

Olde Town Subarea Plan



Prepared for
City of Issaquah

Prepared by
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& MAKERS

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Olde Town Subarea Plan

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FACT SHEET

Proposed Action	<p>The City of Issaquah has released this addendum to update the Final EIS for the Issaquah Comprehensive Plan (February 1995), pursuant to the provisions in WAC 197-11-625.</p> <p>The City proposes to amend the Issaquah Comprehensive Plan and add the Olde Town Subarea Plan. The Plan is a smaller area and provides a more detailed look at growth, land use, transportation, urban design, economic development, capital facilities and utilities for this portion of the City than was provided in the Issaquah Comprehensive Plan.</p>
Location of the Proposal	<p>The site is generally within the area south of Gilman Boulevard, west of the edge of Tiger Mountain (the eastern City limits), north of the terminus of 2nd Avenue South, and east of Issaquah Creek. The Subarea is shown in Figure I-A.</p>
Lead Agency	<p>The City of Issaquah</p>
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Licenses or Permits Required	<p>Approval by City Council. The action is the adoption of Olde Town Subarea planning document. Subsequent actions by the City, other agencies or private individuals may be subject to permits, such as for development or subdivision of land.</p>

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Location of Background Materials	Planning Department City Hall North 1775 12 th Avenue NW Issaquah, WA
Date of Issue of Draft EIS	November 1, 1994
Date of Issue of Final EIS	February 1995
Date of Issue Addendum	September 30, 1998
Date Final Action is Planned	December 1998
Time and Place of Public Hearing	October 8, 1998 at 6:45 PM City Hall South, Council Chambers 135 E. Sunset Way Issaquah, WA 98027

I. Introduction

A. History of the Planning Project

The Olde Town Subarea Plan is a detailed strategy for the downtown goals and policies established in the community's Comprehensive Plan. Part of the work on this plan was initiated with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

In December 1993, an ad hoc Downtown Committee was formed to provide input to the City in regard to the downtown area. The committee's "Report of Recommendations" for Issaquah's downtown was included in the Land Use Appendix of the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan. In June 1996, Phase I of the Olde Town Subarea Plan was adopted into the Comprehensive Plan. Phase I of the Subarea plan built on the vision and goals established by the "Report of Recommendations" from the ad hoc committee and the Main Street Issaquah downtown revitalization program.



Phase II of the Subarea Plan identifies the specific changes that should occur within the subarea to implement the vision and goals for Olde Town. This plan includes background information to describe the current conditions in the Olde Town Subarea. Alternative scenarios have been developed to illustrate several ways in which the vision and goals for Olde Town can be implemented. These alternatives are analyzed to provide a comparison of the impacts and to aid in the selection

of a "preferred alternative". The preferred alternative has received greater detailed study of the physical, political and economic actions necessary to implement it.

B. Preparing and Adopting the Plan

Phase II of the Olde Town Plan was initiated by the City in October 1997. Since that time the Olde Town Plan was developed with the input of merchants and business property owners, the Main Street™ organization, residents, Planning Policy Commission (PPC), School District and general public. Olde Town Plan workshops were advertised through postcard mailings to 400+ business, property owners and others attending prior meetings or requesting to be on the mailing list. The Olde Town public planning process has included:

- Oct. 97 *Olde Town Task Force* formed and met twice with Olde Town Planning Team to review and confirm our starting assumptions.
- Dec. 97 *1st Olde Town Community Workshop* hosted by PPC. Design alternatives developed and examined.

- Jan. 98 *Design Alternatives display boards* with comment questionnaires at the Issaquah Community Center.
- Jan. 98 *Committee-of-the-Whole Council* briefing on design alternatives.
- Feb. 98 *2nd Olde Town Community Workshop* hosted by PPC with updated economic and capacity analysis of the design alternatives.
- Feb. 98 *Preferred Alternative* presented at PPC Open House.
- May 98 *Draft Design Strategies brochure* developed and widely distributed through mailing (450+), distribution at Front Street Market, and community group presentations (Chamber of Commerce Economic Committee, Chamber luncheon, Issaquah Historical Society, Main Street First Tuesday).
- May 98 *3rd Olde Town Community Workshop* PPC and Community review of the preferred alternative.
- June 98 *Community groups receive individual briefing* to discuss specific issues, including Issaquah Parks Board, Arts Commission, Main Street™ organization, Historical Society and Pomegranate.
- Aug. 98 *Preliminary Review Draft* of the Olde Town Subarea Plan distributed within City to Planning; Public Works, Building, and Parks and Recreation Departments, as well as SE Bypass Consultant team.
- Sept. 98 *PPC Review Draft of the Olde Town Subarea Plan* distributed to PPC as well as the Chair or Executive of the Arts Commission; Development Commission; River and Streams Board; Park Board; King County Library; Main Street Issaquah; Greater Issaquah Chamber of Commerce; Historical Society; and F.I.S.H.. Public review copies made available at the Community Center, Downtown Library, and Permit Center. Notice of the plan's availability and review schedule sent to 400+.
- Sept. 98 *Integrated EIS Addendum to the Olde Town Plan* reviewed by PPC.
- Oct. 98 *Draft Olde Town Plan Public Hearing and two Community Workshops* hosted by PPC
- Dec. 98 *Recommendation on 98 Comprehensive Plan Amendments*, PPC recommends that Olde Town Subarea Plan be adopted in the 1st half of 1999, separate from other proposed amendments, in order to review additional issues including consistency with adopted CIP.
- Jan. 99 *Proposed Revision Document* to PPC draft Olde Town Subarea Plan reviewed at 3 PPC meetings.
- Feb. 99 *PPC recommends Olde Town Subarea Plan* to the Issaquah City Council.
- Aug. 99 *Council Land Use Committee recommends Olde Town Subarea Plan* to the Issaquah City Council.

C. Olde Town Plan Document

The Growth Management Act does not require the preparation of subarea plans as part of the mandate of growth management planning. Subarea plans are acknowledged as a part of the growth management planning process and an accepted component of a City's Comprehensive Plan. Subarea plans must be consistent with the citywide Comprehensive Plan, in policies, maps and regulations. Subarea plans offer the ability to focus on

details, address solutions to problems, instill innovation and establish a hierarchy of desired changes, not possible at a citywide scale.

This is the City of Issaquah's first subarea to be planned under the GMA Comprehensive Plan. This document combines the Olde Town Subarea Plan (a small area comprehensive plan) and an Addendum to the Issaquah Comprehensive Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement (November 1994) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (February 1995). Because the Olde Town Plan and Addendum documents are combined into one, it may be difficult to differentiate between them. This section explains the way to distinguish the two documents. The portions of the document that compose the Olde Town Subarea Plan are printed on white paper. Those sections of the document that are part of the environmental impact analysis have been printed on colored paper. Descriptions of the existing conditions in the subarea plan serve as the requirement for the "existing conditions" of the Addendum. The summary of proposal, the alternatives considered, major conclusions and the impacts, mitigation measures and unavoidable significant adverse impacts of the alternatives is contained in its own chapter -- Chapter II. The impacts related to each of the elements of the subarea plan are identified at the end of each chapter -- Chapter III. Land Use, Chapter IV. Circulation and Parking, Chapter V. Urban Design Concept, Chapter VI. Marketing and Economic Conditions, and Chapter VII. Utilities and Facilities. There are no impacts identified with Chapter VIII Implementation.

Using the Olde Town Plan

The Olde Town Plan provides the vision, goals, policies and implementation actions that will guide changes to downtown Issaquah for the next twenty years. In compliance with the Growth Management Act, the Plan reflects the comprehensive plan elements -- Land Use, Transportation, Utilities and Capital Facilities. Housing is not an included element of the subarea plan, but is discussed in the Land Use Chapter. As an implementation tool, the Subarea Plan includes Chapters on Urban Design and Economic Development.

The Olde Town Plan will guide decisions that affect new development and redevelopment in the Olde Town area. Many groups with varying interests will use this plan for different purposes. The following list provides an array of different decision-makers that will use the Olde Town Plan.

- *City Council* – to prioritize policy and budget decisions relating to Olde Town.
- *Development Commission* - to implement the vision, goals, policies and actions of the subarea plan through review of developments that are proposed in the area.
- *City Administration* - to prepare development guidelines/regulations, procedures, criteria and capital projects and budgets for the improvement of the Olde Town area, to base administrative decisions on land use and development review, and to implement the vision, goals, policies and actions of the subarea plan through review of developments that are proposed in the area.
- *Developers and Businesses* - to assess project feasibility, to make investment decisions and to design and build their projects.
- *Service providers* - to assure that the services and facilities identified in the plan are available when needed.
- *General public* - to understand the future of downtown Issaquah and the surrounding residential area, and to influence City planning and public decisions.

Using the Environmental Impact Statement Addendum

This EIS Addendum document is the second step of a phased environmental review and planning process. It is intended to assist the agencies and the public in focusing on associated subsequent planning and financial decisions with consideration of environmental issues. Specific development proposals may be subject to additional SEPA review at the time of project application. It is intended that projects that are consistent with the Subarea Plan may rely on much of the impact analysis used for the Plan that remains timely, and forego detailed study of those issues covered under the existing environmental documents. It is also expected that future development projects

will require detailed study of project specific impacts that cannot be analyzed in a programmatic study.

The purpose of the Olde Town Plan and EIS Addendum is to encourage the type and mix of Olde Town development described by the Olde Town Plan. By consolidating and disclosing information known about the area:

1. It will focus the vision, so that funding and priority projects can occur as implementation,
2. Development in the area will be encouraged to maximize the potential of the area,
3. As many questions as possible will be answered about the amount, type and mix of development that might actually occur in the area,
4. Property owner and developers will use the Addendum information to remove some of the uncertainty that inhibits action, and
5. Redundant efforts and time expended on project planning and review will be reduced.

As a second step to phased environmental review (the Issaquah Comprehensive Plan being the first step), this document addresses the specific impacts of changes to the Olde Town Subarea of a Preferred Alternative. Other alternatives were considered through the public participation process and the best features of the alternatives are combined into the Preferred Alternative. The alternatives were also considered in light of the potential environmental effects, which could result from its implementation.

D. Purpose and Need for the Project

Growth during recent years in the Issaquah area has helped to create an increased demand for housing, increased demand for offices and industry, increased demand for services and goods, congested traffic conditions and increased demand on public services and utilities. Projections for the future indicate that these trends will continue.

New commercial and office parks, Master Planned Developments, residential subdivisions and apartments have been developed, concentrated in and around Issaquah to meet this demand. However, in the center of it all remains the City's traditional downtown core. One of the ways that Issaquah has chosen to respond to growth is by closely examining the Olde Town Subarea as the first area to be planned under the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan. The Olde Town Plan is to preserve and enhance the traditional downtown core, and retain its viability to serve the community as a social, governmental, historical, commercial and entertainment core of the City.

Policy L-4.1.2 of the Issaquah Comprehensive Plan provides the impetus for preparing the Olde Town Subareas Plan as it states:

“In conjunction with downtown property owners and the public the City shall prepare a Subarea Plan which addresses land uses, densities, parking, urban design, transportation, economic development as well as methods and potential funding mechanisms for achieving established objectives. The Subarea Plan will work to

reconcile the recommendations set forth by the ad hoc Downtown Comprehensive Plan Review Committee and the recommendations set forth in the proposed “Downtown Issaquah Facilities Master Plan: (January 1992) and, if appropriate, related issues in the Olde Town Subarea. The strategy shall provide options to actively encourage enhancement of the CBD and incorporation of mixed use development”

E. Vision

While the Comprehensive Plan addresses issues of the City as a whole, it cannot address those concerns related specifically to the Olde Town area of Issaquah. Hence, the creation of the Olde Town Subarea Plan.

Issaquah’s Olde Town retains the historic backbone that renders memories of a small town, far removed from Seattle and Bellevue, where children walked to school, and people lived, worked, shopped and played in the same hometown community. The area boasts attributes such as the Salmon Hatchery, 14 of the City’s treasures, 9 parks and trails, the oldest residential and commercial structures in the City, Front Street shopping and business corridor and the Trolley. It is the center of the City’s civic focus with Salmon Days, Summer Concerts on the Green, the Community Center and Swimming Pool, and the old and new Village Theaters. The natural environment – the creeks and the mountains - that drew the settlers here in the 1860s is still accessible from Issaquah’s downtown. Therein lies the strength of Olde Town.

Over the past seven years, the City has invested more than sixteen million dollars in Olde Town improvements including the new Police Station, the Community Center and Skate Board Park, improvements to the Salmon Hatchery, and contributions to the new Issaquah public library and public art. Despite these investments and despite the attributes of our cultural and historic center, Olde Town’s economic climate has encountered some difficulties in the past several years. Reviving and sustaining this heart of our community is our challenge.

The Olde Town Design Standards became effective on July 2, 2001. The Standards provide the authority to enhance Olde Town’s attractiveness by applying criteria to architecture, site design, parking lot, landscaping and signs for projects within Olde Town. The Design Standards will allow the downtown to grow while retaining its uniqueness and charm.

The Design Standards are a start, but there is still work to be done. The public and private sectors must work together to strengthen the Front Street shopping and Theater District, encourage mixed and diverse uses, draw residents for daily needs as well as local events, and offer incentives for downtown improvements that will attract new business and home owners alike.

Issaquah is fortunate that it has a downtown sense of place; we do not need to create one as do so many other communities. Our challenge is maintaining the integrity of this sense of place while promoting and enhancing economic growth and vitality. Implementing the policies laid out in this plan will enable the residents and business owners whose lives are invested here to attain that goal.

