



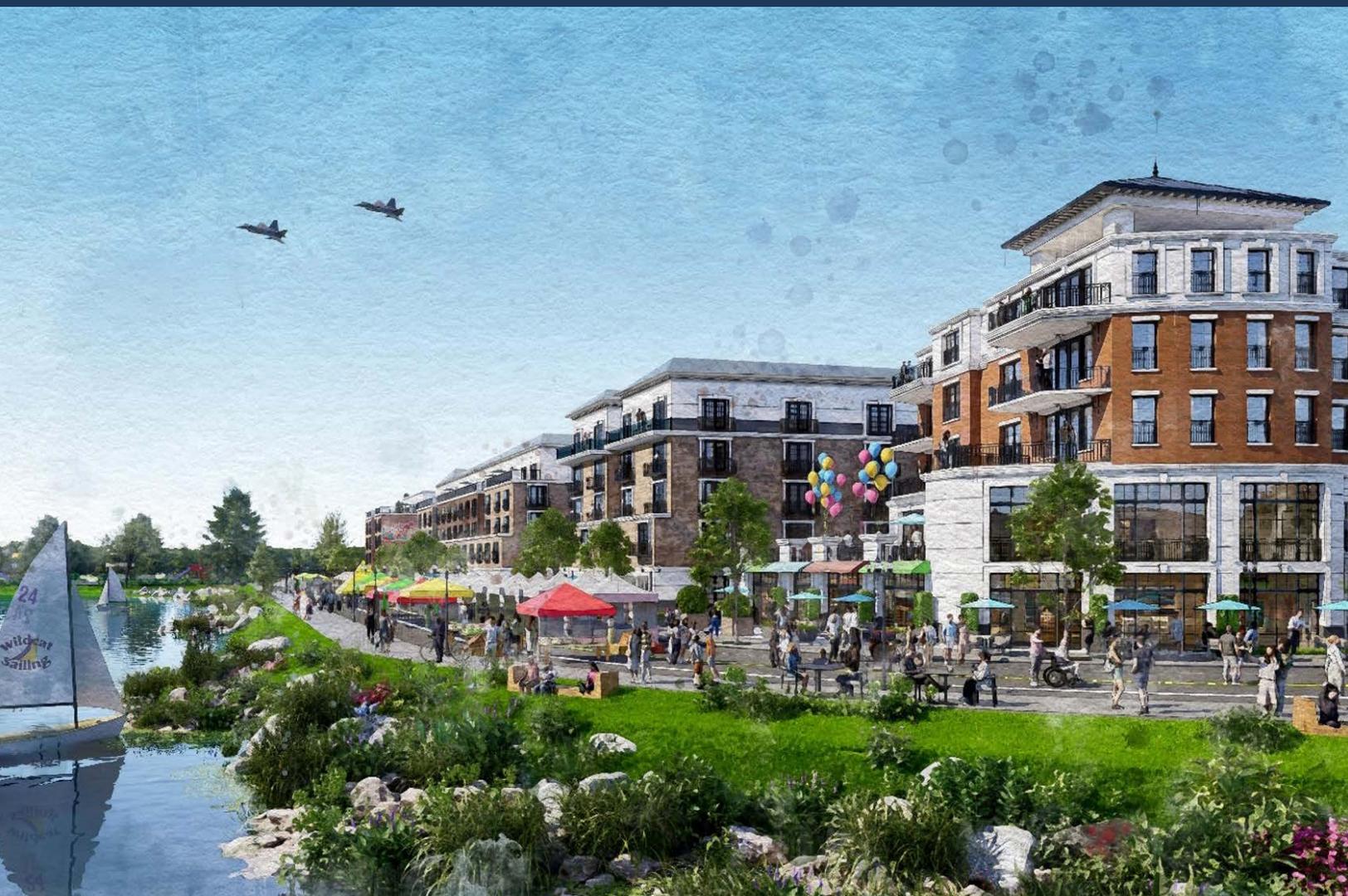
CENTER FOR CREATIVE
LAND RECYCLING

RECLAIM. CONNECT. TRANSFORM.

Vision To Action Plan

**OAK HARBOR WATERFRONT
VISION TO ACTION PLAN**

Provided by
The Center for Creative
Land Recycling



In Collaboration with

City of Oak Harbor

Washington Department of Ecology

The US Environmental Protection Agency

September 14th, 2025

STAKEHOLDERS

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The Waterfront Area VISION TO ACTION PLAN

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Introduction

The Best Waterfront In The Puget Sound

As an island community, the City of Oak Harbor enjoys many miles of shoreline along the beautiful Puget Sound. Located in the rain shadow of the Olympic Mountains, the area receives about half the annual rainfall of Seattle. Traveling to Oak Harbor from the north, vehicles journey through Deception Pass Station Park known for its rugged cliffs, old-growth forests, abundant wildlife, as well as the iconic Deception Pass Bridge. Arriving from the south, one travels through Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve a stunning landscape described as "almost a paradise of nature."

The partnership between Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, located to the north, and the City of Oak Harbor is a vibrant, deeply rooted collaboration that benefits both the military community and the broader public in meaningful and measurable ways. The Seattle metropolitan area, located 1.5 hours to the south, has emerged as one of the most dynamic and economically resilient regions in the United States, underpinned by its thriving tech sector, which is dominated by global giants like Amazon, Microsoft, Google, and a burgeoning startup ecosystem. Beyond technology, the region benefits from a diversified economy that includes aerospace (Boeing), healthcare (with institutions like the University of Washington Medical Center), and international trade, thanks to its strategic position along the Pacific Rim. This economic diversification, coupled with a strong talent pipeline and a culture of innovation, has not only fueled job creation and housing demand throughout the broader region, but also positioned the greater Seattle area as a leading hub for economic growth, sustainability, and global investment.



Study Area

Oak Harbor's downtown is the heart of our city — but like any heart, it needs care, investment, and vision to keep beating strong. Over the decades, we've seen shifts in how people live, work, and interact with their surroundings, and our downtown no longer reflects the energy, opportunity, and durable infrastructure that our community deserves. Redevelopment is not about erasing the past — it's about honoring it while building a vibrant, accessible, and economically resilient future that attracts residents, supports businesses, and becomes a destination for all.

And like most communities in the region, Island County, where Oak Harbor is located, is facing significant growth pressures at a time when the city's charming small town character is poised for greater urbanism. Oak Harbor's downtown and surrounding areas are the oldest sections in the city and facing continued structural deterioration.

The community must attract hundreds of millions of dollars to replace decades of existing aging infrastructure or continue to experience further costly decay of our older city center, thus impacting the whole city.

The City has spent decades developing the vision of how it will transform into its next phase of growth. From its initial visioning in the 1990 Harbor Watch plan, the growth expected for this area has long been planned to occur along the shoreline—specifically, in the area between the intersection of Highway 20 and Pioneer to the west (i.e., Waterfront West) and the intersection of Bayshore Drive and Pioneer Way (i.e., Waterfront East). Between these two endpoints is the area that this document will refer to as The Waterfront.





The study area contains approximately 121 acres of land, a mile of shoreline, and hundreds of businesses and homes.



The Catalyst Sites

This project focuses on a subset of the greater Waterfront District. The focus area is approximately 80 acres and contains the City's richest urbanism with the downtown core and major regional park. Major thoroughfares serve the area and include Main Street, Bayshore Drive, and Highway 20. This infrastructure supports the City's highest concentration of existing businesses that range from professional services to retail and dining. The area has a rich mix of additional land uses that include institutional, recreational, and residential developments. Residential uses are exclusively attached, higher-density developments that include condominium and apartment buildings. The area also has the City's most robust street network with a fine grain of street grids, city blocks, and sidewalks. These features give the Waterfront the "bones" that are needed to support the new growth projected over the next twenty years.

But catalysts are needed. There has not been much new development in the Waterfront area over the past ten years. Several important properties have proposals that fit the City's vision for greater urbanism but are not constructed as of yet. Thankfully, the Waterfront has several City-owned properties and two of them are a particular focus for this plan.

1081 and 1091 Pioneer Drive, at the corner of Pioneer at Bayshore, marks the easternmost edge of the Waterfront District. These properties are prominent, vacant lots that sit adjacent to the shoreline and provide stellar views of the surrounding areas. These properties also form the eastern gateway to the downtown district. When combined, the properties are 1.38 acres in total area, providing the City with the critical mass it needs to recruit a development partner to build the first cornerstone of the Waterfront's vision for the future.



The Catalyst Sites

It is important to note that the original buildings on these sites are consistent with the area's original vernacular. The first building, at 1081, was built in 1945 and operated as a gas and service station for over 40 years. The second building, at 1091, was built later and has operated as a barber shop, commercial office space and most recently, a tattoo parlor, which closed in 2020. Both structures are small, single-story, flat-roofed, and were originally developed in a non-descriptive, utilitarian fashion. In later years, public artwork and placemaking brought greater value and character to the buildings (along with many other buildings in the downtown core) but the capacity for more unique architecture, flexible usage, and greater urbanism is inherently limited. Likewise, the low density of the development left a significant amount of land underutilized. As a reflection of its time, the development is an excellent example of the City's form and function dating back to the 1970s. However, to meet the needs of 2025 and onward, the site—like the Waterfront itself—must evolve.

When combined, the Waterfront District and the Catalytic Site serve as a multi-tiered study area that needs a refined vision and strategy coupled with a site-specific anchor development solution. Each aspect must work in concert. The anchor development must be fashioned in a manner that reflects the District's future form. The District, meanwhile, must change its form to accommodate a significant increase in capacity for commercial and residential development. This greater intensity will need an improved public realm that is more livable, resilient, and attractive. Attractiveness, in this case, refers to both the social and physical character of the area (which attracts visitors and residents) as well as the economic profile (which attracts private investment). This multi-pronged approach makes the Waterfront a keystone of the broader evolution that the City will undergo in the next two decades.



1091 Pioneer Drive is a commercial space that has served as an office, barber shop, and tattoo parlor. It has been vacant since 2020.



The gas station building at 1081 Pioneer Drive was built in 1945 forty years and has been vacant since the 1990s. It's most notable feature is the mural on the western facade.



Current Obstacles

Altogether, these key themes are an excellent foundation for the Waterfront's vision of the future. Many of these ideas could be realized today, to varying degrees of consistency, without any action from the City. Yet, several obstacles stand in the way of the Waterfront reaching its fullest potential and thus a more focused plan is needed.

Obstacle 1 – lack of clarity in the current vision

For the Waterfront, there is a lack of cohesion and clarity in the current plans. The area has been planned and visualized several times over the past thirty-five years. The plans are largely consistent with one another, but the reference documents are limited and the illustrations are dated. There is enough material in the current documents to show the general direction for the area, but it needs new details in order to have a plan that is informative and actionable.

Obstacle 2 – lack of analysis for the current vision

Additionally, new details on the vision will give way to new analysis. The vision should be analyzed for its total development potential to see what kind of impacts can be expected. As this plan will show in later sections, the Waterfront's clarified vision assumes many major changes to the built environment. This generates large increases in the demand, usage, and availability of infrastructure. These effects should be understood as much as possible in order for the City to anticipate the need for additional study, capital investments, and policy changes.

Obstacle 3 – lack of community-driven refinements for the current vision

When the current vision is given more clarity, detail and analysis, it must also receive more review and feedback. The current vision has not been formally discussed among the public in many years. Thus, while overcoming Obstacle 1 is crucial, it raises the challenge of Obstacle 2. By creating a more knowable vision, the Waterfront's

future will need to be discussed by the community to ensure that people are aware and at least somewhat supportive of the direction. Concerns emerge in such discussions and refinements should be made wherever possible to address those concerns. Otherwise, this will be a significant obstacle to progress.

Obstacle 4 – contamination at the catalyst site

At 1081 and 1091 Pioneer Drive, Phase I and II environmental assessments have shown that there is groundwater contamination from diesel, gas, vinyl chloride, trichloroethane, volatile organic compounds and other substances. The soil is relatively uncontaminated but the site constitutes a brownfield and thus it warrants proper assessment and cleanup before any redevelopment can occur.

Obstacle 5 – lack of alignment between vision and action

Without a clearer vision, detailed analysis, and community review and refinement, the City will not have the information it needs to take action. This plan is written to compile all the information necessary to overcome this final, and most formidable obstacle. The pages ahead are the result of a deliberate process to overcome Obstacles 1 – 4 so that clear actions can be identified, prescribed, and ready-made for implementation. Future studies, partnerships, policies, and capital improvements will be needed. To align these things in the right way requires a strong plan that gives the City confidence in the steps ahead.

The City's Response

To address these obstacles, the City sought resources and partnerships at the State and Federal level. Given the fact that the catalyst site was a brownfield, the City was eligible for support from the State of Washington's Department of Ecology as well as the Environmental Protection Agency's Technical Assistance to Brownfield service.

Washington Department of Ecology Integrated Planning Grant

In 2023, the Washington Department of Ecology awarded the City of Oak Harbor with a \$200,000 Integrated Planning Grant (IPG) to fund the assessment, investigation, planning, and feasibility analysis necessary to redevelop the catalyst properties.

The overall goal of this approved grant-funded effort was to clean up a contaminated brownfield site and begin to revitalize the historic downtown area so that residents and tourists fully utilize and enjoy the area. This project will create a vision and action plan by gathering community data and feedback, assessing redevelopment options, planning cleanup stages, and completing environmental due diligence. What will result is a broader plan for the Downtown Waterfront Revitalization Project to stimulate a vibrant waterfront economy. Funding for the project was provided in order to advance and expedite the cleanup and redevelopment through the approved approach of hiring an environmental consulting firm for assessment and remediation, an architectural design firm for conceptual design of the reuse, and a planning firm for the visioning, community engagement, economic analysis, and general planning.

CCLR role and TAB Program

The Center of Creative Land Recycling (CCLR) was the City's choice for the planning function. As the region's provider for technical assistance to brownfields (TAB), CCLR had the capacity to provide the planning services through the TAB program. TAB is a program funded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Using federal funds, the program provides Technical Guidance to help communities like Oak Harbor to help them understand and navigate the environmental

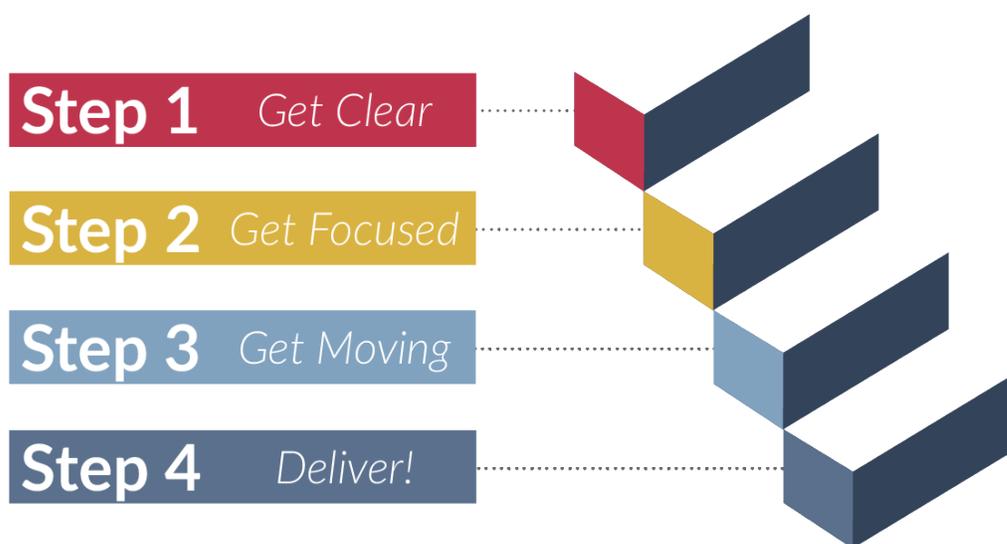
laws, regulations, assessment, and cleanup methods pertaining to brownfields. The service also provides support to facilitate public engagement and stakeholder participation, develop cleanup and financing strategies, and aid in the reuse planning effort.

When CCLR provides this expertise within a single, integrated project, it is referred to as a Vision to Action service (V2A). Within the EPA's Region 10, which comprises the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska, CCLR provides 2-3 Vision to Action projects each year. Oak Harbor was selected for one of the two V2As to be delivered in R10 in 2025. As a result, Oak Harbor was able to save approximately 90% of the cost of planning services and thus leverage the savings into the procurement of environmental and architectural consulting, staff support costs, and more. The environmental consulting firm hired for this project was Farallon Consulting. The architectural consulting firm was the Dahlin Group.



General description of the V2A process

The Vision to Action service is composed of four major steps shown below. All four steps are engaged at all levels of focus, from the City-wide scale to the Waterfront area and then to the specific catalyst sites (1081 and 1091 Pioneer Drive). Thus, in Step 1, the City, its Waterfront, and the Catalyst Site are analyzed to develop a deeper sense of their strengths, needs, and opportunities relative to similar areas at a similar scale. The Oak Harbor Waterfront area is analyzed and compared to other waterfront areas in the greater region (e.g., Anacortes, Mukilteo, and Port Townsend). The Catalyst Site is similarly compared but only to other sites of similar size within the region's real estate market. All conditions were categorized, from infrastructure to development potential, and summarized into a general sense of feasibility for future reuse. Analysis also included the review and synthesis of all existing planning documents to get an accurate summary of the current vision and policies for the area.



With analysis complete, the process moves on to the next step – Visualize. At this point, CCLR develops and hosts two workshops to share its analysis from Step 1, the subject property, and the potential for reuse. From there, the community is given the opportunity to share their concerns, needs, and preferences for reuse. Options are developed, a few are selected, and conceptual designs are created. These conceptual designs “visualize” the reuse according to the community's guidance. Those concepts are reviewed, preferred features are identified, and a final vision for the area is created based on the multiple rounds of feedback over the course of the two workshops. The events are highly interactive and utilize an iterative design process to ensure the final design is responsive to the community's comments.

With a vision developed over multiple rounds of feedback, the process moves on to Step 3. The vision is given a critical path for implementation and the local government will formulate the best way to deliver results. This can include additional analysis, capital improvements, detailed design and construction planning, new policies, new incentive programs, and much more. The final content is ultimately decided by the City (as they are the ones responsible for the work) and, once complete, the process enters its final step. Actions are taken to adopt the vision and implementation plan. Next steps identified in the plan are initiated. Meanwhile, CCLR continues its work by providing technical assistance through the TAB program for as long as it is needed.

Within this general process, there are several unique elements that are added to meet the specific needs of the project. For the City of Oak Harbor, this included the additional services provided by separate contractors. Those services ran in parallel with the V2A and delivered critical materials at specific points in time so that the project's goals and objectives could be achieved.

Project Goals and Objectives

For the Vision to Action to be its most successful, the City identified the following project goals.

Goal 1: Advance and expedite the clean-up and redevelopment of the target site

Goal 2: Engage the community in a manner that creates a meaningful first step in the broader Downtown Waterfront Revitalization Project

Goal 3: Create a redevelopment strategy for the site and surrounding area that:

- Stimulates new businesses to move to the area
- Strengthens current businesses
- Creates a vibrant waterfront economy from the marina east of downtown to Windjammer Park west of downtown

Goal 4: Create an opportunity for missing middle housing and more affordable housing options

These goals mark the outcomes that the project was designed to achieve, as in what should occur as a result of this work. Additional project objectives are listed below and relate to *how* those outcomes should be achieved. In other words, the Vision to Action process was developed to not only deliver on the goals highlighted above but to do so in a way that fosters the following benefits:

Objective 1: Meaningful, Inclusive Community Engagement.

The Waterfront is a highly valued, highly utilized area. It is the heart of the City. Throughout the process, residents needed multiple opportunities to share their voice and have a real impact on the important decisions that determine its future. The workshops had to be delivered in a way that left them feeling like their participation had been worth their time.

Objective 2: Conceptual Visioning That Is Responsive and Flexible.

The conceptual designs needed to contemplate several alternatives at the start so that residents could see their myriad interests reflected in the work. Then, with structured exercises and feedback, those alternatives needed to be modified through participant feedback, consolidated according to stated priorities, and ultimately coalesced into a single preferred final design that would meet the satisfaction of a simple majority. Likewise, the visions needed a high degree of flexibility so that the core ideas could be implemented in many ways as circumstances evolve with time. No vision can achieve 100% support from all participants but the process would need to be transparent, iterative, and responsive to all the feedback provided.

Objective 3: Strategies That Position The City for Further Success.

Finally, as a Vision to Action service, the project needed to deliver a set of actions and approaches that the City could carry forward within months of completion. This would include deliverables that augment future grant applications, policy recommendations that make development more feasible, immediate placemaking strategies for “quick wins” on the street level, and much more. These strategies would need to be cast over a near-, mid-, and long-term horizon and sorted by low-, mid-, and high-priorities based on the established critical path (i.e. prescribed sequence of events). In other words, the vision itself would need a useful, understandable “playbook” for how to move forward.

Project Team

To deliver on these goals and objectives, both in “what” would be achieved and “how,” the effort was designed with the following team composition and project approach.

City of Oak Harbor

Project Management, Community Engagement,
Project Steering.

Center for Creative Land Recycling

Project Management, Planning and Analysis, Community Engagement, Workshop Facilitation, Design and Modeling

Cascadia Partners

Market Conditions Analysis and Economic Development Strategies

Dahlin Group

Urban Design and Architectural Renderings

Farallon Engineering

Environmental Investigation and Clean-Up Solutions

The team represents a multidisciplinary approach for addressing the full range of social, environmental, and economic needs.

Under the guidance of the City of Oak Harbor, the project team has produced key deliverables for each major stage of the project. The project stages were established in a sequence that would allow for joint fact-finding between the City and the community. All

information sharing occurred through the workshops held from February through May, largely as a response to community questions and concerns. As information continued to develop, the Waterfront’s vision and priorities emerged and became the basis for the plan.

Timeframe, Scope of Project

First, to maintain momentum throughout the effort, the project timeframe was kept as short as possible, with no more than six weeks between community workshops. This allowed participants to maintain a grasp of the exchanges and conversations that occurred over time. The workshops themselves were set up with three basic themes.

Workshop #1 was centered on information sharing. It was the point in time where we collectively established the situation that the City faced and gather the community's feedback on how to proceed. This began with an overview of the current vision, the forecasted growth pressures, and then a time for reaction and discussion. By the end of the workshop, participants shared their needs, wants, and preferences through a structured set of exercises. Specific questions about the current vision, the city's growth pressures, and their individual sense of the priorities were cataloged for use in the design work.

Workshop #2 was centered on application. Using the feedback provided by the community, and the work developed through Dahlin (the architectural design consultant), CCLR developed two 3D digital models to illustrate a refined, more detailed version of the Waterfront's future. This gave participants a deeper understanding of the vision's impacts, both positive and negative, to the current conditions. The 3D models were fully explored in a virtual simulation and participants offered their reactions in facilitated discussion and additional structured exercises. Their guidance was used to develop a final refined vision that will be provided in this planning document.

Workshop #3 explored feasibility. Cascadia Partners conducted this final workshop virtually and presented their findings on the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for economic development. They demonstrated the critical steps that the City can take to make the vision a reality, introducing a toolkit of solutions that will be provided in this planning document. The workshops were delivered from mid-February to mid-May 2025. During this time period, Farallon Consulting delivered their monitoring reports and

remedial investigations of the catalytic site. The City also pursued the demolition of the two structures, gaining approval from the necessary State agencies and completing the demolition by the time of Workshop #2, held on April 17th.

After Workshop #3, the total collection of data, designs, and community feedback were consolidated into the findings of this planning document. The results inform the final vision, the next steps, and will be delivered to the City Council for review and approval by resolution in September 2025.

Community Profile

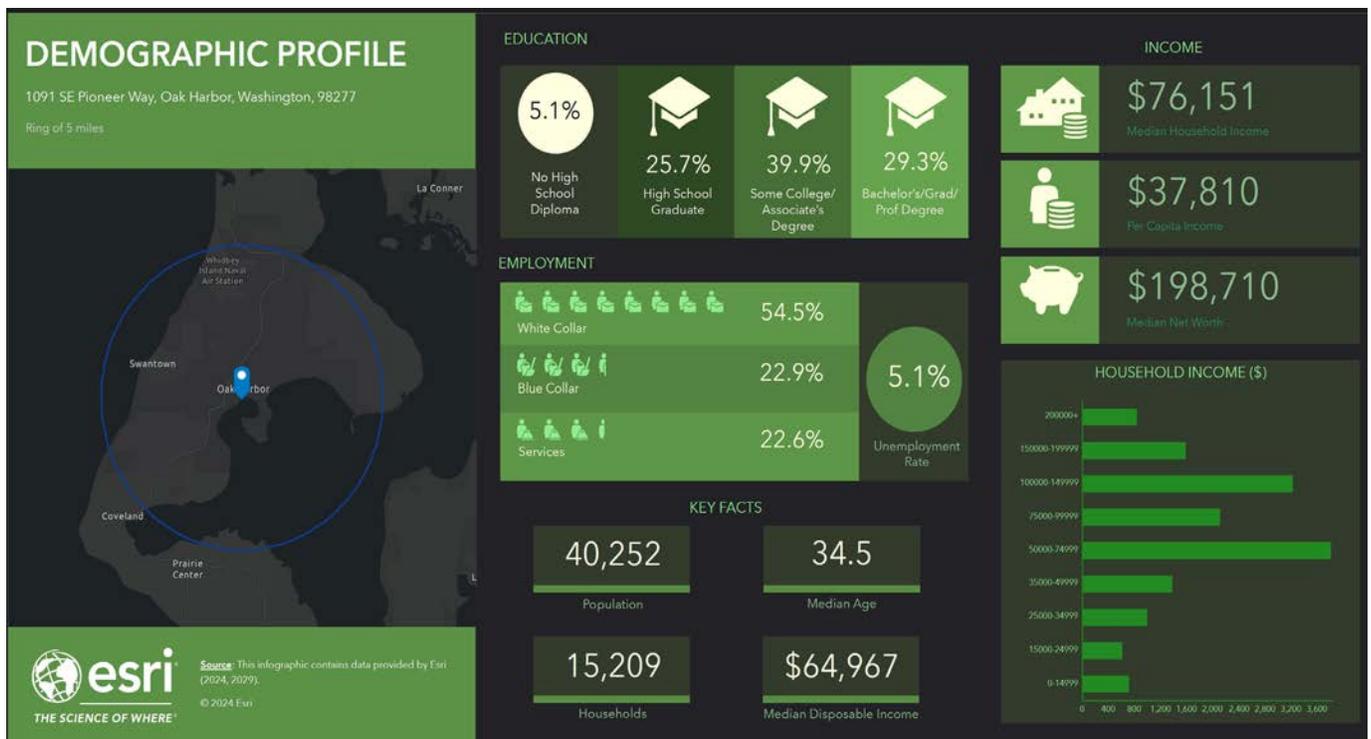
Within this basic approach, community engagement was clearly the most critical element for success. All team members were fully capable of delivering on their tasks but the value of their contributions would increase significantly with well-attended public events and broad awareness within the community. The team developed an effective strategy to ensure the best participation possible.

The City of Oak Harbor has a tradition of excellent community engagement. With dedicated staff providing crucial information in a variety of channels and touchpoints, the City is able to utilize many different forms of communication to raise awareness. Much of the strategy detailed below involves reliable, proven methods that the City has implemented for years. CCLR provided a detailed community profile to help inform the approach and explore new methods wherever it seemed appropriate.

As shown in the data below, the community that resides within a 5-mile radius of the Waterfront has several notable characteristics. First, the population in the area is approximately 40,252 people, all of whom will have familiarity with the Waterfront and will be affected by the

growth projected to occur here. Second, while household income and net worth is projected to be lower than the state average, the cost of living is subsequently lower, too. This suggests that the area has its own unique equilibrium and is currently unaffected by the state-wide trends.

The population is relatively young (median age 34.5) and the dominant groups are described as being city dwellers who are price aware, attentive to environmental concerns, comfortable with technology, and often in a period of transition either from new jobs, new careers, or at the end of a career with retirement on the horizon. This includes what is referred to as the “Old and Newcomer” segment as well as the “Young Professional” segment. Most of the members in these segments rent their housing, occupy smaller households of 1-2 people, and make their homes in multi-unit buildings with an interest in urban lifestyles and amenities. These two groups make up approximately 25.5% of the entire population, or 1 in every 4 persons, within the study area. The remaining 74.5% of the population mostly include middle-income suburban dwellers, empty-nesters, and military-adjacent families. The City has several more unique groups of people within its general market



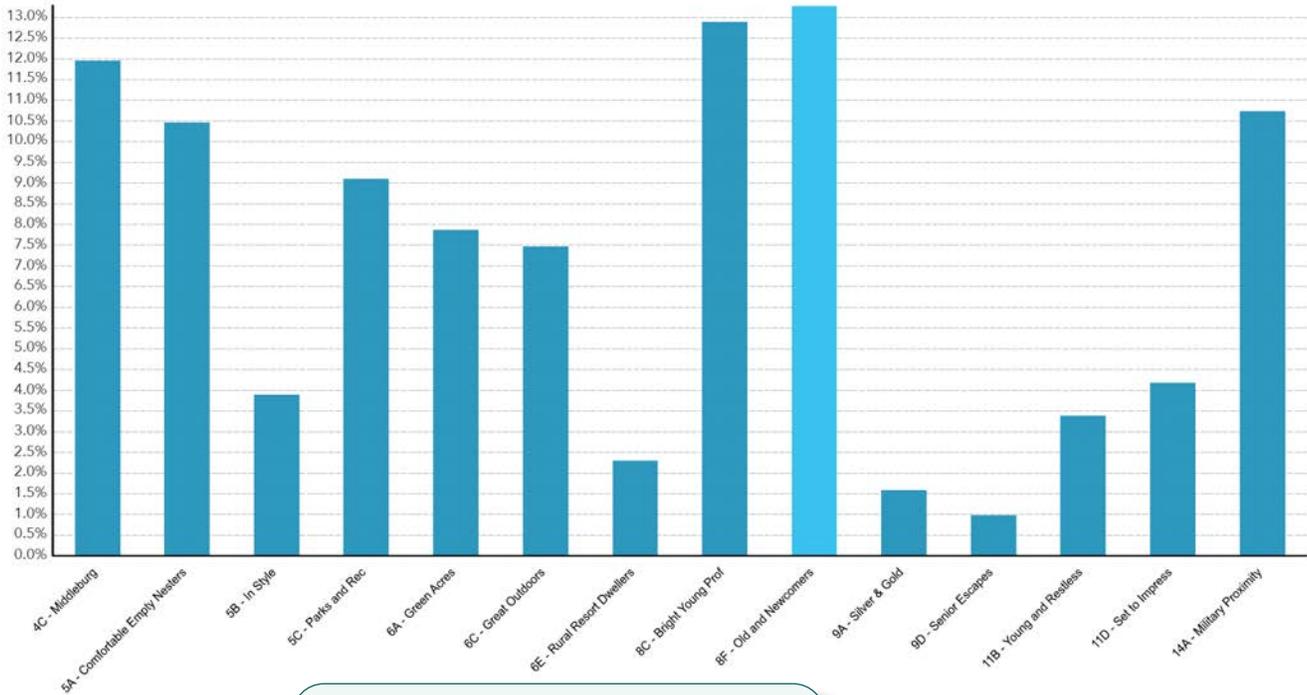
TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION COMPOSITION

This chart displays the percent of households in each segment in this area.



15,216 total households in this area

2,019 households in *Old and Newcomers* - 13.3%

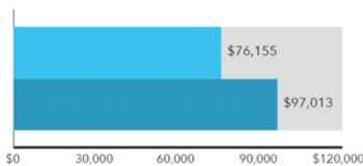


The Tapestry Segmentation analysis translates standard demographic data into sensible, descriptive statistics of the typical consumer groups residing in a given area.

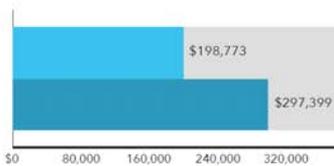
INCOME AND NET WORTH

Net worth measures total household assets (secured (e.g. mortgages) or unsecured (credit cards) for this area.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



MEDIAN NET WORTH



Bars show comparison to

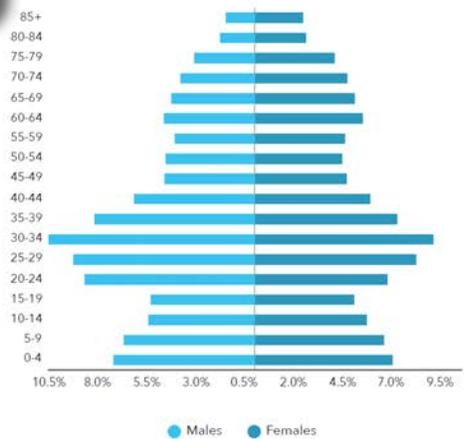
Washington

Bars show comparison to

Washington

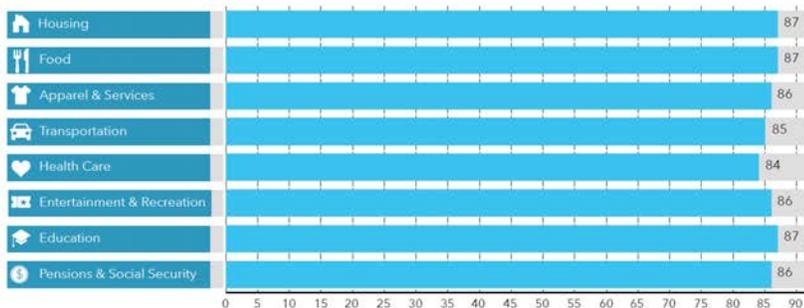
AGE BY SEX

Median Age: 34.5



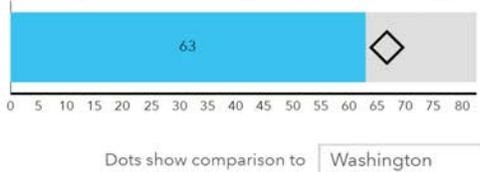
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD BUDGET INDEX

The index compares the average amount spent in this market's household budgets for housing, food, apparel, etc., to the average amount spent by all US households. An index of 100 is average. An index of 120 shows that average spending by consumers in this market is 20 percent above the national average.



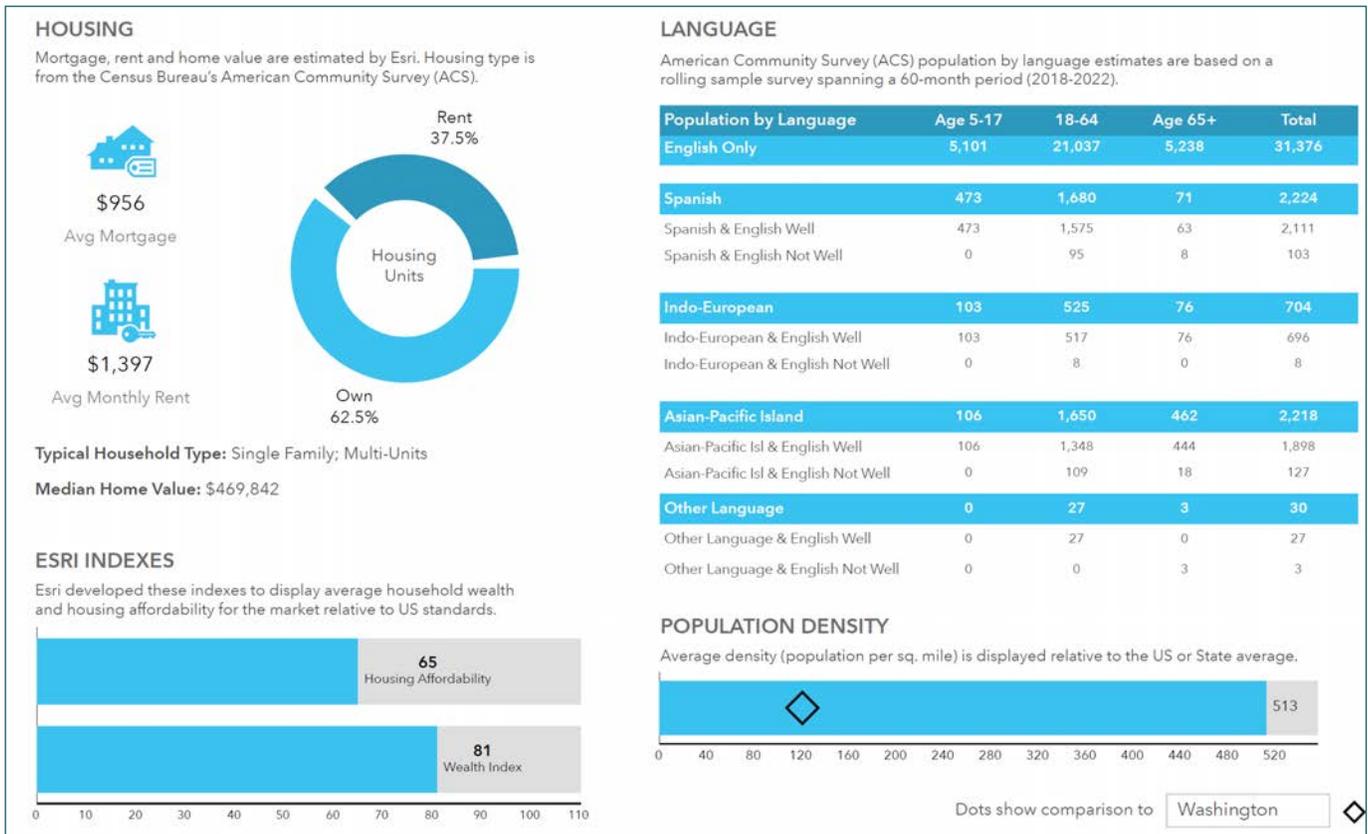
DIVERSITY

The Diversity Index summarizes racial and ethnic diversity. The index shows the likelihood that two persons, chosen at random from the same area, belong to different race or ethnic groups. The index ranges from 0 (no diversity) to 100 (complete diversity).



Dots show comparison to

Washington



segmentation and this summary is only a basic glimpse at the general make-up of its community. But it is enough to corroborate the experience of the City's community engagement efforts.

For example, the community tends to be reliant on social media for its public information. Facebook is a proven platform for the older members of the community while Instagram is a proven platform for the younger members. The City's website generates traffic as well, particularly from those seeking more information from the initial information postings. Finally, a utility bill newsletter is sent out each month and is a viable form of communication for those who do not often frequent social media. The utility bill newsletter and the local paper generate traffic to the City website. Finally, the City maintains a growing email distribution list and has the ability to post updates and continuing stories through that medium for those who opt-in to the service, which strengthens the connections and reinforces the key messages and critical information.

Social media and the utility bill newsletter served as a critical touchpoint for raising initial awareness and directing people to the website for more information. The City website provided reference materials, detailed

narratives, and historical material developed during the project. The community newspaper provided independent coverage and commentary. Finally, email distribution lists provided another source of reference material and updates.

In addition to the media strategy, the City made deliberate decisions to host its meetings and events in places that were convenient for the community. Workshop #1 was hosted at City Hall. Workshop #2 was hosted at the nearby Marina Club. Likewise, a separate presentation was held at the regularly scheduled Chamber of Commerce meeting that took place on the same day as Workshop #2. The two events were deliberately held on the same day to further boost awareness and generate participation. Finally, meetings were held on weeknights and provided food, drink, a play area for children, and a gift card raffle for participants. Workshop #3 was held virtually to offer further convenience after two major in-person events had taken up significant time.

Altogether, the outreach strategy brought together hundreds of people and raised awareness throughout the target area. Over 95% of residents attending the events stated that the events were worth their time. Every

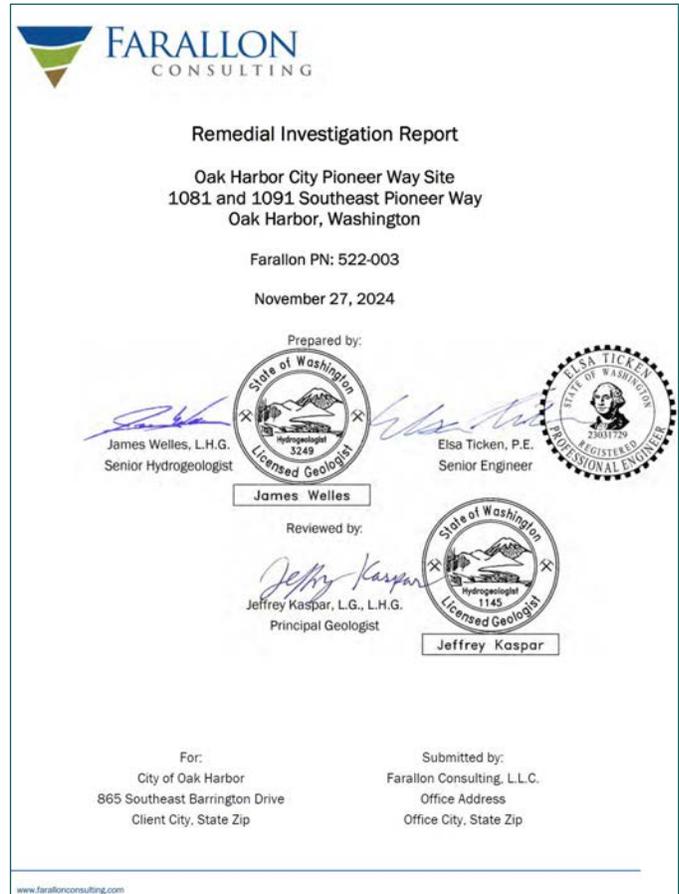
participant had regular opportunities to provide feedback through write-in comments, open question and answer periods, exercises, and surveys. Feedback was regularly reflected in the presentation content and conversations before, during, after, and outside of the events kept participants engaged. This was particularly important because new information and key milestones emerged throughout the project's duration, beginning with the environmental investigation and building demolition.

Remedial Investigation

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) awarded the City an Integrated Planning grant for \$200,000, which required a zero (0%) match from the City, to address the environmental cleanup of the City's properties at 1081 and 1091 SW Pioneer Way.

As part of the grant, Farallon Consulting, L.L.C. (Farallon) was selected to complete a remedial investigation and feasibility study for the environmental contamination under the City owned parcels. Total costs are not to exceed \$107,000. In August 2024, Farallon prepared a Remedial Investigation (RI) Work Plan on behalf of the City to evaluate the nature and extent of contamination at the City's property. The property is part of the greater site, which is defined under the Washington State Model Toxics Control Act Cleanup Regulation (MTCA) as where hazardous substances, other than consumer products in consumer use, have come to be located at concentrations exceeding MTCA cleanup levels. The Site is listed on the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) Confirmed and Suspected Contaminated Sites List under Facility Site Identification No. 78354693 and Cleanup Site Identification No. 16831 due to a confirmed release of carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (cPAHs) to soil.

In accordance with WAC 173-340-350, the purpose of an RI is to adequately characterize a contaminated site, including distribution of hazardous substances, affected media, and the potential risks to human health and the environment. The results from the RI will enable establishment of cleanup standards and the development of and evaluation of technically feasible cleanup action alternatives in accordance with WAC 173-340-350 through 173-340-370.

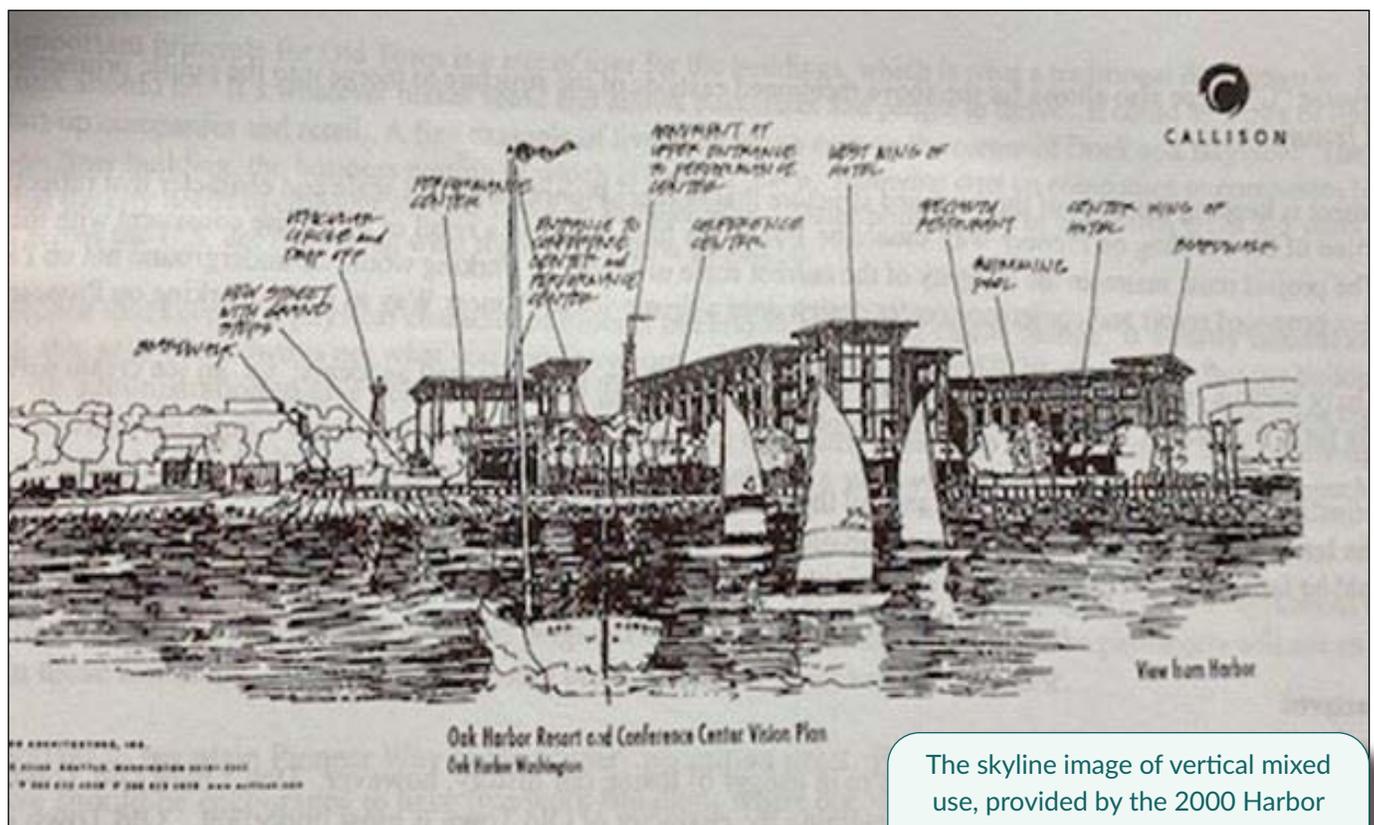


In August 2024, Farallon installed five new groundwater monitoring wells to a depth of approximately 15 feet below ground surface. Farallon then completed four quarters of groundwater sampling in September 2024, December 2024, March 2025 and June 2025. Recently, Farallon has tabulated all four quarters of groundwater data, confirming that contaminant concentrations remain less than applicable cleanup levels for four consecutive quarters. There are two areas adjacent to Pioneer Way where petroleum contamination sample results from the soils were above cleanup levels, both located about ten feet below the surface.

Conceptual Designs

The draft Feasibility Study completion is targeted for early fall for submission to the City, Ecology and CCLR for review with an expected finalization by the end of 2025.

Past illustrations of the Waterfront's future serve as a useful foundation but the catalyst site and surrounding properties need more detail to help the City refine its vision. To this end, the Dahlin Group developed artwork at the City's guidance using hand-drawings and 3D rendering that captured the general essence of what the vision already established (e.g., 4-5 story buildings with mixed-uses, pedestrian-oriented frontages, and high quality facades). This artwork was refined several times over with City staff to encapsulate the ideals. Notable features include the multi-toned facades with flat roofs, parapets, significant articulation, and a high level of transparency (i.e., many windows



contained within the facades). To enhance the urban design, the new buildings are placed along the street frontages with vehicle parking directed to underground podiums and/or the site interiors, which is consistent with the district's broader design features.



Along Bayshore Drive, the renderings showed the general scale and placement of new development that elevates and extends the scale from the downtown core. Building frontages are constructed to the full edge of each lot, creating shared walls between properties. Openings are placed along the sidewalk's edge with tall storefront windows offering views of the water and inviting visitors for active retail and office uses along the first floor.

Meanwhile, the catalyst property at 1081 and 1091 Pioneer Way is illustrated to show itself prominently at the corner of Bayshore. It serves as a gateway to the district and livens the street with outdoor cafe spaces, porticoes, and landscaping. The renderings assume that each new development has a building height of 55 feet or greater. Lot coverages are estimated to be at least 70% or greater, thus showing that vertical development will occupy the great majority of each lot. Finally, several design choices helped envision how the future development foster a livable





and beautiful city center by promoting active outdoor living from the open deck spaces on the upper-story residential, the wider sidewalks for activities and festivals, and the development of open plaza space at both major corners of the catalyst sites.

Finally, on the other end of the district, adjacent to Windjammer Park, the Dahlin Group designed the conceptual renderings for a new Town Center. This concept was developed as a means of reusing several underperforming, large, open parking lots at the intersection of Highway 20 and Pioneer Way. Using the same basic design features shown at the catalyst site, Dahlin expanded the buildings to occupy approximately 12 acres of land and create a mixed-use center that would serve as the other gateway to the district. Again, consistent with the downtown core's original form, the buildings are attached, mixed-use, multi-storied, and rise up to 55 feet or greater in height. The materials, facade designs, and transparency rates, and lot coverages remain consistent with the form established in the Bayshore and Pioneer Drive concepts. The buildings place themselves in a manner that faces outward to Windjammer Park or the adjacent streets, creating more lively public spaces for active first-floor use, while the remaining levels are reserved for residential and/or office uses.



The renderings focus on the potential for the “Waterfront East” area along Bayshore and Pioneer Drive. But the essential themes apply to the “Waterfront West” area that occurs near Windjammer Park.



The Town Center concept at “Waterfront West” capitalizes on the underutilized space adjacent to Windjammer Park.



Workshop #1



The Council Chambers were at capacity for Workshop #1 with residents engaging fully in the discussion and polling exercises.

General approach and intent

Workshop #1 was held on February 27th at City Hall. Per the City's outreach strategy, the event was publicized a month in advance with a public presentation to City Council on January 21st, Facebook and Instagram postings, and the debut of a project website. The efforts were successful and the workshop was delivered to a capacity crowd at the City's chamber room.

Workshop #1 was centered on information sharing. This was the point in time where we collectively established the situation that the City faced and gathered the community's feedback on how to proceed. This began with an overview of the current vision, the forecasted

growth pressures, and then a time for reaction and discussion. By the end of the workshop, participants shared their needs, wants, and preferences through a structured set of exercises. Specific questions about the current vision, the city's growth pressures, and their individual sense of priorities were cataloged for use in the design work.

The Situation Ahead

To provide feedback, attendees participated in live polling via personal cell phones and paper surveys after receiving an overview of the Waterfront vision, the City’s projected growth over the next 20 years, and the emerging development trends in the region. These trends make up the situation the City faces, much of which has been formally established through the City’s comprehensive planning effort that is occurring in parallel with the Waterfront project.

The comprehensive plan includes a Land Capacity Analysis that was completed and reported in October 2024, just three and a half months earlier. The findings show that the city would see its population increase from 24,840 to 38,507 by 2045, an increase of 13,667 people. Meanwhile, under current conditions, the City’s total buildout of all available lands would provide enough housing and nonresidential development to support less than half of the project population but would provide sufficient capacity for employment needs.

To support the total growth projected for the area, the City would need to create new capacity for an additional 2,801 dwelling units for 7,320 additional

people. This would be a challenge for any community and it is a common issue among cities in the greater Seattle area. Further analysis shared with the community demonstrates that surrounding counties are addressing this need through a significant increase in multi-family housing.

Where could such housing be placed in Oak Harbor? One natural place is the Waterfront, which already contemplates such development and has the capacity and potential to support it better than most parts of the city—thanks to its natural amenities, parks, street network, and proximity to services and employment. With the needs established, the workshop pivoted to a discussion on the solutions.

Table 1: Initial Findings Summary

Subject	Findings
Housing Capacity	2,732 dwelling units
Housing Surplus (Deficit)	(2,801) dwelling units
Employment Capacity	1,999 jobs
Employment Surplus (Deficit)	780 jobs
Population Capacity	6,347 people
Population Surplus (Deficit)	(7,320) people
0-80% AMI Housing Surplus (Deficit)	(2,602) dwelling units
>80-120% AMI Housing Surplus (Deficit)	(200) dwelling units

This table is provided by the City’s Land Capacity Analysis, an important part of the City’s comprehensive plan update.

Vision Theme Rankings

There are 7 key themes contained in the Waterfront's vision. When asked to rank them by importance, survey respondents established the following order:

1. Walkable streets
2. Vibrant public plazas
3. Live-Play-Work activity areas
4. 5-story buildings with mixed uses
5. Rich urban canopy, lots of street trees
6. Public art and unique civic features
7. Special district signage and branding

Situation Assessment

The City faces major growth pressures over the next 20 years. After providing data on the situation ahead, residents were asked to measure their level of agreement with the following statements:

1. "As of now, Oak Harbor can support this [projected] level of growth and thrive."
2. "Oak Harbor will need to make major policy changes to support this level of growth."
3. "Oak Harbor will need to make major infrastructure improvements to support this level of growth."
4. "The Waterfront should be a cornerstone for fostering this growth in a sustainable manner."

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 equaling **Strongly Disagree** and 5 equaling **Strongly Agree**, the audience shared their level of agreement as follows:

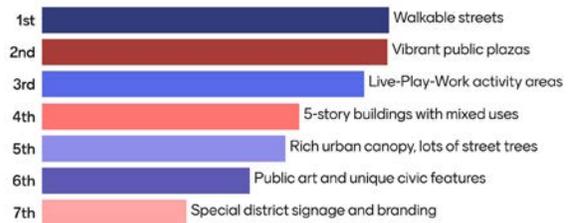
Statement 1: Disagree (2.5 out of 5)

Statement 2: Agree (3.7 out of 5)

Statement 3: Strongly Agree (4.2 out of 5)

Statement 4: Strongly Agree (4.0 out of 5)

Rank these themes in order of importance.



Measure your level of agreement with each of these statements



Housing Preferences

Next, participants were asked to state their preference for housing as a future land use along the Waterfront. **Overall, the majority of people (63%) preferred housing to be a secondary use.**

14.5% preferred it to not be a focus for the Waterfront.

8% preferred it to be a primary use.

14.5% preferred to have as much housing as possible.

Tourism Preferences

Participants were asked to state their preference for tourism as a future land use along the Waterfront. **Overall, the majority of people (63%) preferred tourism to be a major use with visitors staying over-night.**

2% preferred Tourism to not be a focus.

13% preferred visitors have a brief stop in the area.

22% preferred visitors to stay for several hours.

Economic Development Preferences

When asked about Economic Development, **the majority of people (64%) preferred that there be *some* jobs and employment, mostly as retail and services.**

11% preferred that jobs and employment not be a focus for the vision.

23% preferred *more* jobs and employment, so that the Waterfront would be a Central Business District.

2% were happy with any amount of jobs and employment.

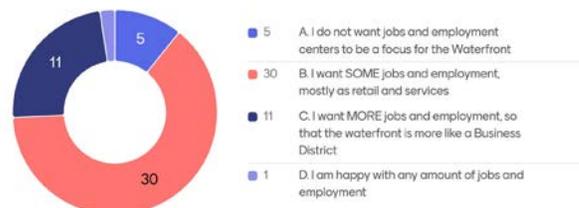
Q3. Housing - Which of these statements fit your vision?



Q4. Tourism - Which of these statements fit your vision?



Q5. Economic Development - Which of these statements fit your vision?



Parks and Civic Spaces Preferences

When considering Parks and Civic Spaces, **50% of survey responses stated “I am happy with the Waterfront’s existing parks and civic spaces.”**

Another 45% stated “I want more parks and civic spaces along the Waterfront.”

The remaining 5% stated they did not want to see parks and civic spaces as a focus for the vision.

Q6. Parks and Civic Space - Which of these statements fit your vision?



Pioneer Site Development Reactions

Participants were shown concept renderings of the future reuse of the subject properties at 1081 and 1091 Pioneer Way. They were then asked to provide their reactions to the thought of a five-story building on the site. **50% of respondents stated “I think it is exciting”.**

25% stated “I don’t like it.”

0% stated “I don’t care either way.”

25% stated “I think it is acceptable.”

Q7. How do you feel about the idea of a five story building at Pioneer and Bayshore?



Bayshore Development Reactions

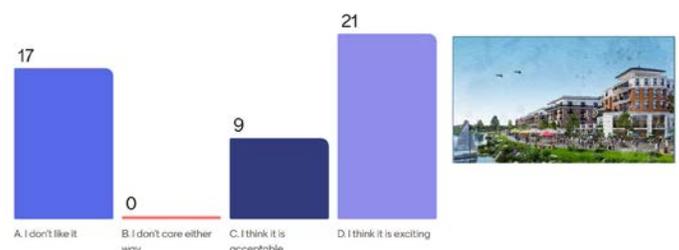
Participants were then shown concept renderings of the additional five-story buildings along the Waterfront at Bayshore Drive. They were then asked to provide their reactions to the idea of such a frontage along the street. **45% of respondents stated “I think it is exciting”.**

36% stated “I don’t like it.”

0% stated “I don’t care either way.”

19% stated “I think it is acceptable.”

Q8. How do you feel about the idea of several five story buildings along Bayshore?



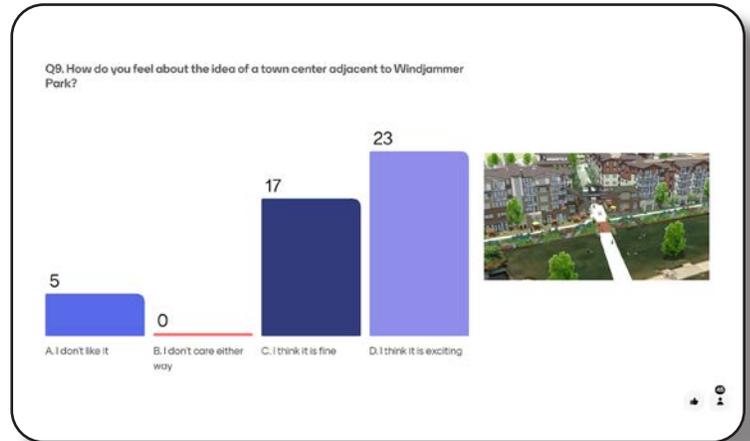
SE Activity Center Reactions

Next, participants were shown an area on the west end of the district where several underutilized properties sat adjacent to Windjammer Park. A concept design for an activity center was then shown to the group and they were asked to react to the idea of such a development occurring on the large lots at the western edge along Pioneer Drive. **51% of respondents stated "I think it is exciting".**

11% stated "I don't like it."

0% stated "I don't care either way."

38% stated "I think it is acceptable."

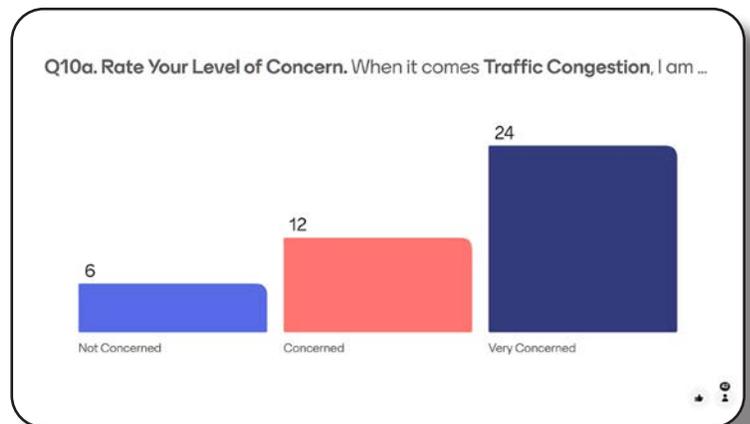


Traffic Congestion Concerns

The workshop then shifted to a focus on participant concerns. When considering the potential for growth to impact traffic congestion, **57% of participants stated they were Very Concerned.**

29% stated they were Concerned.

14% stated they were Not Concerned.

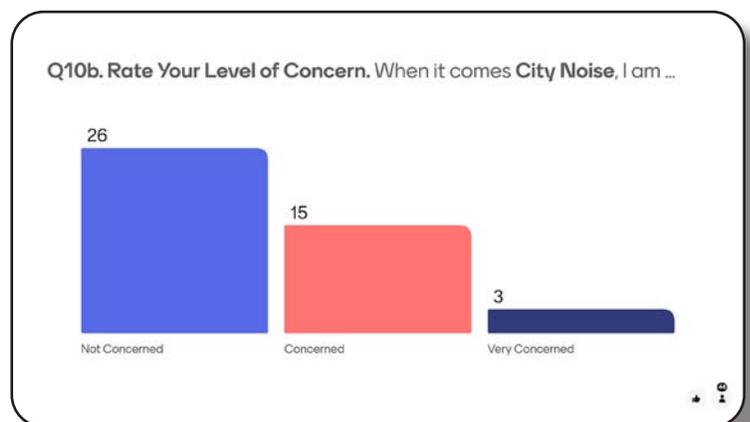


City Noise Concerns

When considering the potential for growth to create more city noise, **59% of participants stated they were Not Concerned.**

7% stated they were Very Concerned.

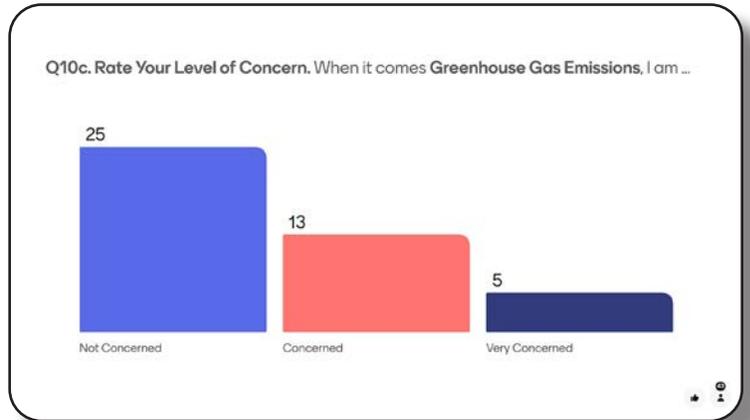
34% stated they were Concerned.



Greenhouse Gas Concerns

When considering the potential for growth to increase greenhouse gas emissions, **58% of participants stated they were Not Concerned.**

12% stated they were Very Concerned.
30% stated they were Concerned.

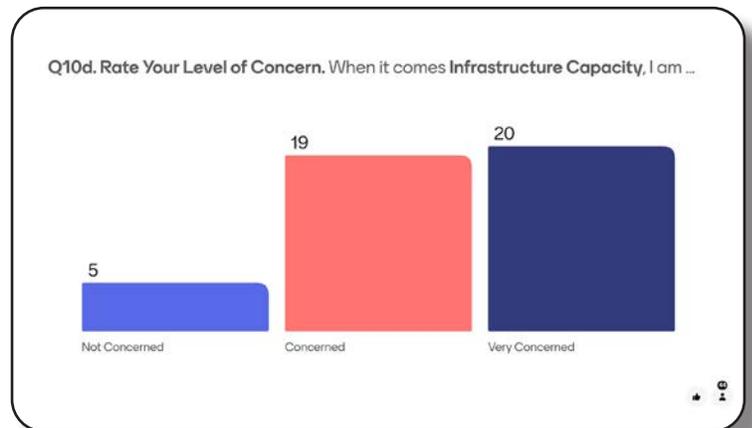


Infrastructure Capacity Concerns

When considering the potential for growth to further strain the City's infrastructure capacity, **45% of participants stated they were Very Concerned*.**

44% stated they were Concerned.
11% stated they were Not Concerned.

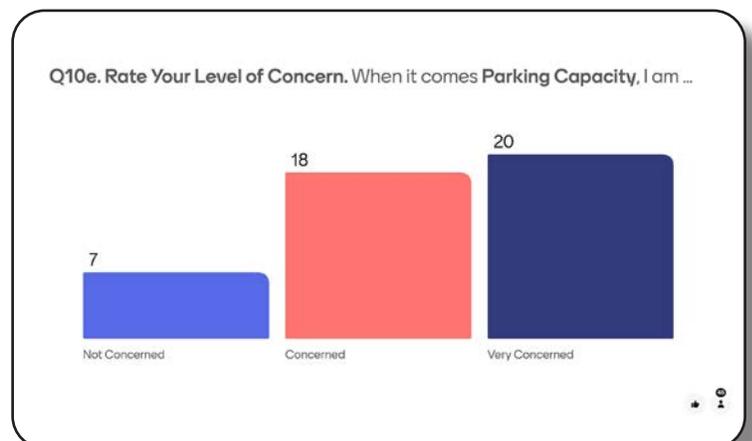
**Please note that the survey graph is illustrative and does not include the responses from paper surveys. The paper survey responses shifted the total response to the final result reported in this text.*



Parking Capacity Concerns

When considering the potential for growth to further strain the City's parking capacity, **44% of participants stated they were Very Concerned.**

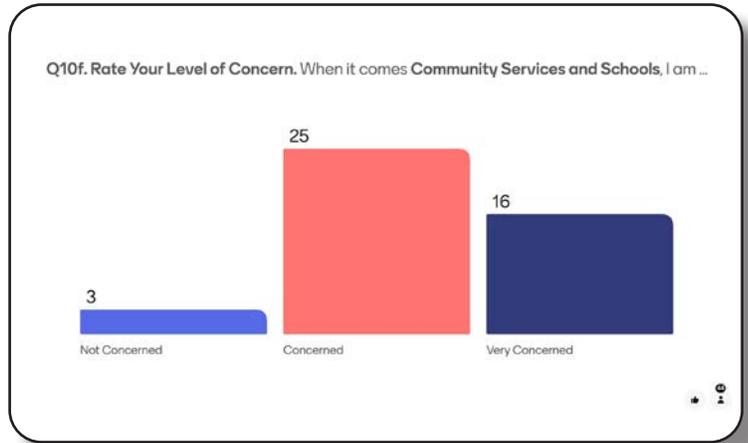
40% stated they were Concerned.
16% stated they were Not Concerned.



Community Services etc, Concerns

When considering the potential for growth to exceed the Community's Services, ranging from schools to emergency response, **57% of participants stated they were Concerned.**

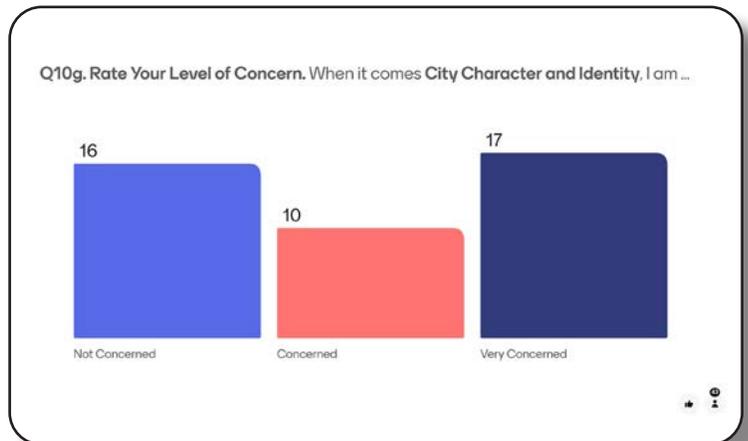
36% stated they were Very Concerned.
7% stated they were Not Concerned.



City Character and Identity Concerns

When considering the potential for growth to result in changes to the City's existing character and identity, **40% of participants stated they were Very Concerned.**

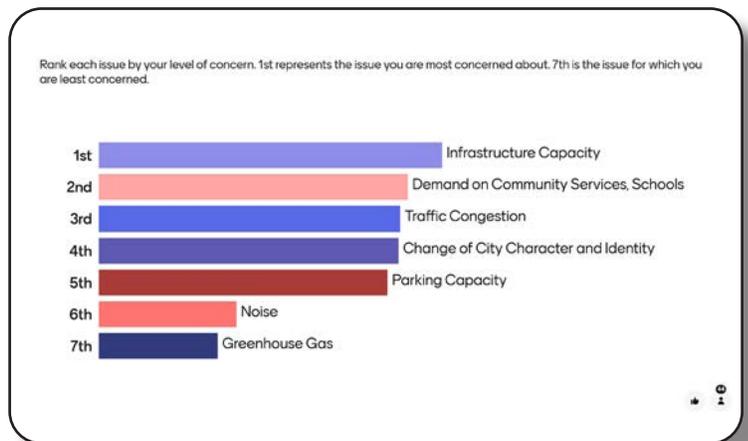
23% stated they were Concerned.
37% stated they were Not Concerned.



Concerns By Ranking

After surveying participants on each individual concern, they were asked to rank their concerns by priority with 1st being the highest priority and 7th being the lowest. The final ranking of concerns is listed below. **Infrastructure Capacity received the highest level of priority for action.**

- 1st - Infrastructure Capacity
- 2nd - Demand on Community Services, Schools
- 3rd - Traffic Congestion
- 4th - Change of City Character and Identity
- 5th - Parking Capacity
- 6th - Noise
- 7th - Greenhouse Gas Emissions



Open Comment - What Is Missing From The Vision?

Before concluding the workshop, participants had a brief moment to share what, if anything, they felt was missing from the current vision. Time was limited but a few comments were shared, particularly through the paper survey. Those comments are provided with minor paraphrasing below:

"Roundabouts & Boardwalk [are missing from the vision]."

"What will happen to the rest of Oak Harbor?"

"[The vision] need(s) [an] enlarged marina."

"How does the current vision impact the majority of the city?"

"This type of growth requires better traffic quality."

"The 5 story building is concerning because of the Whidbey Island fault."

Next Steps

At the end of the workshop, City staff and CCLR reviewed the feedback and decided to refine the vision further with a series of digital models. Like Dahlin's artwork, the models portray an accurate illustration of future development for the area. The models go further, however, to show the surrounding context, give more clarity on the scale and placement of new development, and can also formulate estimates on utility demand, population, vehicle trips, and more. Finally, the models themselves can be presented live in the next workshop so that the community can better engage and interact with the proposal. The models were developed with three-dimensional design software and the results are provided in the next section



The City of Oak Harbor's social media post expressing appreciation for the community's presence at Workshop #1 while notifying them of Workshop #2.

Conceptual Modeling

General approach and intent

Two models were developed for the community: the first was a capacity model that aggregated the total potential development in the Waterfront district, on a square foot basis, and ran it through a statistical model to extrapolate the likely impacts of the changes. The model uses numerical rates and factors that have been established over many years through peer-reviewed research by urban planners, engineers, and researchers. For example, a typical single family housing unit is estimated to produce an average 9.44 trips per day (as determined by the ITE Trip Generation Manual 10th Edition). Similarly, a new dwelling unit in the Waterfront is estimated to have an average of 2.0 occupants and thus is estimated to generate 51.13 gallons of wastewater per person or 102 gallons per dwelling unit.



The capacity model is developed with ESRI ArcUrban software. It represents the total area in a three-dimensional model.



properties were given a “build-out” analysis based on the bulk standards of the current zoning ordinance. These standards were established by City staff prior to analysis. The image below shows the spaces where new development was modeled. All buildings shown in white are existing structures; those properties remained unchanged.

Using basic assumptions for space usage (e.g., first floor retail and services, second floor office and residential, all remaining floors residential or office), the model compared the unique usage requirements for each type of use (e.g., residential generates less traffic than commercial uses) and calculated the results. The table below shows all key measures and indicators from the model.



Catalytic Sites	Totals
Net space area (sqft)	1,630,760.60
Population	1,595
Dwelling units	859
Jobs	1,170
Daily trips (/ d)	16,980.70
Parking spots	2,500
Required parking spots	2,545
Parking balance	(45.00)
Solid waste (lb / d)	6,376.64
Waste water (gal / d)	149,986.26
External water use (gal / d)	73,040.50
Internal water use (gal / d)	170,448.75
Energy use (kwh / d)	143,725.71
CO ₂ emissions (lb / d)	42,534.61

Space use types (sqft)	Totals
Residential Multi-Family	762,461.34
Retail	295,588.80
Hotel	261,845.41
Office	271,161.66
Parking	704,616.55
Other	30,586.03

Zoning types (sqft)	Totals
Commercial Zone 3 (C-3)	1,210,549.14
Central Business District (CBD)	903,427.99
Central Business District 1 (CBD-1)	617,949.50
Open Space (OS)	1,156,475.33
Public Facilities (PF)	281,493.58
Residential 4 (R-4)	312,247.29

Once the total possible square footage is established by the model, the spaces are assigned their allowed land uses so that jobs and dwelling units can be estimated. These results are then analyzed for the associated demand on utilities, parking, and traffic.

Highlights of Conceptual Design Model

Like the capacity model, the conceptual design model focused on the properties that have been designed by Dahlin. Using the form and general architectural vernacular of their designs, the model recreates the concepts in a three-dimensional space that accurately portrays the full Waterfront area on a 1:1 scale (i.e., each foot of actual dimensions is replicated in virtual dimensions in the model) that accounts for the existing topography, streets, and buildings.

This model provides a “flyover” of the entire Waterfront area and highlights the presumed changes that would occur with development over time. This allows participants to see the full vision and all its key themes. For example, pedestrian-friendly streets and a rich urban tree canopy are key features of the vision. The conceptual design model shows how those streets and trees would be placed among the new development.



Similarly, considering the increased traffic projected in the capacity model (X more trips), the conceptual model anticipates certain capital improvements that can improve traffic flow while beautifying the area. Traffic circles are a proven solution to that end.



The design model translates the 2D renderings into 3D space. The 3D model includes the surrounding buildings to show context and scale.



The waterfront remains the prominent amenity and thus all conceptual designs show buildings oriented to the water with robust window treatments, decks, porticoes, and plazas. The buildings themselves emulate the style developed by Dahlin, from the catalyst site onward to the Bayshore Drive buildings.



Though the 3D models lack the detail and texture of a 2D illustration, the models add interactivity and quick access to many perspectives and views to better understand the possibilities.

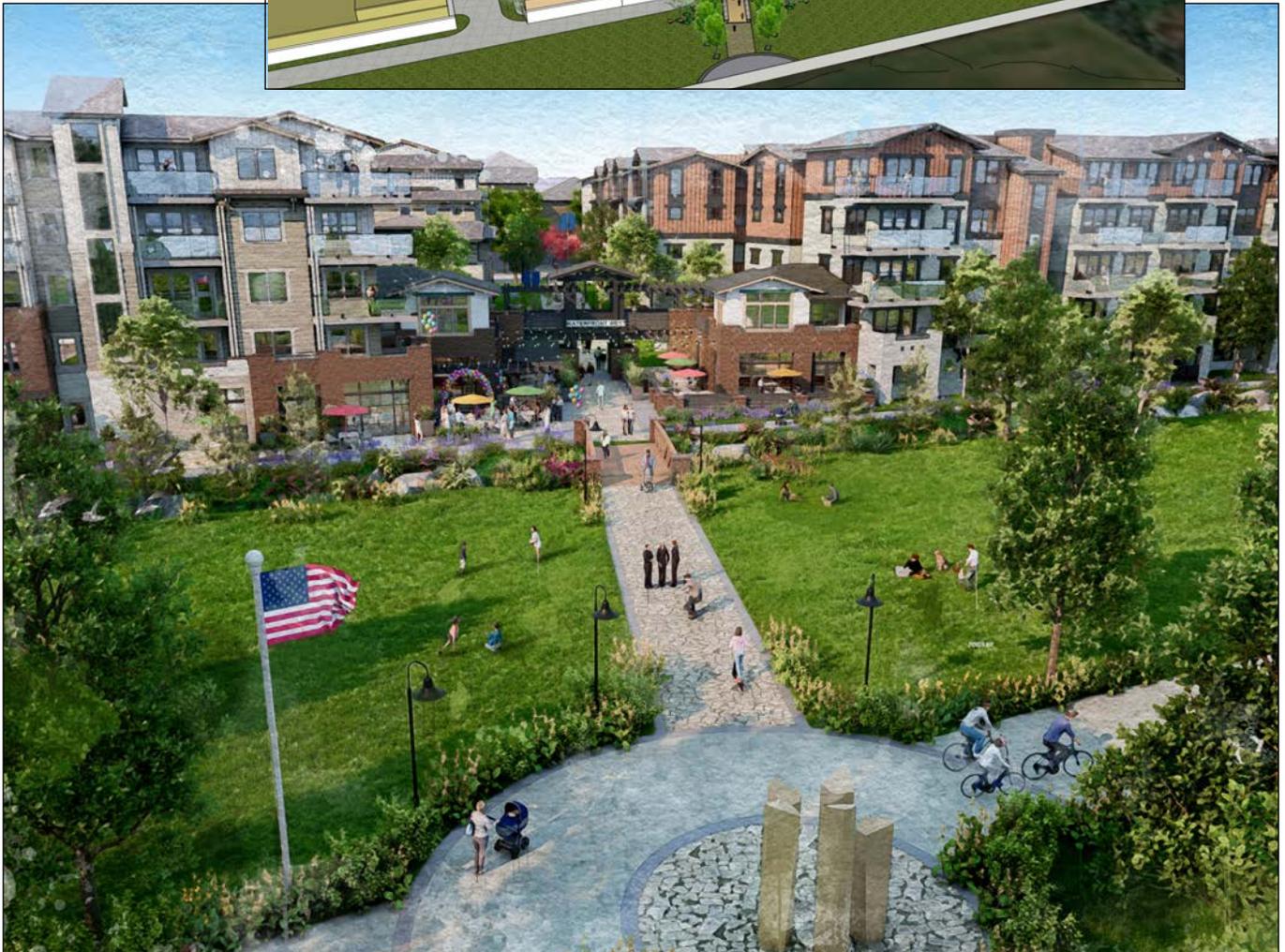
Meanwhile, the town center concept is presented on both sides of Pioneer Drive along the western edge of the Waterfront area. The design features peaked roofs, varying building heights, multiple attached structures, along with multiple entries, walkways, and plazas. This is presented in its basic form with structured parking included aligning with the assumptions and basic layouts established in the capacity model.

These models combine to provide participants with a firm grasp of the envisioned future, how it looks, feels, functions, and creates new demands and opportunities for the community. A notable aspect of the models is that they demonstrate how the vision, as already devised, creates a crucial solution to the housing demands projected over time.



Waterfront West introduces significant capital improvements such as the traffic circle at Highway 20 and Pioneer Way.

With 859 dwelling units proposed within this one scenario, and for only the catalytic projects, the Waterfront has the ability to already support 15.52% of the total demand projected by 2045. And while the prospect of serving 1,600 people within an X acre space might seem daunting to some, the conceptual design model shows how the urban fabric is greatly improved with the amenities that make similar places livable. The additions blend into the current downtown core and provide more people with more access to the waterfront, the parks, the stores, and the services that make the area so original and unique.



Workshop #2

General approach and intent

Knowing the main concerns and preferences from Workshop #1, the approach for Workshop #2 was focused on delivering the latest information from the models to help participants see where and how their general impressions change. For example, while most participants in Workshop #1 preferred housing be a secondary use in the area, there will typically be some different ideas of what a “secondary use” happens to be. Within the capacity model, the total combined nonresidential development space is greater than the residential space—thus making housing secondary—but housing is still, overall, the dominant use if all nonresidential use types are measured individually (see Table 1 for more details). This fact does not seem so concerning when the housing is viewed in the conceptual design model. There, the residential uses are distributed on upper floors of mixed-use buildings and show a livable space and a pleasant street frontage that fits the desired character depicted in the Dahlin artwork.

In this way, the models were a way to provide new, interactive information to elevate the discussion. When concerns were raised about traffic in Workshop #1, Workshop #2 would provide reliable traffic estimates for new daily trips in the area. Similarly, when Workshop #1 highlighted parking as a major concern, the models for Workshop #2 showed how parking could be provided at a rate of approximately 0.85 spaces per person or job created by the new development—a ratio that ensure there is adequate parking for the majority of days and times of the year. With this information, participants were asked to judge the Vision on a set of survey questions.



The City of Oak Harbor team includes staff, elected officials, and stakeholders from many organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce.

Feedback on the Vision, Part Two

Participants were shown the capacity model first. When reviewing it, respondents were asked to state their level of agreement with the following statements:

I like the balanced mix of commercial, office, hotel, and residential uses

I consider the scale of development to be just right

I see how the Waterfront can be a cornerstone for sustainable development.

I am confident the City can manage traffic impacts.

I am confident that parking needs can be met.

I am confident that infrastructure can be upgraded appropriately.

In this workshop, with much more information at their disposal, participants naturally give more nuanced feedback and responses. In surveys of this nature, the goal is simple: to see if there is a simple majority agreement regardless of direction. Thus, in questions like these (known as Likert Scale questions), the idea is to characterize the feedback based on how much is ventures beyond the midpoint. The midpoint is measured as a 3 out of 5 with 1 being Strongly Disagree and 5 being Strongly Agree.

Responses that stay within the midpoint range of 2.6 – 3.4 tend to be seen as moderate positions where there is a lack of strong positive or negative opinions on a given matter. In Workshop #1, responses to Likert Scale questions (Question #2) generated clear signal of group agreement. For example, people agreed in Workshop #1 that “Oak Harbor will need to make major infrastructure improvements to support this level of growth.” Their responses scored a 4.2 out of 5 on the Likert Scale, indicated clear agreement with that statement.



Workshop #2 featured a full review of the conceptual models that simulate the future development for clear understanding and discussion.

Capacity Model Impressions

The graphic below shows that responses in Workshop #2 were slightly more moderate. Two of the six statements received clear agreement and 4 of the six statements received a moderate response that wavers between agreement and disagreement, and thus shows no clear, firm direction. These responses are considered neutral and show a mixed range of opinions that are informed and inspired by the data the workshop provided. Seeing new numbers on all the many indicators naturally gives people pause when forming their impressions of things. This is a good, useful thing as it shows where certain ideas and statements are essentially left to a judgment call on how to proceed. These specific points of response will be interpreted clearly and transparently in the section ahead.

“I like the balanced mix of commercial, office, hotel, and residential uses.” 3.5 out of 5

“I consider the scale of development to be just right.” 3.2 out of 5

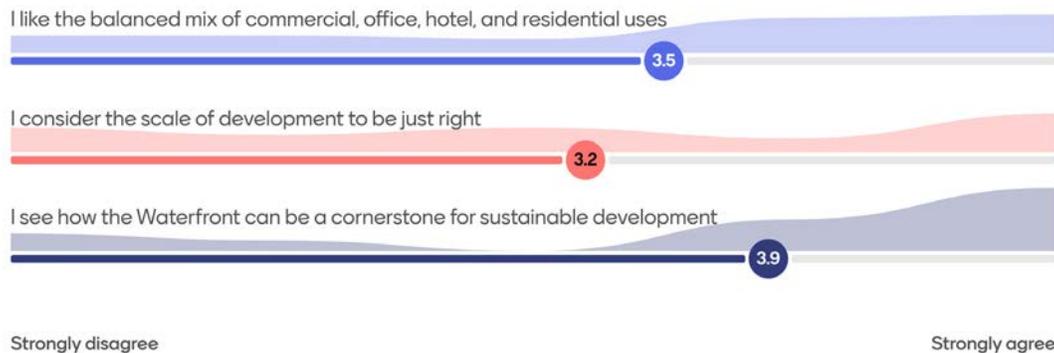
“I see how the Waterfront can be a cornerstone for sustainable development.” 3.9 out of 5

“I am confident the City can manage traffic impacts.” 2.8 out of 5

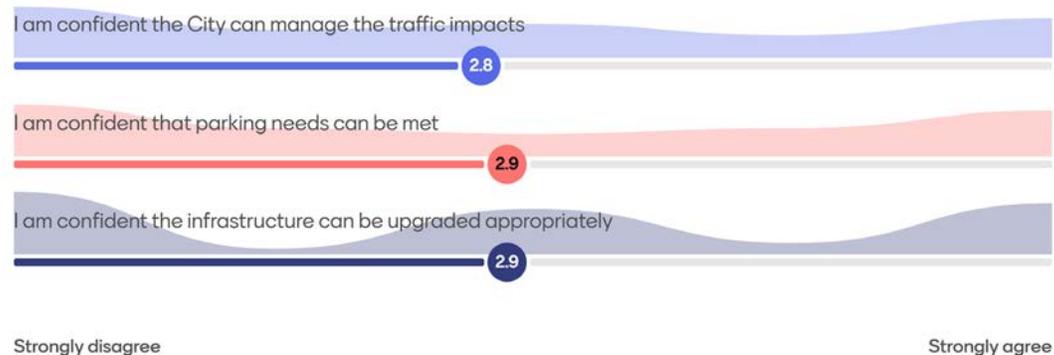
“I am confident that parking needs can be met.” 2.9 out of 5

“I am confident that infrastructure can be upgraded appropriately.” 2.9 out of 5

When reviewing the capacity model ...



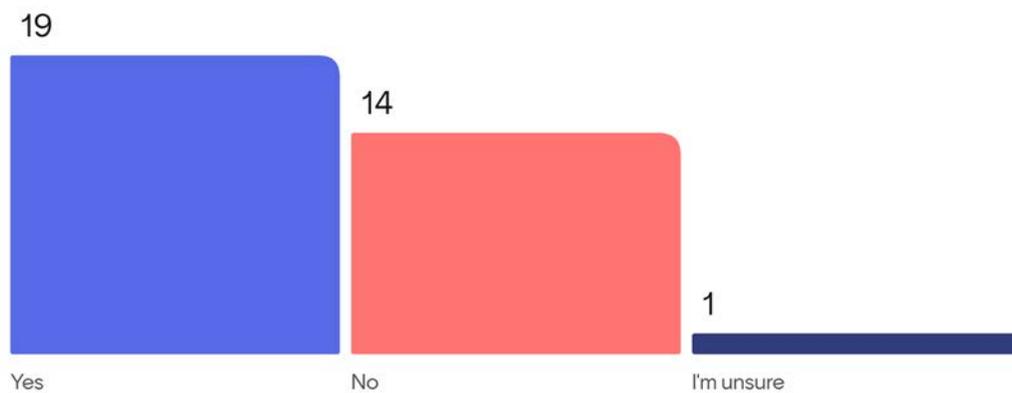
When reviewing the capacity model ...



Trade-Offs and Benefit-Cost

Next, people were asked to evaluate the value and benefit of the Waterfront being developed as proposed. This was considered in the context of trade-offs. With over 13,000 people projected to arrive in Oak Harbor by 2045, the question was essentially about how worthwhile it would be to see that growth absorbed in the Waterfront versus other parts of the City. The results are below and show that most respondents felt that easing the growth pressures through development of the Waterfront was a worthwhile strategy.

If the Waterfront is developed this way, it could reduce growth pressures in other parts of town and increase reinvestment. Would that be worthwhile?



Throughout the project, the community demonstrated a high level of understanding about the situation Oak Harbor faces. The next 20 years will see a significant wave of growth as new residents come to the area from the Greater Seattle Region. This is the main focus of the City's comprehensive plan update, an effort that is currently underway. The Waterfront's vision must be planned in accordance to the comprehensive plan. To do so, the Waterfront's vision is seen as a critical piece of the broader strategy to accommodate growth in a manner that would take advantage of existing infrastructure, protect natural areas, and diminish impacts on the suburban edges of the City. The strategy has many benefits, along with a few costs, and this was further considered at Workshop #2.

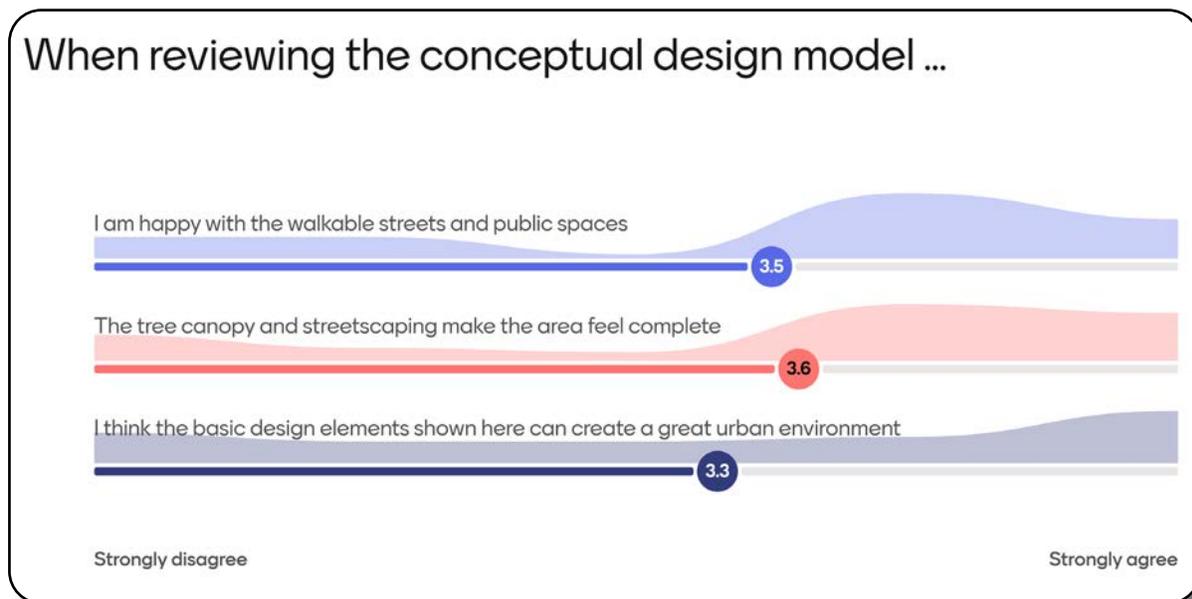
Design Model Impressions

Next, people were asked to evaluate the value and benefit of the Waterfront being developed as proposed. This was considered in the context of trade-offs. With over 13,000 people projected to arrive in Oak Harbor by 2045, the question was essentially about how worthwhile it would be to see that growth absorbed in the Waterfront versus other parts of the City. The results are below and show that most respondents felt that easing the growth pressures through development of the Waterfront was a worthwhile strategy.

“I am happy with the walkable streets and public spaces.” 3.5 out of 5

“The tree canopy and streetscaping make the area feel complete.” 3.6 out of 5

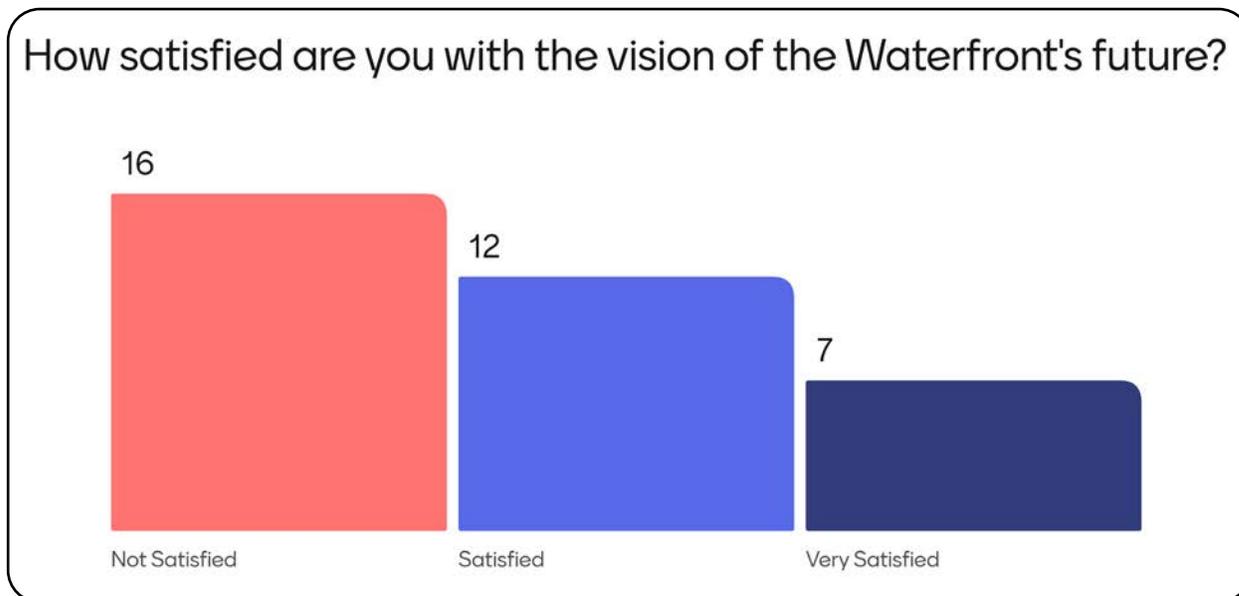
“I think the base design elements shown here can create a great urban environment.” 3.3 out of 5.



The sole response that would be considered more neutral (regarding base design elements) can be interpreted in several ways. First, it shows that there is general agreement at a narrow margin (3.3 out of 5); second, the nature of the question could be too abstract to give everyone a clear sense of how to evaluate it. “Base design elements” can mean several different things. This may have resulted in a lower score since people could make meaning of it in different ways.

Overall Satisfaction

Finally, participants were asked to consider the broad implications of the capacity model, in conjunction with the general look, feel, and form of the conceptual design model, to measure their satisfaction with the vision. Overall, most participants were Satisfied or Very Satisfied with what they saw.



Next Steps

During the discussion period, several people asked about market feasibility. The conceptual design model showed several large, tall, expensive buildings that some felt were too ambitious for Oak Harbor's market conditions. To answer this question, Workshop #3 was pre-scheduled and advertised at the meeting. The workshop would focus primarily on that concern—market conditions, market feasibility, and how to make the vision a reality. Meanwhile, the results of Workshop #2 showed that people had moderate concern about the City's ability to manage the traffic impacts, parking needs, and infrastructure upgrades. This became a focal point for further analysis. What would be necessary for participants to feel like they agree with the idea that the City can manage these issues? To answer that question, this planning document proposes a set of key actions to occur later, during implementation, to provide more analysis and data to the issues. This will be highlighted in the Action section of the document. Finally, with all other questions considered, it was clear that the simple majority of participants felt satisfied with the vision, felt relatively comfortable (and in many cases, clearly supportive) with the proposals as shown in the models, and believed the strategy of focusing growth in this area was worth pursuing. These results indicate that the Vision, as shown in the Workshop, was ready to be formalized for this planning document and City Council's eventual review. All that remained was the analysis, strategy, and final recommendations for action—starting with the need to consider and address market feasibility.

Workshop #3

General approach and intent

From the beginning, the City acknowledged the need to find solutions that could confront the economic realities that they currently face. Originally, the idea was to examine these circumstances within the context of the catalytic site. But with the site's environmental conditions and contaminant costs being relatively low, as established by Farallon's investigation, the need for site-specific analysis became less important compared to the broader insights and actionable strategies that could be developed from a district-wide approach. In other words, the catalytic sites are largely similar in their economic strengths and weaknesses as all other parcels within the district. To find solutions for the district, then, would allow the City to have equally effective solutions for the catalytic sites and all other sites in the area.

Cascadia Partners delivered the district-wide analysis in Workshop #3. The findings were presented in a virtual workshop held on May 15th, 2025. Since this workshop focused solely on the technical analysis, and because the event was held virtually with attendees registering beforehand, audience engagement was kept to the topic at-hand and questions were written and submitted during the registration process. Additional feedback was encouraged through a separate form that was delivered to the City for review and response after the event's conclusion.

Cascadia findings

In a general sense, the shift from 2-story buildings to 5-story buildings requires a significant leap in the economic conditions. The vision calls for mixed use development, which is not common in the area today. The vision also calls for buildings that are constructed of quality materials and unique designs. Such scale is not common in the area, either. Nonetheless, the opportunities and the trends uncovered by Cascadia's analysis show that the City is poised to see such development happening in the near future.

For example, the greater region has seen an increase in these development types and, within the Whidbey



Island region, Oak Harbor is best positioned to ride that proverbial wave. Multi-story multifamily development is very active in the City and vacancy rates are low, showing that the demand is there for more. The building types compelled by the vision are quite expensive to build. Likewise, the Waterfront district is supported by a Federal Opportunity Zone, making projects eligible for tax incentives ranging from temporary tax deferrals to “step-up” adjustments that can encourage the reinvestment of capital gains into longer-term investments.

There are gaps, however, in the current conditions that prevent development of this magnitude from being immediately feasible. For one, construction costs are higher than average due to the smaller labor pool and material availability (as well as the volatility derived from ongoing tariff discussions). Likewise, rental rates in the area are anywhere from 45-70% lower than necessary to offset the construction and operational costs (\$3-4/SF needed versus \$1.36-2.85/SF actual). Thus, for

mixed-use development at the 4-5 story scale to be successful, major incentives and partnerships will be needed. Also, while mixed-use is already present in the area, the future growth of this development type will be driven by residential demand rather than non-residential demand. This is driven by both national trends and local conditions that have evolved since the COVID-19 pandemic. As has been true for many communities since that time, commercial development in Oak Harbor is likely to be successful in smaller footprints (1,000 sq ft or less). Office development, meanwhile, will be unlikely due to a significant drop in demand since the advent of remote work practices.

To improve feasibility, Cascadia presented a strategy that would leverage four major tools available to the City: policy, placemaking, incentives, and development offerings. All four tools will be utilized in a manner that would increase the area's attractiveness to visitors and potential residents. This, in turn, increases demand for development and thus increases development feasibility. The key strategies are detailed below.

Policy

On the policy end, clear and objectionable policies that increase development potential are a crucial first step towards improved feasibility. The vision calls for larger, taller, mixed-use buildings. This is supported in much of the downtown area but certain zones, such as the C-1 and C-3 zones, are not very conducive to this development type. These zones are applied to the Waterfront West area where the Town Center concept has been explored. Modifying these zones in these areas would make the concept buildable; otherwise, the concept would require a major rezoning change.

Likewise, while workshop participants expressed concern over the need for adequate vehicle parking, minimum standards often reduce development potential by consuming valuable land for the sake of automobile storage instead of other productive uses. For example, five parking spaces (96 square feet per space) is the equivalent of a single studio apartment that could generate rent and meet housing demands in the area. And if the studio apartment is built in a walkable, highly connected area that has all major services within a 5-7 minute walk, the need for such parking can be significantly reduced. Otherwise, structured parking is needed in order to maintain the productive development

space. But structured parking typically costs \$30,000 per space and thus the five spaces that could be built below a studio apartment would cost \$150,000 to develop.

Thus, the effort to expand housing, maximize development potential, and maintain a certain level of automobile parking becomes a very expensive proposition. As development increases in scale, parking requirements should be lessened or even removed outright in order to maximize development potential and leasable space without saddling such development with the expensive task of also keeping all the parking that was once required for lower-scale, auto-oriented urbanism.

Finally, the surrounding area is composed mostly of single-family homes. Several of these neighborhoods are poised for evolution to a denser development pattern that is in-between single-family detached housing and large apartment complexes. Known colloquially as "the missing middle," this development type includes duplexes, triplexes, rowhouses, townhomes, courtyard condominium buildings, and even more building types that range from 3-8 units each. These building types are commonly found adjacent to historical downtowns and can be encouraged to return to Oak Harbor in greater number with policies that allow such development at the edges of the district. Such development tends to welcome young families, downsizing seniors, and young professionals—all of whom are found within the dominant demographic segment identified in the Community Profile. The presence of these cohorts, and many others, within walking distance of the Waterfront's downtown will create more economic activity and greater demand for the higher-intensity development for which the Vision calls. Also, the demand for this type of development is already quite high according to the data and the local developer sentiment. Thus, encouraging more of this near-term development that creates immediate action will help build the momentum for larger development in places like 1081 and 1091 Pioneer Drive.

Placemaking

With the encouragement to reduce parking requirements, it is crucial to also expand walkability and accessibility in the area. The current Vision calls for streets that are welcoming and safe to bikes and pedestrians. Also, the vision calls for a more vibrant public realm with active street-level uses, plazas, parks, artwork,

events, and richer landscaping. These improvements increase the attractiveness of the area which further boosts the demand for development. Better still, these improvements give immediate benefits and new amenities to existing residents, allowing them to enjoy more value for their tax dollars.

The specific placemaking features that can provide these benefits include wider sidewalks, flexible gathering spaces (plazas and street dining or shopping spaces), as well as more landscaping, lighting, and public furniture and plazas. To maximize the benefit of these investments, it is best to start with a small subset of the Waterfront that can serve as the heart of the greater district. This core area can become a playground for events, festivals, pop-up markets, and all manner of civic programming. Viable candidates for the initial core area include the downtown core at Pioneer Way, the eastern edge along Bayshore, or the western edge north of Windjammer park.

As these placemaking strategies unfold, the greater district area will need sustained investment in new and improved connections. Streets will need new sidewalks, bike lanes, and streetscaping to foster connections into the core. Where these investments occur, the City will naturally create further development potential. Streetscaping of the sort described here has been known to increase property values by 16% or more. Thus, with wider sidewalks, safer streets, and convenient connection, there comes a greater interest in new residential development that can “capture” the value of these investments. Such development is of a larger scale, such as the “missing middle” building types mentioned earlier. When done in the area that immediately connects to the new downtown area, one can see an effective interplay between these strategies. For example, imagine a refurbished street along the northern edge of the Waterfront, such as Barrington Drive, which is rebuilt for wider sidewalks, street trees, and bike lanes with new rowhouses and courtyard condos added along its frontage to take advantage of the improved connectivity, safety, and enhanced property values. The rowhouses and condominiums bring more people to the core area where the placemaking and events foster a more vibrant urban environment and the momentum continues.

As the momentum builds, this same strategy of capital improvements + placemaking + greater density development can be applied to major arterial streets

such as SE Pioneer Way along the western edge of the Waterfront. By providing the public improvements first, with the supporting residential encouraged via policy in the surrounding areas, the Town Center concept on this major street will become much more viable. The same possibility exists with the Bayshore Drive segments that serve the catalytic development at 1081 and 1091 Pioneer Way.

Incentives

The aforementioned strategies can help improve development feasibility in a way that creates benefits for all residents of the areas. However, to achieve the scale and scope of the development proposed in the catalyst sites, incentives may be necessary. Such incentives can include tax exemptions, tax increment financing, fee waivers, and other such offerings that build mutually beneficial exchanges between private developers and the City. For developers, these incentives can “fill the gap” between a feasible and infeasible development. As stated before, 5-story mixed use development is expensive and the current rent rates in Oak Harbor do not provide a prospective builder with much confidence that they can recoup their investment. Incentives can change that when designed and delivered for the right project. The “right” project is the one that provides the City with sufficient benefit to make the investment worthwhile. The investment, for the City, is typically in the form of deferred or exempted tax revenues. One example is the multi-family tax exemption program that waives taxes and fees for multifamily development over a certain period of time.

This exemption can change the equation for what a private developer estimates as their long-term revenue of a given project—such as a multi-story mixed use development with 4 stories of residential uses. Such incentives require careful consideration before making the major decision about investing City funds or forgoing future revenues. To streamline the process and make those decisions more stable and effective, Cascadia introduced the fourth tool for implementation.

Development Offerings

The vision for the catalytic sites creates an exciting opportunity to bring all of these strategies together in a way that breaks ground (literally and figuratively) on the Vision's key promises for a dynamic urban transformation. To make 5-story mixed use on the catalytic sites as feasible and actionable as possible, a formal development offering can be a major step forward. This tool is a means by which the City can establish its development goals and objectives for the sites that it owns (e.g., 1081 and 1091 Pioneer Drive). Using the designs from Dahlin and the placemaking from the conceptual design model as a foundation, the City can further define the type of development it seeks. From this ideal, the City can then formalize an evaluation criteria and conduct the remaining due diligence on the site to make it "shovel ready." This includes the aforementioned policy modifications to make the ideal design buildable "by-right" through the zoning. This also includes the completion of any remaining remedial actions prescribed by Farallon for the cleanup. Then, the City can define the terms and options for the public-private partnership it seeks and advertise the opportunity through a procurement and outreach process that attracts private developers to compete for the opportunity.

The art and science of a development offering is that it must provide the incentives and allowances that would make such a project attractive as a reliable, profitable venture for the private developer candidate while also ensuring that the City's goals and objectives are achieved in a manner that makes the exchange worthwhile. This may seem like a challenging task but it is made much easier, and much more valid, through the visioning, community engagement, analysis, and findings of this Vision to Action plan.

Cascadia's strategies comprise a set of best practices that have been proven to be effective in many places across the country. This includes the use of similar incentive programs in Bellingham, WA, similar densification and placemaking as seen in Bothell, WA, and similar partnership strategies like what has been seen in Troutdale, OR. The critical next steps to apply these strategies to the Waterfront will be detailed in the "Action" section that concludes the document.

By Workshop #3, the structures on the catalyst sites had been cleared for future development. The City was poised for implementation and the Workshop's guidance and feedback came at the perfect time for incorporation into the plan.



Community reactions

Participants asked several questions at the end of the presentation. Each question was answered during the last 25 minutes of the event. The questions represent a broad range of concerns and interests and answers are provided in the video available online, starting at the 55:00 minute mark, at the following web address: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ky6iONzamQM>.

A brief summary is provided below.

Rather than 5 stories on the waterfront, can it only be 3 stories?

Yes, but it is a matter of trade-offs. Limiting the height to 3 stories creates trade-offs on feasibility. 3-story buildings are much less cost-effective and make new development, especially mixed-use development, less likely to occur.

How can customer/foot traffic be increased to downtown Pioneer Way area businesses?

By focusing on mixed-use development, bringing more residents to the area will naturally increase foot traffic. Additional strategies include allowing a wider range of housing types (missing middle) within the adjacent single-family neighborhoods. It is important to remember that these new residents are the best customers! To make them comfortable, the pedestrian environment and the pedestrian connections should be improved as much as possible. Finally, with those arriving from outside the Waterfront, the City should manage its parking as a crucial resource that helps circulate vehicle trips and automobile travelers.

Can a master plan for aesthetic (look-and-feel) be developed and enforced?

Yes, and it can happen in two ways: first, in the public realm, the City can adopt street standards, lighting, signage, and other elements along the street; second, by City can adopt architectural design standards for all private development. It is important that these standards be objective, clear, and as minimal as possible to avoid any unnecessary burdens while achieving the right "look and feel."

What resources can be offered to existing businesses to help them survive and compete during and after the redevelopment (such as grants for aesthetic upgrades so they are not abandoned after the new spaces are offered)?

This could include business support efforts during the construction of new private development or new street improvements. The City can support public awareness campaigns, provide wayfinding signage, and establish clear, consistent, dependable timelines for the construction phase. Then, after the construction phase, the City can create a storefront improvement program funded by a Main Street program, a State grant program, a Business Improvement District, and a combination of all these sources.

Has there been any consideration of adding a Boardwalk to the Redevelopment Plan?

One councilperson has advocated a Boardwalk and the City staff are supportive of the idea. It feels like a great idea but will need further diligence on the potential environmental impacts.

Will roundabouts on HWY 20 be put in prior to any redevelopment of downtown and the waterfront?

The roundabout proposed at Highway 20 and Pioneer Way is the start of a broader effort to improve the area's walkability. In conjunction with a narrowing of Pioneer Way from 4-lanes to 2-lanes, the roundabout will be a State DOT project and it is slated to be an active project within 2-3 years.

I want the density envisioned, I actually want more than what has been presented, but I worry if it is done all at once then it will be artificial and not in tune with the rest of the City. If it is broken up into sufficiently small steps with appropriate reassessment and planning in-between, then I think it will lead to a healthy organic whole. So, my clear concern/question I want to really see here is how many steps over how many years would this unfold?

As the saying goes in redevelopment efforts such as this, "It takes 20 years to be an overnight success." The plan is built around a 20-year projection of future growth and it will take that much time to see this density unfold in this fashion. There is not enough critical mass or pent-up, unmet demand to see anything major happen quickly. The concern is certainly understandable and typical trends and case studies indicate that this will be a healthy organic whole as growth builds over time.

How will the increased density affect traffic?

Traffic will increase. Traffic will also diversify in terms of its modalities. There will be an increase in transit, cycling, walking, and potentially other technologies like e-scooters. Much of this traffic, as well as vehicle traffic, will be further studied on a regular basis and traffic mitigation measures will be an ongoing activity as growth brings more opportunities (foot traffic, visitors) and more needs to improve the circulation network.

Where will all of the tenants park? Concrete parking structures are probably not economically feasible.

At a certain point in time, rents can justify concrete parking. In the interim, it is not uncommon for property managers to charge for parking in multifamily units. Between this and the management of on-street parking with fee-based services, there is a likelihood that the downtown core, over time, will see tenants reduce their number of vehicles (very common in urbanizing areas around the Greater Seattle Region) or pay for the luxury. This will be dependent on the decisions and designs provided by real estate developers.

COH should look at upzoning density in hubs, based on localized utility and transportation capacity.

The City is exploring this concept in many places through the comprehensive plan. The Waterfront is an example of a certain kind of node and it is going to be further pursued in many parts of the City.

Is the intent to require a minimum density that essentially mandates 4 to 5 story buildings?

No minimum density mandates are being considered at this time.

Please show how pedestrian access and public transportation will continue to be integral parts of this project's lifecycle.

Public transportation and pedestrian access will be critical to the success of both the East and West ends of the Waterfront areas around Pioneer and Bayshore and Pioneer and Highway 20.

Please show how this project is fundamentally related to the City of Oak Harbor's ability to roll out more affordable housing.

As shown in Cascadia's presentation, there is a terrific opportunity for the City to partner with private developers at the catalytic sites that the City owns. For example, at 1081 and 1091 Pioneer Way, the recommended course of action will involve the use of a public-private partnership to provide 5-stories of mixed use development per the renderings and conceptual design model illustrations shared in Workshops 1 and 2. To make the partnership feasible and mutually beneficial, the City would provide various incentives to the private partner while ensuring that affordable housing is developed for certain portions (or perhaps all) of the levels of residential development above the first floor uses.

Can the final designs of this overall project be developed without losing the look and feel of Oak Harbor?

A master plan for the area that includes design standards for the public and private realm (streets and buildings respectively) will be the key method for establishing the look and feel in a tangible manner. But policies of this sort will require a “light touch” so that they are not too burdensome or controlling but still consistent to the general aesthetic the community values.

With the increase in accommodations for tourists, Highway 20 should be expanded to 4 lanes so that people can pass and get to their destination.

The best solutions are manifold: improve the walkability and access via methods other than vehicles, while also expanding the housing development potential in the surrounding neighborhoods through “missing middle” housing types, and developing proactive parking management strategies that can ensure parking is valued and kept available—especially during peak hours. But expanding Highway 20 for vehicular travel would be inconsistent with the vision that has been established and would likely result in a similar environment to what is already seen and experienced in the 4- and 5-lane corridors that are located elsewhere in the City.

Is there a plan or idea on how we would generate more foot traffic then to help sustain additional businesses? It seems like right now Pioneer already struggles to maintain the businesses that are there.

The answer above applies here, too. What is good for tourists will be good for all types of foot traffic and thus good for all businesses.

What will be done to ensure downtown businesses survive shutdowns due to development and prevent their displacement once development is complete?

Incentivizing people to live in the downtown area will be a crucial method for supporting downtown businesses. As stated earlier, nearby residents make for the best customers to these businesses with regular, daily traffic to the goods and services they offer. This, coupled with the recommended strategies for facade improvement programs, events, and broader placemaking can help draw more people to the area—even during construction phases—and also give businesses a chance to make their own renovations at that time with assistance from state and local programs.

The Vision Refined

Oak Harbor's Waterfront has the potential to be the best of its kind in the Puget Sound. With beautiful shoreline and views of the Cascades, Olympics, Mt. Rainier to the southeast, and Mt. Baker to the northeast, the community recognizes its unique, natural splendor. When combined with the City's high quality schools, commercial markets, and excellent public amenities, all residents can agree that the City is a hidden gem—a very special place. It stands to reason that the ever-growing Greater Seattle Area would take notice. The City's 2045 population project and recent development activity indicate that the Oak Harbor is, and will continue to be, a place that many people will want to call home. Whether it is residents who wish to stay or newcomers who will soon arrive, the Waterfront will remain an essential part of what makes the City valuable to all.

No one wants to see these qualities diminish. Participants in each workshop readily acknowledge that unchecked growth and poor planning can lead to the wrong trajectory. The Waterfront's essential benefits and traits—its natural beauty, safe streets, bustling commerce, public parks, art, landscaping, and historic preservation are available to everyone and should remain so. As private development comes to the area and new investments bring forth more commerce, tourism, housing, and all the things that come with it (e.g., noise, traffic, changes to the landscape), the Vision for the area is built in a manner to prove that “more” really can equal “more.”

More housing leads to more demand for businesses and services. This leads to a bigger, more resilient tax base. That, in turn, leads to more and better services and infrastructure and a virtuous cycle begins so that the next 13,000 residents of Oak Harbor provide the growth and activity that helps all residents of all generations thrive. Along the Waterfront, the Vision for all aspects of new development coalesces into a form of taller buildings, mixed use, active street frontages, the key themes introduced at the start of this project:

- **Live-Play-Work activity areas**
- **5-story buildings with mixed uses**
- **Walkable streets**
- **Rich urban canopy, lots of street trees**
- **Vibrant public plazas**
- **Special district signage and branding**
- **Public art and unique civic features**

In Workshop #1, participants made the keen observation that all of these features must be provided in concert. In order for the activity areas and 5-story buildings to be a positive change, the walkable streets, urban canopy, plazas, signage, branding, art, and civic features must surround and support it. This is an outstanding observation and a proven best practice. And as the idea was further supported and validated in the conversation, the results of Workshop #1 showed that the majority of participants were in favor of the Vision as it was illustrated by the renderings from Dahlin Group and the original plans developed over the past decade.

Questions remained, of course, on the impacts these ideas can have on City services, schools, traffic, and more. And while the imagery was beautiful, there were questions about how the 2D images would manifest in a three-dimensional world. In Workshop #2, participants were given high-quality, high-resolution views into the planned future. An ArcUrban capacity model provided them a reliable view into the expected volume of the new development along the Catalytic Sites at 1081 and 1091 Pioneer, the frontages of Bayshore Drive, and the new Town Center at what we refer to colloquially as “Waterfront West.” The magnitude of change was not understated or obscured. Commercial square footage will double. The area's resident population will triple. Vehicle trips will increase significantly. The demands on municipal infrastructure will be significant and the critical mass of new users will be essential to providing “value per acre” at a level that offsets the capital costs.

Refinements to the Vision from Workshops #2 and #3

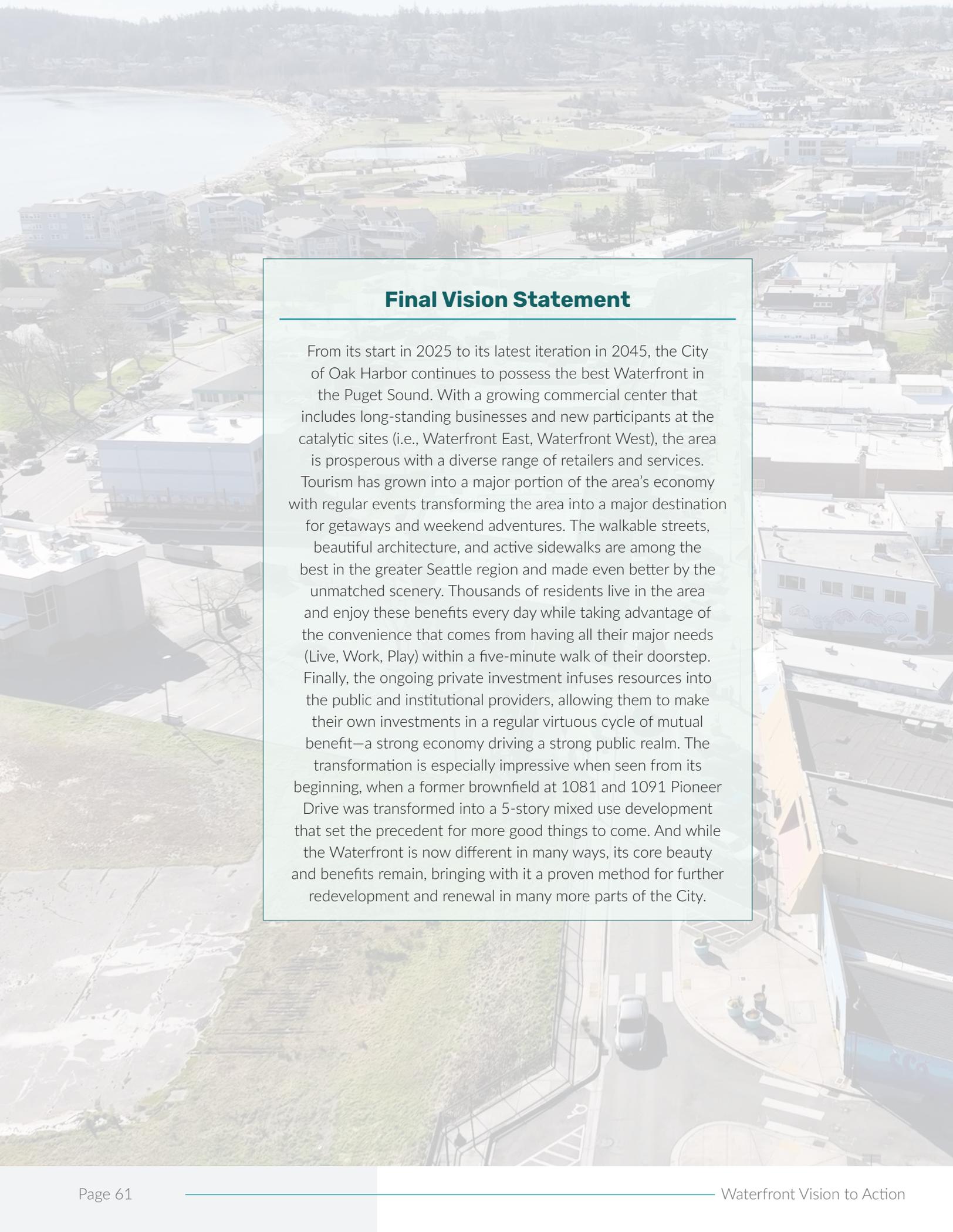
In this way, the Vision is not only bold but also strategic. The expected growth arriving in the area over the next twenty years is a step-change, a major shift in the City's socio-economic fabric that will bring it to the level of activity that is on par with current-day Issaquah and Puyallup. But unlike these and other similar-sized cities, Oak Harbor's Vision for walkable, sustainable, vertical mixed-use along the Waterfront creates a powerful, distinct combination that will set it apart. The urbanism along the Waterfront can relieve growth pressures on the outer edges of the City, preserving the island's sensitive areas, while also maintaining a more efficient footprint for all public services. When combined with the key themes of the vision, especially the walkable streets and tree canopy, the Vision provides new options for all facets of a resident's daily activity that reduce automobile dependency, increase housing opportunities, and promote new investment.

This is certainly the desire of all participants who viewed the Conceptual Design Model. The model showed how the Waterfront's natural areas can be preserved and enhanced. Windjammer Park could be a crucial asset that provides nearby residents of the Waterfront West Center with a spectacular "front yard" that they can enjoy within a 5-minute walk of their storefront, apartment, or restaurant patio. The Catalytic Sites at Pioneer Drive can provide a prominent gateway to the district and foster vibrant street life along the shoreline. And Bayshore Drive's new development can extend this walkable, sustainable urbanism and give more people more opportunities to live in the downtown core.

There are understandable concerns. Participants in Workshop #2 were unsure of the City's ability to meet and manage the parking demand that this new Vision will create. Traffic was also a concern. More generally, participants were unsure that the infrastructure could be upgraded appropriately. These concerns are "mild" or "slight" within the context of the Likert Scale survey questions. Participants did not feel strong, severe concerns. Their trepidation is perfectly natural and points to the need for effective implementation of the Vision rather than wholesale change. The Vision, in other words, remained directionally correct and endorsed by the majority of participants. Thus, no refinements are made

to the models, renderings, or the general plan. Instead, the findings showed that careful attention would need to be paid to the "Action" section of this document to find the right sequence of action that could meet these needs for parking, traffic management, and infrastructure improvements—all of which fall within the ambit of City's municipal operations.

Meanwhile, on the "private" side of the equation, the natural, ongoing concern centered around feasibility. Workshop #3 addressed the concern with a proven strategy built on four key tactics that can close the gap between existing rents and demand versus future potential and desired results. The Action section incorporates these elements, along with the operational components for the City's infrastructure planning, into an integrated playbook centered on delivering the final Vision in an effective, efficient, and successful manner.



Final Vision Statement

From its start in 2025 to its latest iteration in 2045, the City of Oak Harbor continues to possess the best Waterfront in the Puget Sound. With a growing commercial center that includes long-standing businesses and new participants at the catalytic sites (i.e., Waterfront East, Waterfront West), the area is prosperous with a diverse range of retailers and services. Tourism has grown into a major portion of the area's economy with regular events transforming the area into a major destination for getaways and weekend adventures. The walkable streets, beautiful architecture, and active sidewalks are among the best in the greater Seattle region and made even better by the unmatched scenery. Thousands of residents live in the area and enjoy these benefits every day while taking advantage of the convenience that comes from having all their major needs (Live, Work, Play) within a five-minute walk of their doorstep. Finally, the ongoing private investment infuses resources into the public and institutional providers, allowing them to make their own investments in a regular virtuous cycle of mutual benefit—a strong economy driving a strong public realm. The transformation is especially impressive when seen from its beginning, when a former brownfield at 1081 and 1091 Pioneer Drive was transformed into a 5-story mixed use development that set the precedent for more good things to come. And while the Waterfront is now different in many ways, its core beauty and benefits remain, bringing with it a proven method for further redevelopment and renewal in many more parts of the City.

Actions Ahead

Goals and Objectives

To realize the Vision through the efficient use of capital improvements, informed policy, new programs, and transparent, equitable partnerships.

To deliver the public services and infrastructure needed to support current and future residents in the area.

To continually improve the City's resiliency, sustainability, and fiscal health through actions that generate social, environmental, and economic benefits for all.

Implementation Strategy

The City has three major tools at its disposal: policy, programming, and capital improvements. All three can be, and have been, used to transform the built environment in many ways. In the past, the City has developed policies that encourage mixed-use development that support the Waterfront's urban core through its Central Business District zone. The City has supported programs that enhance the Waterfront through the Parks Department programs, Main Street Association, and Chamber of Commerce. Finally, the City has also embraced walkability through its extensive sidewalk network, traffic management practices, and placemaking efforts. This track record for sustainable city-building must continue and evolve so that the City can meet its expected needs and deliver the next stage of urbanism reflected in the Waterfront's vision.

Those efforts will affect the entire Waterfront district. Meanwhile, at a parcel level, the City has major assets it can leverage to accelerate progress. The city-owned properties at 1081 and 1091 Pioneer Drive must continue to its next stage of development. With conceptual plans complete, those next steps include site remediation planning, cleanup, and the establishment of a public/private partnership between the City and a future developer.

An organization might naturally treat this catalytic development as a unique, singular project. But the City should approach the effort in as programmatic a fashion as possible because the processes, agreements, and procedures used for 1081 and 1091 Pioneer Drive can (and should) be re-applied to other catalytic sites

in the area. The City has several more publicly-owned properties in the area. Each have excellent potential for redevelopment under current policies. New policies and capital improvements will increase that potential significantly while still adhering to the Vision's core tenants. Each of these additional properties should be further assessed, prioritized, and planned for redevelopment. The plans for these sites can inform the location and timing of capital improvements so that the vertical and horizontal developments complement one another in a variety of ways.

In summary, the Implementation Strategy is multi-pronged. On the district-wide level, the City should create policy amendments that align the zoning and building standards to the Vision. The City should develop new programs that generate economic incentives and partnerships that stimulate investment while meeting community needs. The City should also deliver new capacity analysis and planning for existing infrastructure. These efforts will support public and private development of all types. On the parcel-specific level, real estate development planning should continue for 1081 and 1091 Pioneer Drive. As policies and procedures are formalized in this effort, the sequence can then be applied to all other City-owned assets in the area.

These are significant undertakings and are best-delivered in tandem. In the pages ahead, the timeline of next steps will show how this can be done at a high level over the near-, mid-, and long-term horizon. The near-term actions are the most detailed and the mid- and long-term actions will emerge with more detail with time.

To manage these efforts effectively, the critical path highlights the need for a multi-disciplinary team of project stewards that can provide consistent oversight of the administrative tasks and reporting needs. This team is ideally composed of mid-level and senior-level staff who can benefit from the professional development opportunities. This team would report their status and progress to the City's executive sponsor and/or executive team responsible for strategic decisions, budgeting, efficiency, and quality.

Such management practices may already be well-established in the City. Creating a new group to do these things might seem redundant. Even so, the work of assembling a specific team for this specific implementation strategy can have many benefits. It can reinforce the urgency and priority of these efforts as well as offer the City a chance to fund the administrative tasks as a distinct cost center or “business unit” within its operating budget. Combined with a communications strategy and outreach effort for every facet of the work ahead, the City could get a more holistic and detailed view of how this effort moves forward. This turns the plan into something more like a program that has a full arc from its beginning, middle, and end with key outcomes to achieve throughout the stages.

Such a team will not only help the City manage the project, it will also provide the additional support needed to analyze, refine, and recommend the new approaches needed for policy and programming. These new approaches will need to be vetted by the City’s executive team and elected officials. They would benefit from a multi-disciplinary team that offers robust recommendations and reports in a consistent, predictable fashion.



The City’s history of investment in the downtown, along with its current efforts at the catalyst site, show an excellent track record for implementing its plans in a timely and effective manner.



Next steps from Policy Standpoint

Embrace a form-based approach to new development in the Waterfront District built on measurable, objective design standards for private development that align with the Waterfront's vision.

Broaden the use allowances, scale, and development potential within the Waterfront District.

Create a new street plan with design standards that further encourage multi-modal travel, enhance walkability and contributes to placemaking opportunities.

Expand options for housing types in the adjacent neighborhoods through buildout analyses, policy revisions, and additional form-based development standards.

Test and refine all proposed policies through buildout analyses and conceptual design to ensure reliability and validity in the proposed standards.

Next steps from the Program Standpoint

Assemble the following implementation teams:

- 1. A project steward team for project management**
- 2. An executive sponsor and/or team for oversight, budgeting, steering, and quality assurance.**

Fund the implementation team's efforts with a dedicated cost center or business unit within the City budget that follows all reporting and performance management methods.

Develop a report on economic incentive options for catalytic developments that includes the Multifamily Tax Exemption program, Tax Increment Financing, and potential revisions to existing System Development Charges.

Expand the existing placemaking efforts in order to identify, coordinate, and invest in a core area for expanded improvements that enhance street life and the Waterfront's unique assets and identity.

Formalize a public-private partnership toolkit that provides the templates necessary for procurement, agreements, diligence, and developer offerings.

Next steps from Capital Improvements Standpoint

Complete the Transportation Element of the Oak Harbor Comprehensive Plan to establish anticipate changes in traffic, capacity, and needs.

Deliver analysis on the Waterfront area's current water, wastewater, stormwater, and electrical infrastructure capacity and condition.

Analyze potential "value capture" through the buildout analysis of new development in the areas of capital improvement.

Prioritize areas of investment that align with anticipated near-term growth (e.g., catalytic sites like the area surrounding 1081 and 1091 Pioneer Drive).

Revise the Capital Improvement Plan accordingly.

Next steps from the Catalytic Development Standpoint

Continue with cleanup efforts on 1081 and 1091 Pioneer Drive.

Establish the preferred uses for the conceptual design.

Develop (or refine) a procurement process for establishing a public-private partnership for the site's development.

Begin conceptual planning, conditions analysis, and prioritization for the other City-owned properties in the area.

Formalize a programmatic approach to additional catalytic development efforts based on 1081 and 1091 Pioneer Drive.

Next steps from community engagement standpoint

Repurpose the Waterfront Vision to Action webpage into a public information portal for all proceeding implementation efforts.

Establish a regular interval for public Open House events and workshops to keep the community engaged and informed.

Partner with stakeholder groups to conduct regular surveys on public interests and concerns.

Partner with stakeholder groups to develop a support plan for area business and residents that may be affected by future construction.



City elected leaders and staff, and Center for Creative Land Recycling representatives, at Public Workshop #2 in April 2025.

Timeline for Next Steps

Fall 2025

Advertisement and Recruitment

Issue RFP for Developers for City's Pioneer Property
Issue RFP for Consultant(s) for Master, Utility and Transportation Comprehensive Plans.
City Hires New Development Services Department Director.
Certification of Election Results for City Council in November

Winter 2025

Procurement and Feasibility Study

Complete final Feasibility Study for Pioneer Site Environmental Cleanup
Council Approves Agreement(s) with Consultants for Master, Utility and Transportation Comprehensive Plans

2026/2027

Policy, Planning, and Procurement

City Updates Land Use Codes for Waterfront District
Finalize Agreement with Building Developer for Downtown Properties, including schedule, building elements and public/private funding.
Complete Updated Plans for Utilities and Transportation.
Certification of Election for Mayor and Council in November 2027

2028/2029

Completion, Adoption, and Agreements

City Updates Land Use Codes for Waterfront District
Finalize Agreement with Building Developer for Downtown Properties including schedule, building elements and public/private funding.
Complete Updated Plans for Utilities and Transportation.
Certification of Election for Mayor and Council in November 2027

2030

Construction

Initiate construction of the Downtown development. An approximate opening would be 2031 or later.

Acknowledgments

City of Oak Harbor

Elected Officials

Mayor Ronnie Wright
Mayor Pro Tem Tara Hizon
Councilmember Barbara Armes
Councilmember Shane Hoffmire
Councilmember James P. Marrow
Councilmember Eric Marshall
Councilmember Bryan Stucky
Councilmember Christopher Wiegenstein
Councilmember Jim Woessner

Executive Team

Sabrina Combs
Steve Schuller
David Kuhl (retired)

City Staff

Magi Aguilar
Gideon Cauffman
Macalle Finkle
David Goldman
Sarah Heller
Wendy Horn
Rajesh "Cac" Kamak
Ryan Kinker
Ray Lindenburg

Washington State Department of Ecology

Aalia Dixon
Elaine Heim
Ali Furmall

Joe Klem
Dan Joswiack, PhD, LHG

The Center for Creative Land Recycling

Jean Hamerman
Claire Weston
Lujain Altawarah

Parameter Consultants

Norman Wright, AICP

Cascadia Partners

Alex Joyce
Rhey Haggarty

Dahlin Group

Andy McKay
Ritu Raj Sharma, AICP, LEED AP

Farallon Consulting

James Welles, LHG
Adia Jumper, P.E.
Suzy Stumpf, P.E.



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