



Longview SDAT

Integrating Smart Growth and LID into Longview's
Municipal Code and Comprehensive Plan

A Sustainable Design
Assessment Team Report

Longview, Washington
May 9–11, 2006



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Wayne Feiden, AICP, *Livability and Land Use*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A city of parks, lakes, and boulevards built on swampland at the confluence of the Cowlitz and the Columbia rivers, Longview was developed by Robert A. Long and designed by George E. Kessler, a prominent planner of the 19th century. Over the past 83 years, Robert A. Long's investment has paid off in both financial and social dividends far in excess of what he invested. Long chose to invest in the future of his city and developed a walkable rectilinear street grid, a city-center lake park that is second to none, a vibrant civic center with public buildings and a hotel at the edge of downtown, a pedestrian friendly downtown, and even unique concrete streets.

In planning for Longview of the 21st century, will this community plan as wisely for its future and invest in a sustainable future? Sustainability is built on respect for the natural and built environments, economic prosperity, and social equity, all with an eye toward maximizing the legacy we leave behind for our children and future generations.

The city today, with its great underlying structure as a planned city, seeks to begin the 21st century with its new comprehensive master plan. The city of Longview requested the AIA Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) to provide a multidisciplinary professional review of Longview's sustainability efforts to help complement Longview's 2006 comprehensive planning process. Given the ongoing comprehensive planning process, the SDAT's review of land use provides feedback on some specific strategic aspects of the plan and other related city policies and, in some areas, challenges the residents of Longview to think outside the box. This report overlays additional initiatives toward the sustainable design of the community. In their review, team members also validated many of the well-thought planning initiatives already under way as part of the 2006 comprehensive master plan.

Analysis

The team began with a review of the planning department's study of the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities for this community.

Major Strengths and Opportunities

Geographic Strengths

- Water: Cowlitz and Columbia rivers, connecting drainage ditches, proximity to Pacific Ocean, Lake Sacagawea
- Variety of landforms: Solo Mountain, St. Helen's viewscape, hills, and views of city plateau

Downtown Strengths

- Attractive buildings built up to the sidewalk lines
- Parking surplus
- Land for future expansion
- Adequate commercial floor space to keep rents affordable and meet current needs
- Some 250 businesses within walking distance of a large number of Longview residents
- Access to the civic center, Lower Columbia College, the St. John Medical Center, the Columbia Theater, and other smaller downtown anchors
- Community consensus that downtown should be healthier



Economic Strengths

- A heavy manufacturing base with available jobs
- Available real estate that provides livable wages to a less educated workforce
- New jobs in the vibrant "post-industrial" manufacturing and health care sectors
- A small but growing number of "footloose" consultants who choose Longview
- New creative businesses located within downtown

- A commitment to workforce training at Lower Columbia College
- An enviable balance between the number of jobs and the number of workers
- City's aggressiveness at creating industrial and economic development opportunities
- Transportation resources such as major rivers and port of Longview, railroads, Interstate 5, street grid, bike paths, some pedestrian trails, some bus line connections

Major Weaknesses and Threats

Physical Challenges

- Identity not defined or celebrated
- Perception that the downtown is not safe because of a visible illegal drug market and other crime problems; downtown is seen as a place to do some shopping or visit the Columbia Theater, not as a primary gathering point
- Gateways to downtown are not indicative of the community's heritage
- New commercial and residential development less attractive than the historic development; street grids missing pieces; buildings without a focus on the streets or the community; the sense that there "isn't a there" there
- Wide streets and intersections downtown that serve as moats discourage pedestrian traffic; dead spots within downtown that reduce pedestrian traffic competition from new retail centers; a "doughnut hole" surrounded by activity

Economic Challenges

- Heavy manufacturing on a long-term decline
- Many new but low-wage retail jobs

Housing Challenges

- Highlands and east side housing in disrepair and with high crime problems
- Large rural lots with redevelopment pressures

Overall, the team agreed with the planning department's initial Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats report and the desire to capitalize on existing opportunities in its neighborhoods, downtown, and economic base. The planning department has used resources wisely to maintain a good environment for new development. Potential

exists in the downtown for the development of new, mixed-use office, residential, and commercial buildings. There is also great potential to widen the mix of housing types and to build more affordable units for its workforce. The Longview building stock includes diverse, stable neighborhoods and valuable historic properties, places, parks, and streets with unique preservation opportunities. Longview is strategically located to take advantage of many regional destinations: the mountains, the cities of Portland and Seattle, the Pacific Ocean, and the Cowlitz and Columbia rivers. The Longview challenge is to strengthen the diversity of its commerce, while maintaining its livability as a “city beautiful.”

Key Recommendations

The team’s key recommendations are identified in the report. Each team member isolated an aspect of the community, reviewing with community members their ideas. Ideas and concepts were derived from the community’s brainstorming sessions. In many cases recommendations from team members overlapped, reinforcing the concepts as important opportunities for change.

Wayne Feiden, AICP, a planner from Northampton, Mass., focused on the downtown and the economy. How will the community know when it has arrived at its goal? Will it be easy to live or walk downtown for an ice cream cone? Can downtown become the vibrant center of the community as originally planned? Much of the team’s sustainability review of Longview’s land use planning and patterns focuses on downtown. This is because it is virtually impossible to have a sustainable city without having a healthy and vibrant downtown.

Will Bradshaw, currently working on new housing in New Orleans, suggests that Longview should continue to guide development with design guidelines, encouraging the type of growth that will make the community stronger. He targets areas for new developments with community river access. He recommends the community consider adapting green building guidelines. He has provided case studies of successful national housing programs and recommends priorities for development potential.

From Maryland’s Low Impact Development Center, Gibson Peters reviews alternative methods of on-site detention and innovations for stormwater systems that can be incorporated into new development standards. The original streets planned for the city included avenues of trees, shrubs, and flowers. Maintenance funding and security concerns have removed some of the valued amenities from the infrastructure. Find-

ing new funding sources for more staff will bring more value to community property development. Creating a sustainable future may mean returning to the design standards of the sustainable planning of the past.

Paula Reeves, a state expert in transportation systems, has provided a road map for success and an opportunity for future state partnerships for change. In Longview, multimodal transportation

even includes a bridge for its squirrels. Transportation connections are vital to the successful redevelopment of the downtown as well as the outskirts of the community. One of the community participants commented, “For a planned city, it is hard to get around.”

A program manager with the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, Henry Kosarzycki works with all municipalities in Wisconsin as an auditor and brings his expertise on enforcement to Longview. He proposes that the city model the RENEW program developed in LaCrosse, Wis., which has strengthened the ability for cities to enforce property maintenance and provides assistance for tenant and property owner training. He suggests funding for additional code enforcement staff and shows that there is a trade off in the cost of insurance rating which makes additional enforcement economically viable.

These recommendations are presented to the community as a guide and in support of the Longview Comprehensive Master Plan. Some initiatives may take years to implement; others, such as a change in codes, might become effective immediately. Longview has chosen to plan once again for its future. By setting goals to integrate the many aspects of the environment, economics, and social equity, Longview will become a model for sustainability in the Northwest.



INTRODUCTION

In January 2006, Longview submitted a proposal to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for a Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) to assist the town and its citizens in addressing key issues facing the community. The issues include an integration of concepts from downtown development, strategies for low-impact stormwater design, multimodal transportation connections, affordable housing, and code enforcement.

The AIA accepted the proposal and, after a preliminary visit by a small group in March, the SDAT members arrived in Longview on May 9, 2006. For three days, the team members, working closely with local officials, community leaders, technical experts, and citizens, studied the community and its concerns. During those three days, the team came to understand the issues and used its expertise to frame a wide range of recommendations, which were presented to the community in a public meeting on May 11, 2006.



This report is a more detailed version of the findings and recommendations that were presented to the community on May 11, 2006. After a brief overview of the SDAT program and process and a short discussion of Longview and the issues it is facing, the report covers

- Livability and land use
- Sustainability and community development
- Water and low-impact development
- Transportation and connectivity
- Process and code.

A closing section offers some thoughts on how the community can best move forward to address the range of issues and recommendations covered in the report.

What is the SDAT Program?

The SDAT program is an interdisciplinary community assistance program that focuses on principles of sustainability. Launched in 2005, the program represents an exciting new chapter in the AIA's history of supporting communities with volunteer design expertise.

The SDAT program is modeled on the AIA's R/UDAT (Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team) program. While the R/UDAT program provides 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 helps communities plan the first steps of implementation. The SDAT program is based on an understanding of design as a process that

- Is integrative, holistic, and visual
- Is central to achieving a sustainable relationship between humans, the natural environment, and the place
- Gives three-dimensional form to a culture and a place
- Achieves balance between culture, environment, and economic systems.

The SDAT program is grounded in the AIA design assistance team values, which call for a multidisciplinary approach, objectivity of the participating team members, and broad public participation.

Why is the SDAT Program Valuable?

Many communities are immobilized by conflicting agendas, politics, personalities, or even the overabundance of opportunity. Many communities have not yet taken stock of their current practices and policies within a sustainability framework, while others have identified issues of concern but desire assistance in developing a plan of action to increase sustainability. The SDAT process ensures that alternative solutions are given a fair hearing and that options are weighed impartially. The SDAT process

- Informs the community of opportunities and encourages them to take action to protect local and regional resources
- Helps the community understand the structure of the place at various scales and contexts—from regional resources to the neighborhood scale
- Explores and articulates the larger contexts and interactions of ecological, sociological, economic, and physical systems
- Visualizes potential futures

- Recognizes and describes the qualities of a place by preserving the best elements of the past, addressing the needs of the present, and planning for the needs of future generations
- Identifies and describes choices and consequences
- Connects plans and actions
- Advances the principles of quality sustainable communities
- Helps the community define the roles of various stakeholders
- Develops a road map for the implementation of more sustainable policies and practices.

The key to SDAT success is diversity and participation; the process involves multiple disciplines and multiple stakeholders. The SDAT process includes not only the expert team but also government agencies and officials, private businesses, schools and students, community members, and other parties as appropriate.

Who are the Key Participants in the SDAT Process?

SDATs bring a team of respected professionals, selected on the basis of their experience with the specific issues facing the community, to work with community decision-makers to help them develop a vision and framework for a sustainable future. Team members volunteer their time to be a member of the SDAT. To ensure their objectivity, they agree to refrain from taking paid work for three years from the date of completion of the SDAT project. A distinct team is assembled for each project based on the project's unique features. The team consists of a leader, five to seven members, and a staff person from the AIA Center for Communities by Design.

The professional stature of the SDAT members, their independence, and the pro bono nature of their work generate community respect and enthusiasm for the SDAT process which, in turn, encourages the participation of community stakeholders. The passion and creativity that are unleashed by a top-notch multidisciplinary team of professionals working collaboratively can produce extraordinary results.

Local Steering Committee

The steering committee is the key organizing group for an SDAT project. It is responsible for assembling local and regional information, organizing the preliminary meeting and SDAT visit, and generating local media coverage during the entire project. After the SDAT visits, the steering committee typically evolves into a group that is dedicated to implementing the SDAT recommendations.

Local Technical Committee

The local technical committee is the technical support group for the SDAT project, including local design professionals, environmental professionals, economists, and others whose skills and experience parallel those of the SDAT members and who bring with them detailed knowledge of local conditions, issues, and information resources. Their presence magnifies the effectiveness of the team.



Citizens

In the end, the citizens of the community are the critical players, both for their insights and observations during the team visit and for their support for the new directions that emerge from the SDAT process.

On behalf of the Longview SDAT and the American Institute of Architects, it is hoped this report will be a useful guide to the Longview community as it charts its future for the coming years and for coming generations.

LIVABILITY AND LAND USE

Downtown Development

A strong and vibrant downtown is critical to any sustainable community. Longview's downtown can ensure that Longview is a unique community ready for the transition to tomorrow's economy. Downtown can, and should, become what residents want: "a place to work, shop, live, and gather."



Downtown can provide the sense of place or identity that many residents think is missing in Longview. Downtown could some day provide many services within walking distance of a majority of the community, could significantly reduce the need for driving, and provide the density necessary for quality transit to succeed.

Longview's downtown has all the elements in place to be a successful downtown, but it needs changes to be considered successful. Downtown is already an incubator for locally owned businesses that cannot even get financing to be in shopping areas that require nationally bankable tenants. But until Longview is as active at 6 p.m. and on the weekends as it is on a weekday at noon, it is not a successful downtown.

Recommendations

- Create a formal organizational structure for downtown organizations. The city of Longview, the Kelso Longview Chamber of Commerce, and the Longview Downtowners are committed to addressing problems. The city and Downtowners share an effective Web site, but there is not an agreed upon work plan or formal process to implement change. Such an organizational structure should immediately focus on traditional and nontraditional marketing efforts.

- Improve downtown's focus on entertainment. In different ways, the Columbia Theater and the Farmer's Market are great successes in bringing people downtown, people who might stay longer and come back more frequently. More efforts are needed to create street fairs and activities and encourage arts and art venues. Making downtown a success at night is critical to downtown's health.



- Improve Longview and downtown Longview's identity. No downtown can be successful if citizens in the city and the region do not love downtown and talk it up. Gateways to the city and the downtown can help. The city's downtown signs and planned gateway signs are good first steps. Longview must design gateways that are more than signage. Visitors need to think, "I'm somewhere different now." Contact the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Washington Main Street Programs for assistance on downtown issues; grants are available.



- Build downtown buildings to sidewalk street lines and mandate a height of at least two stories. These provisions would create a downtown that frames and encloses streets, making them interesting and comfortable. Create a downtown historic district and design standards, with specific requirements relating to windows, doors, articulations, and street trees. Design criteria should provide clear, cookbook standards so that developers don't have to worry about review boards having excessive discretion.
- Increase the number of on-street parking spaces in and adjacent to downtown. On-street parking spaces are the most valuable spaces to businesses and their customers. In larger cities, each on-street parking space sometimes equates to an extra \$100,000 in extra business. Longview has a unique opportunity because many of the streets are so wide that many could easily accommodate additional on-street parking.





Angle parking already exists downtown on several of the streets (e.g., one side of Commerce Avenue and both sides of 16th Avenue), but could easily be placed on many more streets. For example, 14th Avenue has three lanes plus two lanes of parallel parking. Dropping one travel lane would free up room for angle parking on at least one side of the street. Angle parking can either be forward pull-in spaces, as Longview currently has, or back-up pull-in spaces, which are gaining in popularity around the country.

Higher volume streets, especially 15th Avenue, may not be appropriate for angle parking but could still accommodate parallel parking.

- Optimize off-street parking lots to meet parking demand but not create dead spots. Parking lots should be mid-block or behind buildings. They should not be on street corners where they create dead spots, make downtown feel empty, and increase the perception of downtown as unfriendly and unwalkable. Successful cities avoid excessive dead spots. Develop some or all of the street corners that currently function as parking lots.



Once sufficient on-street parking has been created, the inventory of off-street parking lots can be reduced so long as there is a vacancy rate of 15 percent at noon time throughout downtown. Higher vacancies use land that should be developed to create vibrancy. Many larger cities sustain 10 percent or even 5 percent vacancies. A vacancy rate of 15 percent avoids creating queues and leaves some room for growth. Longview has 40 percent off-street vacancy even at peak noon hour.

Downtown does not need parking decks or structured parking now. If development occurs—creating less parking, more need, and higher land values—decks could some day be developed to add capacity.

Employees and residents should continue to be encouraged, through fees and time limits, to use off-street parking and keep on-street parking for shoppers. Municipal and shared parking lots that serve multiple users during the day should be encouraged; private lots for single uses, which are often empty, should be discouraged. Although institutional uses, such as churches, are appropriate downtown, if their parking lots are not available for other uses they create more dead spots.

- Offer incentives to encourage downtown development. The city should offer city-owned intersection parcels for sale for development, provided land is sold for real development projects and not for private parking lots or speculation. To spur development, the city could accept bids on a combination of largest amount of initial sale plus all city taxes over a set time (10 years). This would maximize total city returns but would lower the initial cost of development. The city could further discount the price for projects requiring extra stories or for a downtown hotel or for anyone who builds decked parking.
- Use zoning requirements to encourage new downtown development. Consider ending requirements for parking downtown until development absorbs some of the surplus parking areas and increases demand for parking. Zoning parking requirements currently treat downtown like strip commercial, creating excessive parking which could create a “strip” development-like feel. Zoning should acknowledge that downtown is different from the rest of the city and requires different rules. There is no need for frontage, minimum lot size, or minimum frontage downtown. The city does a great job of encouraging reuse of existing buildings by not requiring parking when buildings are reused, even to more intense uses. Consider expanding this to cover replacement buildings downtown, upper-floor housing, new upper-floor construction of any kind, and authorize payment in lieu of parking.
- Encourage narrow buildings with parking behind the buildings and anchor buildings which might absorb an entire parking lot. Off-street parking is a critical resource, but should not dominate downtown.
- Create significant opportunities for downtown development in the evening (restaurants and entertainment) and nighttime (housing), when excess parking is substantially above the 40 percent noon vacancy rate.
- Encourage social service agencies, especially on Commerce Street (e.g., Lower Columbia Community Action Council) to move to upper-floor spaces when, and only when, there are retail tenants for those first floor spaces. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program funds could be used to fund this move. Community services are needed downtown, but moving them to upper floors

would free up the first floor for higher traffic uses and change the perception of downtown as dominated by social service agencies. Moving them without new tenants on the first floor could create vacant spaces, which have far more adverse impacts on downtown.

- Fund infrastructure and streetscape improvements necessary to leverage downtown development with CDBG funds, to the extent those funds are available.
- Make downtown circulation more pedestrian friendly and more desirable for pedestrians. Roads around downtown, especially 15th Avenue and Washington Way, create a moat around downtown that discourages pedestrian traffic, thereby reducing downtown business and making many visitors drive when they could walk. Safer streets will increase walking, freeing up parking for other visitors and making downtown a more enjoyable experience.
- Replace some travel lanes with parking (see above), reduce the width of the remaining traffic lanes and calm traffic (see transportation section), and provide



pedestrian curb extensions and refuge islands. Reexamine barriers to walking and pedestrian traffic to affect a modal switch from cars to foot. Focus on the streetscape on Washington Way (strip commercial) and 15th Avenue (link to hospital) to make them more pedestrian friendly. Improve the 15th Avenue/Washington Way intersection (see transportation section) to help tie Lower Columbia College to downtown.

- Focus on increasing mixed-use commercial/residential downtown. Downtown housing is one of the most important ingredients to long-term downtown vibrancy, especially in a downtown that is as quiet and empty at night as Longview's. Healthy downtowns from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday have pedestrian and vehicular traffic from offices. Vibrancy on Saturdays requires retail and entertainment, but vibrancy on Sunday and at night requires downtown housing in all price ranges. Downtown housing is also appealing for most communities because, besides creating life downtown, it requires less new infrastructure and creates less impact on drainage systems, roads, and schools than housing anywhere else in town. The first floors of buildings in the downtown, however, should be reserved for activities that create traffic. Residential should not be allowed on the first floor of any building, or at least on the part of any building that fronts onto a street.

Employment and Economic Development

Longview has a heavy industrial and mill legacy that built and sustains the community. From an environmental standpoint, these industries are more polluting and less sustainable than many industries. These industries serve a vital economic function and are needed by society. Arguably, although heavy industry is polluting, it is almost certainly less polluting located within Longview than if these industries moved off shore. The Longview port functions are a vital transportation function and are less polluting than most industrial land uses. It is inevitable that even if the acreage committed to heavy industrial uses stays the same or increases, the percentage of the workforce employed in this sector will continue to shrink.

Recommendations

- Continue strong community efforts to market and reuse existing industrial space and create new space. Longview has done an excellent job of expanding the industrial base. The inventory of land held by the Port of Longview, the city, Weyerhaeuser, and the former Reynolds property will serve the city well in future years. Marketing needs to be a regional effort targeted at both local businesses and in regional and national markets. Besides the traditional industrial focus, an emphasis on quality of life is critical to appeal to decision-makers.
- Target new industrial space to green businesses, both those producing green products (why not manufacture wind generators instead of simply importing them at the port) and other industries with focus on green production methods (e.g., cogeneration, green buildings). If Longview can build on its willingness to accommodate the needs of manufacturing, provide lower-wage employees than major urban centers, and deliver a high quality of life, it should be able to attract this new crop of “footloose” manufacturers. These are the manufacturers who are growing and creating more jobs than older heavy industry with less impact on the environment.
- Work with Lower Columbia College, which does a great job of training workers for manufacturing jobs, and with the Lower Columbia Community Action Council to target CDBG funds to train workforce who want to create their own businesses. Consider small business loans and micro-enterprise grants. New



business start-ups are often downplayed because they are such small players in the market but, in straight percentage terms, these tend to be the fast growing businesses, the ones with the deepest roots in the community, and often the ones that can most help downtown.

- Strengthen downtown's role as a prime economic development engine for the future of Longview. Downtown is critical to the economy and quality of life of Longview. The economic activity that takes place downtown and downtown's ability to build the quality of life and, therefore, attract business elsewhere, are critical.
- Continue efforts to focus on jobs and industry, not just tax base. Except for freight distribution building on loading and unloading ships, Longview should not develop freight facilities, which use large amounts of land, generate relatively little jobs, and generate high volumes of traffic. Port-related shipping should be encouraged because of its focus on the port.

Downtown Neighborhoods and New Redevelopment

Longview's neighborhoods provide quality housing in a range of prices suitable at significantly lower prices than nearby urban centers. From the highest end housing, especially in the old west side and on the mountain side, to middle range housing scattered all over town, the city's neighborhoods provide high quality housing for Longview's residents.

The lowest end housing, especially the Highlands neighborhood and portions of the east side, provide affordable housing that, while often extremely troubled and in disrepair, is probably still much better and much less crime ridden than large urban public housing complexes in many urban communities. These intact, albeit damaged, neighborhoods have a sense of community and cohesion that is critical to its residents.

Recommendations

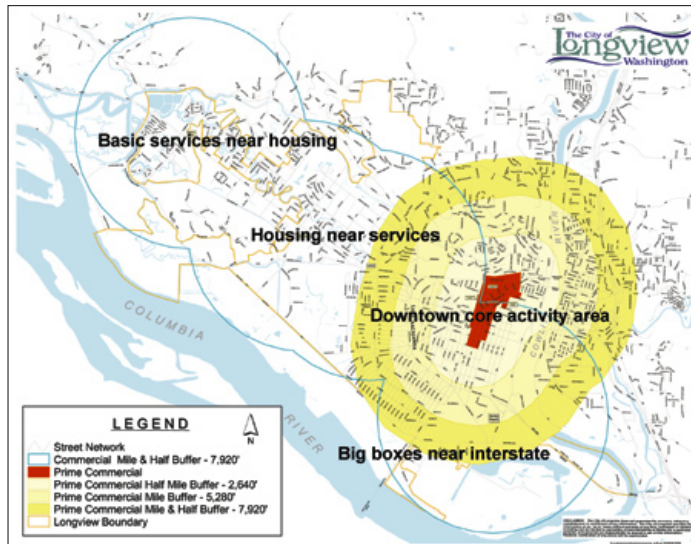
- Have a clear statement in the comprehensive plan that the Highlands and the east side neighborhoods remain as intact neighborhoods and it is the city's policy to maintain and improve these neighborhoods.
- Continue and expand city policy to use the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Home Investment Partnerships program and CDBG funds to repair these neighborhoods. Specifically, consider using HUD funds to provide home ownership opportunities and using CDBG funds to fund housing rehabilitation programs for low- and moderate-income residents. If city funds

are not otherwise available, consider using CDBG funds to fund neighborhood policing programs and targeted code enforcement (both require formal determination of slums and blight by the city).

- Revise zoning to make a clear statement that the city does not want to convert these areas from their primarily single-family home uses. Specifically, single-family home lot sizes should be reduced to match the predominant pattern in the neighborhood, multifamily home lot sizes should be increased so the lot size per dwelling unit matches that of single-family homes. Commercial uses, other than home occupations, should not be allowed in the neighborhood.
- Consider creating a buffer zone between the Highland homes and the county industrial area off Industrial Highway. The city should annex any land it does not already have up to Industrial Highway and zone a thin strip along Industrial Highway for primarily nonretail commercial uses with limited neighborhoods serving convenience retail allowed. This could provide additional commercial opportunities and provide a buffer. Any zoning should focus on the design of the commercial uses that will face the Highlands.
- Strengthen new neighborhoods by design around neighborhood needs and not public works needs. First, consider narrowing street widths. Dead-end and low traffic streets should be 20 feet to 22 feet wide and only very high volume streets should be wider. Second, consider a provision so that projects fed by alley ways that have sufficient off-street parking to serve all needs and all visitors have a 10-foot boulevard sidewalk with no cars at the front of their homes. Third, prohibit new permanent dead-end streets except as temporary dead-ends to allow project phasing or when environmental or other limits make connecting streets impossible. Connecting streets are more efficient for transportation purposes and provide more of a sense of community. When people walk their dogs, they want to feel part of a neighborhood. Fourth, require wider sidewalks (5 feet instead of 4 feet) to create more comfortable settings for walking two abreast and maximize accessibility. Finally, prohibit gated subdivisions and condominium projects that create isolated neighborhoods with less of a sense of shared community.

Commercial Development Other Than Downtown

Although downtown development can and should be the center of commercial uses and gathering, the nature of retail is that more retail dollars are going to be spent in other areas of town. Generally, people should be encouraged to live near services and neighborhood services should be encouraged to be placed near where people live.



Recommendations

- Encourage the highest density of residential development within one-half to one mile of retail services (the distance people are likely to walk).
- Encourage neighborhood services close to where people live. Longview already has this and does not need any new retail areas, except the note about very limited retail along Industrial Way along the edge of the Highlands.
- Limit new big-box retail (90,000 square feet plus) to the industrial/commercial area just south of Tennant Way. This retail creates very high traffic and pulls traffic off the interstate and should not be located in any area that will send this traffic through the community.
- Reduce the amount of commercially zoned land to avoid competition with downtown, except in targeted areas. Specifically limited commercial use in the Highlands neighborhood along Industrial Way (discussed above) and mixed commercial/residential use in the area between St. John Medical Center and downtown would encourage better connections and provide an opportunity for dense development.
- Focus on better design of private development focusing on streets. In every commercial area and for commercial use, within and outside downtown, design matters. The city should consider maximum setbacks for buildings from sidewalks (0 feet to 10 feet), minimum heights, and clear cookbook design standards focusing on windows, doors, articulations, and street trees. Design standards could be under traditional zoning or through an entirely new form-based code approach which focuses on acceptable design approaches as being more important than actual uses.
- Allow housing above, but never at, the first floor in every commercial area. Housing is critical in the downtown, very important in the strip commercial areas near downtown, and least important in the Tennant Way industrial/commercial area. Even in the industrial commercial area, however, housing above the first floor is appropriate if there are any urban pioneers who want it.

SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

“The most important sustainability goal of all time is that every child everywhere should be able to safely walk to a library.” From a Fall 2004 speech by Doug Foy, director of commonwealth development in Massachusetts.

“The central goal of sustainable development is that a 3-year-old on a tricycle should be able to traverse your community without getting killed.” From a Fall 2005 speech by Enrique Peñalosa, the former mayor of Bogota, Colombia.

Longview is already doing many things well in its quest to become a more sustainable place, including

- A comprehensive plan update that leads to concrete actions by city staff
- A focus in city hall and in the civic debate on the combined challenges of environment, economics, and housing affordability; an impressive amount of attention has been paid to these issues and on the connections, synergies, and tensions between them
- Sincere interest in planning for smaller lots and developing policy tools that allow for smaller lot development to be part of the toolkit of options available to developers in the city
- An interest in figuring out how to permit mixed use; the city has even taken the lead in a mixed-use development on the riverfront
- A network of parks, canals, and ditches that traverse the town; these planned elements were well thought out initially and they provide an excellent infrastructure for developing creative ideas going forward.

The city also has a range of public assets that may have been overlooked or not considered as assets in planning:

- Particularly in downtown, the city already owns some critical, well located parcels. If it wants to spur downtown development, the city can create developer design guidelines and direct the development of these parcels. It can also solicit mixed-use developers and market Longview for sustainable development.
- A large amount of flat roof space exists, in the downtown area particularly. With the city’s interest in stormwater mitigation, these flat roofs become an important piece of infrastructure for developing a pilot green roofs program.

- The city has amazing geographic and topographic diversity. Within a small area, the city has wetlands, highlands, and some flatter wooded areas. Development should preserve views and link environmental resources.
- The city is well located in its region with easy access to Portland, Olympia, Seattle, the Oregon and Washington coasts, and other major regional attractions.
- Longview has a much stronger industrial base than other cities of its size, even with the recent loss of industry.

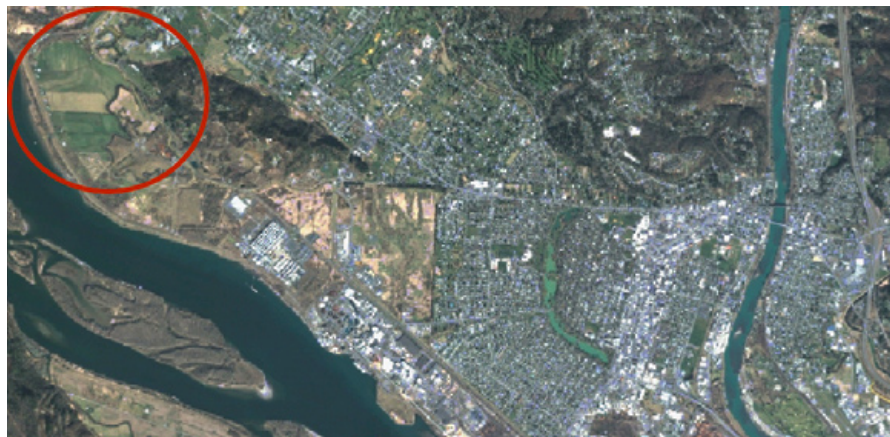
Recommendations

- **Undertake additional economic development initiatives.** The city has already taken impressive steps toward directing economic development. It should be commended for its economic development efforts. Instead of subsidizing new industry in a way that reduces the benefits that industry provides through tax rebates, the city has promoted industry by easing the path for bringing jobs to town, even going as far as developing an industrial park at Mint Farm. This strategy, supported by much of the work that Barry Bluestone has done on industrial restructuring at Northeastern University, changes the rules around economic development and, according to Bluestone, provides as much or more value to firms than the community bidding strategies that give away most of the civic benefits from industrial development. Several economic development initiatives are critical.

1. **Mint Farm Industrial Park**—The city should be commended for this effort. It will expand the industrial base and retain civic benefits from industrial development. It shows an entrepreneurial willingness to try new ideas and to take on the risk associated with attracting and retaining industrial investment in this area. All this will make the city a better partner with the firms that choose to come to Longview and the firms that are already here but could leave. As the industrial park is developed, consider an overlay of connecting walking paths and access to some commercial area within walking distance.
2. **Reynolds Site**—A brownfields redevelopment issue is associated with this site as it likely has significant contamination from its former use. However, a number of state programs have been created to deal with this issue in Washington. In addition, this site is well located for several reasons. First, it has an existing dock facility that could be part of tourist-related development in the area. River cruises are becoming a central feature of

the tourist trade in many river cities around the country. Second, it has the infrastructure and space to attract a range of uses to the site, including new industry. Third, by recycling the site, this area can become a model for how the city and other cities can deal with these large brownfields sites in the future.

3. Barlow Point—The proposed Barlow Point development could become a model for mixed-use waterfront development in the area. Currently, there are very few public access points to the waterfront, as that whole area was taken up by industry. Barlow Point presents a new opportunity to bring residents to the water. It can also attract new jobs and a new type of job, including the higher tech, lower impact industrial processes associated with information technology, biotechnology, and green technology, as well as office jobs in industries that Longview has not traditionally attracted. The downside of Barlow Point is its greenfield location outside the center of already developed areas.



- **Promote affordability.** As expressed from the public comments collected, people in the city are very worried about affordability. We have included several steps that could promote affordability within Longview. Some of these steps may have ramifications for other areas of development, especially parking. We highlight those tensions when they arise below.

1. Zone for smaller size lots. There is already an effort under way to do this. By allowing for smaller units and smaller lots, one addresses the biggest scalable impact on affordability—size. This may affect parking if the city creates lot sizes that make it difficult to get cars off street.

2. Actively support use of in-law apartments. The city already has an ordinance to allow in-law apartments by right in most areas. However, this is rarely done. The city should look into ways of expanding the use of this ordinance, particularly the parking issues associated with it.



3. Change the Planned Unit Development (PUD) restrictions to allow for smaller lot sizes immediately. Again, smaller lot sizes allow for smaller houses, which are inherently more affordable. If the PUD ordinance had a smaller minimum lot size (or no minimum lot size and allowed people to build what they believe they could sell), this could help address the affordability issue.



4. Develop a community land trust. Community land trusts promote affordability by removing land costs from the cost of a house. They work by separating ownership of land from the ownership of the building on top, so that building and land are held by different people. In a community land trust, land ownership is held in common, usually by some resident council or nonprofit set up to manage the trust. Home or building owners pay some rental fee for the land to the trust on an annual basis. This fee pays for operation and other expenses. The Institute for Community Economics in Springfield, Mass., provides support and information to communities interested in community land trusts.

5. Implement an aggressive city/property transfer program for affordable housing. One of the ways to simultaneously promote affordable housing and property maintenance is to have an aggressive program by which neighborhoods (Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative model) or the city (Philadelphia model) will take properties that are blighted or poorly maintained and put them back in commerce as affordable housing.
6. Investigate adopting an adequate public facilities ordinance (APFO) for many areas where there is concern about being able to maintain historic service levels in new development. It should include affordable housing as one of these public facilities, thereby requiring new development to maintain affordable housing stock and mix it in with new development. This can be done with a density bonus for affordable housing if the city doesn't want to require affordable housing outright.
7. Target public investments on problematic areas. Particularly with pass-through entitlement programs, the city should focus its investments on specific areas of concern both geographically and programmatically.
8. Redevelop residential spaces above downtown retail. This is already happening, but the city should work with local developers interested in downtown to develop strategies about how the city could more actively support these redevelopment efforts.
9. Deal with affordability by location and other related housing expenses, especially transportation and energy costs. The city could initiate similar best practices found in other areas in the country, including locating new development near transit lines or in walking distance of jobs, developing or promoting green building residential standards and support programs, and promoting or expanding federal energy production tax credits.
10. Continue to support self-help housing programs. There are several self-help housing programs operating in the region. Although these programs generally have a limited scale and reach, they provide some other valuable services that are difficult to quantify, including community education for first-time homebuyers, camaraderie that develops through building a house with others, and relationships that cross socioeconomic boundaries. There is also something wonderful about the self-help housing model where people are asked to build their own home.

11. Develop additional means of providing affordability and the local expertise to deliver on these alternatives. Many programs can help provide affordable housing, but they require specialized development expertise and experience. The city might consider convening or supporting an affordable housing developer roundtable to address how to build capacity in developing projects that include limited equity co-ops that use a cooperative structure to maintain affordability over the long term and the use of federal programs for tax credits, grants, trust funds, and other related programs.
 12. The city should develop a mixed-use planning overlay for areas like downtown where it wants to promote mixed-use development.
- **Develop downtown.** The city has the potential to have a successful and thriving downtown and many assets that recommend downtown as a development site. We have listed some steps the city can take to promote this.
 1. Use the city parcels to draw anchor tenants and make connections between existing draws (Safeway, college, casino, Columbia Theater, library). The downtown already has many features that could promote an active and lively downtown (grocery stores, students, a gaming establishment, a historic theater, and civic space), but the parking lots the city owns and current traffic patterns cut off connections between these places and make for a disconnected and sometimes unpleasant urban environment. By redeveloping these lots, especially if the lots can tie together potential zones or themes for downtown, this disconnect can be ended and the city can develop an additional revenue source by maintaining an interest in the land and/or development.



2. Develop residential use above large-park buildings. Many large-park buildings exist, many with underused or unused upper floors. These spaces should be redeveloped into residential units, and the city should do whatever it can to promote this.
3. Placing several well located structured parking lots (or below grade if the economics can work out) to replace surface lots would help promote redevelopment of downtown and maintain or expand the current parking capacity.

4. Develop a mixed-use downtown overlay to provide a clear vision and statement to developers about what the city wants to see downtown, and people who comply with this vision should be fast-tracked through permitting and use-by-right status on their projects.



5. Create traffic calming through street furniture, material changes, and street art. Creating a lively pedestrian environment and calming traffic speeds can also be accomplished by changing the appearance of the street. By using street art, furniture, tree plantings, changes in street material, and other strategies, a safer and more interesting pedestrian environment can be generated, not to mention interest from artists and others who often lead efforts at downtown renaissance.
 6. Consider various themes that make downtown a more attractive place to visit. Some ideas might include an education and history zone that focuses on Longview's industrial past and present, an arts district focusing on Columbia Theater, a restaurant district that clusters several different restaurants in a single area, and a district that expands the farmer's market.
- **Avoid a bedroom community.** To address the concern that the city is becoming a bedroom community, we recommend several things:
 1. Create a community land trust, which could be regional, that acquires properties throughout the area and makes them affordable to certain groups who are in danger of being priced out by land value increases. These groups might include school teachers, fire fighters, police officers, store clerks, retail employees, and other low-income workers.
 2. Develop a regional coalition, likely through the universities in the area, to collect and analyze regional information on affordability and transit. Currently, the MIT Affordability Project is developing a similar system to look at the affordability of housing in Massachusetts based on many factors, including commuting costs, school quality, safety, and housing costs. A similar index could be developed for Washington and it would become an important regional planning tool.

3. An APFO that attempts to document the level of service in such areas as parks, affordable housing, traffic, and police protection that speak to the character of the place. Although this will not stop the flow of people willing to commute to other areas and live in Longview, it will help the city define what aspects of the city they are trying to preserve and think about how to best preserve them in the face of rapid change.
- **Offer a housing mix.** Many successful strategies exist for integrating affordable housing into neighborhoods that have generally higher incomes. They include
 1. Creating large buildings with excellent exterior detailing that can be broken into multiple interior units. Some communities have developed tri-plexes and four-plexes as anchor buildings in much more expensive neighborhoods. These buildings are made to look like stately single-family homes but function as smaller, more affordable multifamily units.
 2. Using land trust and scattered site limited equity co-op units to create greater affordability within an area where building quality does not vary. Such an approach can be used to scatter lower-priced housing units among higher-priced units.
 3. An APFO can push developers to figure out the best strategies for locally integrating affordable housing with conventional housing. By pushing developers to integrate new affordable units into their development plans, they have an incentive to figure out how to build these units in a way that does not affect their ability to market the balance of their units.

Issues of Concern

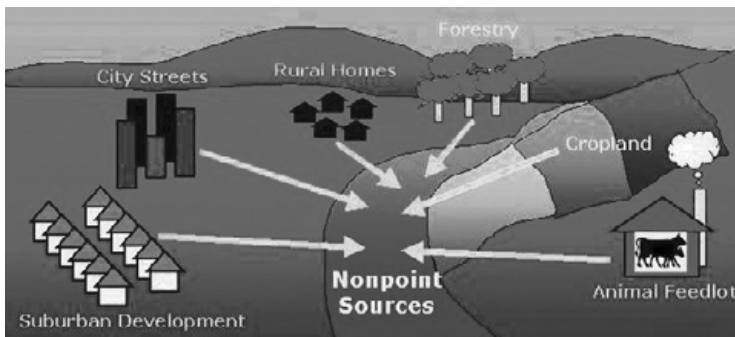
Residents identified several key issues during conversations with them leading up to the final presentation. The issues included

- **Long-term affordability in housing.** This fear shows up in several ways, including common worry about how quickly prices are rising, concern that the city is transforming into a bedroom or retirement community, the idea that the region lacks services for homeless people and/or transitional housing for people to get back on their feet while suffering some economic setback, lack of adequate housing for elderly or people with disabilities, concern around safety and housing and safety of neighborhoods where affordable housing is concentrated, and a sense that transportation options were limited to people who had to travel far out of the area to find affordable jobs.

- Obstacles to downtown revitalization. The obstacles include a sense that there are irresponsible landlords, the idea that rents are too low to spur reinvestment, some sense that the area is not safe for 24 hours, a poor business mix, and the relocation of stores to the periphery of town. On the other hand, some of the opportunities people see include mixed-use development that can bring residences downtown and a chance to improve the business mix through targeted campaigns.
- Little sense of direction. Several people who work in the nonprofit housing community were concerned the city had very little sense of direction in the way that entitlement program money was spent. They saw a 70 percent homeownership/30 percent rental split with no neighborhood focus. They thought this diluted the effect this money could have if it were targeted.
- Regional problems. There was a general critique that many of the stresses that Longview is currently facing have to do with its position in the region, and that there is no avenue for addressing these regional planning problems. The group wanted to see a more regional planning approach that could help them characterize regional challenges and regional solutions to these challenges that did not leave places like Longview fighting for attention and resources to address problems that they did not create and do not have the authority to fix.
- Aesthetics. There was much discussion about aesthetics of housing, the character of certain neighborhoods, and how you mix affordable housing into higher income areas. There was a concern that the traditional housing mix of Longview was being lost as prices rose and people wanted to maintain these qualities even as they helped some neighborhoods revitalize.
- Many people thought there was inadequate enforcement of the housing code and a substandard housing problem that needed to be addressed.

WATER AND LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT

Low-impact development (LID) is a stormwater management strategy to reduce the hydrologic impact of development and maintain or restore the natural hydrologic and hydraulic functions of a site to achieve natural resource protection objectives and fulfill environmental regulatory requirements. LID employs a variety of natural and built features that reduce the rate of runoff, filter out its pollutants, and facilitate infiltration and evapotranspiration of water. By reducing water nonpoint source pollution and increasing groundwater recharge, LID helps to improve the quality of receiving waters and stabilize the flow rates of nearby streams.



Nonpoint source pollution is one of the largest contributors to water quality problems. Runoff from rainfall and snowmelt pick up and carry natural and human-made pollutants into streams, creeks, and rivers affecting aquatic ecosystems. Nonpoint source pollution is created by a wide variety

of human activities, including urban, suburban, and agricultural land uses. In the Northwest, water quality is particularly important to health of salmon fisheries.

LID incorporates a set of overall site design strategies as well as highly localized, small-scale, decentralized source controls. Because LID embraces a variety of useful techniques for controlling runoff, designs can be customized according to local regulatory and resource protection requirements, as well as site constraints. New development projects, redevelopment projects, and capital improvement projects can all be viewed as candidates for implementing LID.



As urban and suburban development expands into rural areas, more land is developed and paved. Paved or impervious areas (e.g., asphalt parking lots, roofs) prevent stormwater from infiltrating into the ground and increase runoff volume and velocity. Conventional stormwater management methods focus solely on efficiently moving water into the sewer

system, decrease the time of concentration, increase the possibility of downstream erosion, and more rapidly fill the sewer system to capacity. Unlike conventional stormwater management, LID takes a decentralized approach that disperses flows and manages runoff closer to where it originates. The optimal LID site design minimizes runoff volume and preserves existing flow paths. The major goal of LID is to maintain or return land to predevelopment hydrology.

Some basic goals for Longview and its watershed should be to

- Improve the water quality of stormwater runoff
- Remove ditch 3, 4, and 5 from the EPA's 303(d) list and prevent the other ditches from being listed
- Reduce and disconnect impervious areas and green downtown
- Educate developers and community

LID can help Longview accomplish these goals. There are many potential benefits for LID for Longview, Washington, and Consolidated Diking Improvement District #1 (CDID1). In a study performed by Parametrix, Longview could reduce its stormwater pollution 40 percent–80 percent by widely implementing LID techniques. LID can increase property value and the city's tax revenue and, by reducing the amount of water entering the CDID1 system, the loads and costs to the pumps and infrastructure can be reduced. LID combined with smart growth, implemented well, can help Longview meet federal and state regulations for water quality standards.

Water Quality, Development, and Stormwater Initiatives

Low-impact development uses tools to improve water quality by creating on-site retention. Currently, when developers are required to create on-site detention they must devote developable land to stormwater detention. The great advantage of LID over conventional design is its ability to greatly reduce the amount of land set aside for stormwater detention. This increases developable land, a developer's profit, and tax revenue. LID also increases profits and saves money by preserving forested areas, planning homes in clusters, reducing impervious areas (reducing road widths,





removing sidewalks), disconnecting impervious areas, and creating small on-site retention areas. Lots that border on open space, parks, and common areas bring higher sale prices, thus more houses bordering more common space will increase the profit of the developer. Creating larger forested areas also means a larger amount of the developed site remains in a predevelopment state, thereby decreasing the amount of runoff and stormwater from the site.

Clustered development greatly decreases infrastructure costs by using fewer materials. Cluster design reduces impervious areas by occupying less land and reduces the amount of concrete and asphalt on site and reduces runoff. Other ways to reduce an impervious area would be to place sidewalks on one side of the street or reduce street widths. Disconnecting impervious areas can encourage the creation of more vegetated



areas on the site and increases the opportunities for on-site detention. An example of this is a design to place a vegetated island in a cul-de-sac. Using different LID techniques, developers can expect to save 10 percent–30 percent and increase lot premiums over conventional methods.¹

Drainage Ditches' Environmental Cleanup Bonus

The implementation of LID could save Longview and the CDID1 money. Currently Longview's drainage ditches 3, 4, and 5 are on the EPA's 303(d) list of impaired waterways. Waterways listed on the 303(d) list are open to federal and state water quality regulations. These federal and state regulations could force Longview to comply with strict pollution regulations, which will be expensive to meet. The CDID1 pumps empty the storm drain ditches into the surrounding rivers which are nearing their capacity. LID can reduce and slow down water entering the ditch system, thereby easing the strain on

¹ Changing Cost Perceptions: An Analysis of Conservation Design, Illinois Conservation Foundation, Chicago Wilderness, February 2005

CDID1 pumps and extending their lives. Longview like many cities has large impervious areas especially in its downtown areas, east of 15th Street. LID can reduce pollution and the volume of runoff entering the ditches and, if widely implemented, LID could remove the ditches from the 303(d) list and save the city millions to comply with the federal and state regulation.

Impervious Surfaces and Green Downtown

Longview's current regulations are good building blocks toward widespread use of LID. The original plan for the city had large, green boulevards and landscaping in the right of way. Maintenance funding to renew downtown landscape areas should be designated to reduce impervious surfaces. Requiring new impervious permits for properties greater than 5,000 square feet to detain stormwater on-site will likely encourage the use of LID. This city regulation was passed in 1999 and requires all new construction after 1999 to detain stormwater onsite. However there is no digital address mapping to ensure that a builder cannot slowly build less than 5,000 square feet and create more impervious area. This is a good start to widespread LID use, but enforcement of current regulations and codes should be implemented to have a successful LID program.

Education and Phase II Permits

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Phase II permit for Longview will go into effect late this year and will require education, public outreach, public participation, IDDE (illicit, discharge, detection, eliminate), development controls, and municipal pollution prevention. The city's stormwater regulation must be rewritten to correspond with the state's. The Phase II permit will challenge Longview's stormwater program by forcing the stormwater program to increase its budget and fees to meet the Phase II requirements and to address the city's stormwater quality. One of the major goals of the Phase II permit is focused on LID education. Longview needs to educate its people and businesses, but especially its developers, on the problems of stormwater pollution and the benefits of LID.

The education process should start with the developers. Longview should develop a design guide for developers on the benefits of LID and how it increases developable land by using on-site retention and how it increases the lot premiums. There is an initial increase in engineering cost as with any new technology but the increase in lot premiums, decrease in capital cost, and increase in sales volume more than offset these

additional costs. Overall LID design and conservation design saves the developer 10 percent–30 percent.² Sale prices are also typically higher as witnessed in one example in Davis, Calif., where homes in an LID-design community resold \$10–\$25 per square foot over standard homes in the area.³

Incentives

Along with targeting the developers with information regarding LID developments, the city should create incentives for developers and potential owners. Financial incentives could include reducing the stormwater fee or streamlining the LID stormwater permitting application process. Nonfinancial incentives could include a stormwater design award, which the developer can advertise to buyers. The city also needs to lead developers toward LID by being a leader. The city should create pilot projects showcasing the benefits, the design, and costs of LID. Good locations for these pilot projects would be downtown, greening the medians of Ocean Beach Highway and 15th Street with bioswales. The town hall roof would be an ideal place for a green roof, on the flat area next to the lunch area over the city offices. The pilot projects can often receive state and federal money to design and build LID structures.

Sanitary Sewer and Potable Water: Encouraging Green Building Practices

Stormwater is the major issue facing the city, but Longview is also facing issues with its sanitary sewer system and its potable water system. The city is facing large capital improvements to upgrade these systems. The city should not only focus on the end of the pipe solutions, but also on source solutions like offering incentives for low-flow toilets, showers, and graywater reuse, all of which reduce the amount of water entering the system and reduce the need for additional capital investment.

For example, a comprehensive study of water use in nearly 1,200 homes at 12 study sites determined, among other things, that homes with low-flow toilets used about 40 percent less water for flushing than other homes in the study. Preliminary results indicate that by 2020 using the average replacement rate for fixtures, water consumption could be reduced by about 3 percent to 9 percent, depending on the location,

2 Changing Cost Perceptions: An Analysis of Conservation Design, Illinois Conservation Foundation, Chicago Wilderness, February 2005

3 <http://www.rmi.org/sitepages/pid209.php>

and wastewater flows to publicly owned treatment works could be reduced by an estimated 13 percent nationwide by 2016.⁴ Some states are taking this study to heart; Maryland requires low-flush toilets in all new construction. Longview is facing many water issues and solely focusing on end-of-the-pipe solutions will cost the taxpayer much more than a systemwide approach.

Stormwater regulations do not need to be onerous regulations that limit development. LID creates new ways to develop subdivisions and communities and it can redevelop downtown with green vegetative areas that also filter and retain stormwater. Stormwater regulations and city leadership can be the drivers for a greener, more sustainable community.

4 Wastewater Flows: Water-Efficient Plumbing Fixtures Reduce Water Consumption and Wastewater Flows; United States General Accounting Office, Report to Congressional Requesters, August 2000 <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/rc00232.pdf>

TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY

Transportation is linked to all aspects of community life. Our natural environment, economic vitality, and social well-being depend on transportation systems that are efficient, clean, and equitable.

Defining Sustainable Transportation

A sustainable transportation system is one that

- Allows the basic access for all
- Offers a variety of transportation options
- Limits waste and uses energy efficiently.

A sustainable transportation project analysis weighs transportation objectives and impacts to the environment and community values equally. It may help avoid delay and other costly obstacles to project implementation

Sustainable transportation systems and projects aim for efficient movement of goods and sustainable freight and delivery systems. Design for walking and bicycling is another critical aspect of sustainable transportation. At state and national levels, bicycling and walking trips are almost invisible in relation to motor vehicle trips but they play a much more important role in cities and in neighborhoods. Most of us are pedestrians at some point each day. Even car drivers and transit riders become pedestrians when they step out of the vehicle. Effective public transportation depends on people being able to walk comfortably to stations and stops.

Establishing Transportation Goals

Longview needs to set quantifiable, area-specific targets and performance measures derived from safety, environmental, and health objectives for the community. The city needs to anticipate environmental or social impacts of transportation-related decisions rather than react to them after they have occurred. This will result in considerable cost savings since transportation decisions often involve costly, long-term infrastructure investments. Several examples of quantifiable performance measurement tools commonly used for transportation systems and projects include

Connectivity Indexes

- The number of roadway links divided by the number of intersections or nodes—higher index means travelers have more route choice.

- Average trip length—the distance community or neighborhood residents travel normalized by population or area (e.g., per capita or Traffic Analysis Zone, TAZ). This can serve as a land use mix indicator as well as a transportation connectivity indicator.
- Intersection density—the number of intersections within a defined area (e.g., square mile, TAZ, other).

Project Citizen Input

- Design charrettes
- Visual preference surveys
- Stratified sample surveys

By using these methods, Longview can begin to prioritize projects that will create greater connectivity and reduce traffic conflicts.

Safety and Access

Making the community's transportation system within and connecting commercial centers and neighborhoods safe and convenient for all area residents will help to create a livable, vital, and sustainable character.

Longview can improve traffic flow and safety at intersections by installing roundabouts at select locations. Roundabouts can also serve as a gateway treatment at key entrances to the city and bridge gaps between key commercial areas and other key destinations in the downtown area. Install raised medians in place of two-way center turn lanes throughout the city. Raised medians or islands improve pedestrian safety, provide space for landscaping and stormwater management, and provide shelter for left-turning vehicles.

Where excess roadway capacity or retrofit is possible, install wider sidewalks with vegetated buffers and/or bike lanes or bike boulevards. Install bicycle detection markings at intersections where streets make up part of the city's bike way system. Use on-street, angled parking and eliminate off-street parking where appropriate for convenience and safety and to create infill opportunities.



Studies show that people are generally willing to walk with one-quarter to one-half mile to transit and other destinations and wait about 30 seconds before attempting to cross the roadway. To increase safety and convenience of pedestrians, establish a block size of 600 feet or less in commercial centers and consider providing a leading pedestrian interval (3 seconds before the green light) and/or curb extensions at longer crossings.

To enhance and extend the vitality of the downtown, use pedestrian-level illumination along downtown corridors. Require downtown merchants to maintain lighting in their store fronts into the evening hours to improve security. All lighting should be shaded to reduce light pollution.

15th Avenue and Other High-Speed Corridors

On higher speed corridors that serve as boulevards or parkways, install pedestrian actuated signals in the median as well as on the roadside to allow one direction of traffic to flow after pedestrians have safely crossed. This treatment improves pedestrian safety with minimal disruption to traffic flow. Mid-block pedestrian crossings will improve pedestrian safety and visibility at locations along 15th Avenue. They will also help to connect key commercial areas and other destinations.

Install roundabouts at several intersections along 15th Avenue to improve traffic flow, increase safety, and better connect business on either side of the roadway. Recommended locations include 15th Avenue and Washington Way, 15th Avenue and Ocean Beach Hwy., and 15th Avenue and Tennant Way. 15th and Washington Way is particularly important to provide connection between the downtown core, the college campus, and the Triangle Mall Plaza.



Transportation and Economic Vitality

Security and Sustainability

Longview should plan for increasing fluctuation in oil availability and prices. As the cost for city services increases, delivery of goods and services will also rise. Citizens will demand additional transportation options from residential areas to essential services and needs. Creating these opportunities will help remove the barriers to downtown growth and neighborhood connectivity.

Enhanced Connections

Longview should

- Improve and increase the existing freight rail system and access to that system
- Improve and modernize multimodal connections and access points
- Pursue efficiencies in the motor freight system as well, like the Industrial Way Bypass alignment
- Work with local delivery companies to ensure that downtown traffic operations and parking are not affected by delivery schedules.

In conjunction with increases in north-south passenger rail services stopping at the Kelso passenger rail station, connectivity can be improved by increasing transit service with a downtown connector service or connecting facility.

In conjunction with infill and new residential developments in the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods, transit service should be increased to meet the needs of these new target populations. Provide a downtown shuttle service(s) that runs on frequent headways (15 minutes maximum) and connects the college campus, the Triangle Mall Plaza, the downtown commercial area, the medical center, and other primary destinations. Transit priority treatments should be provided on parts of the street network with significant delay, especially for express-type services.

By working closely with the Regional Transportation Planning Organization, Longview can pursue partnership opportunities. Public/private partnerships have been effective in other areas in supporting transit, freight, bicycle and pedestrian, and streetscape projects.

Transportation and the Environment

Context-Sensitive Solutions

Tools and processes outlined in state and national guidance on context sensitive solutions should be used. One tool that will help the city establish and convey the priorities for the transportation system is by ‘typing’ the thoroughfares within the city’s urban growth boundary.

Thoroughfare type is established based on the surrounding context and governs the selection of thoroughfare design criteria and configuration. Typing streets and thoroughfares will improve safety and accommodate the appropriate mix of modes for each context. Typing streets and thoroughfares will also provide more information and visuals to the community about what type of arterial (e.g., parkway, boulevard, or avenue) is within a neighborhood.

The table on the following page provides a sample of the kinds of information that can be incorporated into the city’s comprehensive plan, development regulations, and street standards related to roadway type.

Paths and Trails

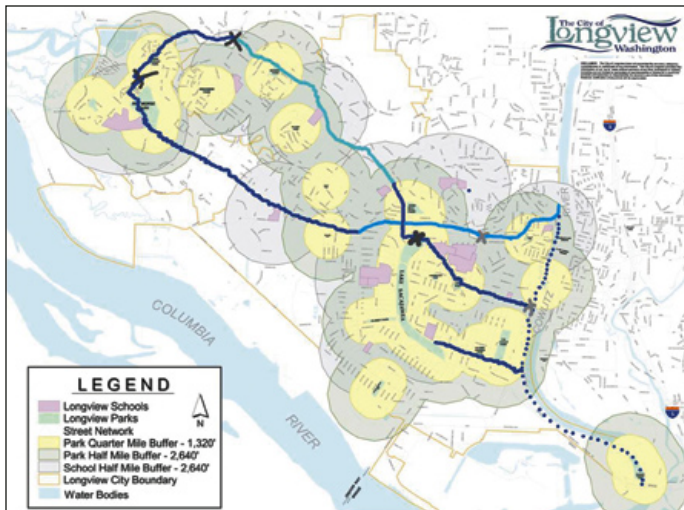
Bicycle travel is an important and efficient element of the urban transportation system. Most bicycle networks are not made up of one type of bike way. Rather, they are a combination of multiple-use paths, bike lanes, bike boulevards, shared roadway lanes, and other facilities.

The city has an existing trail plan that is more complete than the primary connections outlined in this report. The city should focus on a few select trail connections that will link the majority of parks, Lake Sacagawea, many schools, downtown businesses, and residential areas. The map included in this report identifies priority trail connections including

- Douglas Bike Blvd. to south end of Lake Sacagawea
- Gerhardt Gardens Park riverfront trail
- Rail trail on the BN line
- Pacific Way trail and on-street bikeway connections
- New bikeways on Olive Way and Olive Way extensions

Urban Thoroughfare Types	Function	Max. Number of Lanes	Target Posted Speed	Intersection Spacing	Transit Service Emphasis	Median	Driveway Access	Curb Parking	Pedestrian Facilities	Bicycle Facilities	Building Entry on ROW	Freight
Boulevard	Principal Or Minor Arterial	6	35–45	1/4 to 1/2 mile	Express with some Local	Required	Limited	Provisional	Sidewalk	No—Separated Trails and Limited Crossings	Yes	Regional Truck Route
Avenue	Minor Arterial or Collector	4 (6 deviation)	25–35	1/8 to 1/4 mile	Local	Optional	Limited	Yes	Sidewalk	Yes—Boulevard or On Street Bikeway	Yes	Local Truck Route
Street	Minor Arterial or Collector	2	25	300 feet to 1/8 mile	Local	Optional	Yes	Yes	Sidewalk	Yes—On Street Bikeway or Boulevard	Yes	Local Delivery

*Source: Modified from Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities, ITE 2006, p. 51.



- New bikeways on north-south neighborhood connector
- Broadway multiple-use path to north end of Lake Sacagawea

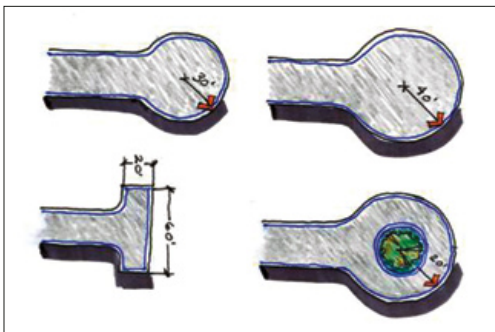
It should be noted that this connected system will require crossing some major and minor arterials at locations identified on the map on this page.

Stormwater Management and Streets

Low-impact road designs are recommended for residential and commercial areas in new development and redevelopment. The city should adopt standards that call for 20- to 25-foot widths for residential collectors, use of permeable materials in alleys and driveways, and reducing the required width of 50 feet for turnabouts, turnarounds, and cul-de-sacs. Several different designs are commonly used, including but not limited to



- 40-foot cul-de-sacs with bioretention as traffic circle (20-foot street width)
- 30-foot cul-de-sacs
- 60-foot by 20-foot Hammerhead turnabout



These designs for residential collectors and turnabouts coupled with other measures outlined in the stormwater section of this report will allow the city to reduce total impervious surface and better filter stormwater. Additionally, the city should continue to take advantage of new and redeveloping commercial and industrial areas to increase connectivity of streets; minimize roadway widths; and incorporate street trees and bioretention in medians, traffic circles, buffers, driveways, parking areas, and other transportation infrastructure.

PROCESS AND CODE

The preceding evaluations considered livability, sustainability, water, and transportation. How can Longview accomplish these goals with regulatory change? Progress should not be slowed through the heavy hand of bureaucracy or regulation. Rather, we must explore and evaluate regulations that promote growth and development as Longview charts its course into the future. The cornerstones for developing that road to Longview's future through tempered regulation should focus on development and maintenance.

Development must keep an eye on Longview's long-range plan, creating a stewardship to the community's mission. Robert A. Long created a model of land use and planning for future generations. That very model should serve as the foundation as the community revisits its regulations based on more than 83 years of economic, demographic, and social change. The city's zoning code was developed in the 1930s.

Though periodically updated, the imminent change to Longview's zoning ordinance will give the community an opportunity to build on the original model while addressing contemporary concerns and goals. Environmental factors that may not have been significant or even realized at the time of Longview's birth today play an important role in the community's future. From low-impact development to stewardship of the valuable resources that exist today, regulation of development must embrace those concerns.

Finally, transportation is overlooked all too often as the necessary dynamic that all residents as well as visitors rely on daily to live, work, and experience any community. A greater understanding and attention to public and private transportation must be addressed as a vital component to the future of Longview. Further development of corridors as well as mass transit must be included in a local regulatory model that will maintain walkability and focus on reducing rather than contributing to the congestion typically associated with growth.

Maintenance

Maintenance concentrates on Longview's 83 years of growth and development. The current building stock of private and public structures leaves residents and visitors a permanent image and memory of Longview. That lasting image can be further examined from both the subconscious as well as the conscious experience—subconscious as we recognize what once was or may have been intended and conscious as it exists today.

Longview is based on not only a blueprint of its origin but an existing condition that should serve as a valuable component of the community's future. Recognizing the rich history of many structures, Longview should promote the preservation as well as adaptive



use of that history. Quality of life and promotion of further development are proven by-products of historic preservation. With growth comes new development and construction.

In the wake of that growth, existing buildings and neighborhoods are often left behind. Varying degrees of this inattention, often a product of available resources, are found in the neighborhoods of Longview. Under these circumstances of limited resources, the community can look to its property owners to assist in not only maintaining but revitalizing its core neighborhoods.

Longview has experienced 83 years of change that is not unlike many communities around the country. What was once conceived as a factory town to serve Robert A. Long's mill soon evolved as a multifaceted community based on the integration of a diverse economic base. The loss of an economic base, the decline of existing building stock, and the perception of safe neighborhoods are all changes that Longview can address with a variety of practical regulatory tools.

Those tools are found in a variety of resources. Federal law, administrative state rules, and municipal ordinances comprise the palette of regulations available to meet the ongoing changes that Longview faces. At each level of government we find the tools necessary to promote a harmonious growth and development subject to the scale of the concern.

Regulatory Tools

Accessibility laws, environmental laws, and even model codes are introduced at the federal level. At the state level, administrative rules and codes focus on concerns relative to the state of Washington, from growth management to environmental policy. Finally municipal ordinances will focus on the community and the safety of its inhabitants. At that local level, zoning focuses on the mix of land use and function, life safety is addressed through the adoption of model codes, and a detailed approach to addressing environmental concerns tailored to meet the needs of Longview all go beyond federal or state criteria.

Regulations at their root are based on health, safety, and welfare. Laws, codes, and ordinances have historically promoted a minimum standard in providing the occupants of public buildings and places of employment as well as our communities at large that expected level

of safety. The adequate protection that those living in and visiting our communities should be afforded includes healthy neighborhoods, structures safe from the threat of fire, and the sustainability of natural resources which contribute to the welfare of the community.

Regulations put in place and enforced by the municipality can be either prescriptive or performance based. When evaluating the impact or expected result of any regulation, the anticipated result and means to achieving that result must be balanced. Building separation distance, smoke detection, or access that does not discriminate reflects prescriptive regulation. Recognizing a desired result opens regulation to the variety of solutions associated with performance-based codes. The result of an equitable and successful regulatory process in a community comes back to the subconscious as well as the conscious experience of those living in and visiting Longview.

Longview has several tools available to promote a healthy environment. The understanding of a healthy environment can be realized in several different levels.

Stormwater Regulations

Low-impact development is a collection of proven, low-tech, cost-effective runoff management strategies that are motivated by regulations promulgated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Management of stormwater runoff has a direct impact on the water quality and health of Longview's residents. The state of Washington in 1971 adopted the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) to ensure that environmental values were considered during decision-making by state and local agencies. Most regulations focus on particular aspects of a proposal, while SEPA requires the identification and evaluation of probable impacts to all elements of the built and natural environment.

Growth Management Act

In a response to rapid growth, Washington state passed the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990. The GMA requires all cities and counties in the state to involve planning in response to population growth, sprawl, and the threat to the state's natural resources. Currently Cowlitz County is not required to plan under the GMA. As Longview looks toward the future, though, consideration should be given to the benefits of Longview's and Cowlitz County's participation in the GMA. At the state level the GMA has given local jurisdictions the tools necessary to reduce sprawl, promote affordable housing, include open space and recreation, and enforce environmental protection and timely permitting.

Municipal Ordinances—Health and Unsafe Buildings

The health of the community as affected by the built environment is also addressed in several municipal ordinances. Title 7 of the Longview Municipal Code (LMC) addresses health and sanitation. Title 16.32 of the LMC gives local regulators the tools necessary to address unfit dwellings in the community. Dwellings that are not owner occupied or scrutinized based on tenant selection all too often act as the catalyst for the failure of most neighborhoods.

Longview has adopted model codes and administers those rules specific to all commercial projects. The International Code Council suite of codes, which includes the International Building Code for commercial structures and the International Residential Code which addresses single- and two-family homes, has been adopted. The National Electrical Code is adopted and used as the regulatory tool specific to electrical installations in Longview.

Municipal ordinances are in place as well in the LMC that address safety concerns. Weed abatement is specifically addressed not only from the perspective of property maintenance but fire safety and fire apparatus access as well. Title 16.32.035 provides the building official the legal path to contact other departments for assistance. In the case of property maintenance, the building or fire official can rely on the police department to provide additional support in what may be a dangerous situation. This ordinance serves as an example of a regulatory tool that should be revised based on the changes that Longview has experienced. The Longview police department or any other municipal agency should be given the same privilege to contact the buildings department when faced with a concern that can be addressed by the appropriate authorities.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The welfare of any community can also be attributed to appropriate and tempered regulation. At the federal level the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law in the early 1990s. This federal law redefined discrimination and gave not only individuals the right of equal access but also gave regulators the tools to enforce those rights. Longview may be eligible for funding to upgrade accessibility for city curb cuts.

Historic Preservation

At the LMC level, again we can identify existing ordinance language that can serve as the foundation to what should be a more substantive text. Title 16.12 is intended to address historic preservation. This section of the municipal ordinance should evolve to further define historic districts as well as historic structures. Once defined, the rich history of historic Longview can be addressed and given the appropriate attention as future growth and development is included as an integral part of the process.

Signs

Recognizing the benefits of signage in the community that serves the purpose of location and identification in lieu of the current trend which includes advertising and attention is critical to the future welfare of any community. The sign ordinance (city ordinance, Title 16.13) needs to be revised to reflect current sign ordinances across the country. Limiting the height, size, and illumination of signs and enforcing sign ordinances will change the visual appearance of major streets. Drivers are confused by too much signage. Too many signs reduce the quality of the visual landscape. Changes to the sign ordinance will remove what now is an unregulated form of visual pollution.



Effective Regulation

Throughout this report, resources to administer and implement regulations have been the key to effective results. Effective regulations are a direct result of effective implementation. Pressures facing our communities create more regulation requiring more resources. Unfortunately, municipalities can not feasibly keep pace with the regulations that face any number of projects and concerns. Faced with this dilemma of regulation and resource Longview can look toward three effective tools for effective regulation: effective regulation and information, education, and resources.



An informed owner, designer, or contractor already has the knowledge to make the correct decisions, expediting the regulator’s job of observation and inspection rather than orders and citation. Longview should become a leader in educating those external customers and providing owners, designers, and contractors the training necessary making them a much more informed customer. Finally, resources should be made available and updated regularly to give all external and internal customers the opportunity to gather information and forms. The building department currently has a small kiosk with printed information. That kiosk can be expanded to address a variety of regulatory mechanisms and tools where individuals can reference these documents during regular hours.

The current process in Longview follows a very conventional model which follows projects, both commercial and residential, from submittal through fire inspection and maintenance. The components of the regulatory model in Longview are submittal, review, permitting, inspection, occupancy, and fire inspection/maintenance. Limited resources at each of the stages of any structure in Longview directly impact the level of attention that can be dedicated to that component.

Permitting Process—Limited Staffing

The commercial projects are handled by two individuals, the building official and the fire marshal. Residential projects are all addressed by one individual. Submittal through review and permit issuance typically may take more than eight weeks. This includes the planning (SEPA, plan commission, and general development), civil site plan review and the individual disciplines of building, fire, and mechanical systems. Once under permit and construction, the building inspector will make inspections throughout the project’s duration at predetermined critical phases of construction. Upon substantial completion of the project, an occupancy inspection and permit is issued and finally ongoing fire inspection and maintenance follows for the life of the structure. With only

one fire marshal in the community of Longview, subsequent fire inspections and maintenance are also limited to critical facilities. Educational, institutional, and hazardous facilities are only inspected regularly; all other commercial facilities are only inspected once every two years.



Property Inspections and Enforcement

Perception has a direct impact on our reality. In the case of Longview the reality of delinquent properties, limited maintenance enforcement, and concentrated areas that lack owner-occupied properties create the perception of a safety risk in certain areas of the city.

A proactive approach to property maintenance inspection and regulation should be explored. Under the current LMC, Titles 7 and 16 provide the tools necessary to enforce property maintenance. Coupled with property maintenance, a landlord/tenant education program can be implemented to give landowners as well as those leasing property the knowledge and tools to better screen as well as understand rights that tenants have regarding their health, safety, and welfare.

Impact of Insurance Rating

Regulation should be tempered and progress needs to be expedited through bureaucracy. There needs to be a balance between regulation and available resources. The Washington Survey and Rating Bureau (WSRB) is modeled after the Insurance Services Organization (ISO). This survey audits and ranks communities in two categories, fire and building departments. The WSRB will audit communities based on criteria that have a direct impact on insurance ratings for that community. On a scale where 1 would be the best rating, the fire department in Longview is rated at 5 and the building department is rated at 3. These rankings have a direct impact on the property insurance rates that will be imposed on the community. It is anticipated that the building department will receive an even lower ranking following the next review due to lack of resources and a continued increase in responsibilities. The fire department's current rating is already a direct result of understaffing and limited resources based on the community size. Balance becomes the question. Based on the WSRB ranking and the property owners tolerance or will to balance risk against taxation, will they pay for additional services? Statistical data can be gathered based on surrounding municipalities regarding property insurance rates as compared to municipal services. This audit can further shape Longview's future and help the elected officials have an informed discussion with the constituents.

Case Study: RENEW

Three years ago the City of LaCrosse, Wis., decided to "Restore Everyone's Neighborhood Effectively and When"; the objective was called RENEW. The building department along with the support of the common council and mayor's office recognized that

deteriorating neighborhoods were directly related to a deteriorating quality of life for the residents and visitors to their community. The RENEW initiative involved everyone from the mayor to the police and building officials to the residents. One of the tools included in the municipal ordinance of the city was the ability for other departments to call on the building officials; just like fire activity led to the building official, so could police and department of public works activity. The result of the program leaves us with the success story where downtown LaCrosse, Wis., saw a 15 percent real estate value rise in 2005. RENEW can be summarized in six goals:

- Involve neighborhoods
- Revitalize and clean up neighborhoods
- Provide positive alternatives for young people
- Enforce city codes proactively
- Provide more law enforcement personnel in neighborhoods
- Increase local, state, and federal financial assistance.

Accomplishment and the success of a property maintenance program starts with an ordinance. Longview has the tool; LMC 16.32, Unfit Dwellings and 16.32.235 where a property is declared nuisance and abatement is required. Under LMC 16.32.240, if the substandard building is in such condition as to make it imminently dangerous to health, safety, moral or general welfare of its occupant or the public, it shall be ordered to be vacated and closed by the building official or the commission. However, the city does not have the enforcement staff necessary for the proper enforcement of this measure.

The city of Milwaukee more than 10 years ago instituted a property recording program. The property recording program requires that all non-owner occupied property owners record ownership information with the building department. This information is critical



for the timely contact in the event of an emergency and speedy resolution of complaints. From the property recording program stemmed landlord training and tenant education classes that continue to improve the quality of life and perceived if not real safety in Milwaukee's neighborhoods. Longview has the opportunity to create a similar program and benefit through a new sense of pride in its downtown neighborhoods.

MOVING FORWARD

Longview has completed a long comprehensive planning process. The SDAT recommends the following short-term goals and immediate next steps toward sustainable community development:

Livability and Land Use

- Add additional on-street parking prioritized on narrowing the width of dangerously wide streets that pedestrians need to cross and change zoning to significantly reduce or eliminate the requirements for off-street parking for downtown projects
- Provide more street parking by adding angled parking

Sustainability and Community Development

- Hold developers forums and partner with AIA local component
- Create local green building standards

Water and Low-Impact Development

- Educate residents and developers on LID options and create design standards
- Encourage replacement of toilets with low-flow fixtures
- Create a demonstration LID project, re-greening one city block which has been paved over

Transportation and Connectivity

- Identify safety improvements for the 15th Avenue corridor, creating a pedestrian overlay zone
- Adopt a context-sensitive solutions policy that will help the city avoid delays and other costly obstacles to transportation project implementation

Process and Code

- Consider hiring of staff for increased property enforcement of existing maintenance and nuisance abatement ordinances
- Create landlord and tenant education programs
- Develop a strict sign ordinance

Longview is a city with the potential to become a very livable community. The willingness of its citizens to participate in master planning and events such as the SDAT visit show a commitment to creating a livable community. Longview once was a model for the city beautiful movement and it has an opportunity to be a 21st century model as a sustainable city. By reinvigorating the downtown, evaluating all new development with sustainable criteria, and emphasizing its unique characteristics, Longview will once again become a livable, walkable community. The importance of place is in the uniqueness of identity. Longview has good structural capacity to maintain the wealth of its inherited planning legacy and build an even stronger identity as a sustainable community.



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