CITY OF BOTHELL – DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN
BOTHELL, WA

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE: In 2006, the City of Bothell came together with residents, businesses, and schools, to develop a fresh vision to revitalize their downtown core. Since 2000, Bothell has had an 18 percent increase in population, and there was a need to make the downtown area more accessible for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers. In the process of designing a Revitalization Plan, the City of Bothell worked with the local community to understand what features they wanted in a new downtown area. Through various workshops, charettes (participatory planning sessions with community members), and other engagement activities, the City of Bothell learned that the local community wanted a pedestrian-oriented downtown area, with more connections between amenities such as retail stores, residences, offices, and parks and recreational facilities. They wanted a vibrant mixed-use community, creating a sense of place and commons for family and friends to enjoy and business to prosper.

The Multiway Boulevard and the City’s Main Street Enhancement are key developments in the Revitalization Plan. The Main Street Enhancement project aims to preserve downtown’s historic character of its Main Street, by adding new retail stores, offices, and residential living. An $8 million makeover to the street will provide wider and curbless sidewalks, so stores could extend their patio seating out into the roadway when weather permits, as well as safety features, such as high visibility sidewalks and traffic calming measures.

CASE STUDY

WALKABLE WASHINGTON

Transformation towards walkability is taking place all over the state of Washington. From urban, suburban and small town initiatives, the program showcases the effects of a renewed focus on creating great places for people to walk. The case studies are exceptional projects and programs showcasing how cities, counties, school districts, and community organizations throughout the state are making it safer, easier, and more inviting for people to walk.

WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

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The Multiway Boulevard project covers 2.5 miles of State Highway 527 (or known as Bothell Way NE), perpendicular to and west of Main St. Previously, the merchants on this road faced this busy highway that connects to the Interstate 405, making it less pedestrian and bike-friendly, as well as difficult for cars to park with fast-moving traffic. The makeover through the Multiway Boulevard project created a buffer, in the form of a side street providing slower traffic lanes, and opportunities for bicycling and parking. The side street is an attractive tree-lined, 10 foot-wide, business access lane off the main highway with 13.5 foot-wide sidewalks, separated by raised medians and street parking flanked by rows of trees. Decorative street lighting, landscaping including rain gardens, street furniture, three new traffic signals, and new underground public and private utility systems were added to enhance safety and the pedestrian experience, and also address stormwater runoff. This project also connects the City of Bothell’s historic Main Street to the area being redeveloped west of SR 527.

Connectivity was a strong element in the Revitalization Plan. Despite the two highways running through the community, the changes allowed residents to easily walk in an attractive setting between the downtown amenities. Residents can easily access the newly built City Hall with a large public plaza (which opened in October 2015), the library, parks and trails, offices, retail stores, and mixed-use developments, while still enjoying the historic charm of the area.

The revitalization of downtown has served the increasing number of residents in the area well. There are approximately 300 homes downtown and 1000 being planned for development.

Anderson School, previously a junior high school, was saved from demolition by the opening of the McMenamins hotel and entertainment complex in November 2015, a popular attraction in downtown Bothell. The complex includes several bars, a hotel, a movie theater, a saltwater pool free for Bothell residents, and a brewery. Some of the design features of the downtown area are also environmentally friendly, and include energy efficient lighting through the corridor, new cameras and signals for optimal mobility, street amenities that promote pedestrian safety such as wide sidewalks and tree-lined streets, recycled pavement, and environmental training for contractors and sub-contractors.

Another part of the Revitalization Plan was to knit the sections of downtown back together to reflect its historic character. The Crossroads Project realigned Highway SR 522 to create a new grid of downtown blocks and eliminated physical barriers and reduced heavy traffic congestion during peak hour traffic around a major commute corridor around Lake Washington. The Wayne Curve project provided an attractive entrance to the City of Bothell, and alleviates some pressure from the tolling of SR 520 by providing increased capacity.

While downtown Bothell was being revitalized to enhance its connectivity and human-scaled features, a sustainable environmental component was also being put in place - an extensive stormwater management system, complete with bioswales, rain gardens,
permeable pavers, and amended soils. This system was designed to treat more than 278 gallons of stormwater, which is estimated to manage 98.1 percent of run-off. The project is adjacent to two salmon-bearing streams, Horse Creek and the Sammamish Slough, and helps decrease toxic stormwater contaminants to these streams and its aquatic life.

**PROGRAM TIME-FRAME:** The downtown Revitalization Plan started in 2006, and the City of Bothell purchased property from 2007 to 2010. Simultaneous activities of planning, community involvement, funding and land purchase were occurring throughout these years.

The construction phase of the Revitalization Plan started in 2010 with construction of the Crossroads Project. Phase I of the Multiway Boulevard project involved building the side access lane with parking and sidewalk on the west side of Bothell Way, from NE 183rd Street to Reder Way. This phase of the project was awarded a Greenroads Bronze Rating, for its exceptional mobility and environmental standards. The final phase of the Boulevard will start this spring and be finished in about 18 months. Construction of an enhanced Main Street is expected in 2017., Stormwater work was completed in 2012. And finally, environmental clean-up at Horse Creek/98th Ave. began in 2014, and is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2016. Phase II of the project will complete the Boulevard, realizing the City’s goal of joining the new development on the west side of Bothell

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:** The City appointed 16 Board members interested in redevelopment with an additional 54 members appointed to engage the community. Community engagement helped to determine what residents loved about Bothell, and what they wanted more of in the downtown area. Through design charrettes and roundtables, the Board learned that locals in the community wanted to retain the historic quaint and charming character of the area, while creating a more pedestrian-oriented downtown, to connect amenities such as retail, residential, work, recreational, and living spaces.

**COST AND FUNDING:** Since adopting the Revitalization Plan in 2006, $150 million of capital funding [money not used for operational expenses, but funds from one-time revenues] has been spent on downtown infrastructure, including the two transportation projects, and the makeover of the Main Street.

The City of Bothell was also able to sell parcels of land to the development community during the recession. The return on this investment surpassed expectations, bringing $350 million to date. Phase I of the Multiway Boulevard project that enhanced Bothell Way from State Route 522 to NE 188 Street cost $25 million. For Phase II of the Multiway Boulevard project, the City was awarded a $6.75 million grant from the
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT BOARD, and along with proceeds from the City’s sale of properties, allowed a total of $14 million for this part of the project.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS: The recession around 2008 posed a big challenge in financing the Revitalization Plan. As the City of Bothell assumed the role of the Master Developer, it shouldered the private sector risk by strategically dividing and selling three individual properties from the 25 acres the City had bought and assembled for revitalization. This sale was to prove the market potential to other buyers and developers. The result was a key successful strategy that responded to a very difficult economic climate.

INNOVATIONS: The effort to buffer merchants off Highway 527 from the busy traffic with an attractive traffic-calming and pedestrian-oriented side street, was an innovative solution to the issue of the store fronts facing the highway. Furthermore, a stormwater management system not only addressed the design for pedestrians, but also environmental sustainability.

On the funding end, the selling of city property to private developers was a strategic move on the part of the City of Bothell in order to fund-raise for the downtown revitalization during an economic recession.

BENEFITS AND RESULTS: As a result of the revitalization process of downtown Bothell, many people, including residents, workers, and visitors, now enjoy connected pedestrian access to many amenities in the area, along with Bothell’s historic charm and character. The City is in the midst of the largest redevelopment in Washington State led by a municipal agency and they are experiencing fantastic results.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
Downtown Revitalization Plan
http://www.ci.bothell.wa.us/CityServices/PlanningAndDevelopment/DowntownRevitalizationPlan.ashx?p=1448

MAIN STREET ENHANCEMENT:
http://www.ci.bothell.wa.us/?p=1464
Multiway Boulevard – Phase I
http://www.ci.bothell.wa.us/?p=1471
Stormwater Management

http://www.ci.bothell.wa.us/CityServices/Administration/CityManagersOffice/CityNews.ashx?p=1710