



# Sustaining a Livable Lake Forest Park: The Future of Our Town Center

## TASK FORCE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OCTOBER 18, 2004



BERK & ASSOCIATES

**BERK & ASSOCIATES**

120 Lakeside Avenue  
Suite 200  
Seattle, Washington 98122  
www.berkandassociates.com  
P (206) 324-8760

***“Helping Communities and Organizations Create Their Best Futures”***

Principals: Bonnie Berk and Michael Hodgins  
Project Manager: Bonnie Berk  
Additional Analysts: Chris Mefford, Matt Stevenson, Courtney Knox  
Report Production: Matt Stevenson, Erica Natali and Courtney Knox

*October 18, 2004. This report has been recommended by the Sustaining a Livable Lake Forest Park Task Force and forwarded to the Lake Forest Park City Council for their consideration.*

## **TOWN CENTER PRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CITY TO SHAPE ITS BEST FUTURE**

Lake Forest Park's Town Center presents a unique set of circumstances and opportunities for the City. This 16-acre, underperforming commercial property is in private ownership and will be for sale in the near future. The community is deeply interested and concerned – even passionate – about the use and character of the property. The Town Center is an important part of the fabric of the community: a gathering place that people identify with and a retail center that has not reached its potential either economically nor in terms of meeting community needs.

In issuing the recommendations in this report, the Task Force has met its charge to articulate a compelling community vision and an implementable set of policy recommendations. These recommendations are rooted in an understanding that the City has an opportunity to act on what is in the City's control by defining the community's needs and preferences for the future of the

Town Center, and by removing regulatory barriers to effective redevelopment at the site.

A fundamental element of that best future is playing an appropriate and responsible role in helping to reposition the property from an economically struggling shopping center to a vibrant Town Center. That Town Center can and should feature a workable mix of housing, retail, office and community uses. The introduction of housing into the Town Center accomplishes many purposes all at once: it will increase activity at the site, which will increase its economic and social vitality; it will help meet expressed community desires for alternative housing types in the City and regional growth management housing targets; and it will work synergistically to foster enhanced transit connectivity and service to the area.

After many, many hours of thoughtful dialogue, the Task Force has achieved consensus on the findings and recommendations in this report, which it respectfully transmits to the City Council in the spirit of helping to sustain and shape the City's future as a truly special and livable community.

# Sustaining a Livable Lake Forest Park Participants

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## **SUSTAINING A LIVABLE LAKE FOREST PARK ADVISORY TASK FORCE**

Roger Olstad, Chair and City Council  
Pamela A. Brown, Citizen-at-Large  
Dale Cote, Environmental Quality Commission  
Mary Jane Goss, City Council  
Joel Paisner, Citizen-at-Large  
Kae Peterson, Shoreline Community College at Lake Forest Park  
Sally Renn, Citizen-at-Large  
Robert Sindelar, Third Place Books  
Lloyd Skinner, Planning Commission  
Karen Sluiter, Human Services Commission  
Anne Stadler, Citizen-at-Large  
Ed Sterner, City Council  
Shary Van, Citizen-at-Large  
Jeff Weissman, Economic Development Commission  
Florence Wright, Parks and Recreation Commission

## **CITY STAFF**

David R. Hutchinson, Mayor  
Karen Haines, City Administrator  
Sarah Phillips, Community and Government Affairs Manager  
John Hawley, Finance Director

## **CONSULTING TEAM**

### **BERK & ASSOCIATES, INC.**

Bonnie Berk  
Courtney Knox  
Chris Mefford  
Erica Natali  
Matt Stevenson

### **MAKERS ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN DESIGN**

John Owen  
Bob Bengford  
Thanasorn Kamolratanayothin

### **HEFFRON TRANSPORTATION, INC.**

Tod McBryan

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# Introduction

## What is the Difference Between Town Center and Towne Centre?

Town Center is the name of the City of Lake Forest Park's city center and its zoning designation. The boundary of the City's zoning designation includes the shopping center, the new Starbucks, the ARCO gas station, City Hall, the Bank of America and the Windermere properties.

The Towne Centre is the name given by the owners to the shopping center.

## INTRODUCTION: PROJECT PURPOSE AND TASK FORCE PROCESS

In late 2003, the City of Lake Forest Park began a citizen-based policy planning effort to assess the strategic options for strengthening the economic and social viability of the City's commercial core, the Town Center area.

The Town Center planning area fully encompasses the 16-acre Towne Centre shopping center, which was constructed in the 1960s and remains a contiguous property under single ownership.

The property is anchored by an Albertsons grocery store, Shoreline Community College's Lake Forest Park campus, the Lake Forest Park Library, a Rite Aid pharmacy and in particular, the much-loved Third Place Books and Commons, which serves as a community meeting and gathering place. There are also several popular retail spots, including Great Harvest Bakery and the Starbucks Store. Lake Forest Park's City Hall is adjacent to the Towne Centre property and within the boundaries of the Town Center.

Many people involved in this project visit the Center daily as an integral part of their routine and to meet basic shopping needs. Others spend time and meet friends and family at Third Place Books and the Commons area, with its food court and open area. Others are neighbors with homes adjacent to or near the site. The Center is considered to be an important contributor to the livability and quality of life of the City's residents.

In recent years, the Towne Centre property has struggled as a commercial center. Two of its larger retailers have vacated the site, and have not been replaced. The vacancy rate currently exceeds 20%, and the owner has indicated it will soon be placed on the market to be sold.

The future of the Town Center area is of significant interest and concern to Lake Forest Park's City Council and the community. The City's Planning Commission, in particular, focused on the Center's viability as part of the Comprehensive Plan update process. The Commission was interested in:

- Establishing a policy framework of integrated land use policies to promote the economic viability of the City's

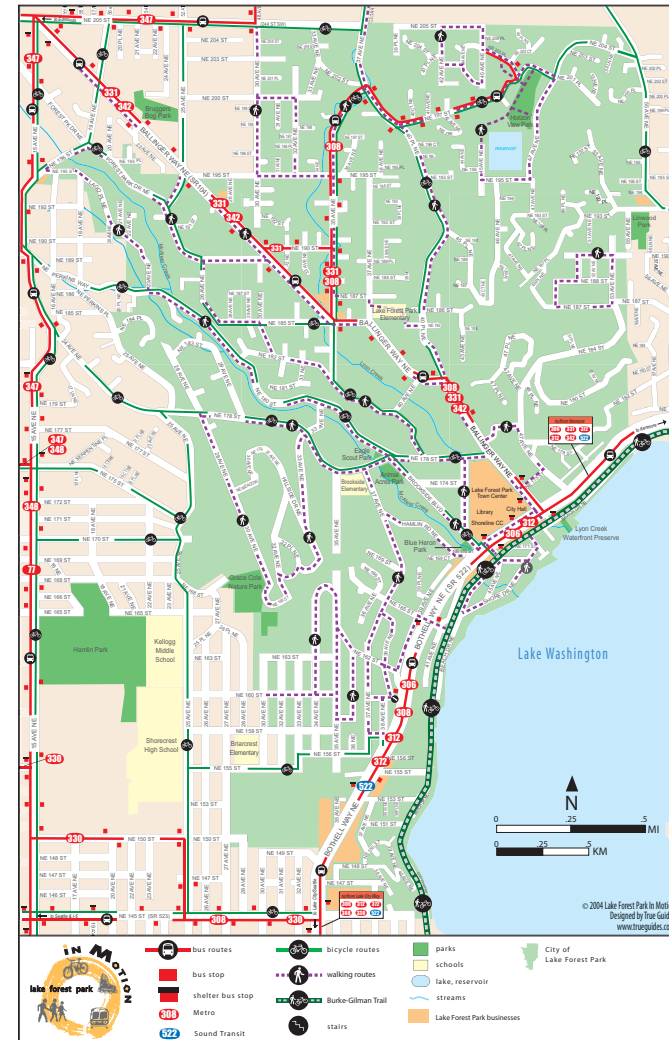
commercial areas, particularly the Town Center;

- Accommodating the City's diverse housing needs;
- Encouraging pedestrian access and activity within the City's commercial areas; and
- To best position the City to work with a new property owner.

The City Council requested that the Mayor and the administration develop a scope of work for a study and initiate a competitive bid process in response to the Planning Commission request. The Council also established the Sustaining a Livable Lake Forest Park Task Force.

A diverse and broadly inclusive 15-member Task Force was appointed, with representatives from the City Council, the Environmental Quality, Parks & Recreation, Economic Development, Planning, and Human Services Commissions. Citizens and shopping center tenants were also represented. The Task Force worked very hard to write a scope of work for this project, one that reflected the community's question, interests, concerns and passions. The draft scope of work was sent to 600 citizens for review and

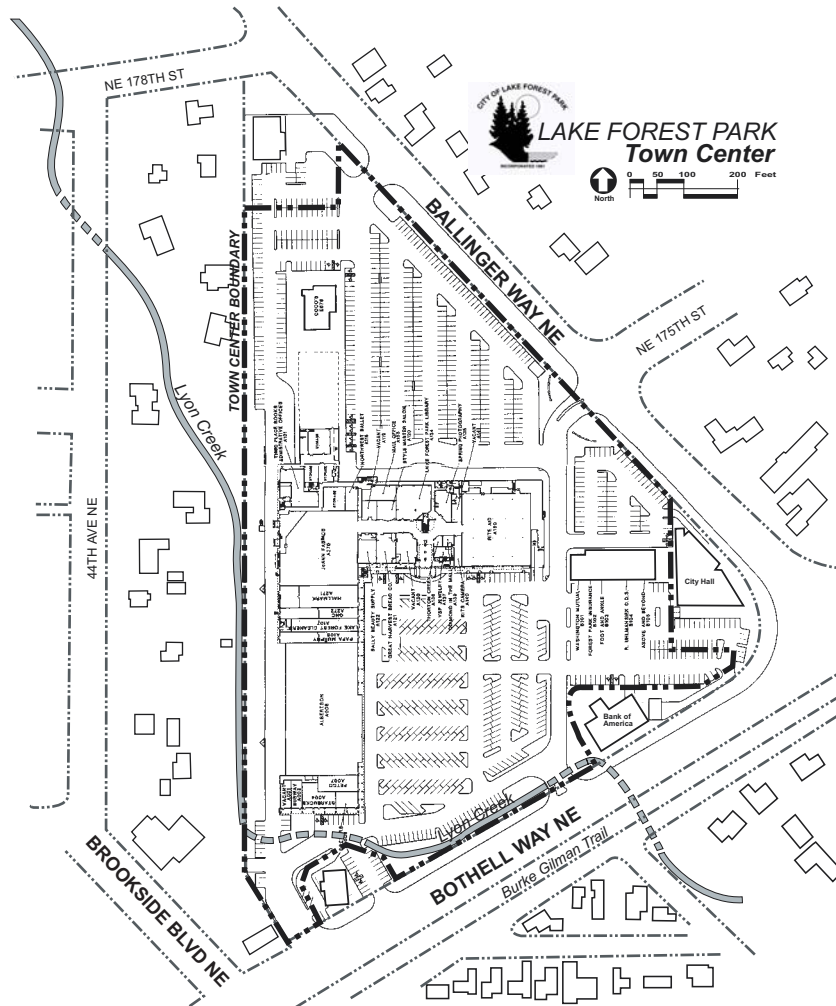
**Exhibit 1**  
**Lake Forest Park's Location on the**  
**North Shore of Lake Washington**



Source: City of Lake Forest Park

# Introduction

**Exhibit 2**  
**Lake Forest Park Town Center Map**



Source: MAKERS Architecture and Urban Design and Heffron Transportation, 2004

Note: Some features of the map are not drawn to scale. Lyon Creek Runs along the west side of the site and is within the Towne Centre ownership and boundaries.

comment, and the Task Force served as the review committee for the consultant proposals and as the interviewing panel for the selected finalists.

Once the consultants were selected, the Task Force worked hard to review and discuss the analytic work, to participate energetically in the community outreach, and to develop a consensus on its recommendations. Over the course of the study, the Task Force met 13 times, sponsored three community forums, and prepared two City Council briefings on the project.

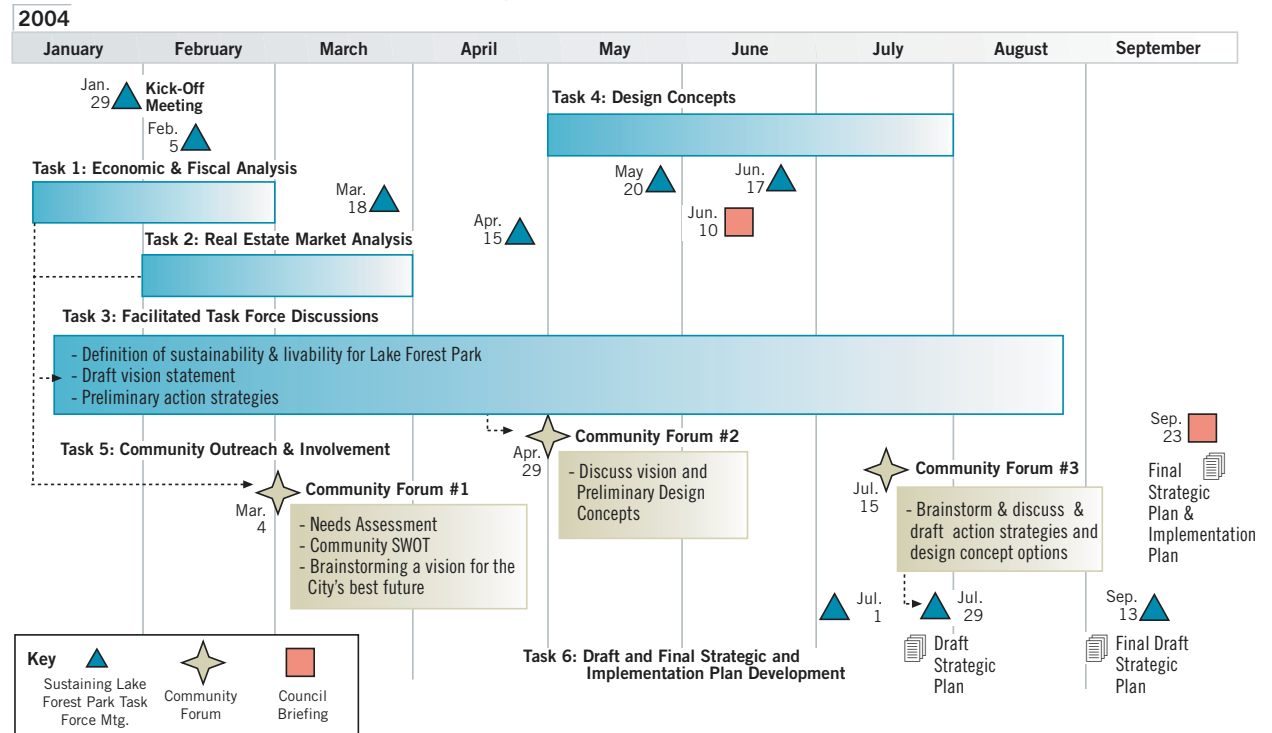
The City's charge to the consultant team and starting point objectives for the project were to:

- Enhance the character of the City's commercial areas and encourage higher quality investments;
- Create increased commercial and housing choices for residents;
- Encourage and improve pedestrian access and activity within and to the City's commercial areas;
- Protect and enhance the City's environmental resources; and
- Improve the City's economic base.

**Project Objectives and the Role of the Task Force.** The project was designed to comprehensively examine the Town Center's economic, fiscal, real estate, urban design, transportation and environmental issues, and to help the City and the community identify opportunities for an economically vital and sustainable commercial center in the heart of the City. A particular area of interest was assessing options for more housing in the City, particularly housing for empty-nesters, those who may want to continue to live in the City, without the responsibilities of a larger home or property.

The project was also focused on positioning the property for its best future, by identifying and removing obstacles that may stand in the way of attracting a good developer and development plan. The Task Force addressed issues that are within the City government's control, such as planning, regulatory and fiscal policies and actions. This report summarizes the Task Force's key products, findings and recommendations. Exhibit 3 shows the project timeline and key analytic and outreach activities. Appendix A contains a complete list of all analytic products developed in support of the Task Force's recommendations.

**Exhibit 3  
Project Plan and Schedule**



Source: Berk & Associates

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Exhibit 4 presents a schematic of the process which could be expected following transmittal of this report to the Lake Forest Park City Council. This process will take time. It will involve several steps and will include opportunities for public involvement, participation by the community, and incorporation of the results of Council deliberations and discussions.

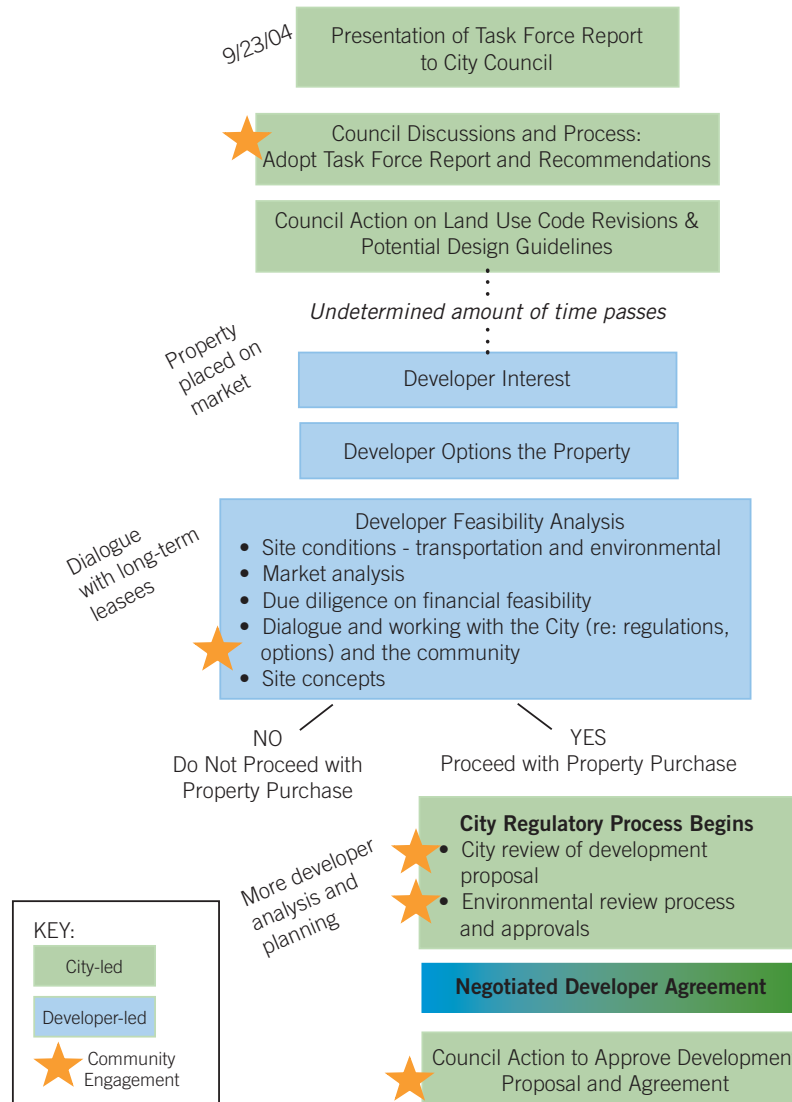
The City can best prepare itself for this planning and pre-development process and for the sale of the Mall by adopting the Task Force recommendations and taking action on proposed revisions to the Land Use Code. Developing design guidelines for the Town Center will also enable the City to work most effectively with prospective developers, by signaling the community's preferences and values regarding the character of the area.

The City can also expect and should be prepared to spend time working with prospective developers. This will include interested developers and ultimately, the purchaser of the Mall. This will require staff time, and the focus and energy of the

Council, with assistance as needed from the City's Commissions.

The developer agreement process provides an opportunity for the City to work closely with the prospective developer to identify and reach agreement on key project issues of importance to the City and the community.

## Exhibit 4: Implementation Steps Following Task Force Report



Source: Berk & Associates, 2004

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND INVOLVEMENT

The Task Force and City staff worked diligently to reach out and broadly engage the community in this project. Three Community Forums were held at Third Place Commons, and each meeting was well attended: More than 200 people participated in the March Forum, 140 attended the April event, and about 100 people attended the final Forum, held in mid-July. Notice of the Forums was widely distributed, including postcards mailed to residents and displayed in the Commons, e-mails sent to 600 people, and meeting announcements posted in the *Town Crier* and on the City's web site. The three Forums were designed and facilitated to solicit perspectives from the community at key project milestones; summaries of comments received were reviewed by the Task Force following each Forum and posted to the project web site.

In addition to the Forums, the project's outreach strategy involved presentations to local civic and service groups and

ongoing updates through various media, including:

- Presentations to the Elks, Brookside Neighborhood, Civic Club, Windermere, Crime Watch/Block Watch groups, Lake Forest Park Rotary, Lake Forest Park Elementary School PTA Board, Stewardship Foundation, Presbyterian Church Board, and area merchants;
- Articles in the monthly *Town Crier*, press coverage in the local paper, and project web site updates;
- Development of a project e-mail address, which was used by a number of community members to ask questions and provide comments; and
- Preparation of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).

Members of the Task Force and consulting team also met with the City Council to provide updates and briefings following completion of the Economic and Market Analysis and development of the Design Options.

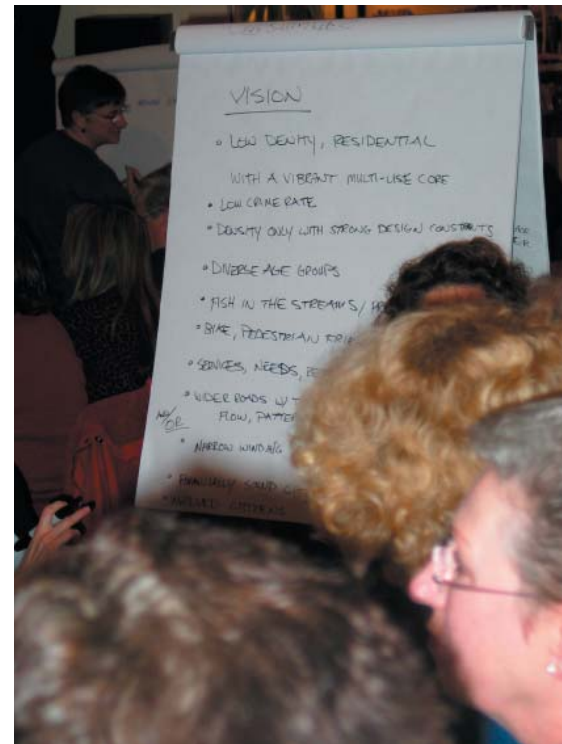
## Summary of the Community Forums

### Community Forum #1: Strategic Assessment and Community Visioning.

Community members gathered in small groups to address central questions for the City's future:

- What are the key strengths of Lake Forest Park?
- What challenges does Lake Forest Park face?
- What opportunities are available to the City?
- In 20 years, the City of Lake Forest Park will...

The Forum revealed that City residents have a strong sense of community and commitment to their neighbors and their City, appreciate and take pride in the Third Place Commons and in the natural environment, and enjoy the community's character and quality government services. Forum participants expressed concerns about: the challenges of parking, traffic congestion, public transportation and pedestrian safety, the business mix and limited services at Town Center, and the uncertainty about



# Community Outreach



the future of Town Center and the City's financial sustainability. They were also concerned about the changing needs of the community, having an appropriate mix of housing types and the interplay of these factors with the environment, especially the City's creeks.

Forum participants looked to a redeveloped Town Center and new multi-family housing and land use choices as opportunities for the City to improve business offerings and employment opportunities; develop transportation, parking and pedestrian choices; enhance the community's connection to the environment; and realize the community's vision. Attendees envisioned and articulated a future in which Lake Forest Park is home to a high quality, walkable Town Center—one that encompasses a community gathering place, a diversity of business in the commercial core and housing choices, a safe, family-friendly community; a fiscally sustainable City government, and enhanced environmental quality, recreation opportunities, and transportation choices.

**Community Forum #2: Defining Design Character.** The 140 participants divided into 16 groups and engaged in lively dialogue on several questions:

- How do we want Town Center to look and feel?
- Where should key uses (retail, office, housing) be located?
- What should we do with the stream and other environmental assets?
- How can this area best meet community needs?

Participants created maps of their desired Town Center, using colored paper to denote various quantities and mix of uses. These maps were then synthesized by the urban design team into three Design Examples. Throughout the evening attendees were also encouraged to “vote” for desired retail opportunities in Town Center.

**Community Forum #3: Turning Vision Into Action.** The final Forum was designed as an open house format, with Task Force members, community volunteers and consultants stationed at

six displays set up to solicit feedback and encourage dialogue:

- Community Vision for Town Center
- Three examples of potential site designs
- Housing at Town Center
- Retail and business activity at the Center
- Transportation
- Civic spaces

Forum participants were asked to comment on the materials and exhibits at each station, using post-it notes and flip charts. In addition, a comment form was also provided to gather additional input, and 56 people took the time to write thoughtful responses, which were later summarized and presented to the Task Force for discussion.

Comments from Forum #3 participants were largely positive, echoing the vision and reinforcing interest in the design elements shown in the Design Examples. The majority of comments reflected an interest in the site's aesthetics and sense of place, accessibility, traffic management, reducing the need for and appearance of parking on the site, and improved pedestrian connections, blending the

development with the community's character, offering a range of housing choices (rental and owner-occupied units) and prices in a mixed use design, developing a public plaza and gathering places for community events, and enhancing open space and landscaping along the creek and walking areas. Both re-routing and daylighting the stream, concepts shown in the Design Examples, were appealing to Forum participants.

Participants were also interested in diversifying the business and service offerings at the Mall to include: more or different grocery stores; restaurants (café, pubs, deli, formal and family dining); a library; hardware, gardening, book, drug, and clothing stores; services (dry cleaner, post office, professional services); and entertainment offerings.

### **ECONOMIC PROFILE AND REAL ESTATE MARKET ANALYSIS SUMMARY**

The City and Task Force requested an Economic and Fiscal Analysis and a Real Estate Market Analysis to ground their decision-making in current data and analysis. This section provides a distillation of key findings that support the policies recommended in this report.

#### ***Economic and Market Analysis***

##### **Population and Demographic Trends Reflect a Declining City Population.**

The U.S. Census shows a current City population of 12,750, compared with 12,871 in 2000. After removing the effects of annexations, from 1997-2003 City population declined an average of 0.1% per year (apparently due to decreasing household sizes and demolitions that off-set new housing construction). King and Snohomish Counties have been growing an average of 1.5% per year and neighboring communities (Bothell, Kenmore, Edmonds) have grown at a comparable rate.

##### **Household Income is Relatively Higher than in Surrounding Areas.**

Median income levels in Lake Forest Park (\$75,199 in 1999, compared to \$53,157 in King County and \$53,060 in Snohomish County) are found only in the neighboring communities of Mill Creek, Woodway and the waterfront areas along Lake Washington.

##### **Relatively Few Residents Work within the City Limits.**

Lake Forest Park is definitely a “bedroom community,” with a 2002 jobs/housing rate of 0.3. In comparison, the average for cities the size of Lake Forest Park is 0.9. There are more than 1,400 jobs within Lake Forest Park, which are heavily concentrated in Retail and Services.

##### **The Predominance of Single-Family Zoning Makes the City Relatively Sparsely Populated.**

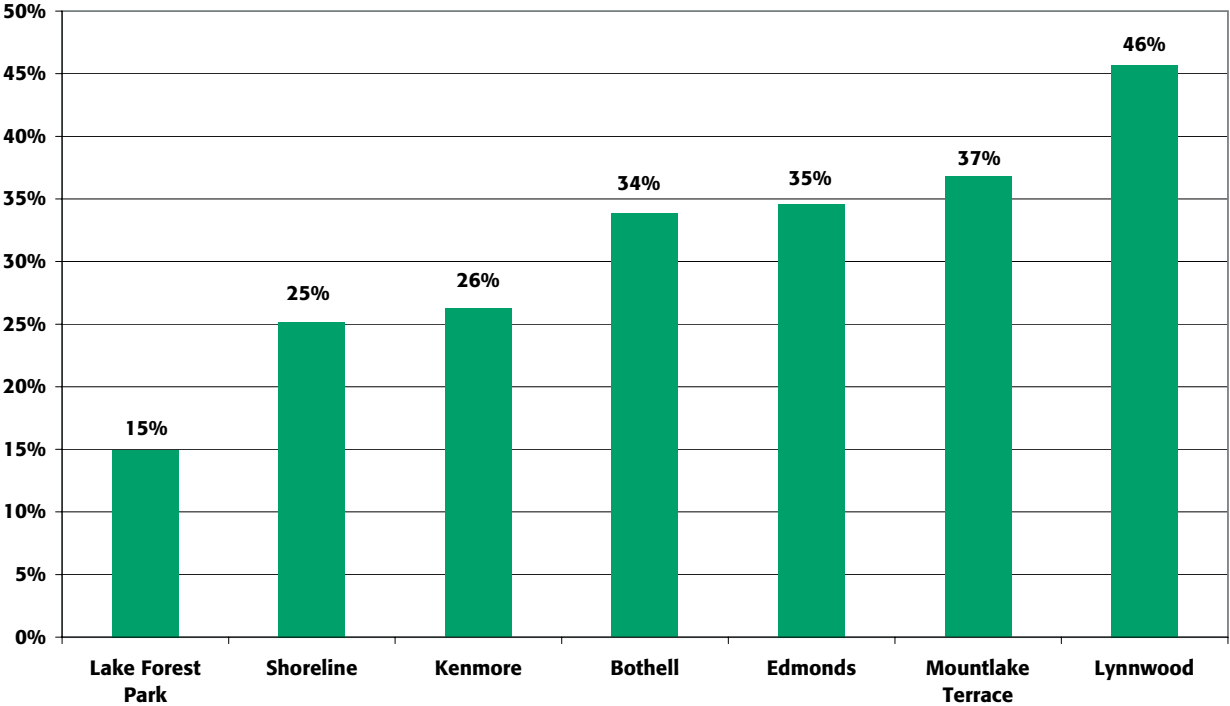
The City is largely (80%) zoned single-family residential; only 36 acres (2%) are zoned multifamily. As reflected in Exhibit 5, the City has very low density compared with Kenmore, Shoreline, Mountlake Terrace and other neighboring jurisdictions. This is a result of the City’s large quantities of single-

family zoning, preceded by low-density development in previously unincorporated areas now within the City's limits.

The limited supply of housing and developable land in the City primarily explains the lack of recent housing and

population growth, and forecasted growth. To illustrate: from 1992-2002, 163 new homes and nine multifamily units (six in 1997; three in 2002) were built in Lake Forest Park. This is a relatively low level of development compared with surrounding areas. At the same time, Bothell (King

**Exhibit 5**  
**Multifamily Housing Percentage Share of Total Housing by City, 2003**  
**Lake Forest Park and Surrounding Communities**



Source: Puget Sound Regional Council, 2003

### Urban Land Institute Definitions for Neighborhood, Community and Regional Centers

**Neighborhood Center.** Provides for the sale of convenience goods (foods, drugs and sundries) and personal service (laundry and dry cleaning, barbering, shoe repairing) for the day-to-day living needs of the immediate neighborhood. It is built around a supermarket as the principal tenant and typically contains a gross leasable area of about 60,000 s.f., though in practice it may range in size from 30,000 to 100,000 s.f.

**Community Center.** Provides a wider range of soft lines (wearing apparel for men, women and children) and hard lines (hardware and appliances). Many centers are built around a junior department store, variety store, super drugstore, or discount department store as the major tenant, in addition to a supermarket. Typical size is about 150,000 s.f. of gross leasable area, but in practice, it may range from 100,000 to 500,000 s.f.

County portion only), Kenmore and Shoreline combined to add 1,560 new multifamily units (1,171 in Bothell; 265 in Kenmore; 124 in Shoreline).

**Rental Housing is in Even More Limited Supply.** No new construction of larger rental properties has occurred in the City for many years. Renting in Lake Forest Park and Shoreline is relatively more affordable than in neighboring areas - - this affordability is largely due to rental units that are relatively older than those in other cities; newer properties typically command higher rents.

**Both Renter-Occupied and Owner-Occupied Multifamily Housing Would be in High Demand at Town Center.** Zoning policies elsewhere in the City, combined with lower vacancy rates and few multifamily housing options, suggest that housing would be in demand at Town Center. Higher density housing at the Town Center would appeal to residents given pedestrian access to grocery stores, drug stores, restaurants, professional services, and the shopping center, as well as excellent bus service to downtown Seattle and other employment

centers for work. Demand for multifamily housing can be expected from empty-nesters, seniors, professionals without children and single-parent professionals.

**Housing Demand Would Likely Support 150-250 Multifamily Housing Units in the Town Center.** The City's growth management housing targets (adopted for compliance with the State's Growth Management Act) suggest there will be demand for 540 new housing units Citywide by 2020, and Puget Sound Regional Council forecasts suggest 333 new units between now and 2020. Both the targets and forecasts are constrained to some extent by City policy (which allows for housing on the site), and indirectly through buildable land estimates and zoning. A major caveat to this conclusion are the unknowns associated with costs specific to building construction at the Town Center.

Housing at the site would serve many purposes:

- Provide vibrancy in Town Center;
- Address the current problem of too much retail space, given the mall's market position;

- Provide increased demand for retailers on site;
- Help meet regional growth management housing targets;
- Provide housing opportunities for empty-nesters, seniors and professionals; and may foster enhanced transit connectivity.

### ***Retail Sales and Office Space Analysis***

**Town Center is More Than a Neighborhood Center, But is Not Thriving as a Community Center.** Town Center is positioned between a neighborhood shopping center and a community shopping center. The center serves some day-to-day needs of the immediate area as a neighborhood center; but it is sized as a community center. The regional draw of Third Place Books, and the presence of Albertsons, Shoreline Community College at Lake Forest Park, and Rite-Aid fall in line with the definition of a community center, but the layout of the space and access to the site prevent the Center from attracting typical community center tenants.

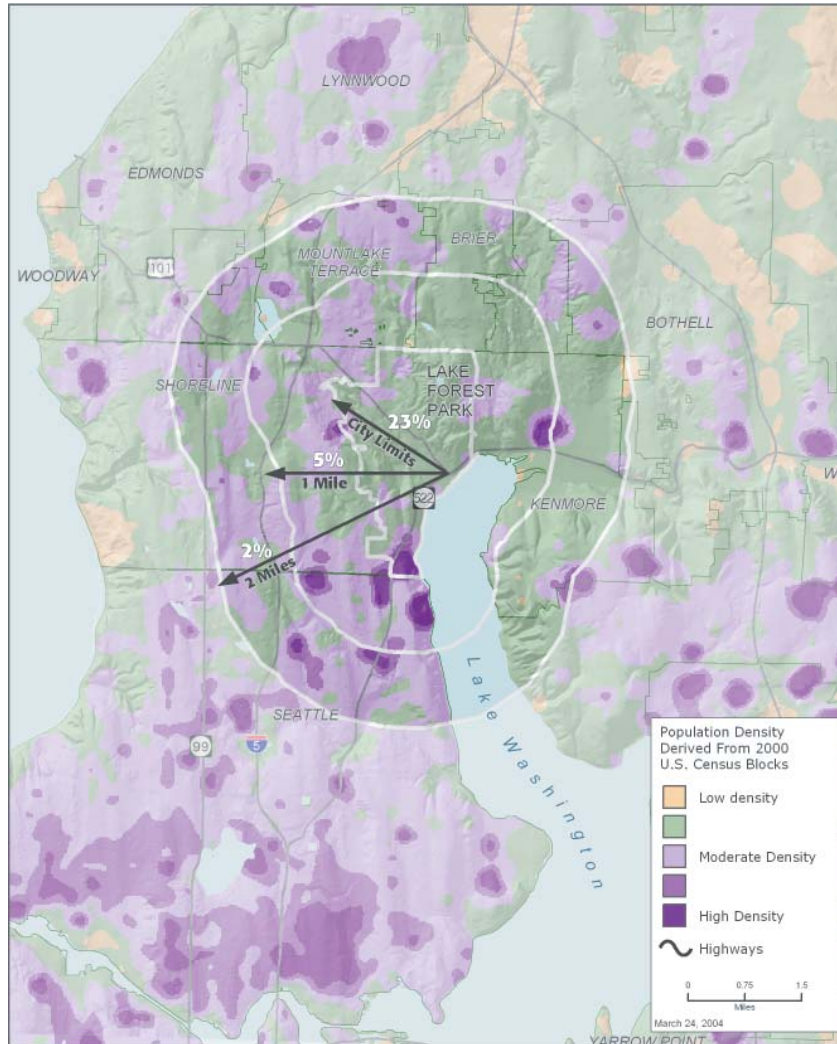
**The Center has Struggled to Keep Space Rented While Additional Commercial and Retail Space in the Region has Grown.** At the time of this report, Town Center has a 21% vacancy rate, and is competing for retail tenants with Mountlake Terrace and Lynnwood, which have retail vacancy rates of 2%. Demand for retail region-wide has been very strong in recent years, with concentrations of new development in Lynnwood, Woodinville and North Seattle. New growth in other areas suggests: developer and retail tenant markets prefer other locations, tenants have missed opportunities in Town Center, or development conditions and/or site characteristics of Town Center have constrained growth.

**Lake Forest Park Retailers have a Relatively Low Retail Capture Rate.** Retailers in the City currently capture just 23% of residents' spending for all retail and the equivalent of just 5% of all residents' spending within a one-mile radius of the City limits. Exhibit 6 reflects the retail capture rates for the City's businesses, juxtaposed against population density within a two-mile radius. Retail sales in Lake Forest Park are low compared to other communities

**Regional Center.** Provides general merchandise, apparel, furniture and home furnishings in depth and variety, as well as a range of services and recreational facilities. Built around one or two full-line department stores of generally not less than 50,000 s.f. Its typical size is about 500,000 s.f.; but, in practice the sizes range from 250,000 s.f. to more than 900,000 s.f.

The Town Center does not fit perfectly any of these definitions. All real estate professionals interviewed for this study, including the Center owners, the leasing agent and regional and national development experts, agree that the Town Center is positioned somewhere between a neighborhood center and a community center, noting that Third Place Books has a draw greater than a typical neighborhood center anchor.

**Exhibit 6**  
**Retail Capture Rates for Lake Forest Park Businesses, 2003**



Source: Washington State Department of Revenue, Office of Financial Management, and U.S. Census Bureau

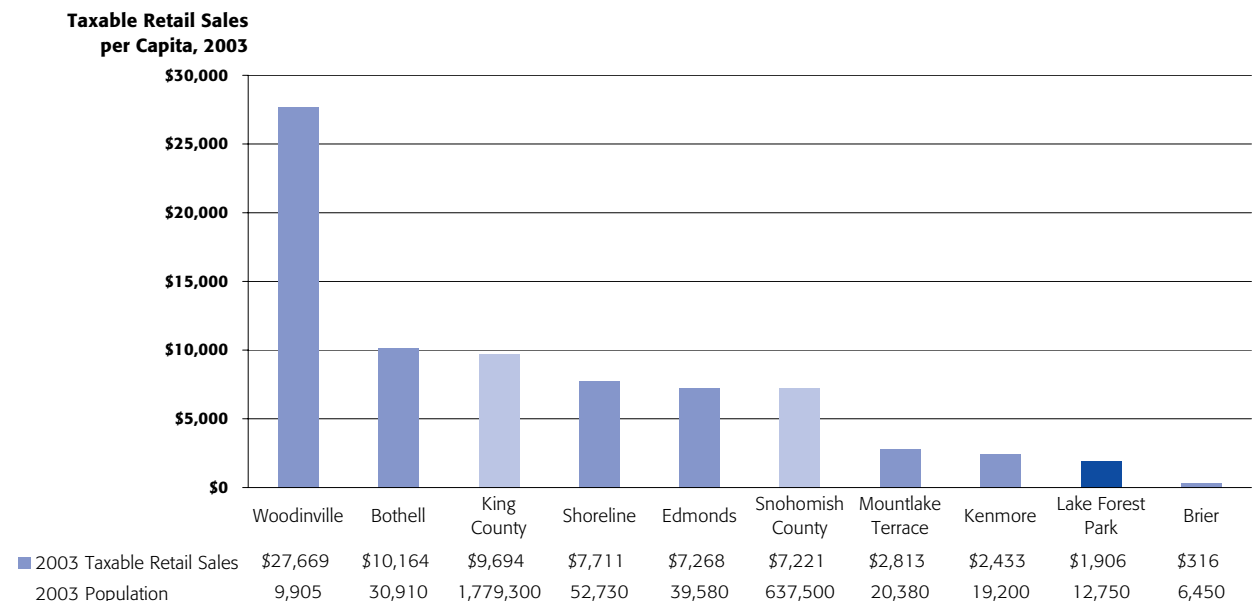
on a per capita basis, as shown in Exhibit 7. Yet residents have more discretionary incomes than their regional neighbors. Much of residents' spending occurs in Shoreline, Lynnwood, Woodinville, Seattle and Bellevue. Local food sales capture the equivalent of only 45% of local spending, excluding convenience stores. Local bars and restaurants capture 21% of local spending on eating and drinking.

**The City's Solid Demographics Would Support More Retail Sales, Suggesting That Site Limitations are Holding Back Mall Performance.** In 2003, local residents spent an estimated \$212.4 million on retail items in other cities. Capturing one-third of this out-of-town spending by local residents would support: more retail space (100,000 s.f., not including absorption of current vacancies); more grocery store space (20,000 s.f., which would only support a smaller store, such as Trader Joe's), and more restaurants. Factors limiting retail performance at Town Center (except for Third Place Books) include: the quality of tenants; the look and feel of the shopping experience (especially as compared with newer or renovated malls and Town Centers); the challenging physical

configuration and Mall layout; and local access to the site and its location on the opposite side of the street from the flow of evening commute traffic, which developers consider to be a drawback.

**Commercial Opportunities for Lake Forest Park: Serve Small Businesses and Home-Based Businesses that Seek Day-Time Amenities while Avoiding Larger Business Parks.** Of the 260 private employer records identified in Lake Forest Park, 190 are located in residential areas, and these jobs account for nearly half of the City's 1,190 private sector jobs. If current trends continue, people will continue to work at many of the new jobs out of their homes as proprietors of small companies. The Town Center could reasonably plan for a small amount of office space (30-50,000 s.f.) to support medical and professional services, including small, home-based and growing businesses. This compares with current occupancy of 9,450 square feet of medical services and about 3,400 square feet of financial services (excluding the two banks, which comprise about 4,800 square feet). The office shells could be supplemented with business services such as copying and print shops, business

**Exhibit 7  
Taxable Retail Sales Per Capita in Lake Forest Park and Surrounding Cities, 2002**



Source: Washington State Department of Revenue, Office of Financial Management, and U.S. Census Bureau

### Town Center Strategy in Relationship to Other Lake Forest Park Commercial Areas

Much of the Economic and Fiscal Analysis that provides a foundation for the Task Force's report applies directly to the City's other commercial areas. Retail sales and other data used in the analysis are citywide data that include the performance of all commercial areas in the City. Trade-capture analyses, fiscal analyses and demographics assessments all show that citywide commercial areas should focus on increasing their share of a very large retail market surrounding Lake Forest Park. Moreover, the very low population growth rates forecasted for the area suggests that the only way these areas can grow is by capturing a greater share of existing markets, much like Town Center businesses.

The other commercial areas of the City each have their own identity, separate and distinct from Town Center. Businesses to the south combine with businesses in Seattle and Shoreline to form the north end of a commercial corridor that begins along Lake  
*(continued on next page)*

supplies, and professional and financial services would help develop a dynamic center to foster local, small business growth. Currently such uses include health services (9,500 square feet) and financial services (8,200 square feet).

### ***Market-Based Recommendations for an Economically and Physically Vibrant Town Center***

**Becoming a Quality Community Center Requires Collaborative Planning, Investments and Potential Repositioning.** Interviews conducted for this analysis yielded a recurring theme: the Town Center has too much retail space. Limited population growth and strong regional competition suggest the Center might succeed better by serving the community as a strong, full-service community center. Serving local customers presents greater potential because: residents are passionate about the community space in the Mall, Third Place Books is succeeding very well, City Hall will likely continue to provide day-time traffic, and Albertsons will continue to serve as a grocery anchor. In a stronger community center, existing

tenants and additional retailers (more clothing, home furnishings, hardware) would be supported by local spending. Attracting higher quality tenants will require collaboration and perhaps City facilitation as well. This could include communicating the opportunities at Town Center to potential new businesses and tenants and connecting prospective tenants with Mall management.

### **Becoming a Vibrant Town Center Would Include On-Site Multifamily Housing.**

Citywide and regional demand supports at least 150 - 250 multifamily housing units at Town Center. Developing housing at the site would serve many purposes. It would:

- Provide vibrancy in Town Center;
- Address the current problem of too much retail space, given the mall's market position
- Provide increased demand for retailers on site, help meet regional growth management housing targets;
- Provide housing opportunities for empty-nesters, seniors and professionals; and
- Foster enhanced transit connectivity.

**Existing Town Center Development Regulations Serve to Discourage Neighborhood and Community Scale Developments and Uses, which Create Interesting and Vital Places for Residents.** There are a number of current City policies that constrain the economic and redevelopment potential of the Town Center site, including:

- Size limits – currently limited to no more than 60,000 s.f. per business
- Limitations on residential density;
- Height limits and bulk standards—maximum height of 30 feet (two stories); with residential, 40 feet (three stories);
- Setback requirements - minimum of 20 feet along side, rear and front of buildings;
- Maximum building coverage - 45% of land area of Town Center;
- Sign Ordinance - formula based on business' linear street frontage and restricts illumination;
- Parking—1.5 spaces per multifamily dwelling unit; 1 space per 200 s.f. of gross retail floor area; and
- Business Tax—Lake Forest Park is one of only eight among King

County's 39 cities that impose B&O taxes; neighboring cities that the City competes with do not charge B&O taxes (Shoreline, Lynnwood, Mountlake Terrace, Kenmore, Bothell, Woodinville)

### ***Fiscal Analysis of Town Center Impacts***

**Town Center Provides Property, Sales and Business Tax Revenues to the City—Comprising 5.5% of the City's General Fund Revenues.** Approximately 35% of the City's sales tax revenues (3.5% of General Fund revenues) come from Town Center sales. As much as \$70,000, or 45% of the City's business tax revenues (1.4% of overall City General Fund revenues) come from Town Center tenant businesses. About 1.3% of the City's property tax revenues (0.6% of General Fund revenues) come from Town Center. While a doubling Town Center's revenue would provide the City with an additional \$245,000 per year, that alone will not resolve the City's forecasted operating budget deficit.

City Way in Seattle (which becomes Bothell Way in Lake Forest Park). Businesses nearer to and across the street from Town Center are not connected in identity to Town Center. They behave similarly to a corridor commercial, due to the traffic barriers that separate them from Town Center. Businesses northwest of Town Center along Ballinger Way similarly are auto-oriented retail and services. Those areas compete primarily with the larger commercial center in Shoreline, located further northwest along Ballinger Way.

These other Lake Forest Park commercial areas differ in identity and are physically separated from Town Center by traffic. This separation likely deters people from thinking about all Lake Forest Park businesses together and from deliberately patronizing both Town Center businesses and other local businesses during the same trip. Therefore a City strategy addressing those areas specifically and individually would be useful to identify means to improve those local areas for businesses and patrons.

## DESIGN EXAMPLES: URBAN DESIGN CONCEPTS TO REALIZE THE COMMUNITY'S VISION

Given the principle that a picture is often worth many, many words, the project included a physical design component.

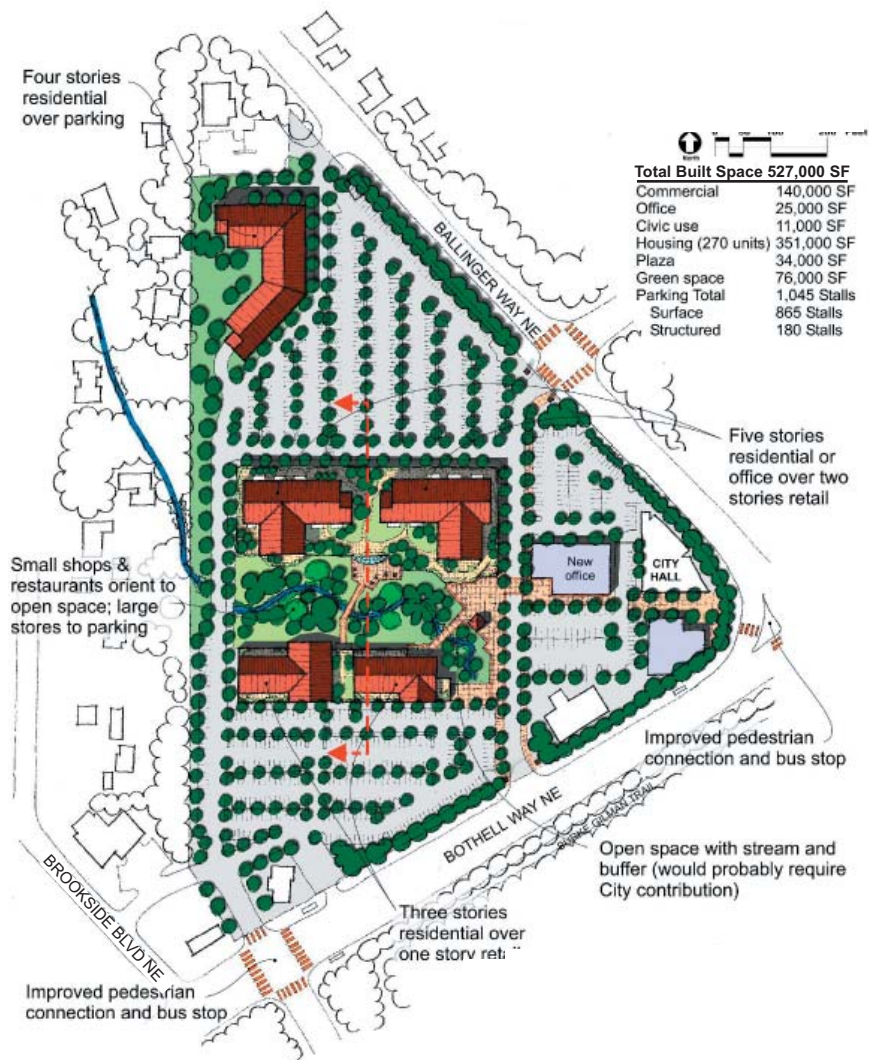
**Exhibit 8**  
**Design Examples and Key Land Use Assumptions**

Land Use	Built Space Represented by Development Examples (in square feet)		
	Example 1: The Stream	Example 2: The Commons	Example 3: The Steps
Shopping Center	76,000	110,000	136,000
Supermarket	50,000	50,000	50,000
Bank w/ Drive-thru	5,000	5,000	5,000
Restaurant	14,000	14,000	14,000
<b>Subtotal Retail</b>	<b>145,000</b>	<b>179,000</b>	<b>205,000</b>
Medical/Dental Offices	10,000	10,000	10,000
General Office	15,000	8,000	10,000
<b>Subtotal Office</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>18,000</b>	<b>20,000</b>
Library	5,000	5,000	5,000
City Hall	19,720	19,720	19,720
<b>Subtotal Civic</b>	<b>24,720</b>	<b>24,720</b>	<b>24,720</b>
<b>Total Commercial &amp; Civic</b>	<b>194,720</b>	<b>221,720</b>	<b>249,720</b>
Residential Units	270 units	200 units	260 units
<b>Residential Space</b>	<b>310,500</b>	<b>230,000</b>	<b>299,000</b>
<b>Total Built Space</b>	<b>505,220</b>	<b>451,720</b>	<b>548,720</b>

Source: MAKERS Architecture and Urban Design, Berk & Associates, 2004

This element allowed market realities and community vision to be integrated and graphically illustrated through a set of schematic, conceptual Design Examples. The Design Examples serve several purposes: they reflect back to the community their visions and perspectives on urban form in Town Center, as articulated in the three Community Forums; they communicate to the public, the Task Force and the City Council a sense of the potential look and feel of Town Center that could be accomplished with potential changes in development regulations; and they can serve to communicate community desires and vision for the property to the mall owner and potential purchaser. Exhibit 8 summarizes the key variables of each of the Design Examples – their areas of commonality and their differences. It should be well understood that these Examples are just that – potential redevelopment scenarios for the site – and that any developer approaching the property will develop his or her own design.

**Exhibit 9**  
**Example 1: The Stream**



Source: MAKERS Architecture and Urban Design, 2004

**Exhibit 10**  
**Example 2: The Commons**



Source: MAKERS Architecture and Urban Design, 2004

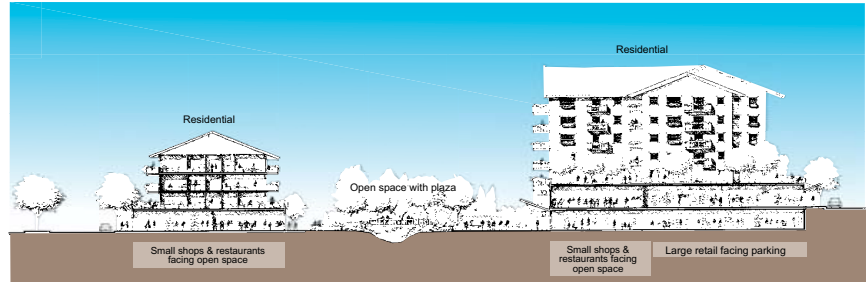
# Design Examples

**Exhibit 11**  
Example 3: The Steps

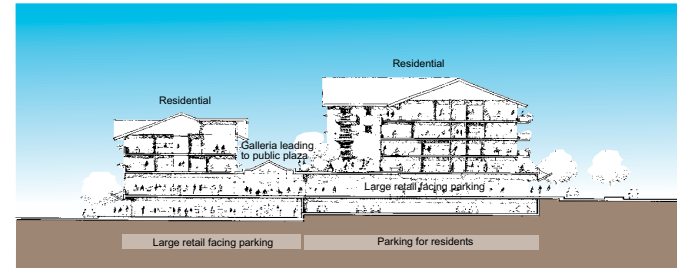


Source: MAKERS Architecture and Urban Design, 2004

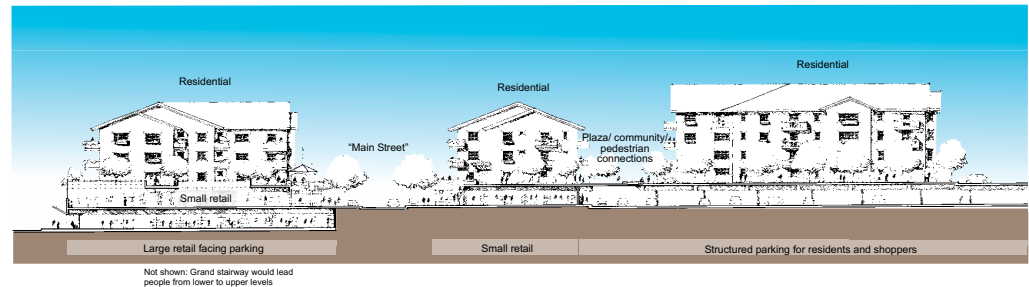
**Exhibit 12**  
Example 1: The Stream, Section View



**Exhibit 13**  
Example 2: The Commons, Section View



**Exhibit 14**  
Example 3: The Steps, Section View



### ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS AND VALUES

The Lake Forest Park community places high value on the environment, and on the natural features that make the City a distinct and special place. The City has an Environmental Quality Commission charged with protecting the community's environmental assets and values, and a representative of that Commission participated actively on the Task Force.

The Task Force views the redevelopment of Town Center as an opportunity to integrate principles of environmental sustainability with community building and economic feasibility. The area's ecosystem includes Lyon Creek and two wetlands adjacent to the Town Center's boundaries. The Creek is part of the mall property, but is currently separated from the shopping area by a fence, preventing the community and Town Center patrons from accessing the Creek.

The Task Force has discussed ways to incorporate the Creek into the property, for the enjoyment and appreciation of

the community. In that spirit, the Design Examples developed for the project have tried to incorporate the site's environmental assets. Design Example 1 in particular, depicts a potential site configuration that incorporates Lyon Creek as an amenity.

In the Community Forums, many members of the community expressed interest in and enthusiasm for a redesigned site that allows for enjoyment of the Creek. It is also understood that many developers value such natural assets as on-site amenities for shoppers and tenants, and would consider the Creek to be a distinguishing feature of the property.

The Task Force has worked to craft recommendations that will allow the City to work flexibly with developers to take advantage of the site's environmental assets to the greatest extent feasible. The Task Force has also made recommendations on potential stream corridor acquisitions by the City, to enhance the community's parks and open space system.

The Task Force has not made recommendations regarding new stream regulations, and evolving state regulations impacting critical areas create

uncertainties about how redevelopment alternatives may affect stream alignment and adjacent new development. All of these issues will need to be addressed in the environmental review process which will accompany any substantial redevelopment at Town Center.

## **TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

The Task Force commissioned a transportation analysis to evaluate current conditions and the transportation and parking issues associated with the three Design Examples.

### **Methodology, Existing Traffic and Parking Conditions**

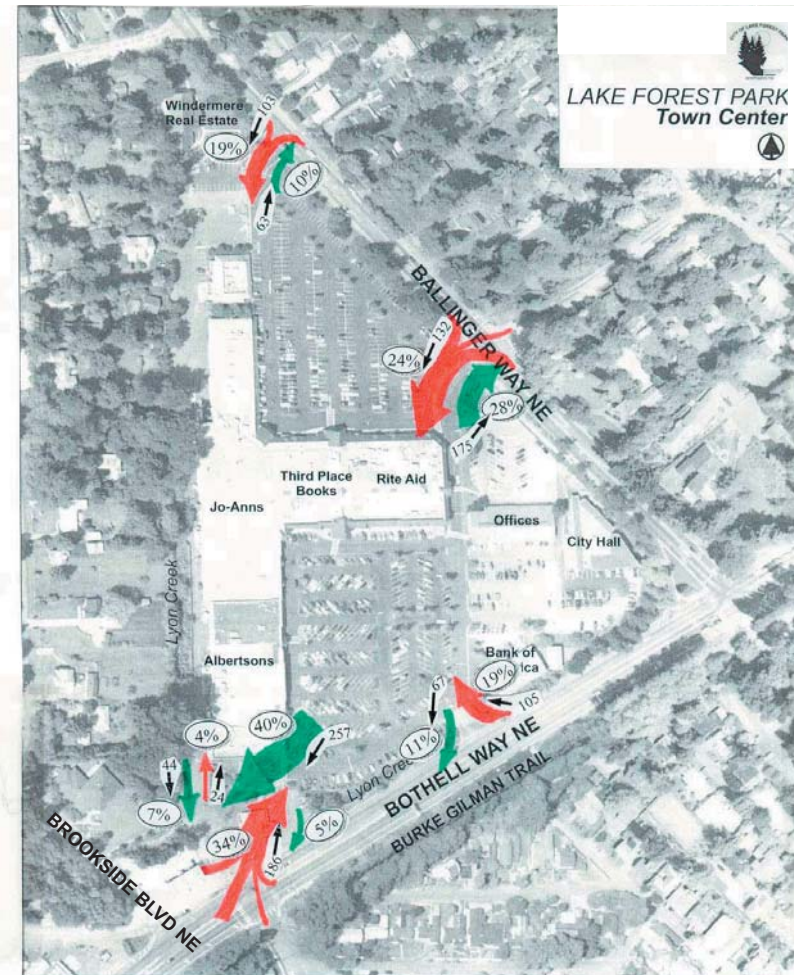
Traffic volume data along Bothell Way and Ballinger Way were obtained from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Traffic Count Consultants. These data were used to evaluate existing traffic operations in the site vicinity and at site access points. Town Center traffic counts were commissioned. Machine traffic counters were placed at Bothell and Ballinger Way Town Center driveways for a 48-hour period in May 2004. Traffic operations at the Town Center access points were also reviewed using level-of-service calculations. Peak parking demand counts within the Town Center were performed to document existing peak parking lot utilization rates. Counts were taken during traditional peak

demand times for retail—on a weekday afternoon and on a Saturday afternoon.

**Parking Findings.** There are large portions of the Center’s parking lot that are underutilized: in particular, the northernmost parking area adjacent to the vacant restaurant space was roughly 10% full during both peak period counts. The parking lot in front of the Albertsons supermarket was, as expected, nearly full on Saturday afternoon. Likewise, the parking for offices on the site (northwest of the City Hall building) had lower demand on Saturday than on weekdays. Overall, Town Center’s parking lots are only about 56% full during traditional peak times.

The lower (south) lot is more heavily utilized than the upper (north) lot (87% Saturday and 59% weekday in the south lot compared to 53% Saturday and 42% weekday in the north lot). Peak parking demand at the site occurs on Saturday. In general, the total amount of parking in Town Center is adequate, but many of the vacant spaces are located inconveniently or at long distances from desired retail entrances.

**Exhibit 15**  
**Existing Afternoon Peak Hour Traffic Patterns**

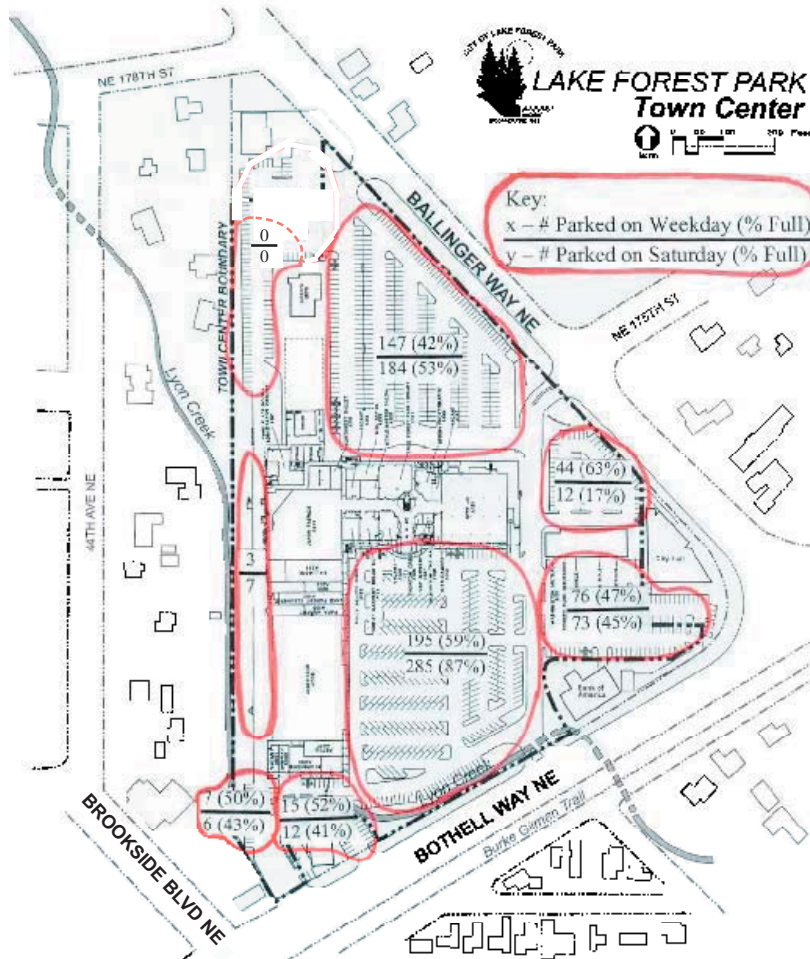


Total Daily Trips - 13,492  
 Morning Peak Hour Trips - 571 (from 7-8 A.M.)  
 Afternoon Peak Hour Trips - 1,186 (from 5-6 P.M.)

Red arrows depict inbound traffic; green arrows depict outbound traffic.

Source: Heffron Transportation, 2004

**Exhibit 16:  
Parking Demand Counts:  
Performed Tuesday, May 25 & Saturday, June 12, 2004**



Total Weekday Demand - 487 vehicles  
 Total Saturday Demand - 579 vehicles

Total Parking Supply - 1,038 vehicles

Source: Heffron Transportation, 2004

**Existing Pedestrian, Bicycle and Transit Conditions.** Pedestrian access along the site frontage and through the existing site is very poor. Except for the sidewalk along storefronts, there are few pedestrian walkways at Town Center. Pedestrians must walk through parking lots with no designated pathways and must negotiate raised curbs or other vehicular channelization. Sidewalks along Ballinger Way provide adequate access for pedestrians, but there are no sidewalks along Bothell Way adjacent to Town Center. Pedestrians traversing the study area in an east-west direction must either use the Burke-Gilman Trail to the south, which only connects to Town Center at the two signals across Bothell Way, or walk through parking lots. There are pedestrian crosswalks and pedestrian actuation buttons at the three signalized intersections adjacent to the Town Center. The two signalized intersections on Bothell Way provide access to the Burke-Gilman Trail which curves to meet these intersections. There are sections of sidewalk at bus stops along Bothell Way. Other than the Burke-Gilman Trail, there are no viable bicycle facilities within the Town Center vicinity or along its frontage.

### **Transit Service and Parking Demand.**

King County Metro serves the Lake Forest Park Town Center. There are three bus-stop pairs (a bus stop for each direction of travel) adjacent to the site—on Ballinger Way at NE 175th Street, on Bothell Way at Ballinger Way, and on Bothell Way at NE 170th Street. There is latent demand for park-and-ride spaces in the City and at the Town Center. Anecdotal evidence from members of the community and from King County Metro shows that the existing Town Center site is already being used by some as an informal park-and-ride facility. Some enforcement has been undertaken by the mall management to discourage this activity. Metro is planning to expand its existing Kenmore Park-and-Ride lot by 225 spaces. While this will help alleviate some demand, it will not eliminate the demand in the City.

### ***Traffic and Parking Demand for the Design Examples***

The three Design Examples were evaluated to determine approximate traffic generation and parking demand estimates as input to the Task Force's recommendations.

**Signal Cycle and Phasing.** The increased trip generation associated with the three Examples could be accommodated by the existing site access points, although improvements will need to be made to the signal cycle and phasing to alleviate the delays and queues currently experienced. The City and the transportation consultant involved in any future impact analyses for redevelopment should explore options with the WSDOT to improve operations of these intersections.

**Traffic Calming Measures.** Internal site access roadways and drive aisles should be designed to calm traffic through the site. Calming measures could include all-way-stop control at internal intersections, speed humps or speed tables, well marked pedestrian path ways and crosswalks, narrowed intersection approaches (using curb-bulbs), and parallel parking or loading zones along the drive aisles. These traffic calming measures would be intended to reduce cut-through traffic that may be avoiding the Bothell Way/Ballinger Way intersection, improve the character and environment for pedestrian and cyclists, and improve connectivity throughout the center.

**Park and Ride Facilities.** The community and the City's Transportation Commission have debated the potential benefits of including a park-and-ride facility within the Town Center. Some transit patrons already use the site as a park-and-ride (although some have received tickets from the owners). There is clear demand for some amount of park-and-ride space on-site. Providing an officially designated park-and-ride would eliminate any existing confusion and tension, and would provide clear policy for enforcement. Between 50 and 100 spaces could be designated for part-time use as park-and-ride spaces.

Park-and-ride services could be accomplished in a variety of ways:

- A separate lot (either owned by the City or the Town Center owner) developed and assigned as a park-and-ride lot, made available mid afternoon or evening to all users.
- The site could be designed to accommodate this activity without any formal designation of spaces.
- Reserve spaces with signs for park-and-ride users until 10:00 A.M.; free to all users after 10:00 A.M.
- Work with Metro to establish a more formal Shop-and-Ride program (where

transit riders are given a pass to park in the retailer's lot in exchange for a promise to shop regularly at the retail center).

- Lease existing parking spaces to Metro and designate as park-and-ride spaces.

**Future Non-Motorized Facilities.** To enhance the viability of the Town Center for retailers, employees, and residents, the pedestrian access through and around the site must be improved. Pedestrian enhancements should be included at the major gateway intersections—Bothell Way NE/NE 170th Street/Site Access and Ballinger Way NE /NE 175th Street/Site Access—as well as the unsignalized driveways along Bothell Way NE, Ballinger Way NE and Brookside Blvd. NE. Improvements at these locations could include: wider sidewalks, textured pavement at crosswalks, landscaping, and sidewalks or walkways leading into the Town Center.

Inside the Town Center, pedestrian walkways should be provided along the drive aisles, along store frontages, through larger sections of parking, and should

connect the retail center to the Bothell Way/Ballinger Way intersection. An east-west connection should be included to provide access parallel to Bothell Way as close as possible.

**Pedestrian Crossings.** The Task Force considered the need for a grade-separated pedestrian crossing of Bothell Way at Ballinger Way. Major considerations for such an improvement include its potential cost, the activity generators on each side, and alternative crossing options.

Grade-separated pedestrian crossings can be very expensive. If in the future, the Town Center includes a two or three-level development on the southeast corner of the site (such as retail or parking structure), a grade-separated pedestrian crossing could be an excellent means to connect the Town Center to the Lake Washington waterfront and Burke-Gilman Trail. However, without such a development component, a grade-separated crossing is not recommended.

**Future Transit Service.** The Town Center has excellent potential for enhanced transit service as a result of its redevelopment. There are several elements that could be included by the City or the developer to assist Metro in providing enhanced transit service:

- Residential Development
- Pedestrian Amenities
- Transit Information Kiosk
- Community College and Library Uses
- Transit Pass Programs; Transit passes could be offered as part of commute-trip-reduction (CTR) programs for the redeveloped Town Center.

### ***Creating an Economically and Physically Vibrant Town Center***

The Task Force developed a set of overarching principles used to guide their deliberations. The following principles served as a framework for the development of their recommendations.

- Becoming a quality community center requires collaborative planning, investments and potential repositioning of the Town Center property.
  - The Town Center would be best suited serving the needs of local customers with existing tenants, additional retailers (more clothing, home furnishings, hardware stores) which would be supported by local spending.
  - Multifamily housing at Town Center would provide increased demand for retailers on site and bring vibrancy to Town Center.
  - Existing Town Center development regulations serve to discourage neighborhood and community scale developments and uses.
- The Community places a high value on the environment and the natural features that make the City a distinct and special place. Redevelopment of Town Center is an opportunity to integrate the site's environmental assets.
  - The Task Force determined that the project objectives cannot be met through a No Action alternative.

## TASK FORCE VISION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Regulatory and Policy Recommendations*

#### *1. Sale and Purchase of the Towne Centre*

##### **The Issue:**

In the community, questions have been posed in the community about the City potentially purchasing the site, when it becomes for sale.

##### **Task Force Recommendation:**

- The City should not consider purchasing the site because:
  - o It does not have the financial wherewithal to buy the site (especially in an uncertain fiscal environment);
  - o It should not assume the financial risk of site purchase if it does not need to;
  - o The City's best and most appropriate role is to help create a development environment in which a new owner will acquire the property, and design and manage a good project.

- The City's interests will be best served by removing regulatory impediments to the redevelopment of the site into a vibrant mixed use project.

#### *2. Multi-Family Housing Planned for the Site*

##### **The Issue:**

The community's design vision includes multifamily housing at Town Center – this housing will appeal to a mix of people, including empty-nesters, seniors and professionals.

A vibrant Town Center would include on-site multifamily housing. City and regional demand, quantified in the market analysis, supports at least 150-250 multifamily housing units at the Center.

The addition of housing at Town Center would provide increased demand for retailers on the site; help meet regional growth management targets; provide housing opportunities for empty-nesters, seniors and professionals; and foster enhanced transit connectivity. Overall, housing would enhance the economic and physical vitality of the site as a commercial center and as a community gathering place.

#### ***Task Force Vision for Town Center***

An important element of this project was the Task Force's articulation of a vision statement for Town Center. The vision served as a set of guiding principals or ideas that the City can use to navigate by in discussions and decisionmaking about the future of the property. The Task Force's vision is simple and compelling:

- Lake Forest Park is a model community;
- Town Center is an inviting gathering place and the heart of the City's diverse, high quality, economically-viable, community-scale shopping and business district;
- Town Center is a safe and walkable hub of activity for all ages;
- The buildings on the site, including housing, blend in with the community's character; and
- Recognized regionally for its environmental stewardship, the Center features the community's environmental assets, making it a place unlike any other.

## **Task Force Recommendation:**

- The City should encourage a paradigm shift at Town Center, from shopping center to a mixed use center with housing, as well as retail, commercial and public spaces.
- The Task Force endorses multifamily housing of the scale reflected in the Design Examples and supported by the market study. A density range of 150 to 250 units is recommended.
- It is understood that the market will chose the appropriate mix of owner-occupied and rental housing, given market conditions at the time of redevelopment.
- The City should maintain a significant role in approving development plans for housing at Town Center.

## **3. B & O Tax**

### **The Issues:**

- The B&O tax is a competitive disadvantage for retailers in the City;
- The competitive situation is: only eight of King County's 39 cities impose B&O taxes; neighboring cities, with which the City competes, do not charge B&O taxes (Shoreline, Lynnwood, Mountlake Terrace, Kenmore, Bothell, Woodinville); and

- Budget impacts to the City of eliminating the tax source: in 2003 B&O provided \$70,000 in revenues to the City.

## **Task Force Recommendation:**

- Retain the B&O tax at this time.

## **4. Sign Ordinance**

### **The Issues:**

- There is a science to signage – gaining people's attention. This can translate directly into sales gained or lost, and retailers point to visibility problems and signage problems at Town Center as an impediment to sales;
- Mall management cites the ordinance as an impediment to leasing empty space;
- There is an important balance to be struck for the project's owner, tenants and City—aesthetically and economically; and
- The City is working on a new sign ordinance.

## **Task Force Recommendations:**

- Continue with the City's efforts to amend the sign ordinance and evaluate progress from that effort.
- Consider reviewing the City's sign ordinance as part of the redevelopment planning process at Town Center.

## **5. Developer Agreement**

### **The Issue:**

A developer agreement will provide the City the flexibility and opportunity it needs to work with a developer, on all elements (height, open space, parking, etc.) of project entitlement.

### **Task Force Recommendation:**

- Be prepared to work with prospective developers to negotiate a development agreement for Town Center.

## **6. Stream Corridor Acquisition Option**

### **The Issues:**

- The stream on the west side of the site is behind fencing, but is within Towne Centre ownership and boundaries (i.e. owned by the mall).
- The City could purchase a stream corridor swath from the Mall owner

for the purpose of upgrading the stream and creating a greenbelt. This action would have multiple benefits: it would provide an open space and environmental amenity; would improve the views; would improve public access and open the mall site to green space; would improve the site from a development perspective.

- There would be the potential option of creating a trail (pervious surface only).
- If the City moved forward with this option, it would seek grant funding to pay for the acquisition and enhancements.

### **Task Force Recommendation:**

- Work with prospective developers to assess the options and costs of enhancing the stream corridor and making it an open space amenity for the town center and the City.
- Assess the City's participation in contributing to such improvements in the larger context of site development regulations and requirements, and the City's desires for amenities on the site. Assess the tradeoffs associated with City participation in contributing to stream enhancement, versus other open space and amenities the City would enjoy.

## 7. The Town Center Boundary

### The Issues:

- Some members of the community (including at the Community Forums) have asked whether the boundary and footprint of Town Center should be expanded, either for new multifamily housing, or to encompass acquisition of adjacent properties for additional park and open spaces.
- The Meacham property, which is adjacent to the Town Center boundary at the southwest corner, was recently placed on the market and purchased by a private party. City administration had been considering purchasing the property to serve as part of the stream corridor, and for park and open space.
- Given that the stream floods every year, this property could help with stormwater controls.
- Should the City consider purchasing the Meacham property in the future, as well as potentially the adjacent property?
- There is a question about whether this area would be appropriate for cottage housing, as part of the City's discussions about future cottage housing regulations.

- The Task Force addressed the question of under what circumstances the City should move the Town Center boundary line. For cottage housing? For open space?

### Task Force Recommendations:

1. Do not expand Town Center to the west for commercial or mixed use development as part of the Town Center.
2. Consider possible expansion of the stream corridor or purchase of one or several parcels to the west of the Town Center boundary to be used for open space and flood control purposes.
3. The Task Force takes no position on future cottage housing in the City, as that is an issue separate from the Task Force's charge.

## ***Transportation Recommendations***

### **8. Transportation Network**

#### **9. Access and Site Circulation**

##### **The Issues:**

- Access to the Town Center site from Bothell and Ballinger Ways are known to be congested. Improvements for access and egress, and to interior circulation were evaluated. Signalization was also studied, including relocation of driveways and signalized access points at the major intersections.
- The major signalized site access intersections are appropriately located as principal access points.

##### **Task Force Recommendation:**

- Retain existing locations of signalized site access points to the Center.
- Maintain unsignalized driveways along Brookside Blvd. NE, Bothell Way NE and Ballinger Way NE.
- Design internal site access roadways and drive aisles with traffic calming features such as all-way-stop control at internal intersections, speed humps, well marked pedestrian pathways and crosswalks, etc.

- Improve internal roadways and driveways to provide a conflict-free entry into the Town Center; move drive aisles and internal intersections as far as possible from major access points to improve site access operations at the two signals.
- As part of a redevelopment proposal, explore options with WSDOT to improve operations of these signalized intersections, such as reducing cycle lengths, changing side-street phasing split times, and/or revisions to geometry or channelization.

#### **10. Park and Ride**

##### **The Issues:**

- There are large portions of the Center's parking lot that are underutilized. Town Center's parking lots are about 56% full during peak times - in general, the lower (south) lot sees heavier use than the upper lot.
- Many of the vacant spaces are located inconveniently or at long distances from desired retail entrances.
- There is latent demand for park-and-ride spaces in the City and at Town Center. The Town Center is already used informally as a park

and ride. Feedback from merchants and shoppers indicate that this issue should be dealt with.

#### **Task Force Recommendation:**

- A potential developer might consider a park and ride program on the site. The developer will need to consider active enforcement of the park and ride policy.

### ***11. Pedestrian and Bicycle Access***

#### **The Issues:**

- Pedestrian access along the site frontage and through the existing site is very poor. There are few pedestrian walkways at Town Center. As a result, pedestrians must walk through parking lots and negotiate raised curbs and other vehicular channelization.
- There are no sidewalks along Bothell Way, adjacent to Town Center.
- Other than the Burke-Gilman Trail, there are no viable bicycle facilities within the Town Center vicinity or along its frontage.

#### **Task Force Recommendation:**

- Provide pedestrian enhancements (such as wider sidewalks, textured pavement at crosswalks, and landscaping) at the major gateway intersections of Bothell Way NE/NE 170th Street/Site Access, Ballinger Way NE/NE 175th Street/Site Access and Brookside Blvd. NE.
- Provide pedestrian walkways within the Town Center along the drive aisles, along store frontages, through larger sections of parking, and connecting to the Bothell Way NE/Ballinger Way NE intersection.
- Include an east-west connection to provide access parallel to Bothell Way.
- A grade-separated crossing of Bothell Way at Ballinger Way is not recommended at this time. However, if long-term Town Center redevelopment includes a two or three-level development on the southeast corner of the site, a grade-separated pedestrian crossing should be re-evaluated since it could be an excellent means to connect the Town Center to the Lake Washington waterfront and Burke-Gilman Trail.

## 12. Enhanced Transit Service

### The Issues:

- King County Metro serves the Lake Forest Park Town Center with three bus-stop pairs—a bus stop in each direction of travel.
- These routes are heavily travelled. Existing transit stops are relatively small with very little amenities. An opportunity may exist with redevelopment of the site to improve the transit stops and foster pedestrian connections to the Mall.
- The following elements could enhance transit service to Town Center:
  - Continued or expanded community college and library uses,
  - Transit pass programs,
  - A transit information kiosk,
  - Improved pedestrian walkways and amenities, and
  - Lighting and signage about bus arrivals.

### Task Force Recommendation:

- Transit is an important mode to foster for accessibility to Town Center.
- The City should work with the developer to explore ways to include transit enhancements in Town Center.

## THE NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

An element of the Task Force's charge was to assess the "No Action Option," i.e. what would be the consequences of the City not moving forward with the Task Force's findings and recommendations. The Task Force considered this option in the context of the overall objectives of the project: to facilitate creation of a vibrant commercial center that meets community needs and contributes to enhancing the quality of life for City residents; encourages broader housing and retail choices for residents; improves pedestrian access and flow in the Center; protects and enhances the City's natural environment and strengthens the City's economic position.

The Task Force reached consensus that these objectives cannot be met through a Do Nothing or No Action alternative. Instead, the Task Force recommends that the City take responsible actions to effectively regulate properties located in its commercial core, for the benefit of the  
*(continued on next page)*

## Land Use Regulation Recommendations

The Task Force reviewed and discussed the City's Town Center Land Use Regulations, from the perspective of achieving its vision for the Center. The group's recommendations for each of the key regulations are presented below.

### 13. Land Coverage

#### The Issues:

- **Section 18.42.080 of the Lake Forest Park Municipal Code (LFP MC): Land Coverage.** Current regulations set the maximum land coverage by all structures, excluding driveways, private walkways and similar impervious surfaces (parking) to no more than 45% of total lot area.
- This provision severely limits the density and development capacity on the site. It also encourages surface parking and discourages structured parking, since such parking would count within the 45% limit. This provision does not allow for achievement of the Task Force's vision and objectives.

#### Task Force Recommendations:

- Eliminate this outdated and suburban-oriented land coverage requirement; let the market, zoning and City planning process dictate the density.
- City regulations and planning for the property should encourage increased green space on the property.

### 14. Setbacks

#### The Issue:

- **Section 18.42.070 of the LFP MC: Setbacks.** Current regulations set a minimum of 20 feet setback along side, rear and front of buildings.
- These setbacks render pedestrian improvements difficult (particularly front setback), and create a suburban-style look and feel to the development. A more pedestrian-oriented facade near the street would require eliminating the setback requirement in the front.

#### Task Force Recommendations:

- Reduce the front setback requirement to zero, if there is a pedestrian-oriented facade.
- Maintain the rear (west side) setback as is.

- Focus on preventing shadow effects on adjacent properties to the west to avoid a canyon effect. Include this concept in developer agreement discussions.

## 15. Residential Use

### The Issue:

- **Section 18.42.040, A and B of the LFP MC: Limitations on Residential Use.** Residential uses are not permitted as separate projects; they must be developed in combination with commercial or nonresidential uses as part of a single site development plan. Commercial and nonresidential uses shall occupy the floor(s) below the residential portion of a mixed use building.
- This regulation unnecessarily encumbers flexibility in a future Town Center design.
- At the Community Forums, the majority of the groups envisioned parts of the site to have single-purpose residential buildings.
- All three Design Examples show single-purpose housing on the ground floor. Residential development is often easier and more feasible to accomplish than mixed use development.

### Task Force Recommendation:

- Remove this requirement, subject to assuring that the site continues to be a vital retail and commercial Town Center shopping area. The intent is that separate freestanding housing would be developed in conjunction with other commercial and retail uses.

## 16. Residential Density

### The Issues:

- **Section 18.42.040 of the LFP MC. Limitations on Use: Residential Density Limits.** Residential uses may not be developed at a density of greater than seven (7.0) dwelling units per acre.
- This density is too low to make residential development feasible on the Town Center site, and to realize the type of project envisioned by the Task Force and the community.

### Task Force Recommendations:

- Set dwelling unit regulations to be congruent with the market research conducted for this project;

whole City. Such actions particularly include revising the out dated regulatory provisions governing Town Center, which were likely put in place when the property was constructed several decades ago. These regulations put the City at a competitive disadvantage with other cities, which have adopted more current, urban-oriented regulations, rather than the suburban-style zoning reflected in the City's current code.

Moreover, from a pragmatic perspective, once the Towne Centre property is put up for sale, interested buyers will predictably be approaching the City to inquire about the City's willingness to revise the Town Center land use designations in precisely the direction recommended in this report. The City will have to make similar decisions at that time, and will likely be faced with the very same issues asked and answered by the Task Force in its nine months of focused work. Taking a proactive approach sooner, rather than being forced to be reactive later, would be the best public policy choice for the City at this time.

- Work with the developer to establish optimal height limits, given setback and parking requirements, and design guidelines for the property; and
- The City should commission development of Design Guidelines for the site, which would articulate design styles and considerations, including façade, setbacks and other design features.

## 17. Building Heights

### The Issue:

- **Section 18.46.060 of the LFP MC. Building Height: Limits and Bulk Standards.** Maximum height in Town Center is 30 feet (two stories); and with the addition of residential, 40 feet (three stories).

### Task Force Recommendations:

- On the northern portion of the site, raise the height limit to allow for five stories (i.e. four floors of wood frame construction over one concrete story or “4 over 1 construction”), subject to the requirement that there be appropriate setbacks and no shadow effects.
- On the southern portion, increase 40 foot limit to allow for pitched

roofs; allow 45 or 50 feet limit, to accommodate pitched roofs; and

- Keep heights lower on southern end to maintain views on higher end. Avoid potential soil limitations by putting the more intense development on the northern half of the site.

## 18. Parking Spaces

### The Issues:

- **Section 18.58.030 of the LFP MC: Parking Spaces Required.** Multifamily units are required to have 1.5 spaces for dwelling unit. This is a development standard that is currently expressed in the City’s Code.
- Retail uses require 1 space for every 200 square feet (or 5 per 1,000 s.f.) of built space.
- Parking occupies scarce land otherwise available for other activities (larger plaza, more amenities, more restaurants, wider through-streets, pedestrian pathways, others);
- Potential developers would value more flexibility in site design; and
- Development activity since the Mall was built (City Hall and the Windermere Building) has resulted in fewer parking spaces available to the Mall.

### **Task Force Recommendations**

- Decrease the retail parking requirement to a minimum of 3.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet, subject to a developer-commissioned traffic impact study, and maintain 15% additional parking supply beyond peak retail demand.



Several analytic products were developed to support the Task Force in their deliberations. The Task Force's recommendations were informed by the key findings of:

- **Sustaining a Livable Lake Forest Park: The Future of our Town Center. Economic Profile and Retail Market Analysis (March 2004)**

*Berk & Associates;*

- **A Strategic Plan for Sustaining a Livable Lake Forest Park: Fiscal Policy Assessment (April 2004)**

*Berk & Associates;*

- **A Strategic Plan for Sustaining a Livable Lake Forest Park Transportation and Parking Analysis Summary (September, 2004)**

*Heffron Transportation; and*

- **Community Forum Summaries (March, April, and July 2004)**

*Berk & Associates*