Appendix F  Downtown Plan
APPENDIX G: DOWNTOWN PLAN

Vision Statement

This Plan envisions resurgence of Downtown Stanwood as the heart and core of the community. In addition to serving as a retail center, Downtown Stanwood of the future will be the public center of the greater Stanwood community area. People will identify with the public activities they come together to share. Stanwood can be seen as a series of urban nodes or “villages” tied together with attractive green corridors, with tree-lined pedestrian-friendly streets. The Downtown as the heart of the City can be a place that provides commercial and civic activities, a variety of gathering spaces including community parks, waterfronts and trails. To create a successful Downtown the City must create an atmosphere and identity the community can embrace.

Principles of the Downtown Vision

1. Historic Downtown East Stanwood and West Stanwood are what make the city unique. Preserve them. Enhance them. Show them off.

2. Development consistent with the character of Stanwood’s historic nodes is important as infill. Consistency should be defined as requiring similar scale and site planning and not strictly replication of historic architecture.

3. To unify the Downtown, a new Center District is envisioned. The Center District will join east and west Stanwood, connect the two historic commercial areas, and provide retail, services, government, cultural, and social activities. This area currently includes under-utilized and vacant land and an opportunity exists to attract new uses that will help build a consolidated downtown.

3. A critical element of success for this District will be to extend the historic grid and create a critical mass of urban activity.

4. Special attention on infrastructure and amenities are needed to attract retail into the businesses, protect downtown Stanwood from further loss of business and economic vitality and bring customers to the front doors of the businesses.

5. The downtown is more than a place for business. It’s the cultural, educational, and governmental center for Greater Stanwood and houses both public and private
organizations—all those things that make a city center. It includes diverse public and private facilities, not just a place where people come to buy goods and services.

GOAL- Promote Downtown as the heart and core of the community.

Objective - Protect Downtown Stanwood from further loss of business and economic vitality.

STRATEGIES

1. Locate land uses in the downtown that attract retail, recreation, and services that support multiple destination trips.

2. Consider locating municipal services in the downtown to support downtown businesses and create a critical mass of business activity.
   
   a. Determine whether or not to continue providing municipal offices including City Hall and the Police Station in the historic nodes of East and West Stanwood as a Phase I 10-15 year strategy.
   
   b. Determine whether or not to continue to plan for a new municipal campus consolidating city and other government functions in the downtown as a Phase II goal to be achieved within 20 years.

3. Use City hall and municipal parking lots for general public parking to support businesses open after normal city business hours.

4. Use City investments in municipal facilities as a model of sustainable development in the flood plain.
   
   a. Work with the Snohomish County Conservation District to develop low impact development designs to upgrade municipal parking lots.
   
   b. Incorporate sustainable design including low impact development into design of city parks, landscape strips and urban plazas.

5. Maintain City property at a standard that is a model for private investment.

6. Adopt a minimum property maintenance code.

7. Prevent suburban growth patterns from altering Stanwood’s grid based zero line development and continuous storefront historic development pattern.
a. Use infill development standards for the downtown that allow flexibility around uses but create an urban form based on the development pattern in the two historic downtown nodes that is: human scale, pedestrian orientation, continuous storefront on a public street grid.

b. Restrict auto-oriented activities such as shopping centers.

8. Create design character and identity through architectural standards the community can embrace without relying on a theme.

GOAL - Recognize and Designate East and West Districts as the Historic Downtown

Objective - Maintain a Historic Downtown Overlay to allow consideration of regulations and standards that promote the historic urban form of the two original downtown nodes of Stanwood and East Stanwood now re-designated as the West and East Districts.

STRATEGIES
1. Allow parking, landscaping and signage in the historic downtown districts that reinforce the existing scale and land use pattern in the historic grid and support the goal of continuous storefront development patterns.

2. Allow standards that support continuous use and maintenance of existing structures in the historic overlay.

GOAL - Unify Downtown

Objective - Enhance the two historic downtown districts of East Stanwood and West Stanwood and connect them with a Center District.
EAST STANWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Objective - In East Stanwood, emphasize the feeling of Main Street, with shopping connected to the railroad and contiguous storefronts that open onto the sidewalk.
STRATEGIES

1. Emphasize Main (271st) Street and pedestrian connections to the Train Station.

   a. Create continuous storefronts that open onto sidewalk for two blocks west of 88th Avenue.

   b. Provide full sidewalks on both sides.

   c. Maintain diagonal parking in front of stores.

   d. Require additional parking behind buildings.

   e. Provide a bus transfer point at the train station.

   f. Reorganize the city parking lot to get 25% more parking.

   g. Provide parking for train patrons and local businesses in the municipal parking lot.
h. Provide bathrooms facilities for the public.

i. Provide a continuous sidewalk from the train station to the municipal parking lot and into the downtown main street commercial area.

2 Require site design for new development to encourage pedestrians.
   a. Locate parking lots to be convenient for business use.
   b. Maximize street parking.
   c. Provide street level entry.
   d. Minimize front setbacks.
   e. Minimize parking lots on private property.
   f. Encourage street level amenities such as flower boxes, outdoor displays and creative signage that provides interesting things to look at on the street.

3. Upgrade rear entries of existing buildings to make them attractive and functional.

4. Attract specialty retail and convenience/service uses in East Stanwood that is attractive as a destination served by the new train/transportation center.

5. Develop a downtown urban park to service residents and businesses and to reinforce the entry to the East District from the train station.

6. Encourage sustainable design in upgrading the municipal parking lot and the future downtown park to incorporate green design and promote conservation and open space on a small scale within the historic downtown area.

7. Provide historic street lighting.

8. Provide pocket parks or urban plazas on unused portions of public rights of ways.
WEST STANWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Objective - Maintain the existing feel of simplicity the West District has already. Reinforce what West Stanwood already has. West Stanwood should emphasize the character of “small town” or “old town.”
STRATEGIES

1. Enhance the historic character of the West End.
   a. Retain and restore the older houses and commercial structures in the West End.
   b. Require infill development to be consistent with the historic character of the West End.
   c. Restore the existing brick road.
   d. Add more historic light fixtures.

2. Reinforce the existing eclectic nature of West Stanwood.
a. Retain the irregular edges of the West End by including landscape elements that soften the streetscape. Allow a variety of setbacks on lots with non standard parcels, and encourage variety in heights and architectural details of structures.

b. Keep the feeling of the historic center by not expanding the boundary of West Stanwood.

c. Allow a wide range of mixed use businesses.

d. Support daytime and evening business and cultural activities.

e. Use selective infill development to reinforce nooks and crannies and maintain historical context.

3. Strengthen the entry and pedestrian connections within the District4.

a. Redefine the entry to the West End by changing the intersection so the south fork is the obvious gateway.

b. De-emphasize the through traffic route.

c. Extend the brick crosswalk across 102nd Avenue.

d. Link sidewalks throughout the West End.

e. Add hanging flower baskets.

f. Install banners on SR 532 to identify the downtown.
CENTER DISTRICT

Center District is a transition zone between east and west accessible by foot, bike and car. The area has vacant and underutilized land available in a range of parcel sizes. The District also includes vacant structures presenting an opportunity for re-use. The library, PUD, banks, a medical center and Stanwood Middle School are already in the middle and form a nucleus of activity. The development of the Center District is essential to build a unified downtown that will become the modern Stanwood. The feel of the District can be contemporary, but to avoid importing a suburban character the site design and architectural design of new projects must be carefully considered.

Objective - Develop the Center District as the center of the downtown with a mix of retail, service, government, educational, institutional, and open space uses that connect the two historic downtown nodes.
1. Actively market and/or work with private parties to attract a range of land use in Center District: public and institutional uses, including schools, post office, community center, parks, pathways, library, retail, services, offices, housing, non-profit organizations.

2. Evaluate the opportunity for a municipal campus as a 20 year goal.

3. Plan for a green place to gather pathway corridors that provide open space and make connections through the city.

4. Develop mixed use structures.

5. Encourage small scale infill development and conversion of small houses to other uses.
   
   a. Use older houses for start-up businesses.

   b. Add residences above garages out of the flood plain.
6. Re-align the south side of Main (271st) to achieve a unifying landscape corridor, improved parking serving businesses, and better pedestrian circulation.

   a. Make right of way 40 feet deep and landscape it.
   
   b. Pull sidewalk closer to the buildings.
   
   c. Allow parking in front of buildings.
   
   d. Create a comprehensive green open space on south side of 271st.
   
   e. Eliminate or combine driveways.

Conceptual Alignment of Main (271st St)
7. At Stanwood Middle School move fence inside the green space.

8. Build a pedestrian corridor (on the east side of The Central District), using old sloughs as an open space system.

9. Locate office or retail uses on the vacant area east of the QFC site.

10. Develop an east-west connector south of Main Street to support a grid system.

11. Develop a downtown grid modeling the existing street and alley network in the historic downtown to improve the pedestrian network, utility service, emergency vehicle access and functional circulation.

   a. Incrementally work toward completing a street and alley grid network.

   b. Establish a public corridor south of 271st Street to develop a more complete grid of streets to facilitate development and provide for alternate and emergency access.
c. Establish a public corridor north of 271st to provide east-west linkages (particularly from the transit station to Heritage Park) to provide linkages for pedestrians, other non-motorized travel and as emergency access for pedestrian links.

d. Minimize entry points, and reinforce edge of parking from highway for sites with visual access from SR 532 with landscaping.

12. Locate required parking inward to the development to maximize building frontage along the sidewalk.

   a. Encourage storefront businesses to construct back entrances that lead to alley and back of building parking.

13. Internalize parking to the side and rear of buildings.
GOAL - Develop Transportation systems that reinforce the development of downtown and provide regional access to and from the community.

Stanwood’s downtown developed around the Stillaguamish River and the rail system that served the lumber industry and later agriculture. While the original purpose for these systems has passed, the backbone of the rail system and some diminished capacity of the river remain.

Objective - Balance the desire for efficient service on SR 532 allowing people to get between Camano Island and I-5 as fast as possible with providing easy and safe access into and out of downtown.
1. Work with the Washington State Department of Transportation to facilitate access in and out of the downtown. Several locations for improvements should include 88th, 92nd, 98th, and 102nd Avenues NW.

   a. Install vehicle actuated and coordinated signals at Pioneer Highway, 88th Avenue, and 92nd.

   b. Install signals at 102nd Ave NW and ultimately at 98th Avenue.

   c. Incorporate pedestrian crossings when signals are installed to provide safe linkages between the downtown and the river access opportunities.

   d. Use landscape elements to distinguish intersections and as another visual indicator that you have arrived in the downtown by extending landscaping into the downtown side streets.

   e. Reduce the speed limit to 35 per hour on SR-532 between Pioneer Highway and the Camano Gateway Bridge.
f. Connect adjacent surface parking lots and/or shared access drives when new development occurs or as businesses change use, particularly along 271st St NW.

g. Identify shared parking opportunities and develop credits for shared parking consolidating access and parking lot linkages.

**Goal - Effectively Identify Stanwood.**

Objective - Establish a gateways and signage program that informs the traveler of when they arrive and leave Stanwood and adds to community identification.
1. Establish a consistent series of indicators to let visitors know when they enter the city and how to access the downtown.

   a. Develop a coordinated gateway and signing program that uses common materials, symbols and colors to designate entrances to the City, entry into distinct districts and neighborhoods, and major public places.

   b. Accentuate significant entry locations and intersections with some landscape feature to announce arrival at a place or acknowledge a transition into another part of town.

   **Street Signs**
c. Establish an historic street signs system to reinforce the heritage of the downtown area.

d. Use lighting standards (which also enhance pedestrian safety), flower baskets, flower pots, landscaping, and street furniture to reinforce visual identity.

e. Add historical street signs to existing street poles.

f. Define Gateways with new Gateway signs, potentially located at: 532 and 72ndth, east entry to Stanwood, and major intersections through downtown, particularly to the three Districts (88th, 102nd and 92nd). Gateway sign at 271st/98th to West Stanwood.

g. Add landscaping to signage.

**GOAL - Separate downtown from the commercial area on the hill.**

Objective - Recognize Downtown and Uptown as separate centers and do not merge the two areas into one commercial district.

1. Continue the existing land use designation of Residential use in the areas between the two commercial centers.

2. Provide connection between the Uptown and Downtown Centers through the transportation network but reinforce the visual separation between the two areas through the adopted wayfinding signage system.