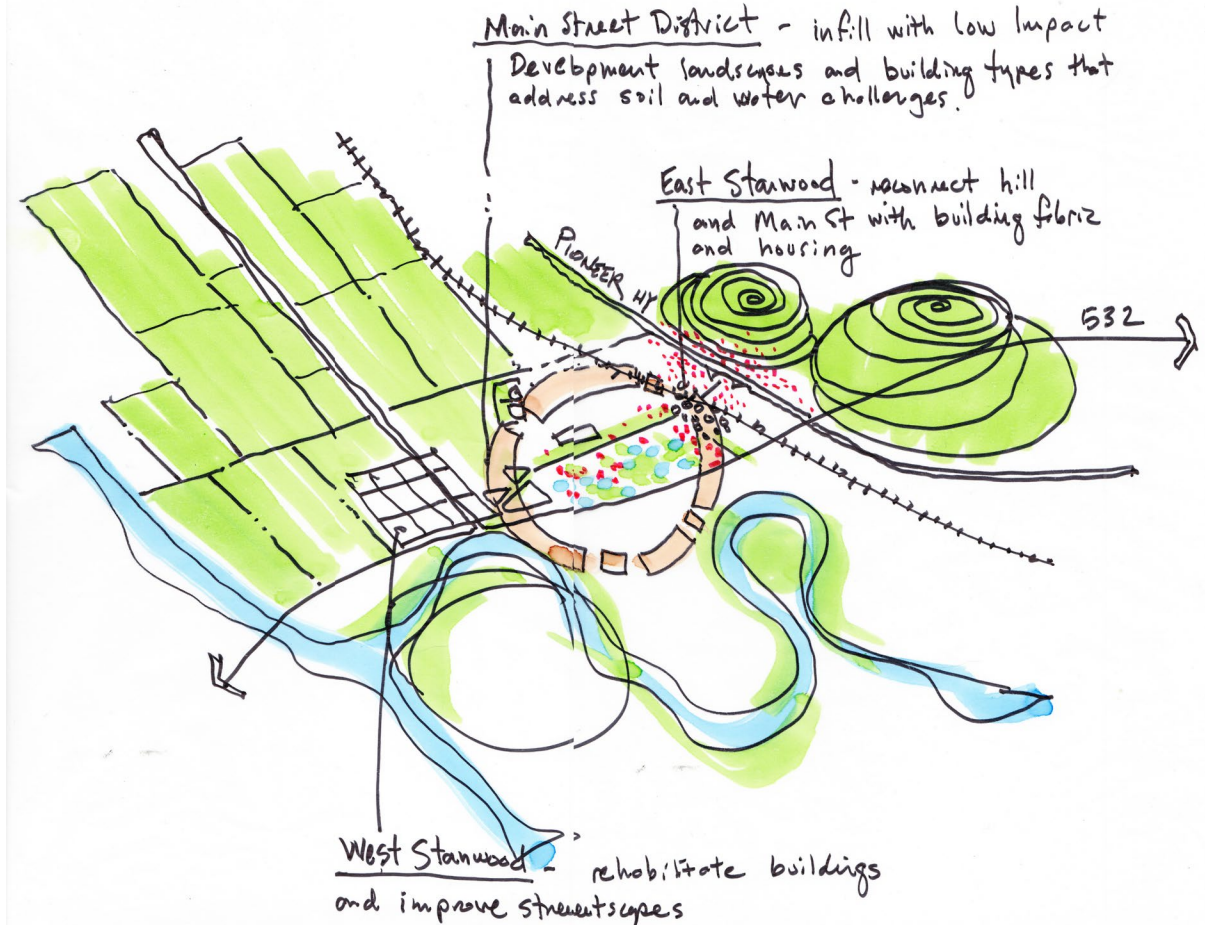
SIX PLANNING AND DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

The following six planning and design recommendations are synthesized from common interests voiced throughout the public design workshops and charrettes held with area residents in July. Given Stanwood's scenic delta geography, it should come as no surprise that landscape and water play a significant role in the development of urban design recommendations. Implementation of these recommendations not only requires further design and engineering services to achieve a detailed and plausible vision, but a more involved integration of urban design, landscape architecture, architecture, and ecological engineering disciplines to deliver holistic solutions that solve for multiple challenges.

1. Use landscape architecture to structure a community identity.

Cities with large service areas lacking urban characteristics in their contemporary development patterns can no longer rely automatically on compact and contiguous building fabric to define imageable places. For instance, traditional Main Streets were defined by skinny and tall urban buildings placed next to one another to define signature corridors. But that was then. Instead, contemporary town planning looks more to

landscape architecture involving parks, community trail systems, streetscapes, tree-lined boulevards, pocket gardens, and edible landscapes to offer low-cost and scalable means by which to structure community spaces and districts. Landscape infrastructure, otherwise known as "landscape urbanism", combines infrastructure with landscape architecture to deliver the urban services expected from infrastructure (land use, utilities, transportation and access, lighting, etc.) and the ecological services necessary to sustain local environments (water regulation, erosion control, pollution control, soil formation, nutrient cycling, food production, pollination, etc.). Value in each of the three major districts that constitute downtown Stanwood can be leveraged through landscape design strategies.



West Stanwood

Due to flooding concerns and the area's proximity to the water, new building construction is simply not feasible. However, since some of the city's most historic and well-defined urban neighborhoods are found in West Stanwood, district features can be reinforced through clustered streetscape improvements. District coherence can be elevated through strategic location of streetscapes that define gateways into the district, particularly along 102nd Avenue (Old Pacific Highway) and 270th Street. Signature shopping corridors like 270th Street may include street trees and groundcover, curbless right-of-ways, and continuous decorative pavement to create corridor nodes which reward walking and increase pedestrian activity (see photo below).



Example of Street Nodes (Courtesy: University of Arkansas Community Design Center)

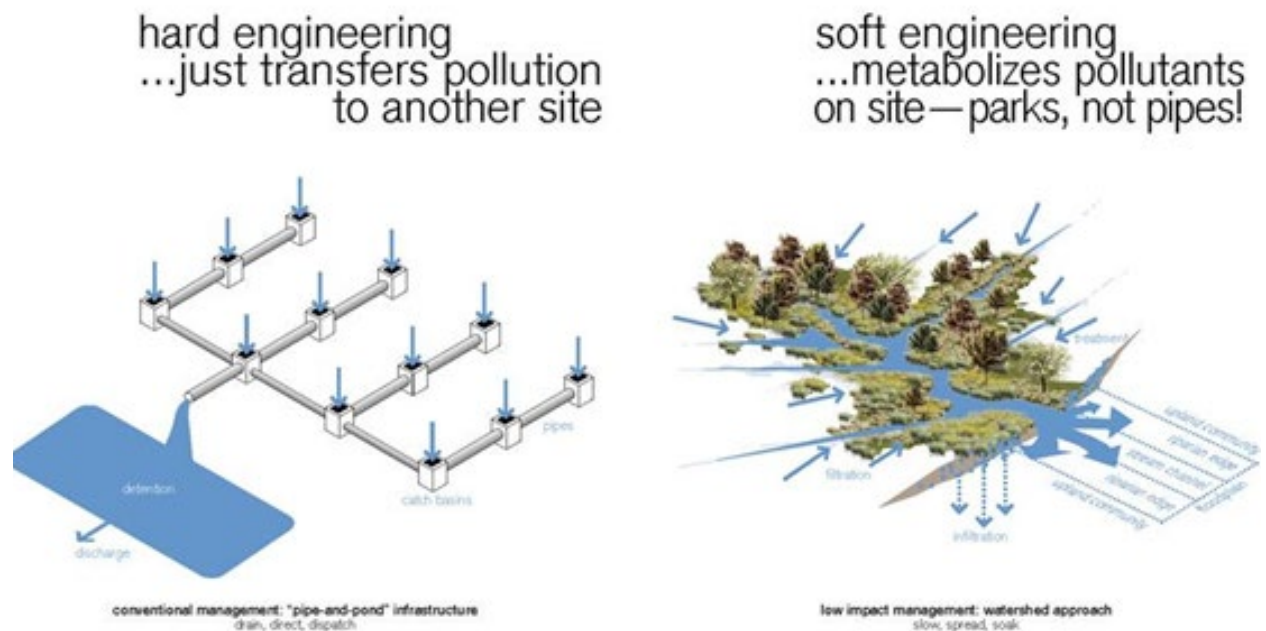
Main Street District

While periodic flooding and unstable soil are also development challenges in the Main Street District, the area does not inhibit new building construction though development does entail increased capital costs compared to conventional sites. Turning a liability into an asset, the district can be overlaid with a Low Impact Development (LID) Plan incorporating "green" infrastructure to ecologically manage stormwater runoff and minimize disturbance from flooding (for further details on LID, see Recommendation 3). LID is sometimes mistakenly viewed as more difficult to implement in urban neighborhoods since more land area is required than in conventional "pipe-and-pond" conveyance systems. However, the Main Street District is land rich considering that streets are oversized, lots are either vacant or underdeveloped, and parking lots for commercial land uses are often grossly oversized per standard development codes. More compact building development would facilitate implementation of LID infrastructure, and create greater returns on investment in the face of elevated construction costs necessary to mitigate soil, flood, and seismic challenges.

A LID plan provides place-based solutions responsive to soil conditions, native plant communities, and local hydrological patterns. Planning strategies aim to minimize hard surfaces in roads and parking lots to reduce stormwater runoff while relying on landscaped treatment networks to manage water on site. Design solutions generally involve parking lot sharing, use of porous paving, green streets that incorporate bioswales and rain gardens, and substitution of native landscapes for the invasive

turf comprising most lawns (the typical short-root grass lawn is not much better than asphalt as it delivers almost no ecological services and conveys stormwater on its surface). Plants and trees are selected for their productive value beyond their ornamental qualities. Main Street, for example, could be retrofitted as a green street with a boulevard section and/or landscaped curb extensions. In addition to its ecological value, LID infrastructure presents a safer, greener, and more aesthetically pleasing public realm. LID landscapes also resolve transitions between the public right-of-way and elevated buildings in flood plains that often appear uninviting. Essentially, the LID overlay constitutes a green infrastructure designed to a 100-year flood capacity, requiring greater coordination from the city and cooperative development arrangements among property owners. An extensive body of literature on LID technologies and applications exists and is understood by most landscape design professionals.

A LID plan provides place-based solutions responsive to soil conditions, native plant communities, and local hydrological patterns. In addition to its ecological value, LID infrastructure presents a safer, greener, and more aesthetically pleasing public realm.



Hard Engineering vs. Soft Engineering (Courtesy: University of Arkansas Community Design Center)

East Stanwood

The other downtown center in Stanwood, primarily centered on Main Street, is remote to visitors and through traffic passing along Highway 532. While most commercial Main Streets traditionally are not tree lined, streetscapes marking entry ways from Highway 532 along 88 Avenue are recommended to announce the presence of the Main Street commercial district. Tree-lined streetscapes define the edge and center of the otherwise amorphous Main Street district and add value to underperforming and vacant property ripe for development.

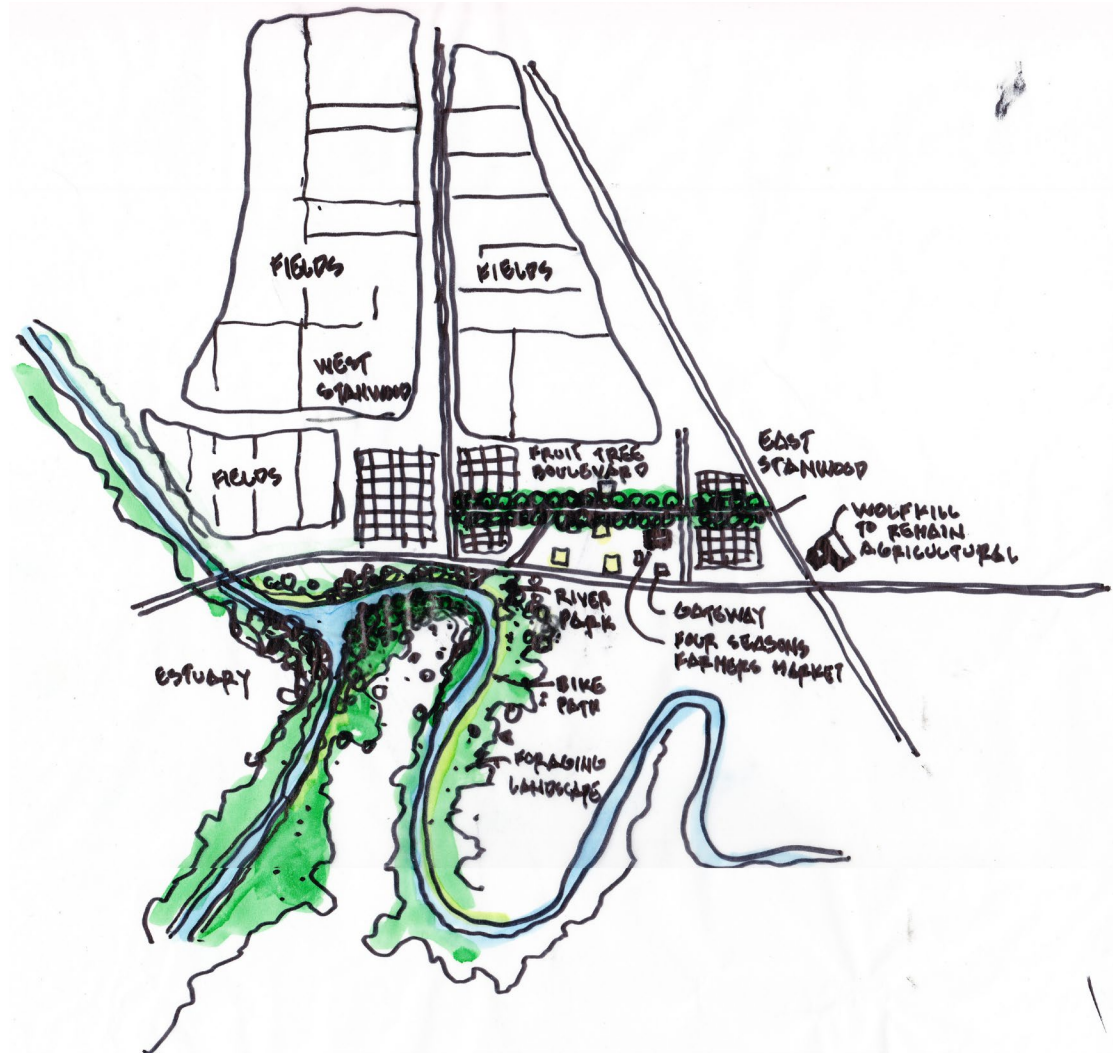
2. Bring agriculture into the city.

Why not develop identity from the means by which Stanwood makes a living? Urban agriculture—or edible landscapes—is an underutilized place-based economic development tool that offers positive externalities beyond food security. Urban agriculture can be an important component in the incubation of a creative economy triangulating food, the visual arts, and hospitality/tourism based on historic town development. An urban agriculture plan would detail strategies appropriate to each area of the urban transect from rural farmland preservation to the urban edge and downtown neighborhoods. The latter supports high-value intensive farming suitable to urban areas, including organic farming and strategic companion planting which has been found to have ten times the yield per acre than monoculture farming.

Urban agriculture can be an important component in the incubation of a creative economy triangulating food, the visual arts, and hospitality/tourism based on historic town development.

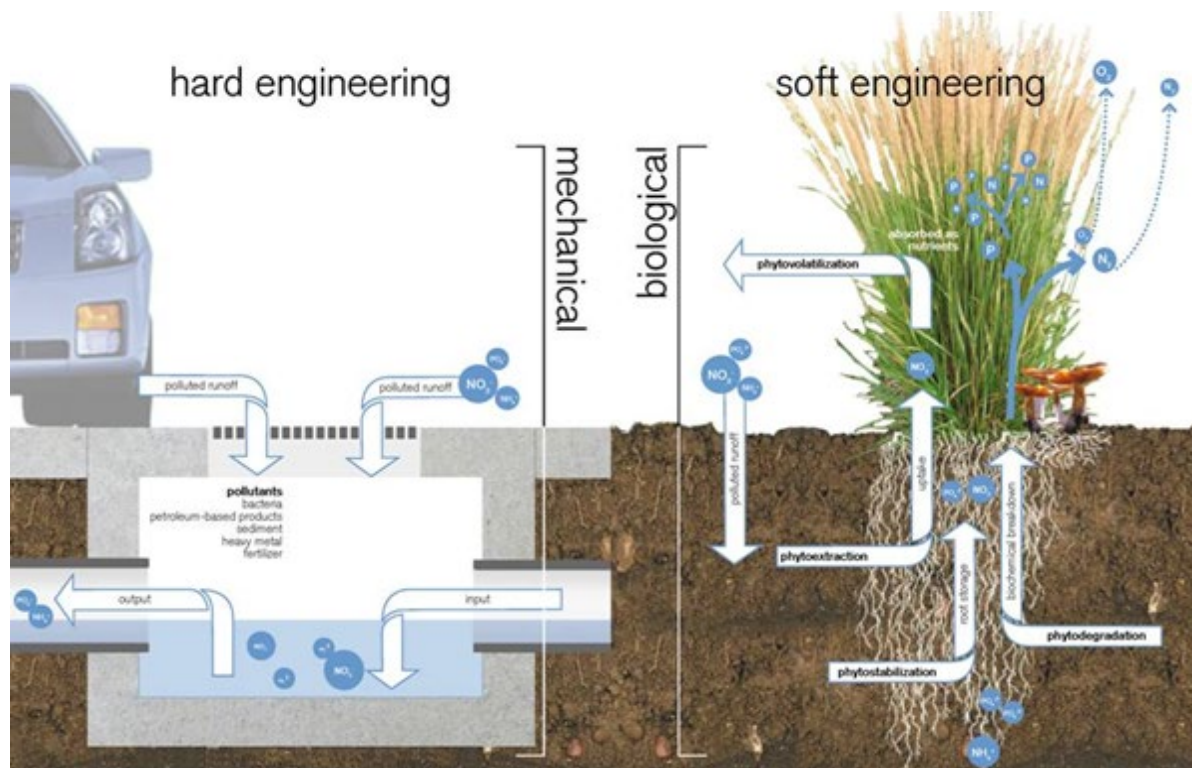
Urban agricultural typologies entail the development of edible landscapes within city right-of-ways, community gardens, parks, front yards, and schoolyards. Edible landscapes including foraging landscapes along riparian corridors and community trails would be a terrific way to establish uniqueness and identity based on local

heritage. Main Street, for instance, may include a fruit tree boulevard. Urban agriculture and a local farm-to-table economy address reclamation of a middle-scale food infrastructure lost to big farming. Such infrastructure encompasses local centers for processing, distribution, cleaning, and retailing. A well-defined plan accounts for the local brokerage of agriculture products that connects suppliers to customers, beginning with stable institutional consumers like school districts, nursing homes, and hospitals.



3. Employ Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater management technologies and landscapes.

What is LID? LID is the use of landscaped-based or ecological engineering technologies to treat and manage stormwater runoff in place of costly hard-engineered solutions. Mimicking natural watershed functioning, the goal of LID is to sustain a site's pre-development hydrologic regime by using techniques that infiltrate, filter, store, and evaporate stormwater runoff close to its source. LID solves for water pollution and management problems on site rather than transferring pollution elsewhere. Contrary to conventional pipe-and-pond conveyance infrastructure that channels runoff elsewhere through pipes, catchment basins, and curbs and gutters, LID remediates polluted runoff through a network of distributed treatment landscapes. In other words, soft-engineered stormwater infrastructure can be planned to deliver valuable ecological services and function as a beautiful green network within the city.

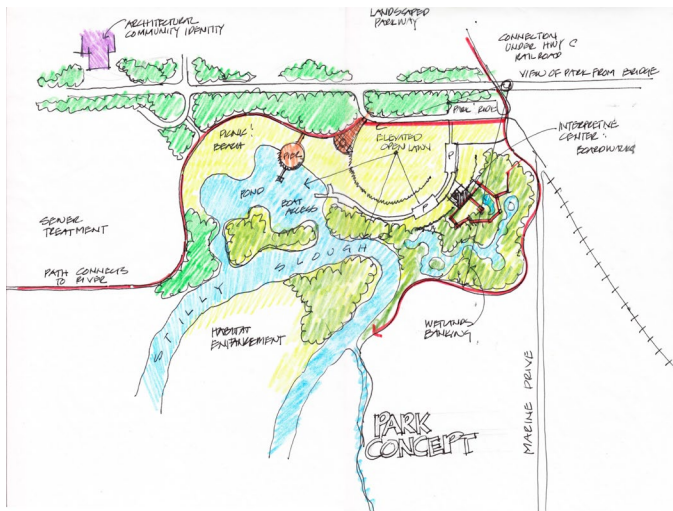


Low Impact Development (Courtesy: University of Arkansas Community Design Center)

LID technologies were traditionally employed as single-lot applications in land-rich agricultural and suburban contexts. However, urban areas are now adopting LID practices and rescaling their applications to the level of infrastructure and the neighborhood (see programs in Portland and the SEA Streets program in Seattle). A LID Plan for the downtown, especially for the Main Street District, would begin with the hydrological modeling of downtown to understand urban watershed flows and patterns. Modeling is followed by development of a treatment network that actively shapes water flows rather than resists them through expensive and usually ineffective hard engineering approaches. An effective LID network slows, spreads, and soaks runoff to prevent concentrated and channelized flows that eventually lead to property damage. Indeed, the most progressive approach to chronic water management challenges involves formation of a stormwater utility, where all new infrastructure investments in streets, parking lots, detention ponds, and open space are coordinated to deliver ecologically-based stormwater management at the scale of the district. Every new public and private investment can play a role in the incremental creation of an LID network. LID landscapes can be simply

conceptualized within the five-element vocabulary of corridors, nodes, landmarks, edges, and district, including:

- Rainwater gardens and xeriscape lawns (native drought-tolerant plants) on individual lots (nodes and districts).
- Green streets that minimize impervious paving and integrate bioswales within their right-of-ways (corridors).
- City parks, pocket parks, and other open spaces that integrate landscape-based treatment systems combined with recreation facilities and park aesthetics (nodes and landmarks). By the way, the proposed River Park on the Stilly Slough suggested and drawn in the first charrette is still a great idea!
- Area greenways and trails that restore floodplain and other riparian functioning (edges and districts).



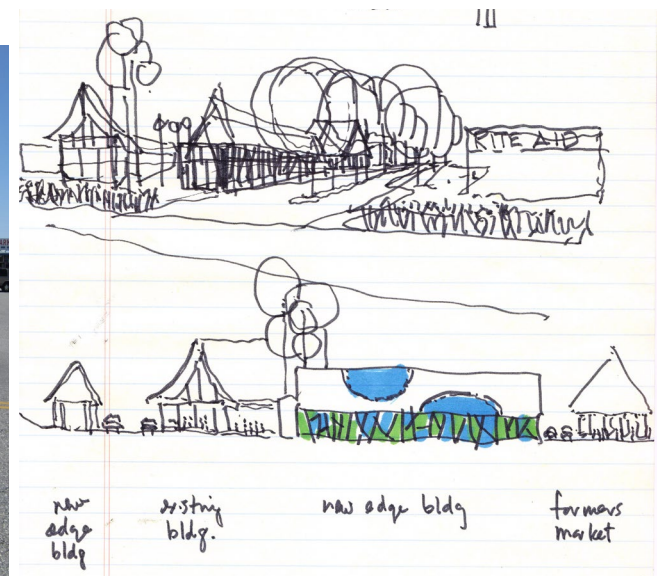
River Park on the Stilly Slough

4. Develop a downtown gateway with creative infill and LID parking solutions.

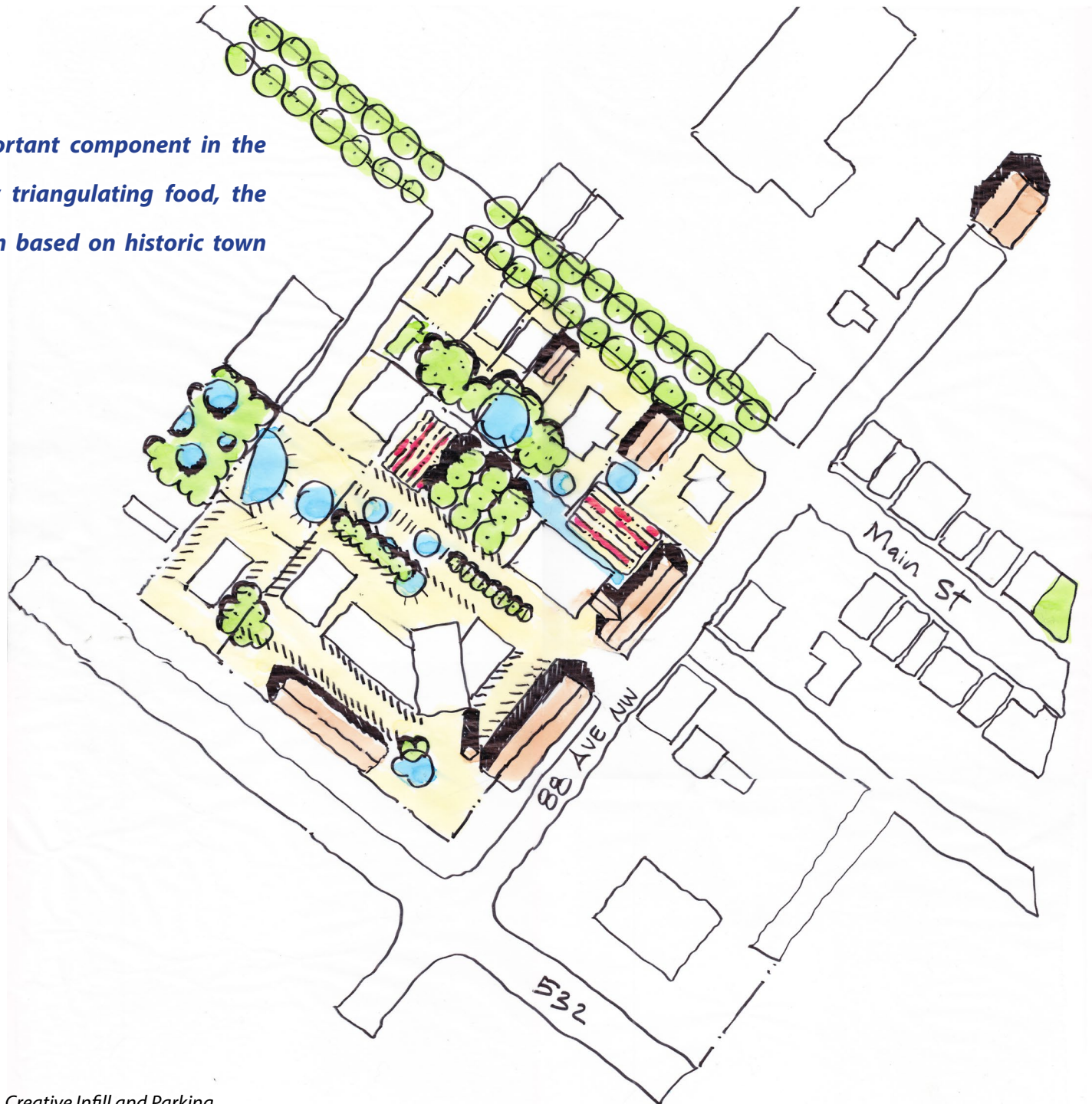
The iconic commercial block on the northwest corner of Highway 532 and Highway 88 could be incented to become an important gateway node announcing arrival into Stanwood. The shopping center's unique late modern roadside aesthetic is an ideal armature for catalyzing additional infill development related to a farmer's market, professional offices, and supporting retail. The oversized parking lot could easily be retrofitted as a demonstration LID parking garden with rain gardens, bioswales, and infiltration gardens. Since good infill development shapes the street edge to define an imageable public realm, infill strategies are critical in optimizing the roles of both the block interior and the surrounding streets. Appropriate infill development can make 88 Avenue a great gateway street connection to Main Street, clarifying edges and center of the district, while creating an interesting activity node along Highway 532. The first order of business is to set aside modern zoning, which requires building setbacks from the property line, and substitute a form-based code that stipulates the opposite—build-to requirements that allow buildings to define the street edge. Form-based codes ensure an interesting, vital, and thus walkable environment. People will walk if the environment rewards them for it.



Infill Development with Farmer's Market on 88 Avenue



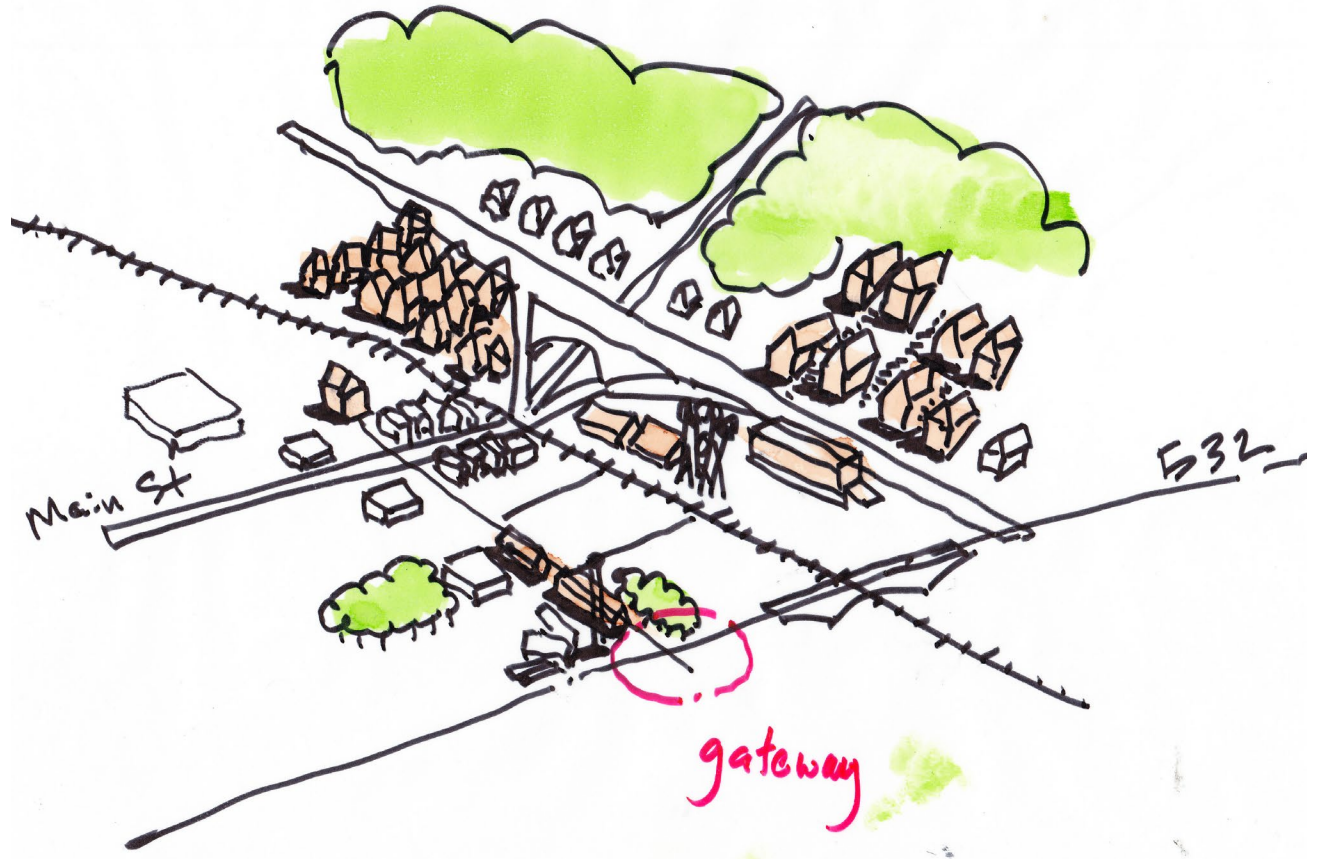
Urban agriculture can be an important component in the incubation of a creative economy triangulating food, the visual arts, and hospitality/tourism based on historic town development.



Creative Infill and Parking

5. Expand upon the connection between East Stanwood downtown and the hillside.

The fabulous views overlooking the riparian valley from the hillside around Pioneer Highway are an underutilized development asset. Why not incent some of those future housing starts to form urban hillside neighborhoods, adjacent the East Stanwood downtown? This would move the Main Street District toward the creation of a Complete Neighborhood? Complete neighborhoods approach self-sufficiency by accommodating all land uses, including residential, work, and commerce, within walking distance of one another. Land-use mix, rather than transportation, is used to improve access to essential services. Downtown commercial districts without a surrounding stable residential consumer base will always struggle as marginal enterprises. Hillside neighborhoods incorporating green pedestrian infrastructure can overcome the gap between downtown and isolated neighborhoods on the hill. The national resurgence of American downtowns over the past two decades has shown that improved connectivity is a powerful economic development tool.



East Stanwood: Completing the District

6. Preserve important legacy structures.

Signature structures in the built environment remind us of our heritage and/or harbor memories of important community happenings. Many of these structures also hold unique architectural qualities and their vernacular imagery acquire landmark status over time. Even industrial buildings from past generations, like the mill structure along the rail line, now attract affection and project significance. Despite the mill structure's irreplaceable imagery, its value as centrally located "cheap space" may prove indispensable to a resuscitated urban agricultural economy needing small-scale processing and distribution facilities. Cheap space plays a fundamental role in urban revitalization by providing low-cost facilities for the incubation of creative but marginal economic activities in urban areas. Artist lofts from the adaptive reuse of abandoned warehouses are good examples of value creation from once neglected structures. Rather than see emptiness and underutilization, imagine possibilities.



CONCLUSION

While almost all cities are legislatively required to plan, few cities achieve good community design. That communities do not get the kind of development they desire is usually attributable to the public realm's inability to exert design leadership and to set high standards by which owners develop their properties. Good design that holistically solves for multiple economic, social, and environmental challenges does not emerge from conventional tools in zoning, economic development analysis, and comprehensive planning. Good design is a function of strong and resourceful governance with a cultivated capacity to imagine and enforce implementation of design visions. Since the process begins with engagement of design professionals who think holistically, Stanwood is on the right track to shape the future it desires as long as the community follows through with further implementation steps.



TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTIVITY

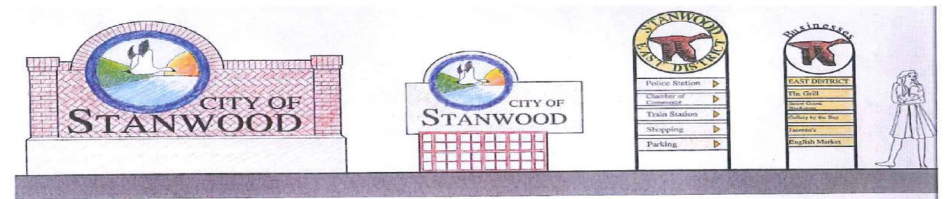
TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY

One of the most important things municipalities can do to promote livability in and among adjacent communities is to concentrate growth and diversify the transportation system. Historically, compact walkable communities and neighborhoods were built because transportation options were limited. One either walked or hopped on the bus or train. Citizens lived in-town and only those who worked the land lived outside the “city limits”; rural dwellers were responsible for trucking their goods to market at which point they also took care of their needs for goods and services. With the advent of personalized travel by automobile, central cities dispersed because anyone could go anywhere for anything at anytime!

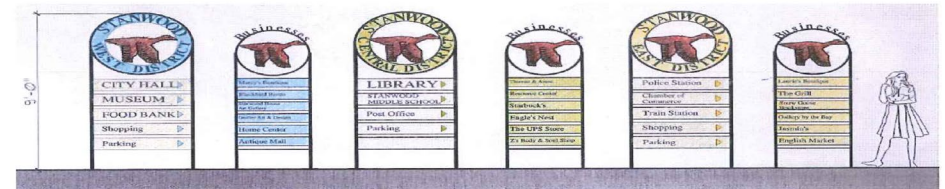
More than half a century of post auto-era transport has had the unintended consequence of focusing many land use decisions on the principal (if not sole) transportation option available – the highway option. The resultant sprawling pattern forces the use of single occupant vehicles and ever widening highways. The challenge for many communities is to revitalize their original land pattern and dedicate dwindling resources toward strengthening the existing core communities.

Stanwood –Camano is no exception. The following section will assess key components of the transportation system in these communities and make recommendations for their improvement that will support walkable and livable patterns of development.

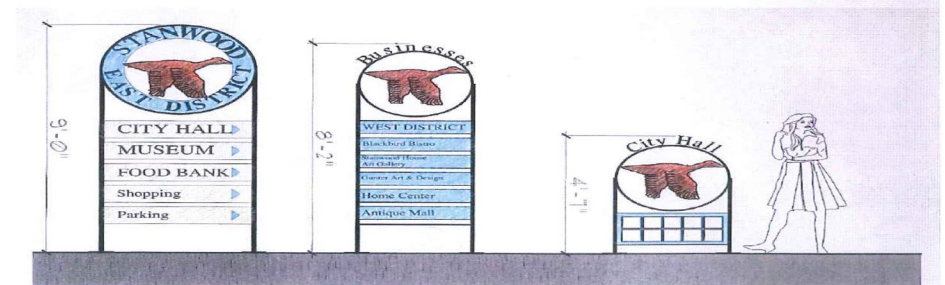
According to Washington State DOT or WashDOT, State Route 532 (SR-532) is a rural collector of regional significance. SR-532 is 10.09 miles long and connects Camano Island, Stanwood and parts of western Snohomish County to I-5. The highway carries roughly 20,000 vehicles per day through Stanwood. It was improved in the last several years when DOT installed on-street parking and a center turn lane (to minimize rear end crashes) along Stanwood’s western end. This cross section differed substantially from that which was envisioned in the 2003 DAT and somewhat from the SR-532 Development Plan designed by WashDOT.



ENTRY, DISTRICT & BUSINESS SIGNS



DISTRICT & BUSINESS SIGNS



Citizens who spoke at the 2012 stakeholder and public sessions talked about how travelers don't know what is off SR-532; that a downtown exists there with a lot to offer. They talked about how visually the corridor is not very appealing and that it is not a comfortable place to walk or bike; it lacks connectivity with the rest of the community.

Participants also noted there is no Gateway that shows one has "entered" Stanwood. The easterly section of the 2-lane rural roadway is controlled by DOT which allows access only at established intersections. The only access points in this section today are at 72nd Avenue NW and Pioneer Highway and 88th Avenue NW. To give travelers a sense of arrival, a Gateway plan, including landscaping and signage at a minimum, should be implemented. The City of Stanwood's proposed new Beautification Project for SR-532 is a great beginning (graphic on previous page); proposed in summer of 2011 and adopted in June 2012, it envisions banners, wayfinding signage and landscaping. In addition to wayfinding, Gateways should be included at these access points; and one gateway should be included heading east from Camano Island on the east bound side of the highway in the vicinity of 104th Drive NW.

At the corner of Lindstrom Road across from 72nd Avenue NW, a "Welcome to Stanwood" sign kiosk or sculpture with appropriate landscaping would signify arrival. A small corner of the vacant land at this location (as little as 200 - 400 s.f.) could be set aside for this purpose.



Consistent with the theme currently proposed, a wayfinding sign could be used at Pioneer Highway directing travelers to "uptown", and other public points of interest most easily accessed at this intersection.

For accessing downtown, the Beautification project envisions appropriate signage. SDAT recommends reconsideration of the existing depicted location for west bound Entry Sign. Based on the Map in the June 2012 Memo amending the Code, one existing sign and one new entry sign is proposed. For travelers arriving from the east, the existing entry sign appears to be on the south side of the highway; this causes a driver to visually locate the sign across opposing traffic and diverts their vision from straight ahead. The Entry sign would be more safely placed on the side of the highway that matches flow of traffic.

Speeds and through-travel could be reduced by narrowing the field of vision without necessarily removing pavement. Along SR-532 from 88th Avenue to 104th Avenue, landscaping would substantially beautify this cross section. In other communities, some not-for-profit business groups in cooperation with municipalities incentivize the private sector to take on landscaping the public realm by providing landscape materials (i.e. tree/shrub planting programs) with the owner undertaking land prep, planting and maintenance. This can be a good way to introduce a “common landscape scheme” where repetition and pattern can be appealing to the eye. As an alternative, the highway right of way could remain grass with landscaping right up to the line within a 10’ strip on the private property side.

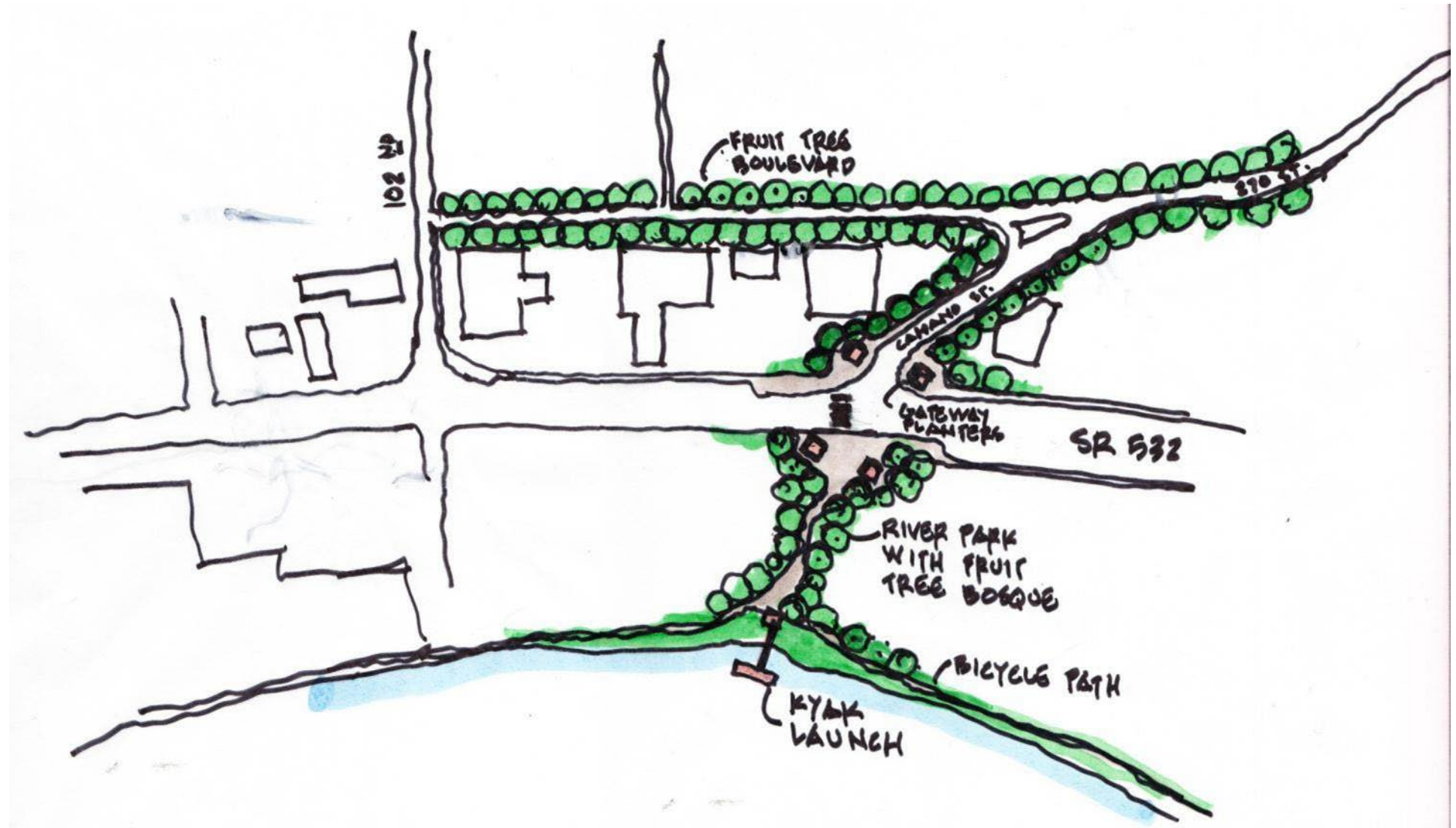
Because the parking lanes are augmented by on-site parking, this linear space becomes an opportunity for creating wide esplanades separated from the travel lanes by planters. The esplanades could include pedestrian and bike ways in the form of a multi-use path. Narrowing the pavement across which pedestrians must pass to get from one side of the highway to the other increases safety and makes a space more inviting. An option to removing on street parking is to leave it but incentivize private land owners to remove on-site parking and instead use the freed up space as ‘public’ space for pedestrians and cyclists. Ideally, a public easement should be granted across the frontage of each parcel in order to assure ongoing access should properties change hands. Incentives would include reduction in assessed value and could include fee reductions.

Longer term, another way to slow down traffic and increase the appeal of doing business in Stanwood is to require a zero setback from the sidewalk in order to “downtown the strip”. A zero setback establishes a ‘wall’ of buildings much like a downtown; flood management could be addressed by reserving the ground area for under-building parking over a 3 or 4 story building (see <http://roads.maryland.gov/ohd/MainStreet.pdf> for more information.)

At the Camano Street intersection with SR-532, there is a prime opportunity to create access to the riverfront across a city owned parcel on the south side of SR-532. One option is to prohibit auto traffic from using Camano Street to access SR-532 and to reinstate the Augusta Street connection to SR-532. Camano Street could now be used solely for bike/ped access. As the intersection of Camano Street and SR-532 would now be the principal bike/ped access to the SR-532 business area and the waterfront, a major crosswalk – possibly using a speed table at its approach – could be designed here. At the very least, an extra wide cross walk should be used. At each corner of the cross walk, 4 large planters should be placed at the edge of the travel way as a buffer to pedestrians and cyclists as they wait safely before crossing (see <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/works/njfit/toolbox.shtm> for more information.)

Connecting downtown to the water front at this location could be accomplished by a small kayak launch area. Over time, the city should take advantage of opportunities to work with the county and private owners to acquire access easements along the river at the rear of private property in order to provide a waterfront trail. From this area,

such a multi-use trail could travel along the river to Marine Drive where it could connect to a roadside trail leading back to the Park 'n Ride lot much as is described in the Bike and Trail map from the 2004 Stanwood Comprehensive Plan.





Once at the river, it may be possible to create a river crossing in the vicinity of 264th NW in order to access Thomle Road which could be followed to Marine Drive, then onto Rydjord Road to Railroad Road and Miller Road where it can loop back to Pioneer Highway, 64th Avenue NW across SR-532 to Woodland Road where it can access the neighborhoods in Uptown.

Some have suggested a trail connecting to the Centennial Trail head in Bryant at the Route 9/SR-532 intersection. On-road riding is not as comfortable as off-road due to high speed traffic nearby but is a good short term solution as shoulders along SR-532 are wide; longer term, the city should work with the County to acquire a strip of land on the south side of SR-532 all the way to Bryant Route 9 intersection and the trail head.

DOWNTOWN TRAIL

Safe routes to school is a program of the FHWA and can be a funding source to assist communities with creating safe pedestrian/cycling connections between neighborhoods and schools. Stanwood should work closely with the Puget Sound Regional Planning Commission MPO to apply for this funding.

From 84th Avenue, the idea of a Rail Trail adjacent to the AMTRAK rail line could bring cyclists full circle from the river, to the station and along a rail spur that travels at the back of Heritage Park toward the Sound and SR-532. The only gap in such a trail then would be at the back of Twin City Foods along the River. As an alternative, the use of Saratoga Road should be explored until such time as a river side connection may be made.

Completing such a downtown trail loop would provide recreational access and may provide a transportation option for those living and working within this area. The





2004 Comprehensive Plan Bike and Trail Map should be pursued and expanded upon to make sure that schools and neighborhoods remain connected.

CONNECTING DOWNTOWN TO CAMANO ISLAND

The shoulders along the SR-532 corridor are ample for on-road

bicycling with the exception of the Davis Slough Bridge. According to WashDOT records, that bridge will be raised and widened in 2013 to provide 14' shoulders. The shoulders from the end of SR-532 at Terry's Corner down along East Camano Drive at least to Monticello Drive appear to be adequate of on-road bicycling. The highway shoulders on the west side of the island are quite narrow; the pavement condition appears to be quite good. As such, unless substantial new traffic is added, an improvement project is not likely in the near term.

Working with Island County, Camano Islanders may wish to explore how an off-road trail may be created. All publicly owned or tax acquired parcels should be mapped and opportunities for connecting them should be explored. As new parcels become available, the county should consider their value in retaining them as part of an island wide off-road trail system. Done properly an off-road trail could consider hoof, foot

and wheeled traffic (although bike and equine traffic may need some separation). Explore this link to see how such multi-use trails are accomplished at Acadia National Park in Maine: <http://www.nps.gov/acad/planyourvisit/upload/CRUMmap.pdf>

CONNECTING DOWNTOWN TO UPTOWN

In order to connect downtown with "uptown", the intersection of Cedarhome Drive, Triangle Drive in the area of Pioneer Highway should be addressed. As it currently functions, the intersection can be confusing and unsafe for drivers. Pedestrians and cyclists have no way to travel through this intersection unless they are on the north side of Cedarhome Drive and are heading for Pioneer Highway. However, once at Pioneer highway, the roadway is very narrow with no room for on-street parking or sidewalks. The safest way to get across to the neighborhoods in Uptown would be to travel under Pioneer Highway. This too is a particularly narrow passage with barely enough room for two way traffic. One way to begin to address this difficult area is to reconfigure the intersection as shown in the diagram. Triangle Drive would be modified to create a 90 degree turn from Cedarhome Drive; it would also be limited to one way travel in a southerly direction. Cedarhome Drive would also be configured to create a 90 degree intersection at Cedarhome Drive NW. The wide access point at the veterinary clinic would be managed with an entrance and exit separated by a landscaped island. Making these changes provides the opportunity for a sidewalk on the south side of Cedarhome Drive, a crosswalk where Cedarhome Drive NW travels to Pioneer Highway. The sidewalk could continue onto Cedar home Drive, crossing at Triangle Drive, and entering a small park and stairway to Pioneer Highway. If at all

possible, the sidewalk should be continued underneath the overpass even if travel under the bridge is restricted to one vehicle at a time or worst case, to one way travel. A traffic engineer should be consulted to obtain traffic counts/circulation needs and to consider turning radii, and lane widths before a decision is made to modify this intersection.

TRANSIT

Stanwood residents and Camano Island residents alike identified the excellent bus system provided by Island Transit. Stanwood residents expressed a desire for shuttle service between the two downtowns. The Island Transit website for Camano Island shows that it not only makes an island loop but also makes several stops in Stanwood. As this is a free public service, Stanwood residents may ride as well when the bus travels in town. More frequent headways are probably not likely to occur until a greater ridership exists in either community. Stanwood residents should become familiar with the transit loop and take advantage of it not only to frequent Stanwood shops but to visit Camano Island as well. Limited commuter service exists by bus and by train. Again, until such time as the density of Stanwood increases, the likelihood of increasing that service, adding trips or shortening headways is probably not going to happen in the near term. Meanwhile, Stanwood codes should direct as much residential/office/recreational/hotel growth into its downtown or near transit



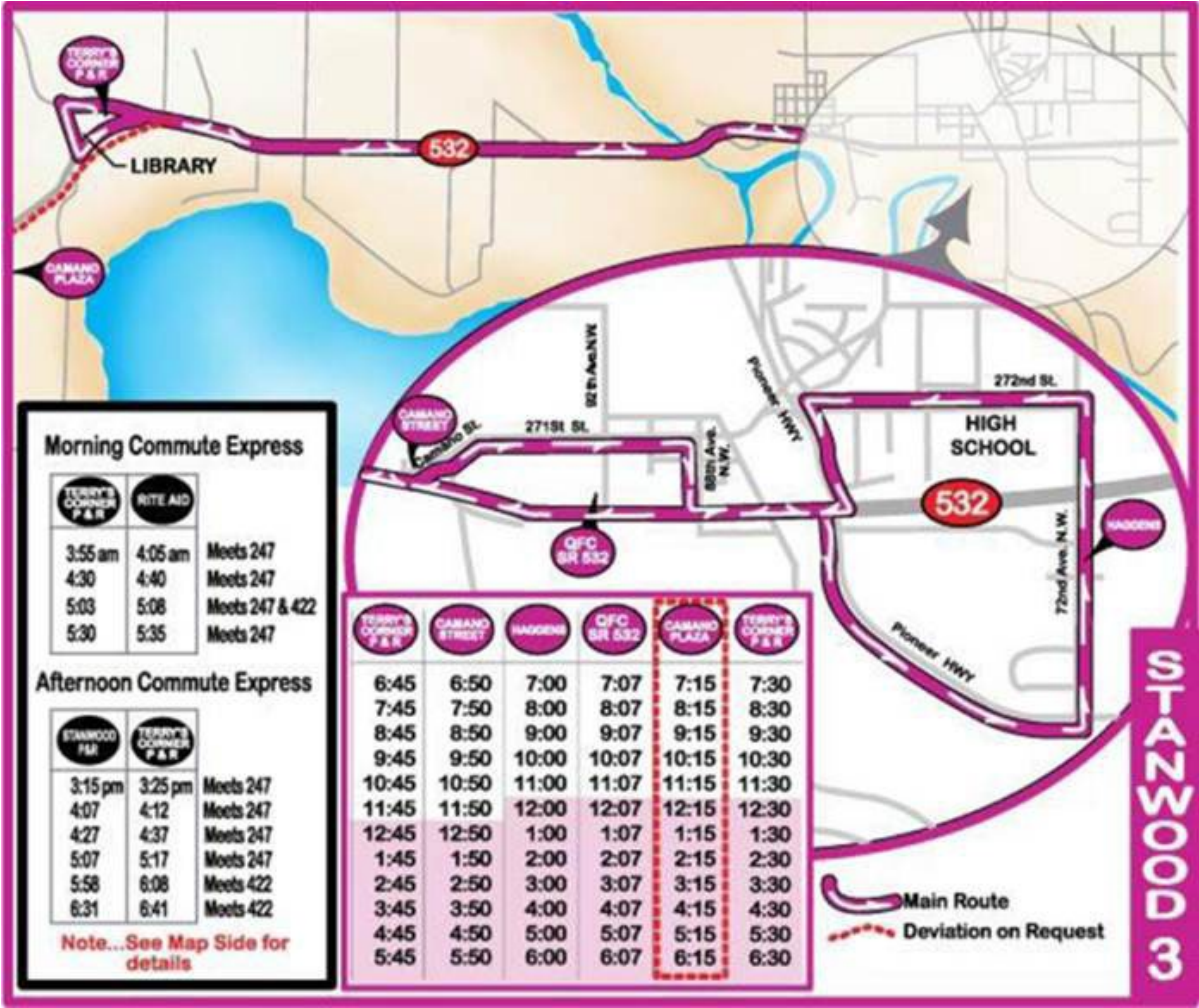
stops to make them more viable and attractive for the long term.

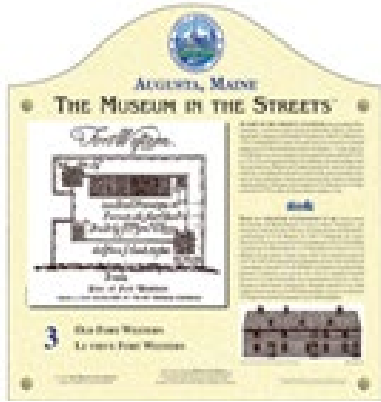
In many communities, public transportation may suffer from a stigma that it provides transportation only for certain populations. One way to overcome this perception is to make it fun. Stanwood and Camano residents should work with Island Transit to not only review stops and headways but also to explore bus and bus stop design that is attractive to the larger population. In Maine, the Explore Maine public transportation systems have become extremely popular and are substantially funded by local business. <http://www.exploremaine.org/newsite/bus/index.shtml>

In Bangor, Maine, the Bangor Area Transit or BAT has a new bus design that plays on its acronym. In other communities, bus stops are funky and fun!

OTHER IDEAS

Some communities make use of a “Museum in the Streets” concept to attract pedestrian. A bollard is installed at an appropriate vantage point to the subject building with an interpretive panel that usually includes a historic photo of





a building and a narrative that provided information as to its history. These have become very popular in some states.

Economic Development efforts should be focused on creating an inviting environment at the rail station platform. A visitor or service based activity in the area of the vacant lot adjacent to Florence Street would provide a positive first impression for travelers as they de-board the train. One good suggestion already made is to build a hotel/YMCA (Vancouver has done this). Adding a public restroom, some bike racks and landscaping would greatly improve this area as well. Having a YMCA near the existing school makes it easier to access for after school events or for the Y to make use of athletic fields. This kind of collaboration will save money in the long term.



Another reason to combine a Y with a hotel is that the Y can serve as the gym and pool amenity that many hotels provide. Of course, there would be the need to work out maintenance, oversight and other liability issues but in light of the fact that many Y's around the country are merging or closing, the Stanwood community would be ahead of the game by pursuing a solid funding partnership for its Y for the long term. A hotel could also host small medical office facilities and related activities that could also use the Y and bring additional business to the area. YMCA-hospital collaborations are growing as well.

Street audits have become a meaningful way to address walking, bicycling and traffic problems in a community. The FHWA and state DOTs has supported such planning efforts involving community residents. Wearing DOT-loaned safety vests and hard hats, with cameras and clip board, area residents walk with a community, county or state official long the street that is being evaluated. From the variety of perspectives



involved, a holistic inventory of issues is identified. Once compiled, a summary is prepared and during a workshop, participants are facilitated through a prioritization and conflict resolution process so that a plan of action can be achieved. <http://www.levelofservice.com/This Measuring Walkability website is one resource for such audits>.

Rails to trails projects are happening nationwide. While it is important to carefully consider which rail lines should be converted to trails, a number of abandoned rail lines have undergone very successful transformation and have become successful economic engines for their regions. In some areas, Rails with Trails have also been successful. Some states have funding programs for such projects through the State DOT or Department of Conservation or their corollaries. <http://www.railstotrails.org/index.html>



MOVING FORWARD



NEXT STEPS

For three days, the SDAT team members spoke with as many people as possible and heard a lot of great ideas for the Stanwood/Camano region. The team gathered information for several months prior to the SDAT, and used its initial base of information to inform its dialogue with the community. The SDAT Steering Committee and local volunteers did a tremendous job engaging the community, and the result was broad participation by hundreds and a lot of excitement and momentum for implementation. The next step is to capitalize on that momentum as the community moves forward with the recommendations provided by the team.

The team has outlined its recommendations for the region in the preceding report. Moving forward, we feel there are several critical things to consider. The first and most important priority is the community's willingness and ability to partner with others to accomplish the goals articulated during the SDAT process. It will be important to partner with property owners, public agencies, non-profits, businesses and residents, even on very small projects. Second, the team feels it is important to leverage previous studies and documents, as many of them have detailed solutions that are still the right choice for the region and can be easily implemented. Third, and most importantly, the team wants to emphasize the need to build upon the significant community engagement in the SDAT process by including everyone in the implementation effort. Participation by all will make it a much more dynamic and vibrant community as well as a great economic driver.

The SDAT team felt throughout the process that the Stanwood/Camano region demonstrated enormous potential to realize its vision for the future. The team observed tremendous capacity locally to engage the whole community in the effort and build the partnerships necessary for success. While the team focused on short, mid, and long term recommendations, they have isolated a few recommendations that they feel are of particular importance:

- **STRONGLY** consider locating the YMCA in East or West Stanwood or within the midtown area between the two. Even though neither downtown cores have enough available land for a YMCA, there are feasible sites within a ¼ mile walking distance. A YMCA in downtown would help support the downtown commercial districts and would help bring vibrancy and people to the area.
- Designate a specific champion for economic development initiatives. Currently, there seem to be too many cooks in the kitchen...and no "chief chef" so to speak. The numerous economic development entities in the communities should get together and make sure their roles do not overlap and that a communication mechanism exists to alert their counterparts regarding certain collaboration opportunities. It may also be important to create a memorandum of understanding between these entities that identifies each function and how they will collaborate. Ideally, there should be a city staff person whose function is dedicated to economic development with a clear distinction between it and the community development (planning) function. Perhaps the two communities could pool resources to hire one person to undertake this role....someone who can convene, facilitate and coordinate but who also has the authority to bring investment to the area.

- Create an overlay district so that any future development within the Douglas Creek Basin, any future expansion of the UGA northward, and any development in the town/village centers would have to undergo an engineering analysis that strictly adheres to the No Adverse Impact floodplain management principles
- Create a Low Impact Development (LID) Plan for the Main Street District to ecologically manage stormwater runoff and minimize disturbance from flooding. Implementing LID infrastructure into more compact building development would garner greater returns on investment in the face of elevated construction costs necessary to mitigate soil, flood, and seismic challenges, thereby revitalizing the Main Street district.
- Create Gateways to provide travelers with a sense of arrival to the region. Institute a Gateway plan in collaboration with the City of Stanwood's proposed new Beautification Project for SR-532. The gateway plan should include landscaping and entry signs at a minimum, and should be located appropriately to welcome visitors and residents to the community.

LESSONS FROM THE DESIGN ASSISTANCE PROCESS

The team was asked to provide some comparable cases that might offer lessons for Stanwood, and the preceding report contains innumerable examples of design interventions, policy models, and other best practices that can be applied to many components of the community revitalization process. However, the team felt it would also be instructive to offer comparable case studies from the design assistance experience which can help inform the design of an implementation process for Springfield. Each case reinforces the preceding framework described for the Stanwood/Camano region, as each community has overcome challenges with scarce

public resources by engaging the whole community in the process of revitalization successfully.

PORT ANGELES, WASHINGTON (POP. 17,000)

Building Community Pride through a Public Revitalization Process

Port Angeles, Washington provides an example of how to inspire pride in change by creating a truly public revitalization process. Their success has been built around involving everyone in the process. In 2009, Port Angeles hosted an SDAT to focus on downtown revitalization and waterfront development. Port Angeles had suffered declining fortunes as the result of mill closures and reduced productivity from natural resource industries. The three-day charrette process created enormous civic energy to pursue a vision for the city's future. "Just two weeks after the SDAT presented more than 30 recommendations, the Port Angeles Forward committee unanimously agreed to recommend 10 of those items for immediate action," said Nathan West, the City's Director of Community and Economic Development. "Public investment and commitment inspired private investment, and, less than a month later, the community joined together in an effort to revamp the entire downtown, starting with a physical face-lift. Community members donated paint and equipment, and residents picked up their paintbrushes to start the transformation."

During the first summer of implementation, over 43 buildings in the downtown received substantial upgrades, including new paint and other improvements. This effort led to a formal façade improvement program that extended the initiative

exponentially. The city dedicated \$118,000 in community development block grants (CDBG) for the effort, which catalyzed over \$265,000 in private investment. The city also moved forward with substantial public investment in its waterfront, which had a dramatic impact in inspiring new partnerships and private investment. Three years later, the city had over \$75 million in planned and completed investments and had turned the corner by producing huge civic momentum across the community. In June 2012, Port Angeles was recognized with a state design award for its waterfront master plan, designed by LMN Architects. The city will break ground on construction in the fall.

As West concluded, “The City of Port Angeles SDAT experience was far more than just a planning exercise. This opportunity for our community was a catalyst for action, implementation and improvement. Three years after the SDAT team arrived, the progress and excitement continue. A primary outcome has been that the process awakened community pride and inspired a “together we can” attitude. Today the inspiration remains and the elements and recommendations of the program continue to be the driver for publicly endorsed capital projects and investments in our community. More importantly this sustainable approach has tapped into the core values and priorities of our citizens to ensure a better and more balanced future for our City.”

NEWPORT, VERMONT (POP. 5,000)

The Power of Leveraged Actions

In 2009, Newport, Vermont brought a Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) to town to help build a revitalization strategy. Patricia Sears, the Executive Director of the Newport Renaissance Corporation, described the town’s dilemma a few years ago: “We were the last city in Vermont to achieve downtown designation from the state. We had some of the highest unemployment in the state. We decided we were done being last. We decided, ‘we are going to be first.’” Newport hosted the first R/UDAT in state history. Hundreds of residents and stakeholders participated in the process. As Mayor Paul Monette said, “it wasn’t the usual political process. Everyone was heard during the R/UDAT.”

Within two years of the project, the R/UDAT had built so much momentum that the town had over \$250 million in new and pending investment, including 2,000 new jobs in a town of just 5,000 – an incredible achievement in the midst of a severe national recession. Like Port Angeles, Newport was able to achieve success through broad partnership and involvement. It also leveraged small actions to build momentum for larger investments. For example, the R/UDAT team included a recommendation to create a community garden downtown, something that has been suggested for Springfield as well. Newport created a community garden with over 32 organizational partners. They took advantage of existing capacity – a downtown parking lot that was donated – and not only created a garden, but programmed it to have a transformational impact.

Out of the community garden, the “Grow a Neighborhood” program was created, teaching neighborhood residents about urban agriculture, providing space for family plots, and engaging local restaurants in a farm to table initiative. Six new restaurants opened in the downtown during the first two years of implementation. Newport also took advantage of widespread community participation in the R/UDAT to engage citizens in code changes, designing a participatory process to create the first form-based code in the state. New investments include boutique hotels, a tasting center featuring regional agriculture, and a waterfront resort. The city also created the state’s first foreign trade zone, attracting a Korean biotechnology firm and other businesses.

The City has undergone a fundamental shift in its thinking since the R/UDAT process. In 2009, the public dialogue was dominated by nostalgia about the city’s past. As one resident exclaimed, “I’ve seen Newport come, and I’ve seen it go.” Two years later, the R/UDAT team conducted a follow up visit to assess progress in the community. As the Mayor stated, “I attribute our success to the successful R/UDAT in 2009 followed by the great public/private partnerships which have developed.” The sense of change reaches all levels of the community. A citizen described the civic “attitude adjustment” that had occurred: “When you have people working together, things can happen and do happen. That’s the most important change that has occurred – a change in attitude. All of a sudden, nothing is impossible.” Today, communities across New England are visiting Newport to learn the ‘secrets’ of its success.

THE STANWOOD/CAMANO REGION CONTEXT

The design assistance program has a 45-year history of working with hundreds of communities across the United States. Any number of successful examples could have been drawn upon to illustrate a path to success for Stanwood/Camano, but the preceding cases were specifically chosen because they represent communities that are comparable to the region, and demonstrate what is possible even with scarce public resources. As the above cases illustrate, success is not dependent upon public resources. It is dependent on vision, broad partnerships, and broader participation from all sectors of the community.

Context is everything. Certainly, this initiative must be realistic. Government cannot do this alone. This work will take a generational commitment, involving all sectors of the community. However, the team found that the Stanwood/Camano region has enormous potential capacity that is currently underutilized, and by unlocking the community’s full potential, we believe the region can enjoy enormous success. The future path must be defined by its citizens. The Stanwood/Camano region must build its own authentic process that reflects local traditions and culture. It must own its future.



TEAM ROSTER

STANWOOD SUSTAINABLE DESIGN ASSESSMENT TEAM MEMBERS

Lee Quill, FAIA – Team Leader

Lee Quill, FAIA, CNU is a founding principal of Cunningham | Quill Architects in Washington, DC, with over thirty years of experience in urban design, master planning, institutional, residential, infill, mixed-use, commercial, and corporate architecture. Recognized as a leader in design, Mr. Quill has presented for organizations such as the National Building Museum, the Urban Land Institute (ULI), Rail-Volution, the American Planning Association (APA) and the AIA. He has also served as a juror for the EPA National Awards for Smart Growth Achievement, and on numerous regional ULI Washington advisory planning panels. He was the Team Leader for the Pikes Peak Region SDAT in Colorado Springs, Colorado in 2011.

Mr. Quill is heavily involved in shaping the growth of the DC Metropolitan area, developing policies with the DC Mayoral Task Force on Transit Oriented Development; the City of Alexandria as Chair of the Urban Design Advisory Committee (OTN) and the Carlyle-East Eisenhower Design Review Board; and as an appointed member of the 2050 Initiative – Region Forward and Metropolitan Development Policy Committee with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

Mr. Quill's projects have received design awards from the American Institute of Architects, the Congress for the New Urbanism, and the District of Columbia's Mayoral Excellence Award Program. His work has been published in Urban Spaces, Architect

Magazine, Architectural Record, Architecture Magazine, Urban Land Magazine (ULI), Inform Magazine, Planning Magazine (APA) and The Washington Post.

Kat Beaudoin- Transportation & Connectivity

Kat Beaudoin has nearly 28 years in planning; 13 years in municipal land use planning, 13 years in Transportation Planning and 2 in private practice. She has been a certified member of the American Institute of Certified Planners since 1990. She served as Chief of Planning for MaineDOT between November 2007 and January 2011 when she retired from public service.

During her tenure at MaineDOT, she served in 5 different capacities (Regional Planner, Policy Specialist, Assistant Director of Planning and Director of Environment, Chief of Planning) and was instrumental in the Department's adoption of a statewide access management program along with an incentive program, based in rule, allowing DOT to promote the integration of land use and transportation decision-making. She also championed the Department's efforts to institutionalize Context Sensitive Solutions approaches to planning and project development. She was the creator and project manager for the Gateway 1 Corridor Action Plan; this approach to corridor planning is being used in two other ongoing MaineDOT corridor planning studies. The EPA honored the Gateway 1 Plan by giving it a national award for Rural Smart Growth in 2010. She has received several awards from the Maine Association of Planners, the Northern New England of the American Planning Association and the Northeast Section of Institute of Transportation Engineers.

She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Maine at Orono. She is a graduate of several Leadership Programs; and is a member of the Maine Association of Planners, and of the American Planning Association for whom she has held numerous leadership positions. She is currently pursuing a diploma in landscape design.

Josh Bloom- Economic Development

Josh is a partner and principal at the Community Land Use & Economics Group (CLUE Group). He teaches communities how to revitalize their commercial centers by first gaining an understanding of their local economies and then helping them apply that knowledge to a series of market-driven and achievable projects. He has particular interests in using research on local customers to deepen the picture painted by traditional demographic data sources, and in cultivating sustainable clusters of chain and independent businesses. He has published articles on both of these subjects.

Before joining the CLUE Group, Josh spent ten years as a program officer at the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center. While he works in communities of all sizes, he was instrumental at the Main Street Center in expanding the program's urban reach to cities that included Boston, Cleveland, St. Louis, Los Angeles and others.

Josh received his B.A. from Columbia University and a master's in historic preservation from the University of Pennsylvania. He is a former molecular biologist (really). And he

is a trained preservation carpenter, having completed a two-year course of study at the North Bennet Street School, a highly regarded trades school in Boston.

Wayne Feiden, FAICP, WMAIA- Downtown, Villages, & Land Use

Wayne has 30 years planning experience in land use, downtown and community revitalization, sustainable transportation, environmental justice, open space, and the environment. He is the Director of Planning and Development for Northampton, Massachusetts. There he helped lead Northampton to earn the highest score in Massachusetts scoring of municipal sustainability efforts, an APA Great Streets award, and a League of American Bicyclists designation as a Bicycle Friendly Community.

Wayne also has a small consulting practice, and serves as an adjunct faculty at the University of Massachusetts and Westfield State University. Wayne's publications include three APA PAS Reports, most recently Assessing Local Government Sustainability. Wayne has participated on or led 14 AIA design assessment teams. He has fellowship experience on sustainability projects in Hungary (Eisenhower), South Africa (Fulbright) and New Zealand (Fulbright).

Wayne has a Master's in City and Regional Planning from the University of North Carolina and a B.S. in Natural Resources from the University of Michigan. He has earned the American Trails' Trails Advocacy Award, Honorary Western Mass AIA, and APA-Massachusetts Chapter Distinguished Planner and Advocacy Planning Awards.

Stephen Luoni, Assoc. AIA- Urban Design

Stephen Luoni is director of the University of Arkansas Community Design Center (UACDC), an outreach program of the Fay Jones School of Architecture. Luoni is a Distinguished Professor and the Steven L. Anderson Chair in Architecture and Urban Studies. His design and research have won more than 80 design awards, including Progressive Architecture Awards, American Institute of Architects Honor Awards, a Charter Award from the Congress for the New Urbanism, and American Society of Landscape Architecture awards, all for planning and urban design.

Luoni's work at the UACDC specializes in interdisciplinary public works projects combining landscape, urban and architectural design. Current work includes design and planning for municipal infrastructure, residential development, campuses, parks and scenario planning. He directed production of the center's award-winning book: *Low Impact Development: a design manual for urban areas*. His work has been published in *Oz*, *Architectural Record*, *Landscape Architecture*, *Progressive Architecture*, *Architect*, *Places*, *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, *Progressive Planning*, and *Public Art Review*.

He previously taught at the University of Florida; the University of Minnesota, as the 2000 Cass Gilbert Visiting Professor of Architecture; Washington University in St. Louis, as the 2006 Ruth and Norman Moore Visiting Professor in Architecture; and the University of Oklahoma, as the Bruce Goff Chair for Creative Architecture in 2008.

Luoni has a BS in Architecture from Ohio State University and a Master of Architecture from Yale University.

Terri Turner, AICP, CFM- Water Management

Terri Turner is the Development Administrator / Floodplain Manager / Hazard Mitigation Specialist in Augusta, Georgia and has worked for City and County government for over 18 years. Before her government service, she spent 16 years designing the same type of projects she now reviews in her role with the City of Augusta. Terri serves on the Board of Directors of the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) as their Region 4 Director and is also their No Adverse Impact (NAI) Committee Co-Chair. Terri is also the Deputy Executive Director for the Natural Hazard Mitigation Association (NHMA).

Terri spends countless hours writing for national publications and touring the nation speaking as a local government expert on community planning initiatives such as green infrastructure, sound floodplain management, the need for hazard mitigation, and promoting community sustainability and resiliency. Outside of her work and volunteer efforts, Terri devotes herself to her faith, to her husband and family, to her yard (which includes an enormous daylily collection), and to spending as much time possible with her precious grand-daughter, Quinn. Terri's e-mail signature sums up her attitude about her work and her life quite effectively: "Today, may I do my job so well, that I don't have to dread the storms of tomorrow; instead, may I be able to dance for joy in the rain."

Joel Mills- Director, AIA Center for Communities by Design

Joel Mills is Director of the American Institute for Architects' Center for Communities by Design. The Center is a leading provider of pro bono technical assistance and participatory planning for community sustainability. Its processes have been modeled successfully in the United States and across Europe. In 2010, the Center was named Organization of the Year by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) for its impact on communities and contributions to the field.

Joel's 18-year career has been focused on strengthening civic capacity and civic institutions around the world. This work has helped millions of people participate in democratic processes, visioning efforts, and community planning initiatives. In the United States, Joel has worked with dozens of communities in over 25 states, leading participatory initiatives and collaborative processes that have facilitated public-private partnerships and led to hundreds of millions of dollars in new investment. His work has been featured on ABC World News Tonight, Nightline, CNN, The Next American City, Smart City Radio, The National Civic Review, Ecostructure Magazine, The Washington Post, and dozens of other media sources.

In December 2010, he was elected to the Board of Directors for the IAP2-USA. He is also a member of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF), the American Planning Association, the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD), and the Mid-Atlantic Facilitators Network.

Erin Simmons- Director, AIA Design Assistance

Erin Simmons is the Director of Design Assistance at the Center for Communities by Design at the American Institute of Architects in Washington, DC. Her primary role at the AIA is to provide process expertise, facilitation and support for the Center's Sustainable Design Assistance Team (SDAT) and Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) programs. In this capacity, she works with AIA components, members, partner organizations and community members to provide technical design assistance to communities across the country. Through its design assistance programs, the AIA has worked in 200 communities across 47 states. In 2010, the Center was named Organization of the Year by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) for its impact on communities and contributions to the field.

Erin is a leading practitioner of the design assistance process. Her portfolio includes work in over 55 communities across the United States. A frequent lecturer on the subject of creating livable communities and sustainability, Erin contributed to the recent publication "Assessing Sustainability: A guide for Local Governments". Prior to joining the AIA, Erin worked as historic preservationist and architectural historian for an environmental and engineering firm in Georgia, where she practiced preservation planning, created historic district design guidelines and zoning ordinances, conducted historic resource surveys, and wrote property nominations for the National Register of Historic Places. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Florida State University and a Master's degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Georgia.