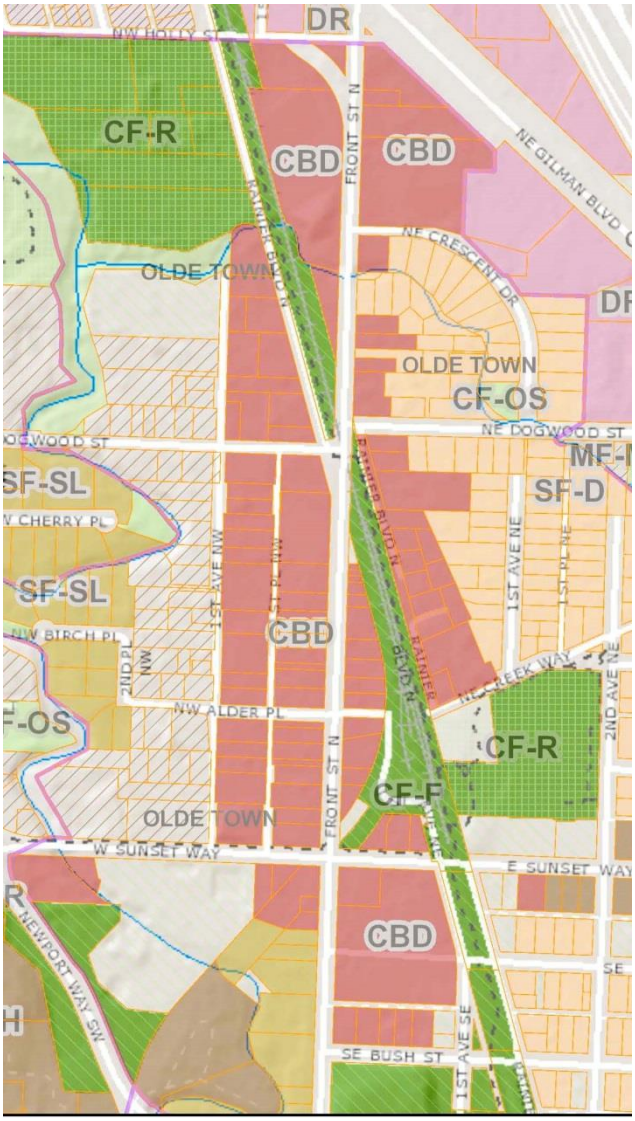
CITY OF ISSAQUAH WASHINGTON

Old Town Vitality Task Force Report 2015

Background/Introduction

Old Town[1] is the historic commercial center of Issaquah. Today, Old Town is also home to many of Issaquah's cultural amenities including the Village Theatre, the salmon hatchery, the historic train depot and museum, along with a host of arts and music related businesses, lending the Cultural Business District (CBD) its name (see map to the right) . Since its founding, Issaquah has grown from Old Town into a city of many neighborhoods. In 2013, the city council adopted the Central Issaquah Plan (CIP) which established a new vision-- complete with updated zoning and design standards-- for much of the valley floor along the I-90 corridor. Also in 2013, Grand Ridge Plaza, the new commercial development in the newly developed Issaquah Highlands, opened for business. With new and exciting opportunities occurring in these other prominent areas of Issaquah, the city council turned their attention back to Old Town in order to ensure Old Town continues to prosper along with the rest of the community.



To be certain, downtown Issaquah is doing well: commercial vacancy rates in Old Town are low and hundreds of thousands continue to flock to the CBD every year to celebrate Salmon Days, catch a play, or dine at one of the many bustling restaurants. Despite this success, more could be done to enhance vitality and to ensure downtown's vibrancy well into the future. For this reason, one of the city council goals for 2015 was for the Mayor to establish an Old Town Vitality Task Force that would develop a list of recommendations to the Mayor on what the community can do to enhance Old Town's vitality.

Recognizing that there are a variety of stakeholders each with different roles to play in Old Town's vitality, the Mayor invited an assortment of people to the group including Old Town residents, business owners, property owners, and people representing the arts, history, and other anchor institutions that make downtown Issaquah so unique. (See page four for a list of members.)

[1] One of the recommendations of the Task Force is to remove the "e" from "Olde Town" during the Old Town Plan update. The "e" has been removed in this report at the request of the Task Force to reflect that recommendation.

Executive Summary

Process

The Old Town Vitality Task Force met once a month over 2015 and went through an extensive process of gathering information and synthesizing thoughts into findings and recommendations. Their process included:

1. Defining vitality. While there are many themes guiding the vision for downtown vitality, the task force distilled these down to one main idea: a vital downtown attracts people day and night, and builds a sense of community by providing spontaneous ways for people to engage and interact.
2. Walking audit of the CBD
3. Strengths Weakness Opportunity and Threats (SWOT) analysis
4. Reviewing city code and policy documents including the Old Town Plan, Old Town Design Standards, and the 2012 Parking Study
5. Hosting walking tour with city council
6. Taking inventory of existing activities, events and programs in public places
7. Crafting actionable recommendations

Major Findings

Following this process led the task force to many findings that, in turn, guided the development of recommendations. Their findings are briefly summarized below.

- Many spaces are underutilized resulting in underserving community needs and detracting from vitality.
- Streetscape design and amenities across the CBD are very inconsistent and work to funnel people through rather than facilitate engagement and community interaction.
- Historic buildings lend downtown Issaquah unique charm, but many buildings are poorly maintained, under lit, without weather protection for pedestrians, and lack engaging storefronts.
- While much of the built environment lacks a consistent design and would benefit from a facelift to improve aesthetics, the downtown has enormous strengths in public art and natural beauty which add significantly to its unique attractiveness.
- Many city codes governing the use of land (including parking, pervious surface, building height, and signage requirements) are more restrictive in the CBD than they are for other parts of the city, hindering downtown's competitiveness and reinforcing the underutilization of spaces.

Recommendations

The task force asks that the City build the supportive environment for a vital downtown via policy and infrastructure. Building on that environment, the community, through partnerships and programs, should work together to bring the vision to life. While the recommendations are detailed and span many topics, they can be distilled into three main areas of implementation:

1. The City should update the Old Town Plan and Design Standards to increase the neighborhood's competitiveness for attracting private investment.
2. Create a consistent and well-designed streetscape by developing and implementing a streetscape plan.

3. The Downtown Issaquah Association (DIA) should increase partnerships with other community groups to establish programs for showcasing a lively and beautified downtown, including partnering with the Chamber to help grow Salmon Days.

Conclusion

Focusing on enhancing the aesthetics of downtown, reducing barriers to downtown competitiveness, and creating inviting places that serve locals, engage the public, and facilitate interactions among community members, will ensure a vital downtown for years to come.

Task Force Members

Karen Abel	artEAST
Trey Bailey	Uphill Running (retail store), Old Town resident
Philis Bodle	King County Libraries—Issaquah branch
Karen Donovan	Downtown Issaquah Association (DIA)
Michele Drovdahl	King County Libraries
Cyrus Krohn	Greater Issaquah Chamber of Commerce, Old Town resident
Robb Hunt	Village Theatre, property owner
Barak Rosenbloom	Old Town resident, DIA
Todd Sargeant	Issaquah History Museums, architect
Keith Watts	Property owner, DIA
Cori Walters	Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank, Old Town resident

Other Key Contributors:

Brandon Claycomb	Professional Facilitator
Christen Leeson	City staff, Development Services
Keith Niven	City staff, Economic Development
Andrea Snyder	City staff, Economic Development
Jennifer R. Woods	City staff, Development Services

Process

The task force met on a monthly basis for most of 2015 and hit the ground running, with the first meeting exploring what "vitality" means for downtown Issaquah. Because the Old Town area is large and consists of different commercial, institutional, and residential areas, the task force focused their efforts on the commercial and cultural heart of Old Town: the CBD (see map on page one). Once they had agreed on what vitality means for Issaquah, they used that definition as a guidepost for the rest of their process and recommendations. Next, the task force kicked off a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis (see Table I) with a walking audit of the CBD, paying special attention to the look and feel of downtown. They finished up the SWOT, with special emphasis on the strengths, weaknesses, and even the unique aspects of the CBD. (See walking audit form in Appendix A)

From the SWOT, task force members began forming their recommendations, identifying who in the community should take the lead on implementing each of the recommendations. Once the task force exhausted topics related to design and character of the CBD, they then turned to understanding the underlying city code and regulations that govern how land downtown is used. They also compared development code and design standards of Old Town with other parts of the City to determine how competitive the neighborhood was with others in Issaquah for investment.

Finally, the task force turned their attention to programming and activities downtown, and performed an activity inventory to determine who was being served by the events and activities, where the programming was taking place, and when the activities were being held. (See Appendix B for the activity inventory.)

Task Force Findings

Defining Vitality

In order to define vitality, the task force members brought photos of what they felt were vibrant downtowns and discussed the themes of the photos. They then distilled these themes into what they envisioned for a vital Issaquah downtown, which included:

- Authentic—the downtown serves the local population first, offering every day needed services for the community. Tourists will come naturally if the downtown serves the locals well.
- A mix of transportation options—vibrant downtowns are walkable, have transit, and also have ample parking.
- A mix of land uses and amenities—there is housing, public buildings, shopping with local stores (minimal national chains), outdoor public spaces, and art/cultural facilities.

- Good aesthetics—with well-maintained buildings and streets, big trees, good lighting for ambiance and safety, and built on a human scale.
- Energetic— a vital downtown attracts people day and night, and builds a sense of community by providing spontaneous ways for people to engage and interact.

These themes were used to define vitality and served as guideposts for the rest of the task force's work and recommendations.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

With a vision of what vitality means for downtown Issaquah, the task force then broke into smaller groups and performed a walking audit of different parts of the CBD. The group quickly discovered that strengths in some parts of the downtown were weaknesses in others which produced big inconsistencies across the CBD. Summarized below are the strengths and weaknesses for the CBD.

Table I: Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths	Weaknesses
Rainier Trail & Rainier Blvd	Inconsistent sidewalks (width, and paving material)
Grocery store located downtown	Wasted/underutilized spaces
Non profits/institutions like food bank, library, hatchery, history museum, city government, etc.	Poor lighting- inconsistent, insufficient for safety and ambiance
Public parking (library lot)	Lack of wayfinding
Historic buildings give charm like train depot, Hailstone	Poor connections to /visibility of Issaquah Creek
Art- Village Theatre, sculptures, murals, businesses	Lack of consistent weather protection
Attractive collection of buildings	Poor accessibility to Senior Center
Mountain views	"Grubbery"- grubby shrubbery
Proximity to trails, outdoor rec opportunities	No bike lanes
Restaurants	Poorly maintained buildings and façades (including city parks building)
Proximity to housing	WiFi- weak signal and security settings too high
	Too many service businesses in prime locations, need more retail

The task force ranked the strengths and weaknesses by assigning a score from one (needs improvement) to five (great). The leading strengths were:

- Public/Performance art and classes
- Overall Safety
- Overall aesthetic with historic buildings
- Parks and Plazas

And worst of the weaknesses included:

- Consistent weather protection:
- WiFi
- Lighting
- Building facades/displays
- Sidewalks

When it came to identifying opportunities, the task force felt the biggest opportunity was the growth of the community, including the new housing that is being constructed proximate to the downtown. The group also believed many of the weaknesses also offered opportunities for improvement such as upgrades to the landscape or "grubbery" as the group called it, and helping store owners create more attractive window displays. They also saw the opportunity for more crosswalks that were improved with flashing lights and/or more artful markings.

As far as threats, the group only identified one threat—safety or the perception of safety. By consensus, the group did not identify safety as a current weakness despite a recent influx of homelessness and increased evidence of illegal drug use. Members cited awareness of others who may feel unsafe at times in the CBD, but that

it was not felt by anyone on the task force. Instead, they identified safety or the perceptions of safety as a threat to the downtown's vitality should the trend continue.

Old Town Plan and Design Standards

With the help of city staff from the Development Services department, the task force examined in detail aspects of the Old Town Plan and the Old Town Design Standards. The group found that many codes governing the use of land are more restrictive in Old Town than they are for other parts of the city.

Parking

Parking requirements are a barrier to vitality. Parking requirements in Old Town, for example, often require more land devoted to parking than in the Central Issaquah Plan (CIP) area (see Table II below). For a new restaurant of 2,000 square feet, 17 parking spaces must be provided in the CBD compared to fewer than four spaces in Central Issaquah. While the CBD parking standards waive the requirement to develop more parking for existing buildings that transition to a different type of use, Central Issaquah has several other waivers and allowances that can significantly reduce the parking required beyond the minimums listed. For example, in Central Issaquah, developers can use adjacent street parking towards the number of parking spaces required. With property parcels in the CBD much smaller than in most of Central Issaquah, the task force found the parking requirements to be a barrier to generating private investment and put the neighborhood at a significant disadvantage compared to other parts of town.

The task force discussed parking at length and reached several conclusions. While the parking standards are putting Old Town at a disadvantage, reducing them will exacerbate the parking difficulties without the development of additional parking. Moving parking development to a concentrated area that can serve all of the downtown makes more sense than mitigating parking on site given the small lot sizes.

Table II: Parking Standard Comparison

	CENTRAL ISSAQUAH	CBD
USE	MINIMUM PARKING REQUIREMENT	MINIMUM PARKING REQUIREMENT
RESIDENTIAL		
Multifamily: Studio Apartment	1 per unit or .75/ unit if the unit is less than or equal to 600 sq. ft.	1 per unit
Multifamily: One Bedroom Apartment		2 per unit
Multifamily: other than Studio Apt. or one bedroom		
COMMERCIAL/RETAIL		
Dining, Leisure, Entertainment	2 spaces per 1,000 NSF[2, 3] (1 space per 500 NSF)	1 space per 115 GSF
Personal Services	2 spaces per 1,000 NSF[2, 3] (1 space per 500 NSF)	1 space per 230 GSF
Small Health Services	2 spaces per 1,000 NSF[2, 3] (1 space per 500 NSF)	1 space per 230 GSF
Retail	2 spaces per 1,000 NSF[1, 2, 3] (1 space per 500 NSF)	1 space per 230 GSF

[1]Small Business Waiver. A business less than or equal to 3,000 NSF and meets certain criteria will have its parking requirement waived. A business more than 3,000 NSF and certain criteria receives a waiver for the first 3,000 NSF.

[2]Retail in Mixed Use Building. A Non-Residential space on the street level of a mixed use building which is less than or equal to 3,000 square feet NSF will have its parking requirement waived.

[3]On-Street Parking Credit. Street level Non-Residential uses including retail, services, non-profits, or other commercial uses may count the parking stalls on the right-of-way that are immediately adjacent to the building space to help fulfill the parking requirements.

Pervious Surface

The task force also found that the pervious surface requirements were more restrictive in the CBD than other parts of the city. Pervious surface is considered to be dirt, mulch, and landscape while impervious surface includes buildings, pavement, parking lots, compacted gravel, and awnings. In the CBD (unlike other areas of the city) under current code pervious pavers are not accepted as part of a pervious surface. Below, the table shows the maximum pervious surface allowable in the CBD (85%) as compared to parts of Central Issaquah (90-95%). Task force members cited the pervious surface requirements as a barrier to vitality especially when combined with the small parcel sizes in the CBD. The task force also associated pervious surface requirements for the "grubbery" – or ill-maintained but mandatory landscaping-- that could otherwise be covered and/or paved gathering areas.

Table III: Comparison of Pervious Pavement Requirements

Zoning District	Maximum Impervious Surface
Central Issaquah Area: Urban Core	95%
Central Issaquah Area: Mixed Use	90%
Cultural Business District	85%

Building Height

Current base building height restrictions prevent quality four story development. When examining the code governing the height of buildings, the task force recognized that while the maximum height allowances are higher in other parts of Issaquah, they did not feel this to be a barrier to vitality in the CBD. Instead, they felt the maximum height limits maintained the historic character of Old Town and preserve the vistas to the Issaquah Alps which they cited as unique strengths of the CBD. They did however find that the base building heights are an impediment should a property redevelop. The group wanted to ensure the base building height allow for four story buildings (as the Old Town Plan indicates) with enough room to allow for a quality retail space on the first floor. The architecture and development expertise of the task force concluded this is not possible with a base height of 45 feet.

Table IV: Height Comparison

Zoning District	Base Building Height	Maximum Building Height
Urban Core	48 ft (4 stories)	125 ft (10 stories)
Mixed Use	48 ft (4 stories)	85 ft (7 stories)
Cultural Business District	45 ft (3 stories)	65 ft (5 stories)

Sign Code

The sign code is more permissive in other parts of the city than in the CBD. The task force discovered that more signs are allowed in Central Issaquah than in the CBD. The task force expressed that signage is important to vitality because good signage could help enhance the aesthetics of a place and also could work as an incentive for property and business owners to better maintain back entrances. Table V shows how many and what types of signage the same business could have depending on where it is located.

Table V: A Case Study in Business Signage: artEAST

artEAST	If Located in Old Town	If Located in Central Issaquah
Primary Signs	10% of façade area	10% of façade area Could get an additional primary sign if a "pedestrian oriented entry" was added to the rear of the building.
Secondary Sign	5% of façade area or 30 square feet, whichever is less	5% of façade area or 30 square feet, whichever is less. Could get an additional secondary sign if a "pedestrian oriented entry" was added to the rear of the building.
Additional Signs	Limited number of additional signs allowed, including directional, informational and multi-business signs.	Most signs allowed can also be additional signs, they are typically smaller and pedestrian oriented.
Right of Way Signs	12sf blade sign, A-frames Special Use Permit & Insurance	Canopy & awning signs, 4 sf blade sign, business & civic directional signs, projection signs Insurance & indemnification

Permitting the use of sidewalks is more streamlined in other parts of Issaquah than the downtown, discouraging private investment and vitality. Other aspects of the design code also affect downtown vitality such as the use of sidewalk. The task force, when defining vitality for downtown Issaquah, provided images of people enjoying outdoor cafes and business activity that spill out onto the sidewalk as an example of how spaces can be used to facilitate interactions among community members. When the task force evaluated how the city regulates the use of the public sidewalk, they discovered that the process is more streamlined in the Issaquah Highlands, the Rowley development agreement area, and the Central Issaquah area than it is in the CBD. In the CBD, a special use permit

is required every year for the use of sidewalks. Because of this, businesses have been discouraged from investing in permanent railings or other fixtures that may enhance the aesthetics and design of the CBD.

Programming and Events Inventory

Having covered design of spaces and development code that govern the use of spaces, the task force then looked to what events and activities are attracting people to downtown. While the inventory has information about what types of activities are happening in downtown in general, they also focused on places that the task force considered either underutilized or places that could be better incorporated into the downtown. The inventory also looks at which audiences (by age range) are being served and in what seasons the activities are taking place. The inventory of audiences and activities is presented in the Appendix A, at the end of this document. The task force concluded that while there are some activities and amenities that would be fun to add, overall the mix of audiences and activities is a strength of the downtown, with events happening year round. Instead, the group felt that focusing on the right business and retail mix (for example: securing a coffee shop downtown) will do more for vitality in the long term than adding more events. While achieving the right business mix is more important to task force members than adding programming and activities, the group did brainstorm some ideas for the future such as:

- Street vendors
- Spray park at Confluence
- Dog park
- Food trucks
- Night market

Salmon Days provides a great opportunity to showcase the downtown and utilize downtown spaces more. Attracting over 100,000 people annually, the group cited Salmon Days as a great opportunity to show visitors all that downtown Issaquah has to offer and entice them to return. The task force also expressed, however, that most of the downtown amenities and charm is blocked from view by the vendor tents that line the street. The task force applauded the Chamber's recent efforts to strategically provide spaces and not block all of the buildings. The task force also saw an opportunity for expanding the festival to Confluence Park in order to activate that underutilized space. This will be discussed more in the Findings section.

Recommendations

The task force findings provide the reasoning and evidence for their recommendations. While the recommendations are detailed and span many topics, they can be distilled into three main areas of implementation. While the task force feels that all of their recommendations should be implemented, they prioritized their recommendations based on what would have the most impact on Old Town's vitality. The bulleted recommendations are listed below in order of priority, with the top four priorities within each area of implementation highlighted in bold font. The suggested timeline for implementation is in Appendix C, page 19.

1. The City should update the Old Town Plan and Design Standards to increase the neighborhood's competitiveness for attracting private development.

The task force developed a number of recommendations that could be implemented with an update to the Old Town Plan and Design Standards. The most recent Old Town and Design Standards were adopted in 2002. In the past 15 years since the plan was adopted, the city has almost tripled in population, neighborhoods have developed and been rezoned, and market conditions have changed dramatically. The task force discussed whether changing these standards by making them more permissive would challenge the historic character of downtown. They concluded that even with redevelopment of a few buildings, strong design standards would be in place to ensure a historic aesthetic into the future. While the task force agreed that much of the Old Town Plan's vision is still appropriate, they recommend a few updates to the plan and standards documents in the following areas:

- **Increase base height from 45 feet to 50 feet to enable 4 story construction as the Old Town Plan suggests.** A higher base height will also facilitate the development of quality retail space on the first floor.
- **Reduce parking requirements for on site mitigation by adopting the Central Issaquah Plan parking standards** for development, while maintaining the exception for changes of use.
- **Increase pervious surface allowance.** Due to parcel size and historic nature of existing properties, consider an Issaquah Highlands model of allowing 100% on some parcels and less on others to average a certain percentage in all of the CBD. If this is not possible, then the City should increase the pervious surface maximum from 85% to 95% as it is in the Urban Core zone of Central Issaquah.
- **Keep the step back requirement to preserve views and pedestrian scale development, but allow flexibility in administration depending on parcel size.** Consider putting a standard in place that will

allow the city to waive the step back requirement for gains in architectural design, parking, or other community benefits.

- Encourage sidewalk use and activities by eliminating the requirement for special use permits. Replace the system with a streamlined Sidewalk Use District, similar to what exists in the Highlands, Rowley Development Agreement Area, and the CIP.
- Adopt the Central Issaquah sign standards for Old Town, but maintain the design standards that preserve Old Town's historic character. Consider additional provisions for chain or corporate signs to incorporate something quintessential "Issaquah" in the sign.
- Develop more parking downtown in a consolidated location to compensate for fewer spaces required on site. This could include installing back-in and angled parking along Bush Street, proximate to Front Street, utilizing empty lots, and/or building a parking garage.
- Provide an efficient process for variance and exception regarding the color palette. For example: notice the neighbors if something on the restricted colors list is proposed. Barring objections, grant the variance. Also, make the color palette available online.
- Increase ease of access to Senior Center, Memorial Park, and additional parking by extending Alder across rail road tracks.
- Update the color palette and review on a regular basis or every five years.
- Allow for wayfinding of public and private interests in Old Town similar to the Highlands and Central Issaquah.
- Consider re-zoning East Sunset Way to allow for more stand-alone commercial uses and increased pervious surface maximums.
- Remove the "e" in the "Olde Town" name. The extra "e" is unnecessary and presents the wrong image for the neighborhood.

2. Create a consistent and well-designed streetscape by developing and implementing a streetscape plan.

The streetscape should be designed to encourage people to linger, allow for more outdoor seating for private restaurants and cafes, promote the outdoors and mountain views, and facilitate interactions among community members. A streetscape plan will help fill in the missing details that the Design Standards do not to address and will guide future development. The streetscape plan should:

- **Provide concept designs for specific underutilized areas such as the area behind Stan's leading towards Pedestrian Park/ around Depot Park and the entrance to the Salmon Hatchery.**
- **Widen the sidewalks to encourage more sidewalk uses. Also, establish a consistent sidewalk width as well as consistent paving materials and sidewalk color.**
- **Consider using art and lighting to create a pleasurable walking experience, with connections from Front Street to parking and other destinations in order to increase accessibility to existing parking.**
- **Examine opportunities to provide connections to amenities (for example: the Issaquah Creek, Memorial Field, the Salmon Hatchery, etc) just off Front Street to better incorporate them into downtown.**
- Envision the design and use of public or quasi-public spaces with consolidation of waste receptacles and enclosures.
- Re-envision the Rainier Trail by the Train Depot, including the possibility of removing the extra rail in order to widen sidewalk and increase the potential use of this area.
- Consider opportunities for wayfinding and gateway signage.
- Examine opportunities in public spaces to add weather covering to create all weather places to gather.
- Identify areas in need of safer, effective pedestrian lighting and identify what those fixtures should look like so that they blend in with current aesthetics.
- Identify congregating spaces and determine the type and style of street furniture appropriate to create a consistent aesthetic.
- Present opportunities for quality sidewalk/ public area plantings to help provide buffer against Front Street traffic. If street trees are appropriate, recommend one tree species to replace existing trees.

3. DIA should increase partnerships with other community groups to establish programs for showcasing a lively and beautified downtown.

The task force recognized that vitality is achieved through partnership and the city government should not be expected to do it all. Many ongoing activities and programs are needed to ensure continued vibrancy. Because of the ongoing nature of these programs, the task force felt that the Downtown Issaquah Association (DIA) is best positioned to take the lead on most of these recommendations, while relying on their partnerships with downtown commercial property owners, businesses, city government, city commissions, and other community groups.

- **With the Economic Vitality Commission's assistance, DIA should identify underutilized spaces within the CBD and develop a plan for more vibrant uses.** This could include creating seating in areas adjacent to Pedestrian Park, Depot Park, 1st Place NW, and businesses.
- **The City should work with and provide permits for the Chamber to expand the Salmon Days festival to take better advantage of Confluence Park. Vendor tents and booths should be removed to Rainier Boulevard, with live music and other activities additive to the festival on Front Street to connect Confluence Park and the Hatchery.** DIA should support the Chamber in the expansion by partnering to help program new Front Street activities as appropriate.

- **In partnership, DIA and the City should improve the exterior of the Historic Shell Station to create a better public gathering space.**
- **DIA should work with property owners and the City to identify places for ambiance lighting on buildings, in trees and/or awnings.**
- DIA should develop an incentive program to encourage engaging window displays, weather protection, and better façade maintenance including the addition of lighting.

Photo Credit: Jeff Youngstrom

- DIA should partner with the City, commercial downtown property owners, and businesses to help relocate office uses to other spaces and recruit retail businesses and a coffee shop.
- DIA should work with the Old Town residents, volunteers, and others to have more regularly scheduled clean-up days. Consider once or even twice a month.
- As part of their annual clean-up day, the Downtown Issaquah Association (DIA) should also partner with Recology/ the city's waste collector on contract to organize pressure washing of the city sidewalks.
- DIA should work more with downtown patrons and businesses to educate them about the location of available parking and how short of a walk it really is.

Conclusion

Focusing on enhancing the aesthetics of downtown, removing barriers to downtown competitiveness, and creating inviting places that serve locals, engage the public, and facilitate interactions among community members, will ensure a vital downtown for years to come. This can be achieved with making revisions to the Old Town Plan and Design Standards, creating a streetscape plan to ensure a cohesive, well-designed downtown, and by engaging community partners to implement ongoing programs.

Appendix A:

Olde Town Vitality Task Force Walking Assessment

Amenity	Rating					Comments
Scale:	**1=** Needs Improvement/Need more.			**3=** Satisfactory/OK.		**5=** Great
Parks, Plazas	1	2	3	4	5	
Architecture	1	2	3	4	5	
Private Outdoor Dining	1	2	3	4	5	
Landscaping/ Trees/ Planters	1	2	3	4	5	
Public Benches/ Tables	1	2	3	4	5	
Lighting-- pedestrian	1	2	3	4	5	
Public Art- murals, Sculptures, etc	1	2	3	4	5	
Scale and Size of Buildings	1	2	3	4	5	
Building facades-- well maintained, attractive?	1	2	3	4	5	
Busines window displays	1	2	3	4	5	
Business signage	1	2	3	4	5	
Lighting- building, business	1	2	3	4	5	
Overall Aesthetic	1	2	3	4	5	
Sidewalks- well maintained, consistent, wide enough, etc	1	2	3	4	5	
Street crossings-- easy, safe, well marked, etc	1	2	3	4	5	
Parking	1	2	3	4	5	
Wifi accessibility	1	2	3	4	5	
Weather Protection	1	2	3	4	5	
Overall feeling of safety	1	2	3	4	5	

Questions to consider

Does the amenity meet the needs of downtown? Is there enough of the amenity?

Is the amenity of quality and well-maintained?

Business and services mix- What types of businesses do you see? Do the businesses meet the needs of the downtown? What is the proportion of closed businesses to open businesses?

Do you see people on the street? What do you think attracted them to Olde Town?

Appendix B: **Old Town Vitality Task Force Activities Inventory**

Audiences	Confluence Park	Fish Hatchery	Front Street / Downtown in general	Pedestrian Park	Shell Station	Train Depot
Young families	Growing season: P Patch Summer: Art Camps (City) Weddings (City) June: Fenders on Front St (DIA)	Fall: School Programs (FISH) Salmon Days (Chamber) Summer: Kids camps (FISH) Spring: Kid's camps (FISH)	Summer: Art Walk (DIA/ArtEAST) Concerts on the Green (City) Kid's camps (VT) June Nat'l Music Day (DIA) Year Round: VT, Library October: Zombie Walk (DIA) Salmon Days (Chamber)	Summer: Art Walk (DIA/artEAST) Nat'l Music Day (DIA) Fall: Salmon Days (Chamber)	Winter: Caroling (DIA) June: Fenders (DIA) Salmon Days (Chamber)	Summer: Trolley rides (IHM) Kid's camps (VT) July 4 Heritage Day (IHM) Live music weekly (IHM) School Year: Kid's program (ISD) Depot play dates (IHM) Kids birthday parties (IHM)
Teens	Summer: Art Camps (City) Weddings (City) June: Fenders on Front St (DIA)	Fall: Salmon Days (Chamber)	Year round: Classes/Camps/plays (VT) (artEast, various businesses) Spring: Clean up (DIA) Fall: Zombie Walk (DIA)	Summer: Nat'l Music Day (DIA) Fall: Salmon Days (Chamber)	Salmon Days (Chamber)	
Adults w/o children present	Summer: Weddings Growing season: P-patch June: Fenders on Front St (DIA)	Fall: Salmon Days (Chamber)	Spring: Wine Walk (DIA) Summer: Art Walk (DIA/ArtEAST) Fall: October-Zombie Walk (DIA) Salmon Days (Chamber) 2-4 times per year Pub Crawl (DIA, IHM)	Summer: Nat'l Music Day (DIA) Art Walk (DIA/artEAST) Fall: Salmon Days (Chamber)	Summer: Weekly Garage Blues series (DIA) Spring: Wine Walks (DIA) Salmon Days (Chamber)	Year round monthly: Open Mic
Seniors	Growing Season: P-Patch Summer: Weddings (City) June: Fenders on Front St (DIA)	Fall: Salmon Days (Chamber)	Year Round: Village Theatre, artEAST August: Festival of Musicals (VT) Summer: Concerts on the Green (City) Salmon Days (Chamber)	Summer: Nat'l Music Day (DIA) Art Walk (DIA/artEAST) Fall: Salmon Days (Chamber)	Summer: Weekly Garage Blues Concerts (DIA) Spring: Wine Walks (DIA) Salmon Days (Chamber)	Year round weekly: open mic

Key:

Activities that take place in the fall.
Activities that take place in the winter.
Activities that take place in the spring.
Activities that take place in the summer.

DIA = Downtown Issaquah Association
FISH = Friends of the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery
IHM = Issaquah History Museums
ISD = Issaquah School District

#1: Update the Old Town Plan and Design Standards to increase the neighborhood's competitiveness for attracting private development.																
Recommendations:	**2016- 2019**				**2020-2024**					**2025-2031+**						
Increase base height from 45 feet to 50 feet to enable 4 story construction as the plan suggests. A higher base height will also facilitate the development of quality retail space on the first floor.	I															
Reduce parking requirements for on site mitigation by adopting the Central Issaquah Plan parking standards for development, while maintaining the exception for changes of use.	I															
Increase pervious surface allowance. Due to parcel size and historic nature of existing properties, consider an Issaquah Highlands model of allowing 100% on some parcels and less on others to average a certain percentage in all of the CBD. If this is not possible, then the City should increase the pervious surface maximum from 85% to 95% as it is in the Urban Core zone of Central Issaquah .	I															
Keep the step back requirement to preserve views and pedestrian scale development, but allow flexibility in administration depending on parcel size. Consider putting a standard in place that will allow the city to waive the step back requirement for gains in architectural design, parking, or other community benefits	I															
Encourage sidewalk use and activities by eliminating the requirement for special use permits. Replace the system with a streamlined Sidewalk Use District, similar to what exists in the Highlands, Rowley Development Agreement Area, and the CIP.	I	I														
Adopt the Central Issaquah sign standards for Old Town, but maintain the design standards that preserve Old Town's historic character. Consider additional provisions for chain or corporate signs to incorporate something quintessential "Issaquah" in the sign.	I															
Develop more parking downtown in a consolidated location to compensate for fewer spaces required on site. This could include installing back-in and angled parking along Bush Street, proximate to Front Street, utilizing empty lots, and/or building a parking garage.	P	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I							
Provide an efficient process for variance and exception regarding the color palette. For example: notice the neighbors if something on the restricted colors list is proposed. Barring objections, grant the variance. Also, make the color palette available online.	I															
Increase ease of access to Senior Center, Memorial Park, and additional parking by extending Alder across rail road tracks.	P	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I							
Update the color palette and review on a regular basis or every five years.	I					I					I					I
Allow for wayfinding of public and private interests in Old Town similar to the Central Issaquah Plan.	I															
Consider re-zoning East Sunset Way to allow for more stand-alone commercial uses and increased pervious surface maximums.	I															
Remove the "e" in the "Olde Town" name.	I															
P= Plan I=Implement																

#2. Create a consistent and well-designed streetscape by developing and implementing a streetscape plan.																
Recommendations:	**2016-2019**				**2020-2025**					**2025-2031+**						
Provide concept designs for specific underutilized areas such as the area behind Stan's leading towards Pedestrian Park/ around Depot Park and the entrance to the Salmon Hatchery	P	I	I	I												
Widen the sidewalks to establish a consistent sidewalk width as well as consistent paving materials and sidewalk color.	P	I	I	I	I	I										
Envision the design and use of public or quasi-public spaces with consolidation of waste receptacles and enclosures.	P	I	I	I												
Consider using art and lighting to create a pleasurable walking experience, with connections from Front Street to parking and other destinations in order to increase accessibility to existing parking.	P							I	I	I	I	I				
Examine opportunities to provide connections to amenities (for example: the Issaquah Creek, Memorial Field, the Salmon Hatchery, etc) just off Front Street to better incorporate them into downtown.	P				I	I	I	I	I							
Re-envision the Rainier Trail by the Train Depot, including the possibility of removing the extra rail in order to widen sidewalk and increase the potential use of this area.	P				I	I	I	I	I							
Consider opportunities for wayfinding and gateway signage.	P				I	I	I	I	I							
Examine opportunities in public spaces to add weather covering to create all weather places to gather.	P	I	I	I												
Identify areas in need of safer, effective pedestrian lighting and identify what those fixtures should look like so that they blend in with current aesthetics.	P	I	I	I												
Identify congregating spaces and determine the type and style of street furniture appropriate to create a consistent aesthetic.	P	I	I	I												
Present opportunities for quality sidewalk/ public area plantings to help provide buffer against Front Street traffic. If street trees are appropriate, recommend one tree species to replace existing trees	P	I	I	I	I	I										
P= Plan I= Implement																

#3. DIA should increase partnerships with other community groups to establish programs for showcasing a lively and beautified downtown.																
Recommendations:	**2016-2019**				**2020-2024**					**2025-2031+**						
With the Economic Vitality Commission's assistance, DIA should identify underutilized spaces within the CBD and develop a plan for more vibrant uses. This could include creating seating in areas adjacent to Pedestrian Park, Depot Park, 1st Place NW, and businesses	I	I	I	I	I											
The City should work with and provide permits for the Chamber to expand the Salmon Days festival to take better advantage of Confluence Park. Vendor tents and booths should be removed to Rainier Boulevard, with live music and other activities additive to the festival on Front Street to connect Confluence Park and the Hatchery. DIA should support the Chamber in the expansion by partnering to help program new Front Street activities as appropriate.	I	I	I	I	I											
In partnership, DIA and the City should improve the exterior of the Historic Shell Station to create a better public gathering space.	I	I														
DIA should work with property owners and the City to identify places for ambiance lighting on buildings, in trees and/or awnings	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I							
DIA should develop an incentive program to encourage engaging window displays, weather protection, and better façade maintenance including the addition of lighting.	P	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
DIA should partner with the City, commercial downtown property owners, and businesses to help relocate office uses to other spaces and recruit retail businesses and a coffee shop.	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I					
DIA should work with the Old Town residents, volunteers, and others to have more regularly scheduled clean-up days. Consider once or even twice a month.	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
As part of their annual clean-up day, the Downtown Issaquah Association (DIA) should also partner with Recology/ the city's waste collector on contract to organize pressure washing of the city sidewalks.	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
DIA should work more with downtown patrons and businesses to educate them about the location of available parking and how of a walk it really is.	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
P= Plan I= Implement																