



## **WEST KELSO SUBAREA PLAN**

### **Existing Conditions Report**

**CITY OF KELSO, WASHINGTON**

**October, 2015**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction .....	1
2.0	Land Use.....	2
2.1	Existing Land Use .....	2
2.2	Zoning.....	5
2.3	Transportation .....	7
3.0	Built Environment .....	11
3.1	Streetscape and Public Space Assessment .....	25
3.2	City Owned Properties .....	30
3.3	Infrastructure and Capital Plans .....	31
3.4	Housing .....	32
4.0	Challenges and Opportunities.....	35
4.1	Stakeholder Interviews .....	36
5.0	Economic Conditions + Market Analysis .....	39
6.0	Comprehensive Plan and Development Code Audit.....	44
6.1	Introduction .....	44
6.2	Comprehensive Plan .....	45
6.3	Development Code .....	48
6.4	Summary .....	49
7.0	Organizational Capacity .....	49

### APPENDIX B – Kelso Pressure Zones

### APPENDIX C – Sewer Service Areas

### APPENDIX C – SSWM Changes to Zoning Designations

## EXHIBIT LIST

Exhibit 1. Regional Context .....	2
Exhibit 2. West Kelso Land Use Acres (2015).....	2
Exhibit 3. Distribution of West Kelso Land Use (2015) .....	3
Exhibit 4. West Kelso Land Use Map (2015) .....	4
Exhibit 5. West Kelso Structure Build Date .....	5
Exhibit 6. West Kelso Zoning Acres (2015).....	6
Exhibit 7. West Kelso Zoning Map (2015) .....	6
Exhibit 8. Regional Connectivity.....	7
Exhibit 9. Summary of Roadway Characteristics.....	8

Exhibit 10. Transit Service .....	9
Exhibit 11. West Main Street Design Plans .....	10
Exhibit 12. Realignment Phase 1 and 2 – Before and After .....	10
Exhibit 13. Urban Design Existing Conditions .....	11
Exhibit 14. Historic Buildings on Main St at 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue .....	12
Exhibit 15. Older commercial buildings on Main St between 5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> Avenues.....	13
Exhibit 16. Single-story commercial construction with metal mansard-like roofs and pedestrian-oriented windows .....	14
Exhibit 17. New development on Main Street.....	14
Exhibit 18. Auto-oriented commercial development on W Cowlitz Way near Main St .....	15
Exhibit 19. Commercial building appropriate for light industrial uses on Catlin St, currently used as a brewery distribution center .....	15
Exhibit 20. The Nat Smith House, a Historic Register Property .....	16
Exhibit 21. Vacant house on NW 3 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue .....	16
Exhibit 22. River levee (as seen from 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue at Main St) acts as a barrier.....	17
Exhibit 23. A hill provides a backdrop to northwestern West Kelso .....	18
Exhibit 24. W Cowlitz Way/Highway 4 Bridge underpass.....	18
Exhibit 25. Perception of crime beneath the bridges is a barrier to riverfront enjoyment.....	19
Exhibit 26. Highway signs on the Allen Street Bridge .....	19
Exhibit 27. Cowlitz Way/Highway 4 Bridge entry into West Kelso .....	20
Exhibit 28. Historic two-story building with mural acts as gateway .....	20
Exhibit 29. Washington Way/W Cowlitz Way at Catlin St. entry to West Kelso .....	21
Exhibit 30. Existing gateway feature at W Cowlitz Way/Washington Way and W Main St .....	21
Exhibit 31. View from the Allen St Bridge into West Kelso.....	22
Exhibit 32. Views from Trail .....	22
Exhibit 33. Senior Center and Spray Park .....	23
Exhibit 34. Historic building with mural.....	23
Exhibit 35. New landscaped areas around Main St Realignment .....	24
Exhibit 36. Unique Decorations .....	24
Exhibit 37. West Kelso Existing Streetscape (2015) .....	25
Exhibit 38. West Kelso Parks Inventory .....	28
Exhibit 39. Public Space Assessment .....	29
Exhibit 40. West Kelso Trails .....	30
Exhibit 41. Public Open Space at West Main and Catlin.....	31
Exhibit 42. Housing Tenure .....	33
Exhibit 43. West Kelso Household Type, 2010.....	34
Exhibit 44. Average Household Size, 2010.....	34
Exhibit 45. Age of Householders, 2010.....	35
Exhibit 46. Poverty Levels .....	39
Exhibit 47. Income Trends.....	39

Exhibit 48. Employment Trends .....	40
Exhibit 49. Median Income in West Kelso, Kelso, and Longview.....	40
Exhibit 50. Publicly-owned Parcels in West Kelso (2015) .....	42
Exhibit 51. Redevelopable Parcels in West Kelso (2015) .....	43
Exhibit 52. Assessed Value per Square Foot in West Kelso (2015) .....	44
Exhibit 53. Kelso Comprehensive Plan Audit .....	45
Exhibit 54. Kelso Development Code Audit .....	48
Exhibit 55. West Kelso Development Standards.....	49

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The West Kelso neighborhood is a unique part of Kelso, Washington. It is located on the west side of the Cowlitz River in isolation from the rest of the City, which is situated along the east bank. The neighborhood is surrounded on three sides by the neighboring city of Longview. The area contains residential uses, commercial uses, government/institutional uses, and is frequented by vehicle traffic traveling across the bridges and through West Kelso to get to Longview, Kelso, I-5 and other areas.

Given that West Kelso is a uniquely situated part of the City, there is recognition that it needs its own existing conditions analysis and planning process to ensure future needs are addressed under a common neighborhood vision. This report takes a look at the existing conditions of West Kelso's land use and built environment, and considers the challenges and opportunities that the area faces. In addition, an audit of existing policies and regulations identifies how the City's Comprehensive Plan and code apply to West Kelso and sets the stage for pinpointing additional policy and regulation needs.



**West Main Realignment (West Kelso, 2015)**

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

West Kelso is situated between I-5 and downtown Kelso to the east, and the City of Longview to the west. The West Kelso neighborhood accommodates two major east/west connections between I-5, the City of Longview, and the Washington Coast and as a result experiences high traffic volumes. The larger region, which includes the Cities of Kelso and Longview, share an interest in West Kelso, and regional partnerships may have a positive impact on the revitalization of West Kelso.

### Exhibit 1. Regional Context



Source: Google Earth, 2015; BERK, 2015.

## 2.0 LAND USE

This chapter provides information about land use patterns and trends in West Kelso, including existing land uses, adopted land use plans, and zoning. This inventory relies primarily on information from the City of Kelso and the Cowlitz County Assessor. Also presented are population, housing, and job estimates by the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM), American Community Survey (ACS), and Employment Security Department (ESD).

### 2.1 Existing Land Use

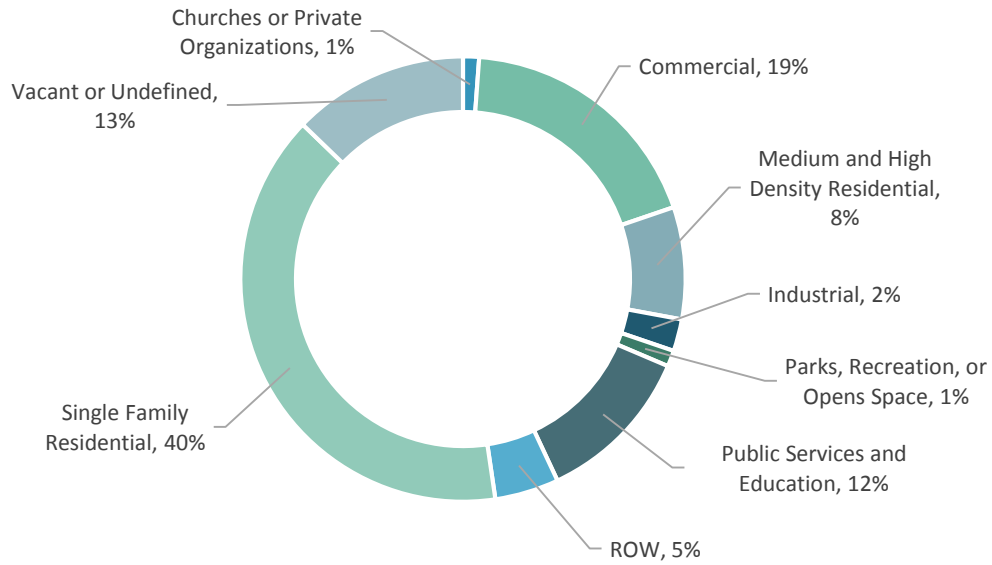
West Kelso’s current land use pattern is dominated by single family residential and commercial uses. Vacant land, public services, and education are also significant. See Exhibit 2 for acres by land use category and Exhibit 3 Exhibit 4 for distribution of land use acres.

Exhibit 2. West Kelso Land Use Acres (2015)

Category	Acres
Churches or Private Organizations	1
Commercial	16
Medium and High Density Residential	7
Industrial	2
Parks, Recreation, or Opens Space	1
Public Services and Education	10
ROW	4
Single Family Residential	34
Vacant or Undefined	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>

Source: City of Kelso, 2015; BERK, 2015.

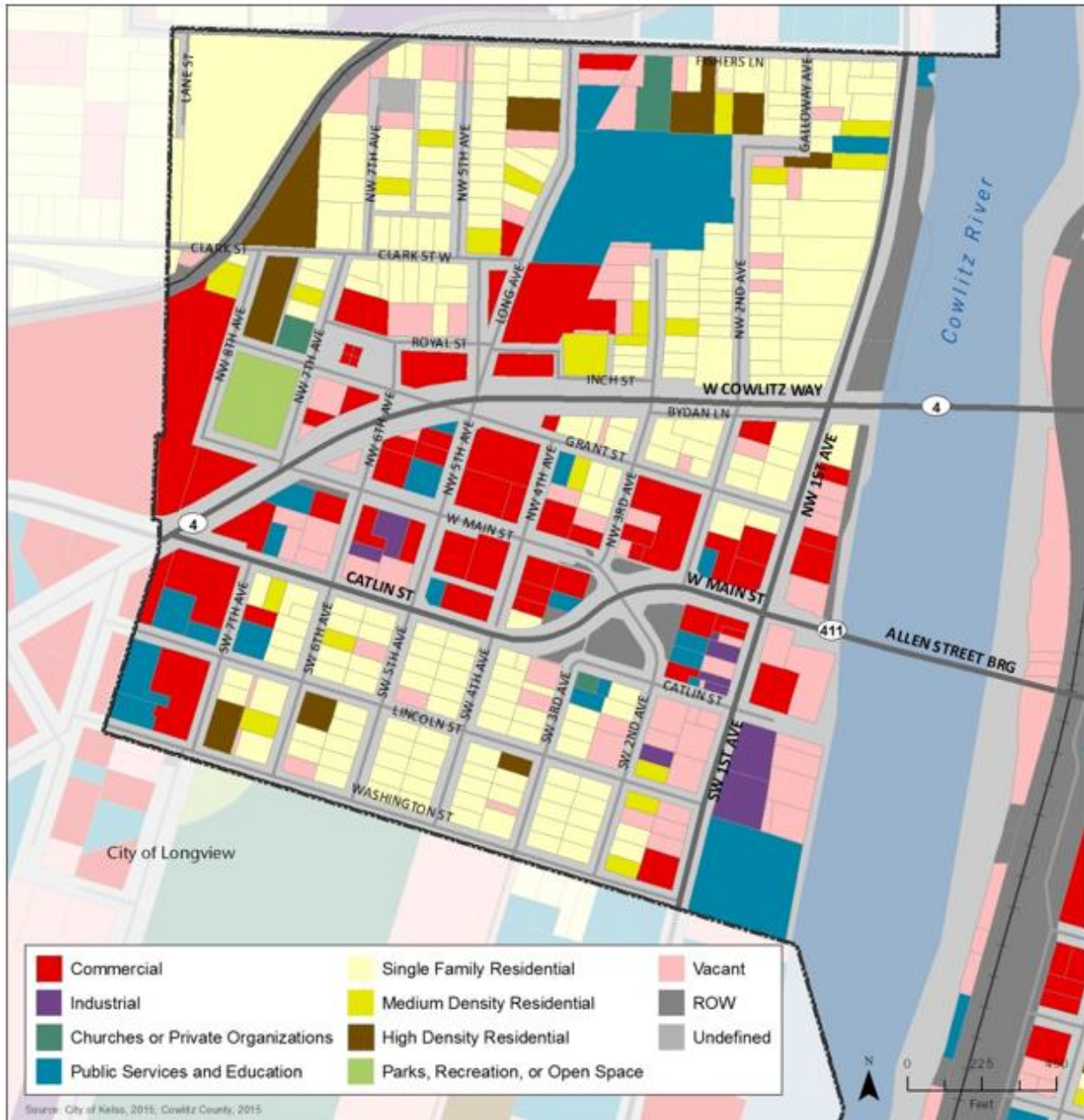
**Exhibit 3. Distribution of West Kelso Land Use (2015)**



Source: City of Kelso, 2015; BERK, 2015.

Exhibit 4 shows existing land use by parcel for the West Kelso neighborhood. Eleven acres of land in the district is classified as vacant or undeveloped, which includes parking lots in the commercial areas that are serving land use on-site. Additional on-street parking may allow for the conversion of surface parking lots to buildings.

Exhibit 4. West Kelso Land Use Map (2015)



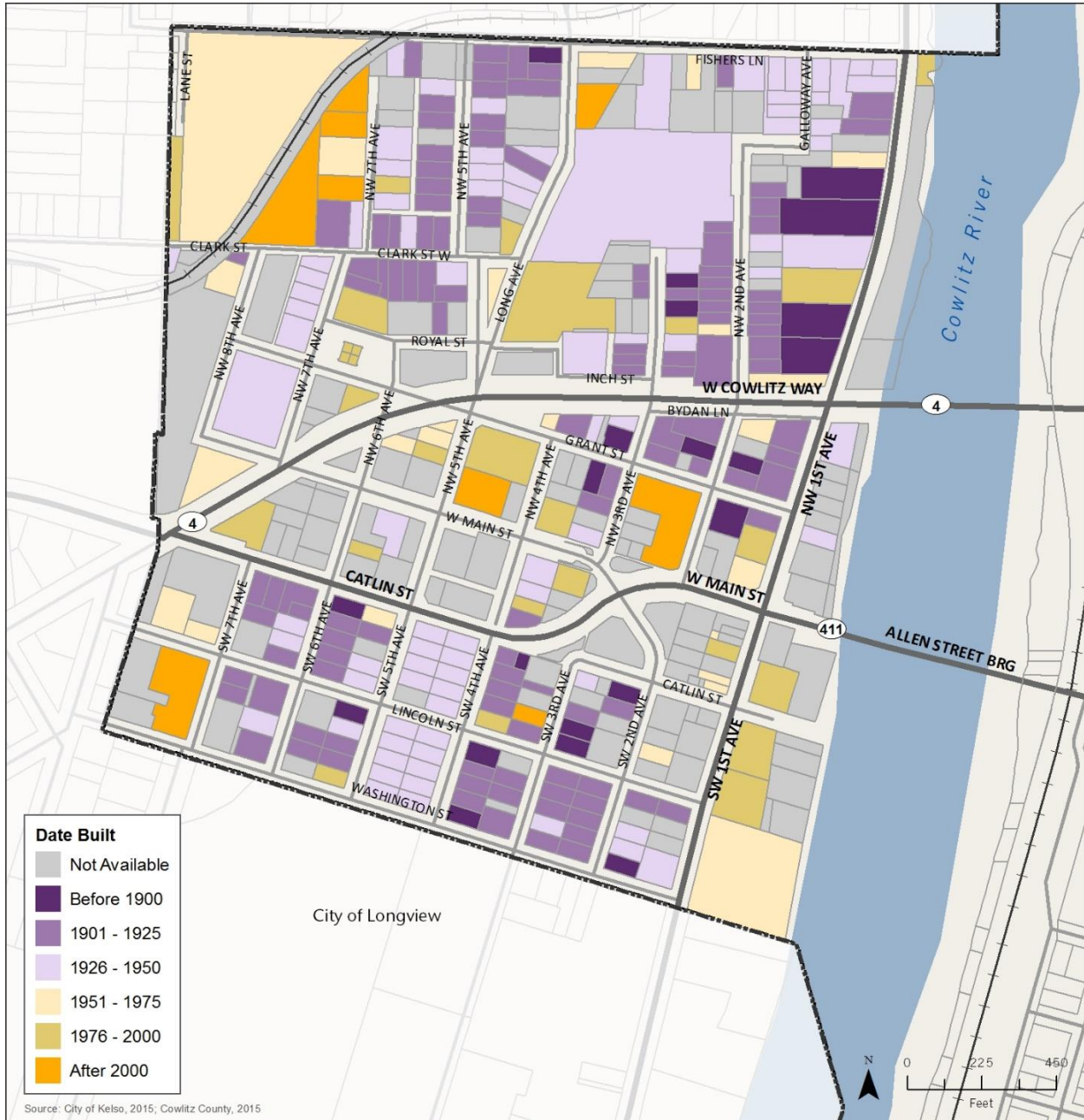
Source: City of Kelso, 2015; BERK, 2015.

Surrounding land uses include Longview’s commercial area along Route 4 and Washington Way and Downtown Kelso across the Cowlitz River to the east. Lower density residential is located in Longview on the hill to the north of West Kelso, with some open space and the Cowlitz County Conference Center and Jail to the south.

The majority of existing structures in West Kelso are older. Exhibit 5 shows the decade structures were built, with the majority of parcels showing build dates before 1950.



**Exhibit 5. West Kelso Structure Build Date**



Source: City of Kelso, 2015; US Census Bureau, 2010; BERK, 2015.

**2.2 Zoning**

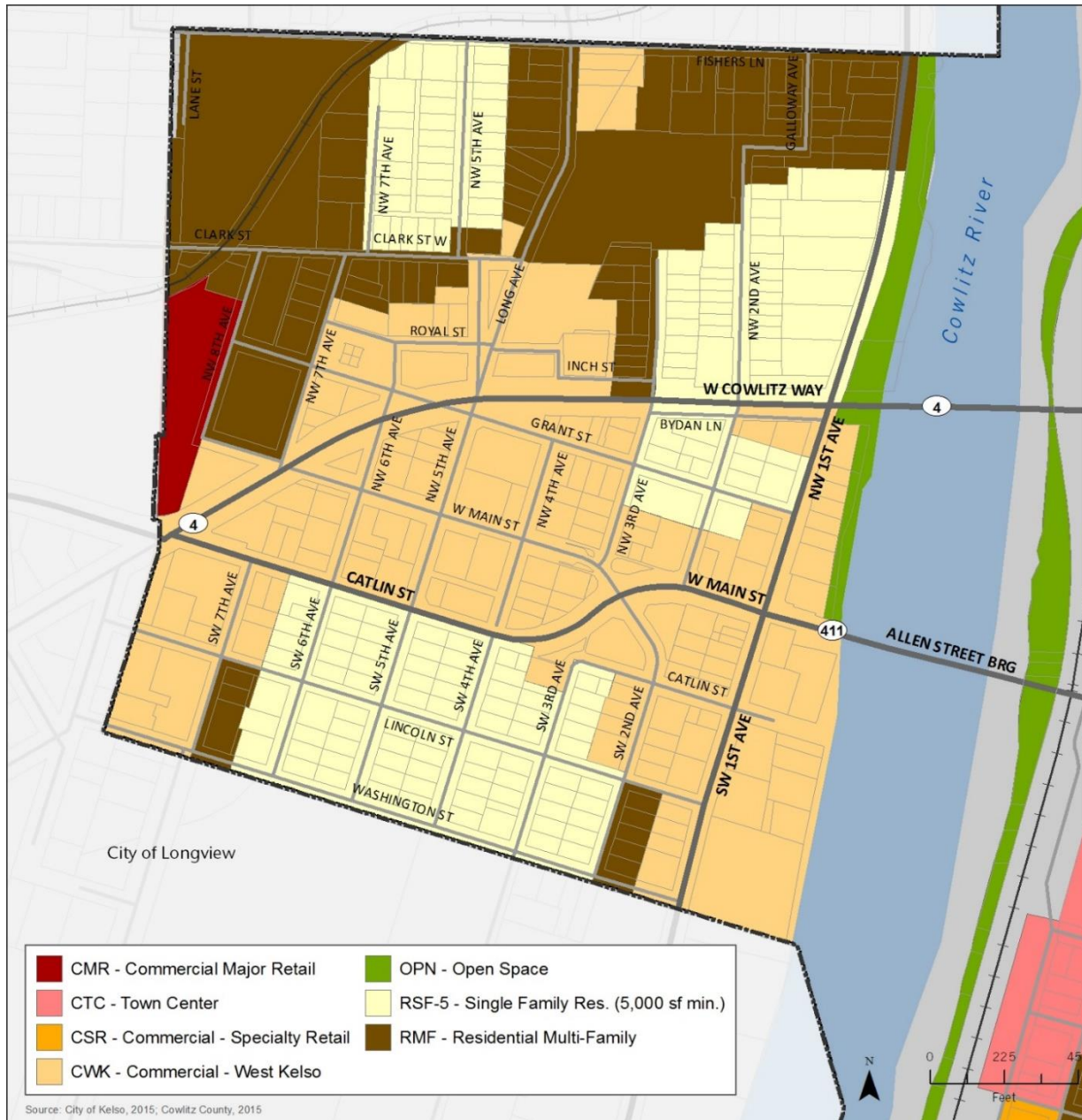
Zoning districts implement the future land use map, which designates the entirety of West Kelso as a special study area per the 2015 Comprehensive Plan update. The special study area designation will be amended with an updated future land use map for the district based on the completion of the West Kelso Subarea Plan. Current zoning acreage in West Kelso is shown in Exhibit 6 and a map of current zoning is shown in Exhibit 7.

Exhibit 6. West Kelso Zoning Acres (2015)

Category	Acres
<b>CWK: Commercial West Kelso</b>	41
<b>OPN: Open Space</b>	0.5
<b>RMF: Residential Multi-Family</b>	20
<b>RSF-5: Single Family Residential (5,000 s.f. min)</b>	23
<b>Total</b>	84

Source: City of Kelso, 2015; BERK, 2015.

Exhibit 7. West Kelso Zoning Map (2015)



Source: City of Kelso, 2015; Cowlitz County, 2015.

## 2.3 Transportation

### Regional Connectivity

Several major roadways are accessed from the West Kelso area (see Exhibit 8). Ocean Beach Highway (SR 4) continues from West Kelso to the west along the north side of the Columbia River to the Washington State coast. West Main Street transitions to Allen Street at the bridge over the Cowlitz River to the east. The I-5/Allen Street interchange is approximately one half-mile to the east. First Avenue (SR 411) continues south and connects directly to the SR 432/3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue interchange. To the north, 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue (SR 411) continues along the west side of the Cowlitz River adjacent to I-5 for approximately 20 miles to Vader, Washington.

**Exhibit 8. Regional Connectivity**



Source: Google Earth, 2015; BERK, 2015

### Functional Classification

The functional classification of a roadway is based on its characteristics and typical trip lengths and helps determine the quality of the facility for motor vehicle traffic and other modes. WSDOT and City of Kelso functional classifications for key roadways within the study area are shown in Exhibit 9. The City of Kelso defines these classifications as:

- Principal Arterial – Provides a high level of mobility for travel within the region. Access is generally limited to intersections with other arterials and collectors.
- Minor Arterial – Provides connections to major activity centers and provides access from the major arterial systems into sub-areas. Minor arterials serve through-traffic and provide direct access for commercial, industrial, office, and multi-family development.
- Collector – Connects arterial networks to each other and connects neighborhoods to commercial areas.

## Roadway Characteristics

Roadways were inventoried for characteristics such as a traffic volumes, speed limits, and number of lanes. Average daily traffic volumes were estimated from available 2009 count data or the WSDOT 2014 Annual Traffic Report. Roadway characteristics are provided in Exhibit 9.

**Exhibit 9. Summary of Roadway Characteristics**

Roadway	WSDOT Functional Classification	Kelso Functional Classification	Average Daily Traffic Volume	Typical Road Width (Lanes)
<b>Cowlitz Way (SR 4)</b>	Principal Arterial	Principal Arterial	33,000 South of Main St	4
<b>Washington Way</b>	Principal Arterial	Principal Arterial	18,800 South of Cowlitz	4
<b>Main Street</b>	Principal Arterial	Principal Arterial	13,500 East of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ave	5
<b>Main Street</b>	n/a	Minor Arterial	2,500 West of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ave	3
<b>Catlin Street</b>	Principal Arterial	Principal Arterial	3,000 East of 6 <sup>th</sup> Ave	3
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Avenue (SR 411)</b>	Minor Arterial	Minor Arterial	11,000 South of Main St	2
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Avenue</b>	n/a	Public Road	4,000 North of Main St	2
<b>7<sup>th</sup> Avenue</b>	n/a	Major Collector	3,000 South of Main St	2
<b>Long Avenue</b>	n/a	Major Collector	9,000 North of Cowlitz	2
<b>Fishers Lane</b>	n/a	Major Collector	6,000 West of 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue	2

Source: WSDOT 2014 Annual Traffic Report, 2009 and 2015 count data

## Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

The pedestrian network on public roadways within the study area consists of sidewalks and crosswalks on both sides of the street with a few notable gaps. First Avenue (SR 411) north of Grant Street has sidewalk only on the west side and Lincoln Street from 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue has sidewalk only on the north side. Major intersections in the study area provide marked crosswalks.

Bike lanes are provided along the new West Main Street-Catlin Street corridor. The remaining streets in the study area require bicyclists and motor vehicles to share the roadway. The Cowlitz River Dike Trail is a paved multi-use trail approximately 1.8 miles long that runs along the east bank of the Cowlitz River. The trail is accessible from the Allen Street Bridge or the Cowlitz Way (SR 4) Bridge and connects the north and south portions of the City of Kelso.

## Transit Service

River Cities Transit serves as the local public transportation system for the Cities of Longview and Kelso. Four transit routes provide service to West Kelso. Exhibit 10 summarizes the current bus routes serving the study area with a general description of the route, hours of operation, and peak hour headways. Route 45 provides weekday peak hour service only. Route 32 provides expanded service with 30 minute headways during weekday peak hours. In general, the bus routes follow a loop configuration with one-way service. The transit center is located at the 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Florida Street intersection in Longview.

**Exhibit 10. Transit Service**

Route #	Route Description	Hours of Operation	Headways
<b>32</b>	Connects West Longview, downtown Longview, Peace Health Medical campus, Lower Columbia CC, Expo Center, West Kelso and Triangle Mall	Mon-Fri 6:30 am-7:00 pm Saturday 8:00 am – 6:00 pm	60 minutes  Peak Service: 30 minute 10 am-5 pm Monday-Friday
<b>44</b>	Connects Three Rivers Mall, downtown Kelso, Amtrak train station, West Kelso, Lower Columbia CC, SR 432, downtown Longview	Mon-Fri 6:30 am-7:00 pm Saturday 8:00 am – 6:00 pm	60 minutes
<b>45</b>	Connects downtown Kelso, Amtrak train station, Kelso Hall of Justice, downtown Longview, Lower Columbia CC	Mon-Fri 10:00 am-5:00 pm	30 minute
<b>57</b>	Connects North Kelso, Kelso High School, Three Rivers Mall, downtown Kelso, Amtrak train station, downtown Longview and Triangle Mall	Mon-Fri 6:30 am-7:00 pm Saturday 8:00 am – 6:00 pm	60 minutes

Source: RiverCities Transit System Map, [www.rctransit.org](http://www.rctransit.org)

## Freight Facilities

Truck routes are designated by WSDOT to provide the efficient movement of heavy vehicles, while maintaining neighborhood livability, public safety, and minimizing maintenance costs of the roadway system. The designated WSDOT truck routes in the study area are the SR 4 (Cowlitz Way) – Washington Way corridor, SR 411 (1<sup>st</sup> Avenue), Main Street between 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenues, and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Main Street and Cowlitz Way.

Large trucks, defined as three or more axles, comprise between 1 to 5% of traffic volume on Main Street and Catlin Street. The percentage of large trucks at most intersections in the study area ranges from 1 to 3%, consistent with what is expected in the central business district and surrounding areas.

## West Main Street Realignment Project

The West Main Street Realignment project was designed to alleviate congestion, enhance community development and economic growth, improve safety, and improve access to the area for all users. Construction of the first phase of the project was completed in spring 2014. The project changed the alignment of West Main Street between the Ocean Beach Highway and the Allen Street Bridge to cross over to Catlin Street west of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. The new alignment was built with additional vehicle lanes,

sidewalks, bike lanes and landscaping. Traffic signals were installed at the new Main Street/Catlin Street/2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Catlin Street/5<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersections.

A review of historic and recent traffic count data shows the daily traffic volumes on Main Street east of Cowlitz Way have dropped from 13,000 vehicles in 2009 to 2,500 vehicles in 2015.

Catlin Street west of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue was built with a three-lane cross-section in the first phase as an interim improvement to fit within the existing right of way. The second phase of the project will widen Catlin Street to a five-lane cross-section with additional turn lanes at the Cowlitz Way approach. The complete design for the project (phase 1 + phase 2) is shown in Exhibit 11. Before and after photos are shown in Exhibit 12.

**Exhibit 11. West Main Street Design Plans**



**Exhibit 12. Realignment Phase 1 – Before and After**



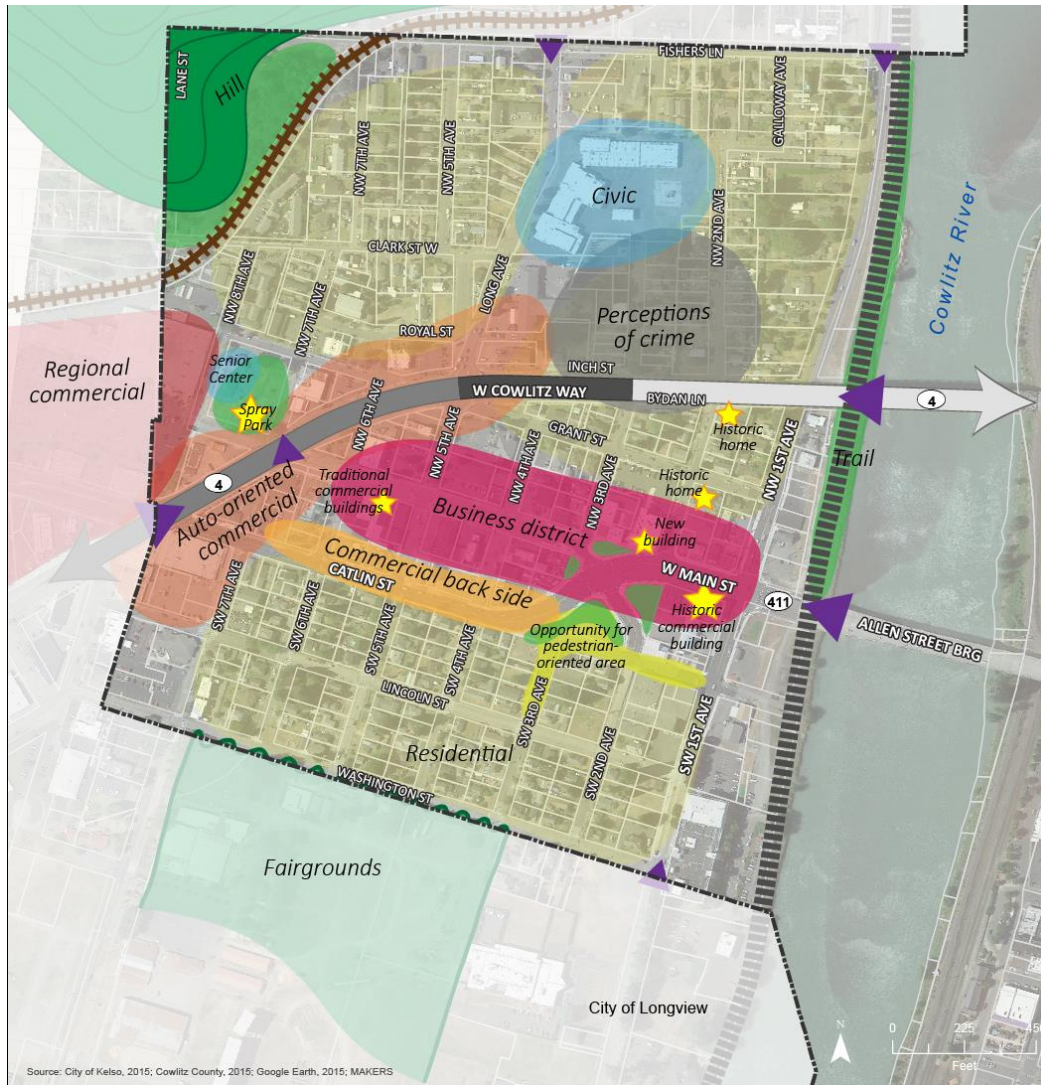
Source: City of Kelso, 2015.

### 3.0 BUILT ENVIRONMENT

#### Urban Design

Exhibit 13 highlights major concentrations of particular building types or land uses and unique features in the built environment. The following sections provide additional detail on West Kelso’s urban design characteristics.

**Exhibit 13. Urban Design Existing Conditions**



Source: City of Kelso, 2015; Cowlitz County, 2015; Google Earth, 2015; MAKERS

**Urban Design Existing Conditions**

**Character districts**

- Business district
- Commercial back side
- Auto-oriented commercial
- Regional commercial
- Perceptions of crime
- Civic
- Landscaped, natural, or open space
- Residential
- Opportunity for pedestrian-oriented area

**Edges and Barriers**

- Hill
- Railroad
- Levee along river
- 6-lane heavily trafficked road
- Ramp up to bridge; walls at street level
- Highway above ground
- Fairgrounds

**Gateways**

- Major gateways
- Minor gateways

**Landmarks**

- Major landmarks
- Minor landmarks

Source: MAKERS, 2015.

## Character

West Kelso has some distinct districts—a traditional business core, commercial areas, and residential zones—with unique characteristics. The overall character of West Kelso is also largely determined by the small block size, approximately 220 by 250-foot block faces, which greatly benefits West Kelso’s walkability. This is particularly true south of W Cowlitz Way. A side effect of small blocks is that storage and service-related land uses front streets, causing some side streets (the north-south Avenues) to have a “gritty” character. See “Commercial/Light Industrial Areas” below for further discussion on this. The major character concentrations are described below.

## Business District

The half block north and south of West Main Street between 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue is the traditional business core. Pedestrian-oriented, commercial buildings line Main St to create the feel of a traditional “main street.” Buildings set up to the street and the frequent zero-lot-line (i.e., side-by-side) buildings, and relatively wide sidewalks provide a comfortable walking environment. See Exhibit 14 and Exhibit 15.

The older West Kelso buildings are generally more modest than those found downtown, but are scaled for humans and provide good “bones” for a neighborhood center. Some buildings appear to be early 1900s western commercial buildings, such as those pictured below. They are generally one or two stories and have many of the characteristics that make a pleasant pedestrian environment, such as transparent storefronts, articulation at regular intervals, frequent entries, and building fronts built up to the sidewalk. However, several spaces in these buildings are currently vacant and the buildings appear to be in need of substantial rehabilitation.

**Exhibit 14. Historic Buildings on Main St at 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue**



Source: MAKERS, 2015.



**Exhibit 15. Older commercial buildings on Main St between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenues**



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

The buildings above, despite holding automotive-related uses, are pedestrian-oriented by providing visual interest through color and other articulation, allowing passersby to see the interiors of buildings, and building up to the sidewalk. These buildings also allow for land uses that aren't typically accommodated in a main street environment. In addition to automotive repair, these structures could be used for artisan manufacturing and production such as a brewery or winery, metal working, wood working, or glass blowing.

Other older commercial buildings on West Main Street are of modest construction with metal mansard-like roofs and generally plenty of windows, such as those pictured below in Exhibit 16.

**Exhibit 16. Single-story commercial construction with metal mansard-like roofs and pedestrian-oriented windows**



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

One new building (Exhibit 17) has taken cues from historic Kelso buildings in terms of scale, materials, and rhythm while providing a contemporary design.

**Exhibit 17. New development on Main Street**



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

The half block north of Catlin Street is an extension, or the “backside,” of the business core. It supports the existing businesses mostly with parking.

### Auto-Oriented Commercial

Many auto-oriented developments line W Cowlitz Way, especially on the west side of West Kelso (See Exhibit 18). These buildings are characterized by large setbacks from the street, drive-through uses, and/or parking between the business entry and the street.

**Exhibit 18. Auto-oriented commercial development on W Cowlitz Way near Main St**



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

### Commercial/Light Industrial Areas

Some West Kelso buildings look appropriate for light industrial uses with garage doors and sometimes long blank walls. These are generally located near the business core, a block or two back from Main Street or on side streets, without detracting from the main street environment (See Exhibit 19).

**Exhibit 19. Commercial building appropriate for light industrial uses on Catlin St, currently used as a brewery distribution center**



Source: Google Street View, 2013.

## Residential Areas

Residential areas lie north and south of the commercial core. Most homes are single family houses built between 1910 and 1925 of styles typical to the Pacific Northwest (e.g., bungalows). Some houses are dated from the late 1800s, two of which are listed on the Washington Historic Register (See Exhibit 20), and others are from the 1940s, 1950s and later. A few multifamily developments are interspersed in the neighborhood.

### Exhibit 20. The Nat Smith House, a Historic Register Property



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

Most residential areas are well-maintained, and because of the small blocks, human scale of the homes, and safe sidewalks, the neighborhoods feel comfortable and safe. However, between the Catlin Elementary School grounds and Cowlitz Way, a small residential area is challenged with some vacant and unkempt homes and a perception of crime as shown in Exhibit 21.

### Exhibit 21. Vacant house on NW 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

## Edges and Barriers

West Kelso is bounded by natural and built features. The Cowlitz River runs along the eastern boundary, separating West Kelso from downtown Kelso. Because the levee raises the ground level significantly around the river, the river is not an easily accessible amenity, and the levee acts as a barrier (See Exhibit 22).

**Exhibit 22. River levee (as seen from 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue at Main St) acts as a barrier**



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

To the northwest, a hill rises from West Kelso, referred to as Columbia Heights and Longview Heights. The steep topography, open space and stream corridor, and railroad tracks at the base of the hill form a semi-permeable boundary on the northwest side (See Exhibit 23). A regional, auto-oriented shopping mall bounds the western edge. Large public uses bound the subarea on the southern edge, including the Cowlitz County Fairgrounds and Conference Center, WSU Cowlitz County Extension, and the Cowlitz County Jail and District Court. These edges provide a clear distinction between West Kelso and neighboring areas and concentrate activity within the subarea.

**Exhibit 23. A hill provides a backdrop to northwestern West Kelso**



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

W Cowlitz Way/Highway 4 acts as an edge, or barrier in some cases, within West Kelso. As a six-lane highway, it serves automobiles. However, for pedestrians, it is difficult to cross and its sidewalks are rarely buffered from the traffic. Between Long Avenue and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Cowlitz Way transitions into an above ground bridge. On these blocks, it is too low to traverse beneath, so it is a barrier. Between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenues, it raises far enough above ground level to create a permeable edge between the residential area and the business core (See Exhibit 24).

**Exhibit 24. W Cowlitz Way/Highway 4 Bridge underpass**



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

A perception of a lack of safety beneath the bridges prevents people from using the trail along the levee that provides views such as those in Exhibit 25. This is a cultural or societal barrier to using the riverfront.

**Exhibit 25. Perception of crime beneath the bridges is a barrier to riverfront enjoyment**



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

Catlin Street, if expanded, may also act as a barrier. Its current width is appropriate for a pedestrian environment.

**Gateways**

Major gateways include the two bridges over the Cowlitz River, the Allen Street Bridge (See Exhibit 26), and the Cowlitz Way/Highway 4 Bridge. These two gateways carry people from Kelso and I-5 and naturally act as major signifiers of entry into a different neighborhood.

**Exhibit 26. Highway signs on the Allen Street Bridge**



Source: Google Earth, 2015.

**Exhibit 27. Cowlitz Way/Highway 4 Bridge entry into West Kelso**



Source: Google Earth, 2015.

Though the Allen Street Bridge signifies a transition between areas, the highway signs identify destinations further than West Kelso. The historic building on the southwest corner of Main St W and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue NW (Exhibit 28) is a prominent feature that more clearly marks entry into West Kelso by setting up a main street environment and suggesting that places of interest exist on Main St. The mural of a historic scene also helps to distinguish this gateway corner.

**Exhibit 28. Historic two-story building with mural acts as gateway**



Source: Google Earth, 2015.

For those arriving from communities further west, Highway 4/Ocean Beach Highway/Catlin Street at Washington Way/W Cowlitz Way is the major entrance into the neighborhood. Longview residents generally arrive at the same intersection but via Washington Way. This intersection (pictured below) is auto-oriented and does not suggest a change from the highway environment to West Kelso.



**Exhibit 29. Washington Way/W Cowlitz Way at Catlin St. entry to West Kelso**



Source: Google Street View, 2015.

Although the intersection above is the entrance to the neighborhood, an existing gateway feature one block northeast at the Washington Way and W Main Street intersection marks entry to the commercial main street (pictured below). This may be a more appropriate location for a gateway as Catlin Street is now the major through route for people not intending on stopping in West Kelso. This gateway, although not prominent, does suggest a change from the highway environment to a more human-scaled environment.

**Exhibit 30. Existing gateway feature at W Cowlitz Way/Washington Way and W Main St**



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

Some minor gateways to West Kelso include the following:

- Columbia Heights residents arrive on Long Avenue at Fishers Lane on the north side.
- Others from northern communities may arrive on Highway 411/1<sup>st</sup> Avenue NW at Fishers Lane.

- Some people coming from Longview may arrive via Highway 411/1<sup>st</sup> Avenue NW on the southeastern boundary.

## Views

Both bridges provide views of the river, Kelso, West Kelso, and surrounding hills as shown in Exhibit 31.

**Exhibit 31. View from the Allen St Bridge into West Kelso**



Source: Google Street View, 2012.

A trail running along the west side of the Cowlitz River also provides river views (See Exhibit 32).

**Exhibit 32. Views from Trail**



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

## Landmarks

Landmarks in or near West Kelso include:

- The Senior Center and Spray Park
- The historic building and mural on Main St near 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue
- The bridges
- The Cowlitz River
- The Columbia and Longview Hills
- Catlin Elementary School
- Red Leaf Coffee

- New landscaped areas around the Main St realignment
- Historic homes
- A variety of stores with unique, eye-catching decorations

**Exhibit 33. Senior Center and Spray Park**



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

**Exhibit 34. Historic building with mural**



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

**Exhibit 35. New landscaped areas around Main St Realignment**



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

**Exhibit 36. Unique Decorations**

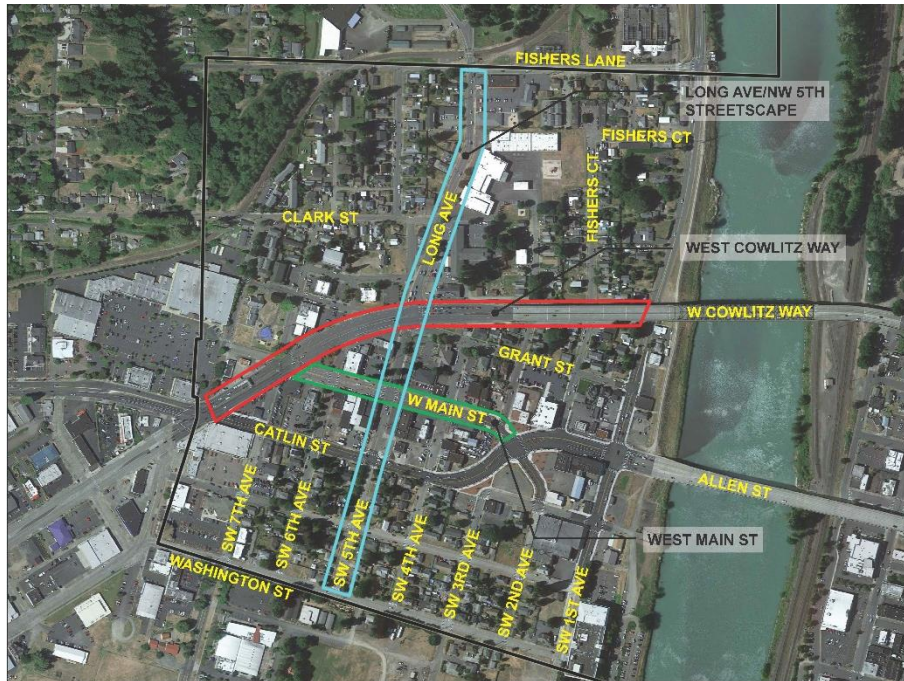


Source: MAKERS, 2015.

### 3.1 Streetscape and Public Space Assessment

This section describes the existing conditions of West Kelso's streetscape. Exhibit 37 highlights the major streetscapes in West Kelso as described below.

**Exhibit 37. West Kelso Existing Streetscape (2015)**



Source: MacKay Sposito, 2015.

#### Catlin Streetscape

##### Catlin from 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue to West Cowlitz Way or Washington Street

##### 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue to SW 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue

- Roadway improvements were recently completed and include intersection improvements at 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. The re-alignment of Caitlin St created opportunities for public open space along the eastern portion of the corridor and connects Downtown Kelso with The City of Longview. Improvements include 12' wide sidewalks, street trees and landscaping, bike lanes, street lighting, traffic striping, and pedestrian crossings improvements. The 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue roadway improvements extend from this intersection to the south to Lincoln Street and to the north 160' beyond Grant St. Roadway improvements include modifications to the intersection at Catlin and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and comprise of 10' wide sidewalks, street lighting, traffic striping, and pedestrian crossings. Street parking has not been provided as part of these improvements.
- There are a few structures that were built to the edge of the right of way along this section of the roadway providing an urban feel. On both sides of the roadway there are pockets of existing development where views are of open parking lots leaving gaps between the urban and suburban environment.
- As part of this roadway reconfiguration several publicly owned properties were created as shown in Exhibit 41. **Error! Reference source not found.** Parcel 1 is approximately .09 acres and is located at

the south corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave SW and W. Main Street and is mainly landscaped with mulch, shrubs and trees. Parcel 2 is a .4 acre gravel lot between 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SW and SW 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave and is comprised of a gravel lot surrounded on all sides with sidewalks ranging from 5-8'. New sidewalks include either a planter strip on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SW and street tree plantings on W Main Street. Parcel 3 is a .08 acre landscaped area that is adjacent to parcel 2 and is landscaped with mulch, shrubs and trees. Parcel 4 is a .07 acre landscaped area comprised of mulch, shrubs and trees. All four parcels have high visibility to Caitlin Street. At each intersection pedestrian improvements include new ADA ramps and frontage improvements on the north side of the roadway from 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW to West Cowlitz Way have recently been improved as part of the roadway project.

- There are very little structures that are or were built to the edge of the right of way along this section the majority of the roadway alignment adjacencies are comprised of open parking lots on the north side of the roadway or single family residences on the south side.

#### **SW 5<sup>th</sup> Ave to West Cowlitz Way or Washington Street**

- Roadway improvements for this section of alignment mainly comprise of ADA ramps at each intersection that tie into the existing 5' sidewalks. Between SW 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and SW 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue the sidewalks are separated from the roadway with a grass strip. The sidewalks at this intersection transition to attached sidewalks with street trees on the north side of West Main Street.
- There are businesses that front the right of way along this section on the north side of the road and over half of the roadway alignment adjacencies are open parking lots with low visual quality. The south side of Catlin for this section is comprised of mainly single family residences and a large retailer at the corner of Catlin and W Cowlitz Way/Washington Street.

#### **West Main Street/Catlin from 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to West Cowlitz Way/Washington Street**

- West Main Street is a four block area that extends from NW 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to W. Cowlitz Way/Washington Street. As part of the Catlin improvements the east end of West Main St. was modified to a 90 degree intersection creating a safer traffic condition and pedestrian environment. The roadway improvements at this intersection include pedestrian crossings, lighted intersection, street trees, landscaping, and a detached 6' wide sidewalk on both sides of the road for approximately 180 lineal feet that then ties into the existing 12' wide curb tight sidewalk. From 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue to West Cowlitz Way/Washington Street there are not any street trees or pedestrian amenities provided other than street lighting. Parallel parking is provided along this corridor.
- This corridor is currently being planned for a 'road diet' and will go from 2 lanes with turn pockets to a 2 lane road system. This will provide for additional parking, bike lanes, and streetscape increasing pedestrian connectivity.
- There are many structures that front the right of way on both the north and south side of the road along this section creating a strong urban presence throughout this corridor. There are adjacent open parking lots but many of these are screened with landscaping creating a low buffer.

#### **W Cowlitz Way Streetscape**

##### **West Cowlitz Way**

- This roadway is another primary access point connecting the City of Kelso to the City of Longview, Exhibit 2. Due to the bridge structure there isn't an interface with 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue NW, 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NW and NW 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. Pedestrian access along the bridge and roadway exist and include an attached 6' sidewalk on both sides of the roadway until Long Avenue or NW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. A transit stop has been provided on the south side of roadway close to the intersection of Grant Street and W Cowlitz

Way. Right of way landscaping consists of mown lawn areas that extend to the NW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue or Long Avenue intersection. It is at this intersection where the sidewalks on both the north and south sides of the roads vary and are either attached or become detached depending on the individual property owner and business type making pedestrian connectivity difficult.

- Most of the structures along this corridor are set back from the right of way and parking lots fronting the roadway dominate the visual experience and create a commercial experience for both the pedestrian and vehicle.

## Long Avenue/NW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Streetscape

### Fishers Lane to W Cowlitz Way

- This collector street provides a north south connection through the subarea and is an important connection between the Columbia Heights residential areas to the north to the Fairgrounds to the south. It also provides for connections to the adjacent neighborhoods, provides access to the elementary school, commercial areas and W Cowlitz Way, as shown in Exhibit 37.
- The right of way consists of detached and attached sidewalks and in some cases the sidewalk transitions to asphalt parking making pedestrian connectivity difficult in some areas. It was also noted that there were not many ADA ramps provided at the intersections and there is limited pedestrian amenities such as landscape areas and street trees. Where detached sidewalks exist mown lawn areas have been installed.

## Neighborhood Streetscapes

### Single Family Neighborhoods

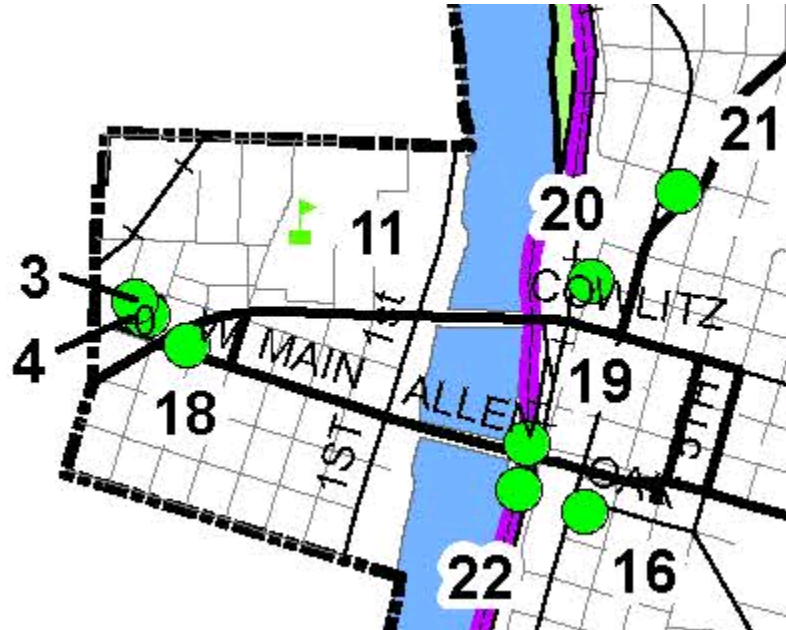
- There are several distinct single family neighborhoods in this subarea, Exhibit 3. The southern neighborhood is bounded by two east west roadways, Catlin Street and Washington Street and two north south roadways 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue SW and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW. Exhibit 3 area A. In this neighborhood all streets have 5' detached sidewalks providing strong pedestrian connections to the surrounding land uses. The landscape consists mainly of mown lawn areas with very few street trees or other pedestrian amenities provided.
- The north eastern neighborhood is bound by two north south roadways, NW 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and NW 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and two north south roadways, Grant Street and Fishers Lane. Exhibit 3 Area B. Both are similar to the southern neighborhood and provide pedestrian connectivity with limited street tree trees and other pedestrian amenities. However, as NW 1<sup>st</sup> Street or Hwy 411 continues to the north the sidewalk on the east side of the road is non-existent while there is a 5' attached sidewalk on the west side of the road that continues to the northern subarea boundary.
- The north western neighborhood is bound by two east west roadways, Fishers Lane and Royal Street and two north south roadways, Long Avenue and the railroad tracks. See Exhibit 3 area C. This combination of single and multifamily residences is similar to what we have seen in the other neighborhoods with detached sidewalks, mown tree lawn areas, and little pedestrian amenities. However, there is a small pocket of single family housing that is accessed by alleys that provide no pedestrian amenities, such as the north end of NW 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

## Public Space Assessment

### Parks

Exhibit 38 shows the inventory of city managed parks properties in West Kelso.

**Exhibit 38. West Kelso Parks Inventory**



Note: 3 – Catlin Hall, 4 – Catlin Spray Park, 11 – Catlin Elementary School, 18 – Triangle Park.

Source: City of Kelso, 2013; BERK, 2015.

### Catlin Rotary Spray Park

A small park exists as part of the senior center property and is called Catlin Rotary Spray Park as shown in Exhibit 39, Area D. This open space provides open lawn areas with a few large mature shade trees and pathways. The Rotary with assistance from the City maintains a small splash pad that is open during the summer months. Picnic tables and shelters have been added over time. This park is fairly visible from the adjacent roadways and is the only park in the subarea.

### Pocket Park/Triangle Park

There is a small pocket park at the North West corner of W Main St and W Cowlitz Way/Washington St, Exhibit 39, Area E. The .10 acre open space is currently used to identify the entrance to the City of Kelso. The open space consists of an entry monument sign, landscaping that includes shrubs, grasses and trees. All three sides of the open space are surrounded by 6' wide attached sidewalks. This pocket park is highly visible from both W Main St and W Cowlitz Way/Washington St.



Exhibit 39. Public Space Assessment



Source: Google Earth, 2015; MacKay Sposito, 2015

**Trails**

West Kelso has no existing formal trails, although there are plans to create a trail network throughout Kelso, which would include parts of West Kelso. Trails in West Kelso are shown in Exhibit 40, where the flag in West Kelso represents the school, the green represents public land, and the red represents potential trails (while blue shows existing trails).

Exhibit 40. West Kelso Trails



Note: Flag = school, Green = public land, Red = potential trail, Blue = existing trail.

Source: City of Kelso, 2013; BERK, 2015.

### 3.2 City Owned Properties

The City of Kelso acquired additional right-of-way (ROW) as part of the first phase of the West Main Street Realignment Project (See Exhibit 41). Parcels 1, 3, and 4 on Exhibit 41 were planted with landscaping and mulch as part of the project. Parcel 2 is currently part of the public ROW, but could be subdivided and redeveloped. Parcels 1, 3, and 4 could also support additional functions beyond landscaping such as places for public art, pedestrian seating areas, gateway elements, pedestrian furniture, and small events and activities.

In addition to the Kelso Senior Center and the Pocket Park, city-owned properties includes a stormwater facility on the southeast corner of SW 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Catlin Street, (Exhibit 39, Area F) and a gravel parking lot on the north east corner of this same intersection (Exhibit 39, Area G).

### Exhibit 41. Public Open Space at West Main and Catlin



Source: Google Earth, 2015; MacKay Sposito, 2015.

## 3.3 Infrastructure and Capital Plans

### Sanitary Sewer

The *2011 Kelso General Sewer and Facilities Plan* identified the sewer basin in the subarea as K-4 north of Grant Street and K-5 to the south of W Main Street (See Attachment A). Ninety percent of both basins flow into the Catlin pump station and then is pumped to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Interceptor. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue interceptor can flow to either the Kelso-Longview pump station or to the West Industrial Way Pump Station. Both of these stations are directly tied to the Three Rivers Regional Wastewater Treatment Plan. As part of the *2011 Kelso General Sewer and Facilities Plan* these basins, pump stations, and sewer system were evaluated and future demand was calculated based on 20-year growth projections.

These projections and recommendations are based on information that shows the collection system within the subarea is adequate to carry peak hour flows for a 25-year event. Pump station improvements and city wide sewer repairs.

The *2014-2019 Six Year Capital Improvement Project* identifies sewer system improvements within the subarea. Projects include the NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Sewer Replacement.

In summary, the subarea can accommodate the projected growth and there is capacity within the existing system for new development.

See Appendix C for the Kelso Sewer Service Area.

### Water System

The *2012 Water System Plan*, updated in 2013, describes the West Kelso subarea as located in pressure zone 188 (See Attachment B).

The subarea is serviced by the following:

- A 12-inch water line that cross both the Allen Street Bridge and W Cowlitz Way.
- Three 10" water lines that connect W Main to Grant Street and Cowlitz Way. In addition, there is a small section of 16" water line in Cowlitz Way running from SW 1st Avenue to SW 2nd Avenue.

- Water is then distributed throughout the area with a combination of 6" and 8" lines. The smaller 6" lines mainly serve the residential areas while the larger 8" lines service the commercial areas.

A 20-year forecast for water system demand for the Longview and Kelso urban areas is provided in the plan update. Based on population forecasts and demand, improvements have been provided.

The *2014-2019 Six Year Capital Improvement Project* identifies water system improvements within the subarea. Projects include:

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue intertie at Fishers Land to Cowlitz Way, where the existing intertie connection with Longview would be upsized to increase the flow capacity by replacing an 8" iron pipe with a new 12" main from Fishers Lane to Cowlitz Way by the way of 2nd Avenue.

In summary the subarea is adequately served to accommodate the projected growth of this area and there is capacity, both within the existing system and being built, for new development.

### Stormwater System

The *2013 Stormwater Management Plan*, Section A.2 West Kelso Watershed, provides a detailed description of the water basin and collection system for the subarea. The subarea is broken into four drainage basins, 34 a, b, c, and d. See Appendix D for more details.

- Basin 34a is located in the northwest corner of the subarea and drains the area north of Grant Street and west of Long view Avenue, to the west city limits and north to Fishers lane.
- Basin 34b is located in the northeast corner of the subarea and drains the area north of West Main St and east of 4th and Long Avenues and east to 1st Avenue NW and north to Fishers Lane, including the Catlin Elementary School.
- Basin 34c is located in the southwest corner of the subarea and drains the area south of Cowlitz Way and Grant Street, south to Washington St. and 8th Avenue east to 4th Avenue.
- Basin 34d is located in the southeast corner of the subarea and drains the area east of 4th Avenue and south of West Main St, east to 1st Avenue Northwest and south to Washington Street.

Recommendations in the report include requiring existing pipe to be replaced with large diameter pipes to better the flow conditions, backflow prevention devices installed at outfalls, and further investigation of catch basins to prevent surcharging during major flood event.

The *2014-2019 Six Year Capital Improvement Project* does not identify stormwater or system improvements within the subarea.

The stormwater system infrastructure, while adequate for new development, will need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to ensure that additional capacity to the system does not create surcharging or tax the downstream system. To reduce these impacts, low-impact stormwater practices should be implemented for all new development.

See Appendix D for the stormwater changes to zoning designations.

## 3.4 Housing

This section describes current household and housing stock characteristics, including units, occupancy, tenure, households, and affordability.

## Housing Stock

Much of West Kelso’s land is zoned for residential uses, both single family residential and multi-family. The existing land use pattern is mostly single family housing and vacant land surrounding the commercial corridor along Main Street and Washington Way that connects Longview to Downtown Kelso. The housing stock is generally in good condition, with some areas containing homes that have not been well maintained. A large majority of the residential structures in West Kelso were built before 1950, and very few structures have been built in the past few decades.

HUD’s Housing Affordability Index estimates that there is a household density of 3.6 households per acre in West Kelso, with a block density of about .45 blocks per acre. HUD also estimates that on average, there were about 5.4 rooms per unit for owner units and 3.9 rooms per unit for renter units. (HUD, 2015)

## Units

In 2010 there were 386 housing units in West Kelso, a 13% decrease from the 443 units in 2000. Around 92% of these units were occupied in 2010 (US Census Bureau, 2000 & 2010).

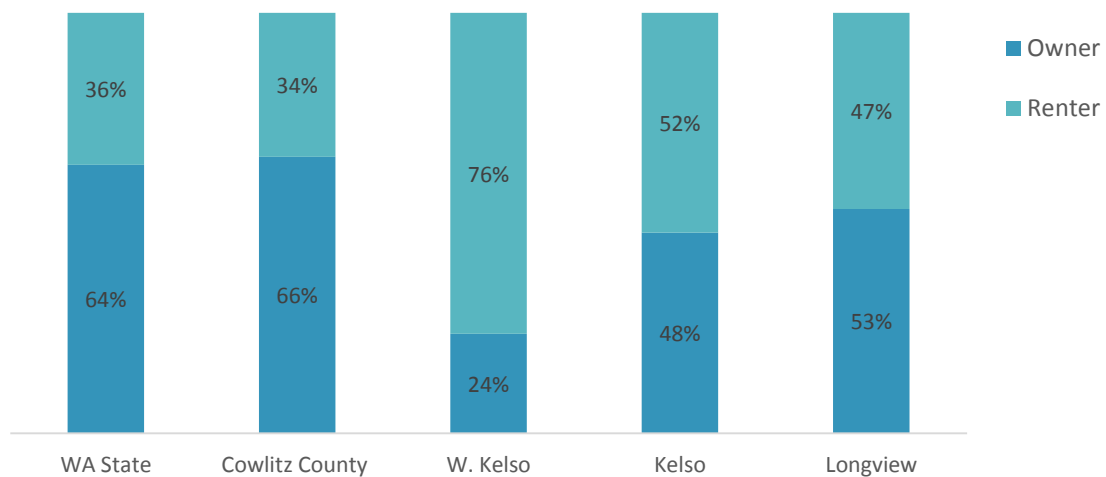
## Occupancy

The share of occupied (92%) versus vacant (8%) units was consistent between 2000 and 2010. This occupancy rate is similar to the citywide rates for Kelso and Longview, as well as the countywide rate for Cowlitz County. Overall population in occupied units decreased by 13% over the decade between 2000 and 2010, but there was a 3% increase in population living in owned units while there was an 18% decrease in population living in rental units (US Census Bureau, 2000 & 2010). The trends indicate a reduction in both the total number of housing units, most of which were rental units.

## Tenure

West Kelso’s population is largely renters, with a 2010 renter rate of 76% and owner rate of 24%. The neighborhood’s tenure of renters is notably higher than that of Kelso as a whole, Longview, Cowlitz County, and Washington State.

**Exhibit 42. Housing Tenure**



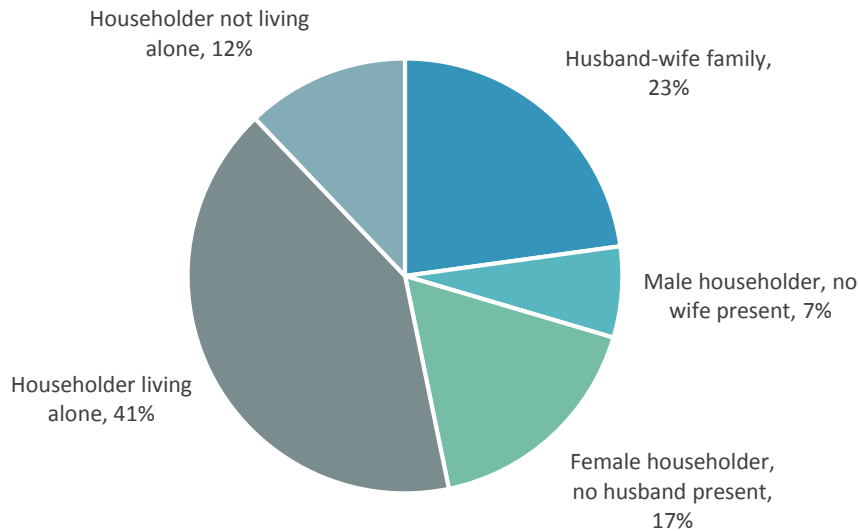
Source: U.S. Census, H3, 2010.

## Households

Around 39% of owner households in West Kelso are between the ages of 25 and 54, while 70% of renters are under the age of 54. Forty-seven percent of households are family households, while 53% are nonfamily households.

Exhibit 43 shows the household types in West Kelso in 2010. The predominant household type was householders living alone, followed by husband-wife families.

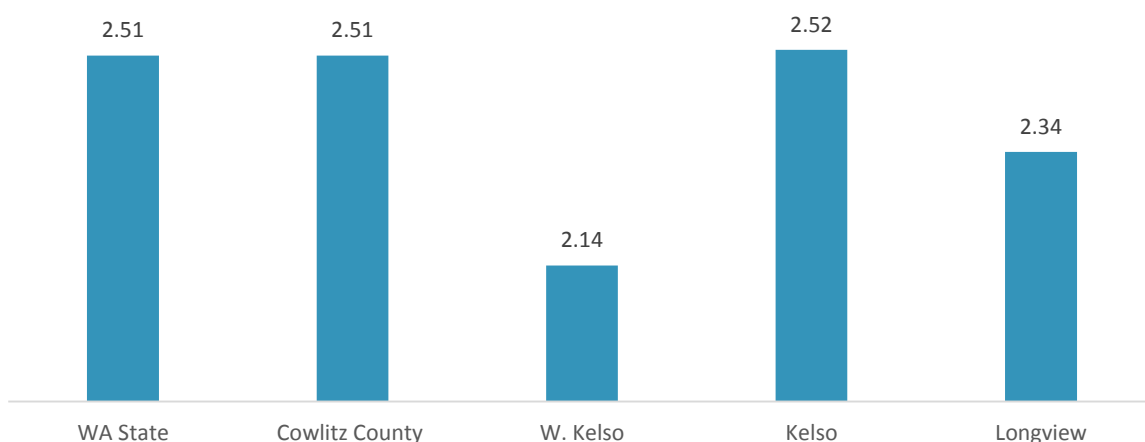
**Exhibit 43. West Kelso Household Type, 2010**



Source: U.S. Census, P18, 2010.

The most predominant household size for owners in West Kelso was two persons, while the most common household size for renters was one person. Average household size in 2010 for West Kelso was significantly lower than in Kelso, Longview, Cowlitz County, and Washington State, as shown in Exhibit 44. Although average household size remained the same in West Kelso between 2000 and 2010, owner-occupied households increased in average size by 19%. Over the same time period, renter-occupied households saw a 6% decrease in average size. (US Census Bureau, 2000 & 2010)

**Exhibit 44. Average Household Size, 2010**

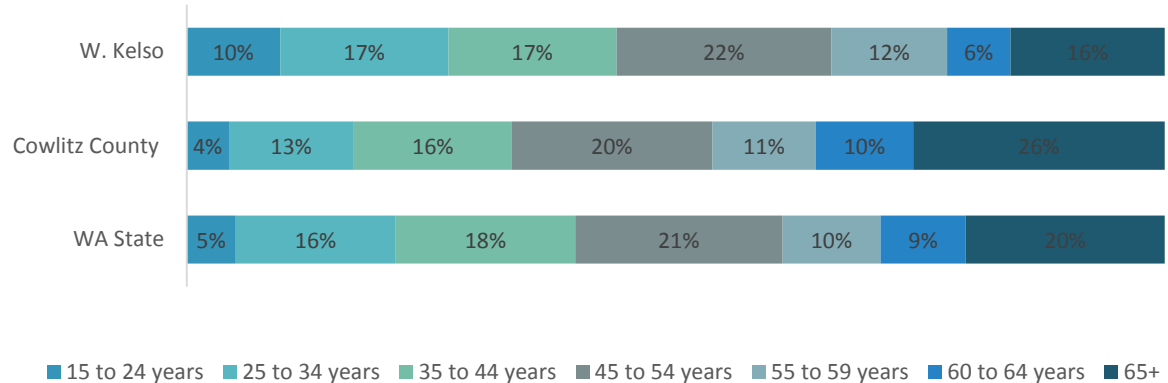


Source: U.S. Census, H11, 2010.

Data compiled by HUD from the 2012 5-year ACS estimates that average household size was 1.9 for owners in 2012 and 2.3 for renters in 2012.

The age of householders in West Kelso skewed slightly younger than the rest of Kelso, Longview, and Cowlitz County. The age of householder makeup was similar to that of Washington State. Exhibit 45 shows the distribution of householders by age. (US Census Bureau, 2000 & 2010)

**Exhibit 45. Age of Householders, 2010**



Source: US Census, H17, 2010.

## Affordability

According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Location Affordability Portal, a median-income family household in West Kelso has an average housing and transportation cost of 47% of household income. The index assumes a family of four people with two commuters, which is a larger household than the 2010 average of 2.14 in West Kelso. The estimated Area Median Income (AMI) for households of this type is \$46,568. Combined housing and transportation costs are estimated to be higher for owners than for renters for all household types analyzed by HUD (including low-income individuals, single professionals, median income families of four, dual professional families and others). (HUD, 2015)

## 4.0 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

West Kelso faces challenges for revitalizing the neighborhood, but with those challenges come opportunities to capitalize on existing assets in the revitalization effort.

### Challenges

- Older housing stock and lack of property and building maintenance in certain areas
- High traffic volumes decrease walkability and pedestrian mobility and comfort
- Perceptions of high drug use and crime
- Vacant commercial buildings and need for rehabilitation
- Lack of connections to the Waterfront
- Low incomes and high poverty rates
- Disproportionately low home ownership rates

## Opportunities

- West Main Streetscape Project
- West Main Street Realignment Phase II
- Publicly-owned properties at the intersection of Catlin Street and West Main Street may be redeveloped
- Historic buildings
- Fairgrounds Master Plan
- High traffic volumes
- Reinforce traditional street grid with pedestrian and bicycle improvements
- Connections to Longview and Downtown Kelso
- Volunteer Kelso and other community organizations
- Programming of public spaces and events
- Proximity to I-5

### 4.1 Stakeholder Interviews

The consultant team interviewed representatives from a variety of West Kelso stakeholder groups, including the school district, police, council members, volunteers, developers, and property owners. Stakeholders raised issues, opportunities, and priorities for West Kelso. The following themes reflect stakeholders' perceptions (i.e., they are not intended to represent factual evidence) and will be considered in the planning process (See Appendix A for the interview list).

## Challenges

### Crime and Safety

The residential area on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenues and the alley between Catlin Elementary School and Highway 4/W Cowlitz Way, locally referred to as "Methlehem," is a prominent issue for all stakeholders. Opinions about this area include:

- Building a walking culture is difficult because it does not feel safe to walk around.
- Businesses may not move into the area until it is cleaned up.
- Kelso's crime rate is higher than other communities, and its crimes are typically related to drugs or I-5 corridor problems. However, violent crime has decreased, and there have been no homicides in "Methlehem" since 2006. Some stakeholders felt drug issues were no worse in Kelso than elsewhere in the nation.
- Landlords and homeowners should maintain the homes better and perform background checks when evaluating renters.
- Hypodermic needles are sometimes found on the elementary school grounds. Stakeholders are concerned about the children who walk home through this area.
- Some stakeholders perceive that the problems have intensified since a homeless shelter opened nearby, but others say the area has improved over the years.



- Some recommend replacing existing housing with condos, restaurants, affordable housing, and/or parks but agree that this approach would likely push crime elsewhere.
- Some focused on addressing the root causes of the crime by focusing on rehabilitation, counseling, and social services. Some have heard that service agencies place ex-convicts and ex-homeless people in the neighborhood and would like to see this more distributed.

### **Middle Class Attraction and Housing**

West Kelso needs to attract more middle class residents. Young adults have few job opportunities in the area, and the community needs a more diverse housing stock. In particular, the area lacks condos or other housing types appropriate for younger adults wishing for a smaller footprint and less maintenance than a house. A sense of safety and community amenities would also help attract a middle class.

### **Parks**

West Kelso lacks parks, especially small parks for community gathering and kids play. The Spray Park, although a great amenity, is overcrowded during the summer. Desired activities include a playground, community garden, nature walk, educational natural area (e.g., pond), barbeque pits, picnic area, movies in the park, skate-park, and kids' entertainment.

### **Mobility**

Safe and comfortable walking routes are desired throughout West Kelso. Sidewalks need improvement. Walking routes to schools should be a priority.

Cowlitz Transit has been improving, but some stakeholders believe further improvements are needed to better serve community members. Some ideas include a fare-less ride and a short local express route that connects major destinations (e.g., grocery store, medical center) to shorten the ride time.

Some noted a need for more parking.

### **Youth Activities**

Youth have few entertainment opportunities in the area. Red Leaf Coffee, the theater at the mall, and the Spray Park are some of the places they tend to gather.

### **Urban Design**

Some stakeholders mentioned a desire for aesthetically pleasing, iconic urban design elements like the Sundial Bridge in Redding, CA.

### **Main St and Catlin St**

The image of W Main Street is improving. Many years ago, it was the entertainment district for loggers, and "seedy" uses have slowly been replaced by other businesses. However, some buildings on W Main Street are in need of upkeep or improvements.

A particular issue relates to the historic building on Main Street near 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. During the realignment, businesses left the historic building. Preservation of the historic building is important, but at the same time, the upgrades needed may be prohibitively expensive.

Businesses appreciate the automobile traffic coming from West Longview. However, stakeholders held varying opinions on the recent W Main Street realignment. Some believe that traffic flows better, some believe it created two viable commercial corridors, some appreciate the landscaped plantings, and others feel it physically divided the community.

If the Catlin Street improvement project receives funding, residential buildings along Catlin Street would be removed. Some stakeholders would like to consider commercial zoning along Catlin Street but are also concerned about the small area this may leave for the residential blocks to the south. In addition, a street name change should be considered for the western portion of Catlin Street, perhaps to “Allen Street.”

## Assets and Opportunities

### Kelso Schools

Kelso has great schools and a strong culture around them. The “We are Kelso” phrase, originating from Friday night football, has become a slogan and symbol of community pride envied by neighboring communities. The schools also have innovative programs like gardening.

### Local Small Businesses

Local small businesses are appreciated by the community. Stakeholders would like to see the existing businesses promoted and new businesses drawn to West Kelso. A few noted a desire for “cool” new businesses like mobile food vendors.

A Merchants Association existed briefly during the realignment project, but otherwise, the West Kelso businesses do not seem to pool resources. The Downtown Association tends to work only east of the river.

### Wildlife, the River, Hunting, and Fishing

The Cowlitz River is an unrealized asset and could be used for active recreation, fishing, nature viewing, trails, etc. Boat launches and places for safe play along the water are desired. Views of the river could be appreciated from tall condos. Access and views to the water are limited because of the dyke. Use of the riverside has been declining with people fishing less and joggers avoiding the trail because of fear of crime under the bridges.

In the past, the nearby wilderness, hunting, and fishing opportunities provided a strong basis for Kelso residents’ culture. However, new land access fees have limited access to timberlands, and parking fees have discouraged fishing. That said, hunters from Portland and Seattle often travel to the Kelso area for hunting opportunities.

### Other

- The Senior Center was recently remodeled and serves community functions well with a nice kitchen.
- The Foster Farms Plant provides many jobs and increases the racial and ethnic make-up of the community.
- The Expo Center at the Fairgrounds provides a venue for large events. A hotel and conference center has been proposed near the fairgrounds.
- The proximity to Portland and Seattle is appreciated.
- Tam O’Shanter Park in eastern Kelso is seen as a great asset.

### Public Engagement Opportunities

Stakeholders also provided advice on the most effective ways to involve people in this planning process. Ideas include:

- Advertise events on the Volunteer Kelso Facebook page.
- Provide free items and food at events.

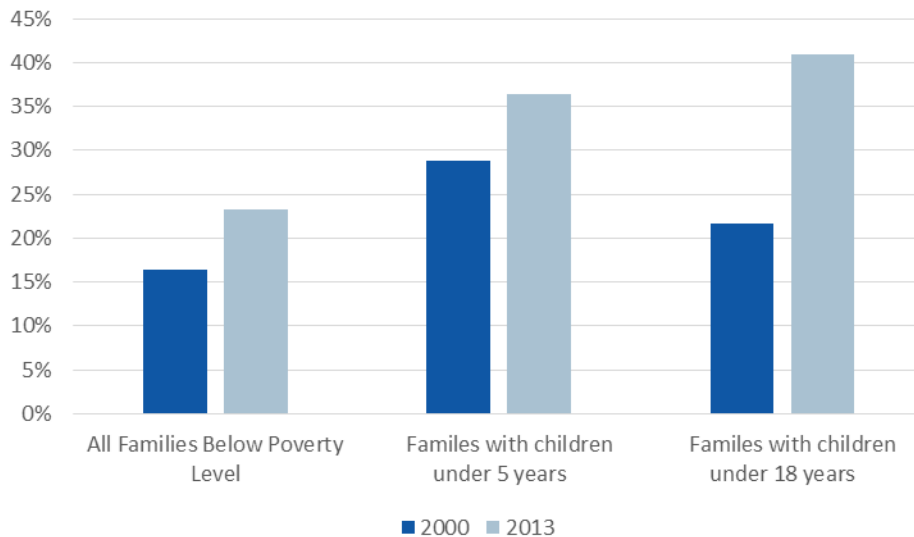
- Offer kids activities at events.
- Tie the process to cleanup of the neighborhood.
- Attend a Rotary meeting: Thursdays at noon at the Elks building.
- Attend a School Board meeting: Monday evenings at 7pm.
- Involve other organizations, including the Rotary Club, Kelso Downtown Revitalization, South Kelso Neighborhood Association, Volunteer Kelso, the Lions Club, the Kiwanis Club, the Senior Center, and the Downtown Association.
- Host a coffee talk at Red Leaf Coffee.
- Have a booth or some kind of presence at the Kelso Highlander Festival at Tam O’Shanter Park and High School: held in September.

## 5.0 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS + MARKET ANALYSIS

### Economic Conditions

Economic conditions in West Kelso are challenged by the low household incomes, high poverty rates, and decreasing employment that characterize Kelso as a whole. Exhibit 46 shows an increase in poverty levels in every category between 2000 and 2010 for the City as a whole. The percentage of Kelso families with children under 18 living in poverty almost doubled between 2000 and 2010.

**Exhibit 46. Poverty Levels**



Source: Census, 2000 and 2010; 2015; BERK, 2015

Between 2000 and 2013 the median household income in Kelso grew less than \$6,000, or approximately 1.6% a year, to \$35,381. See Exhibit 47.

**Exhibit 47. Income Trends**

	2000	2013
<b>Per Capita Income</b>	\$15,162	\$16,431
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$29,722	\$35,381

<b>Median Family Income</b>	\$36,784	\$43,179
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Source: Census, 2000 and 2013; BERK, 2015

Between 2000 and 2013 the percentage of those over 16 in the workforce that are employed decreased 9% while the total number of unemployed almost doubled. See Exhibit 48.

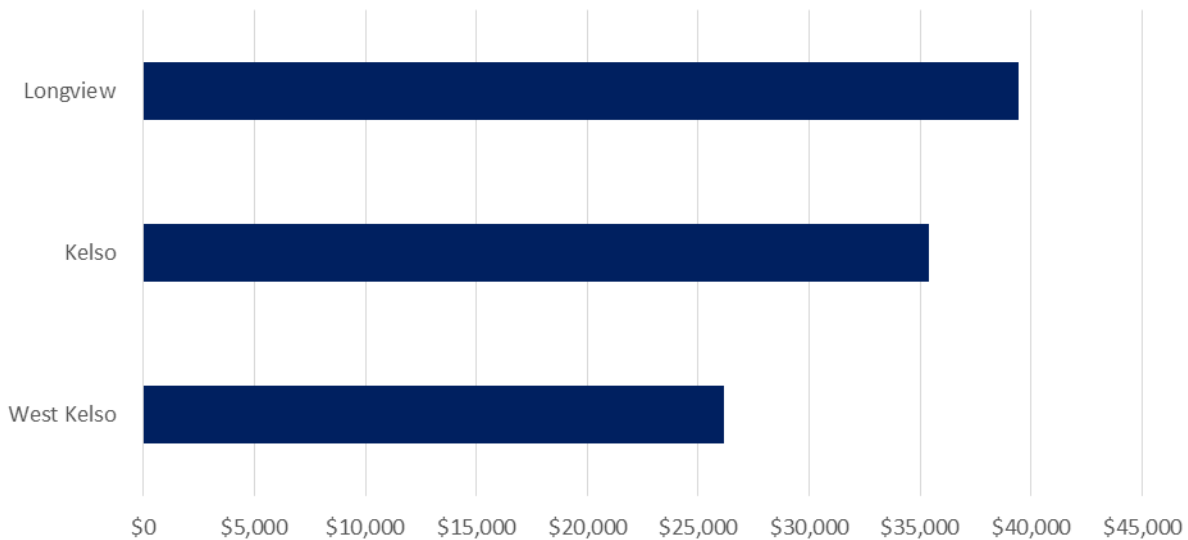
**Exhibit 48. Employment Trends**

	2000		2013	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Employed</b>	4,590	51%	3,922	42%
<b>Unemployed</b>	597	7%	1,051	11%

Source: Census, 2000 and 2010; BERK, 2015

West Kelso has a lower median income than the City of Kelso as a whole or the City of Longview, as shown in Exhibit 49. According to the 2013 American Community Survey, West Kelso has a median income of \$26,165, compared to \$35,381 in Kelso as a whole and \$39,422 in Longview.

**Exhibit 49. Median Income in West Kelso, Kelso, and Longview**



Source: Census ACS, 2013

## Market Conditions

Together, Kelso and Longview serve as the regional center for the surrounding western Cowlitz County communities. With additional shopping and services options located 45 minutes to the north in Centralia/Chehalis and 45 minutes or more to the south in Vancouver/Portland, regional residents obtain many goods and services from Kelso/Longview-based providers. This region-serving role explains the presence of the Three Rivers Mall and large scale retailers. Commercial uses in West Kelso are observed to be predominantly local-serving (a café, a few restaurants, auto parts and repair). Some establishments serve customers in the larger Kelso/Longview area, but likely do not attract significant numbers of customers from outside this immediate market. As noted in the Built Environment chapter, these establishments provide easy auto access while also providing a pedestrian-oriented feel.

The realignment of Catlin Street creates two distinct but closely connected commercial environments. Additional traffic along Catlin and across the Allen Street Bridge may create an opportunity to locate new auto-oriented, local- and region-serving retailers and service providers. The relatively quieter, pedestrian-

oriented feel of the repurposed Main Street may be conducive to establishments that meet the needs of local residents within walking distance. The Main Street environment, with its more distinctive buildings and defined, walkable corridor may attract more unique establishments that draw customers from the broader Kelso/Longview market area.

**Catlin Street.** As noted above, Catlin Street may lend itself to additional auto-oriented uses that capitalize on the region-serving role of the Kelso/Longview economy. This corridor, which is attractive for its central location and high volume of pass-through traffic, may attract uses such as pharmacies, banks and financial services firms, auto supply stores, gas stations, and limited service eateries.

Additional discussion with City staff and community stakeholders is needed to determine if these uses, which could add development and commercial activity in the area, are desired by the community. Additional market analysis could be conducted to better understand the unmet demand for such services in the Kelso/Longview area. Another consideration is the availability of comparable development opportunities elsewhere in Kelso or Longview.

**Main Street.** Residents of West Kelso are unable to obtain many daily goods and services in the immediate neighborhood. This may point to an opportunity to locate a grocery store, pharmacy, and additional food and drink establishments in the area. The low income noted in the Economic Conditions section above will create some challenges, and the viability of such commercial uses will be strengthened by ongoing efforts to improve the quality of the surrounding residential neighborhood and built environment around Main Street.

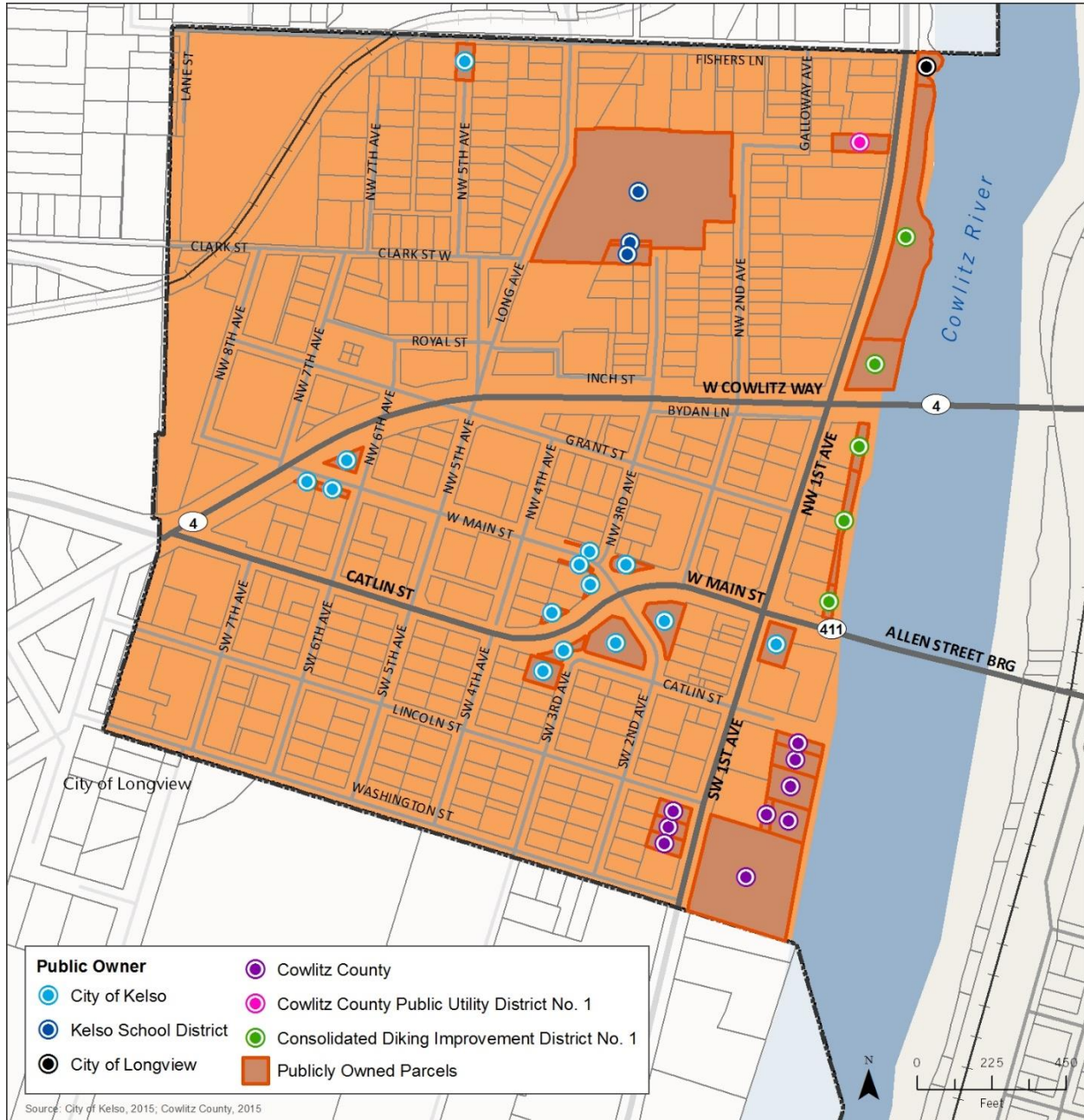
**Mixed use development.** None are observed in the study area today. Mixed use has a higher hurdle for development, as multiple uses can be difficult to finance and development costs are greater. Mixed use development would likely require a long wait for the market to mature.

#### **Business and property owners.**

Redevelopment in West Kelso may be challenging because of the large number of parcels and individual owners. In addition, current property owners may not want to sell or develop their land or have the means to finance substantial redevelopment.

Redevelopment opportunities in West Kelso include city-owned parcels (Exhibit 50), vacant lands, and parcels with low improvement values.

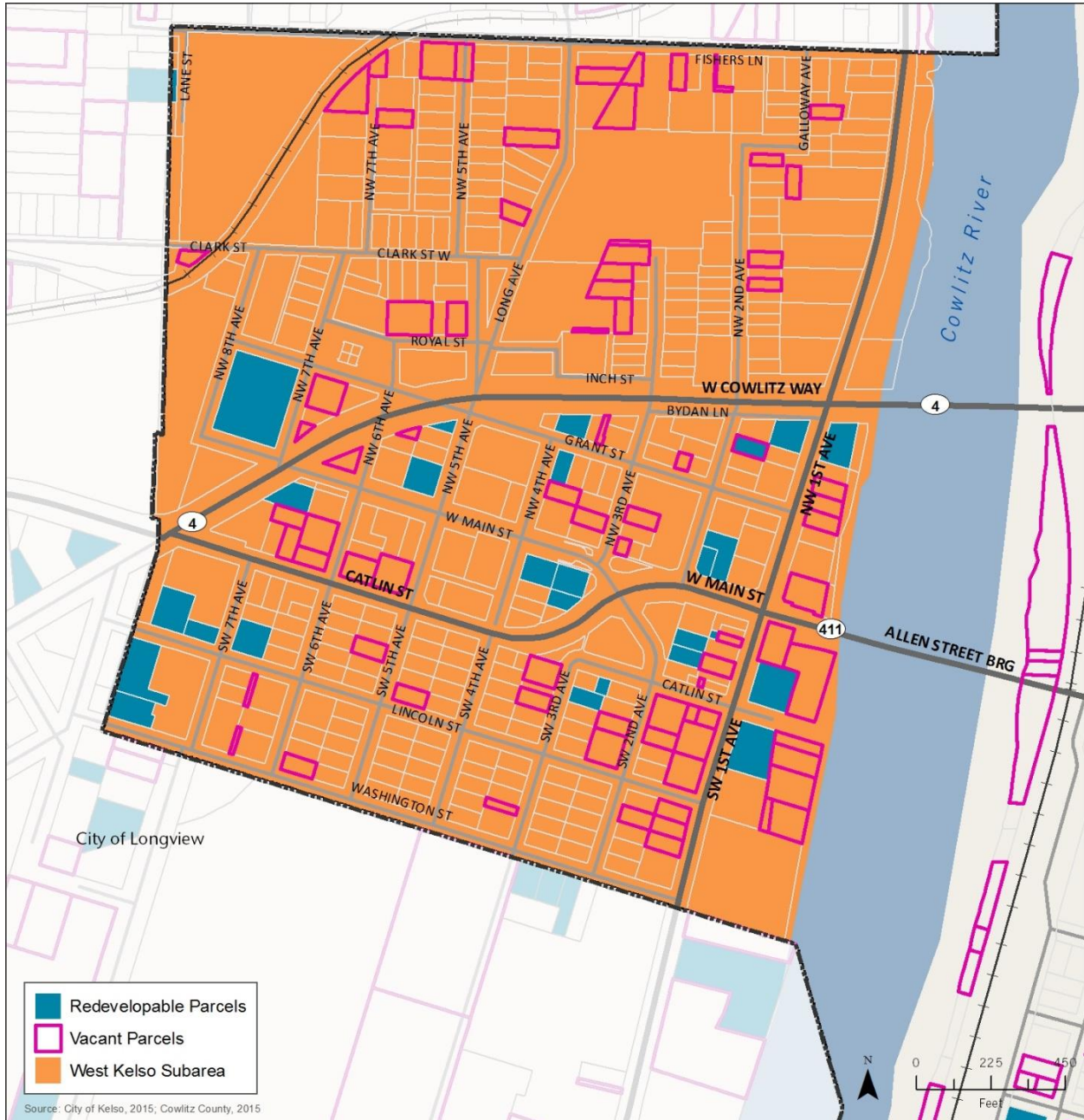
Exhibit 50. Publicly-owned Parcels in West Kelso (2015)



Source: City of Kelso, 2015; Cowlitz County, 2015; BERK, 2015.

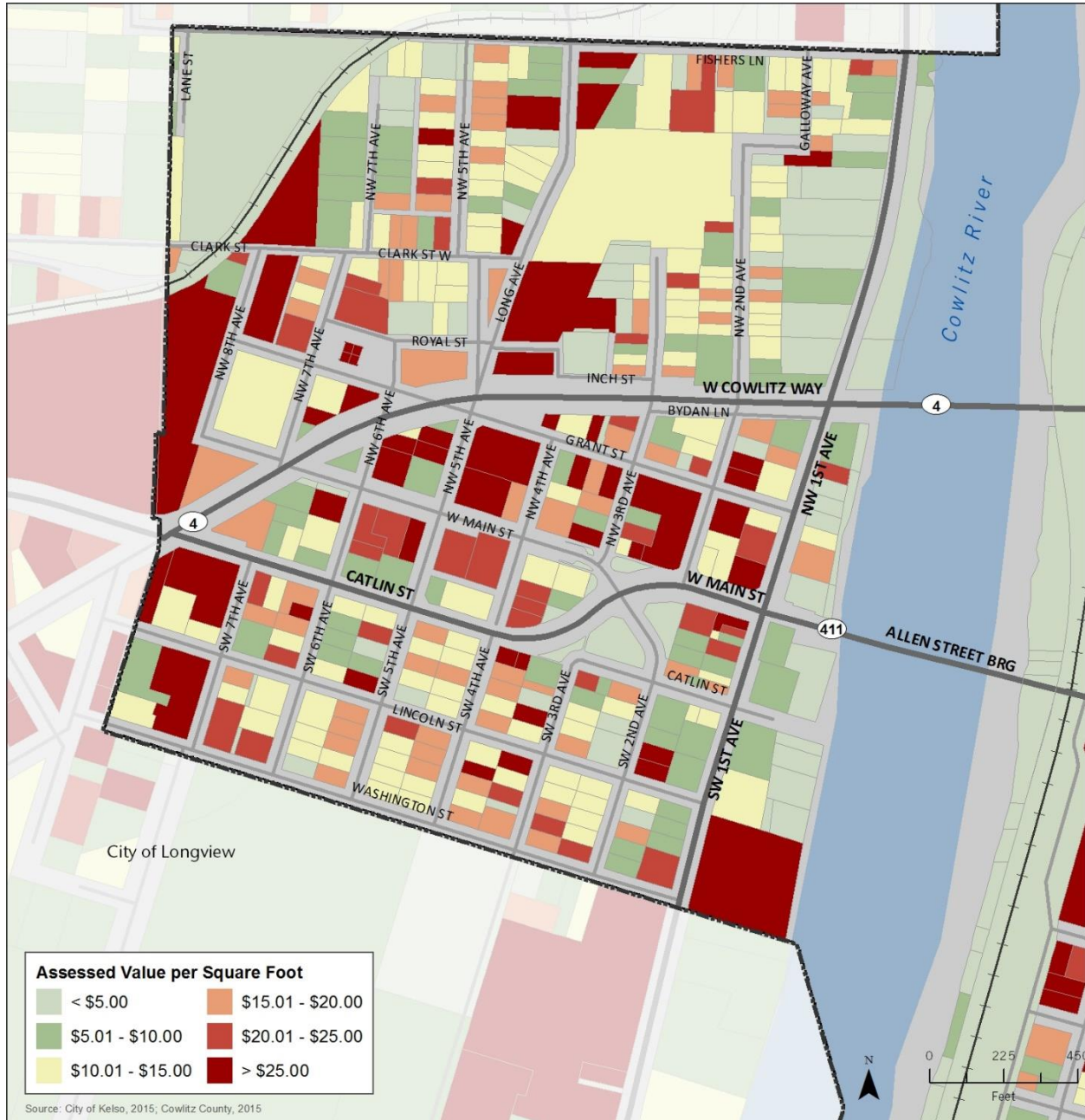
There may be an opportunity to identify parcels that are redevelopable (Exhibit 51) *and* whose owners may be interested in redevelopment. Exhibit 51 shows the redevelopable parcels in West Kelso, defined by sites where improvements are less than 50% of the value of the land, and Exhibit 52 shows the 2015 assessed values per square foot by parcel. However, some of the identified parcels are currently being used as parking in support of adjacent land uses. As additional on-street parking is developed in West Kelso off-street parking lots may be redeveloped.

Exhibit 51. Redevelopable Parcels in West Kelso (2015)



Source: City of Kelso, 2015; Cowlitz County, 2015; BERK, 2015.

Exhibit 52. Assessed Value per Square Foot in West Kelso (2015)



Source: City of Kelso, 2015; Cowlitz County, 2015; BERK, 2015.

## 6.0 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT CODE AUDIT

### 6.1 Introduction

This Comprehensive Plan and development code audit is intended to review Kelso planning policies and regulating codes to identify those that are relevant to the future of West Kelso.



## 6.2 Comprehensive Plan

There are few policies and objectives in the Comprehensive Plan that specifically address the West Kelso neighborhood. Certain policies that apply city-wide, however, are relevant to West Kelso’s future. Land Use Policy #16, in particular, highlights a desire to focus on the West Kelso/East Longview area through partnerships and relationships with stakeholders. The policy considers a variety of actions and activities that can occur in West Kelso as a result of, and with the support of, these partnerships. Items identified under the policy include opportunities for investment, improvements, and regulatory changes:

- A. The realignment of Main Street Southwest and planned Phase 2 improvements;
- B. Opportunities to create a more pedestrian friendly environment and to enhance public spaces;
- C. Opportunities to encourage and support new private investment;
- D. Higher intensity residential developments, especially north of Main Street;
- E. Opportunities to encourage and support the establishment of more local retail businesses;
- F. Opportunities to encourage and support more mixed-use residential developments with ground floor retail, especially along Main Street;
- G. Facilitating the development of a hotel/motel and supporting services in the vicinity of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW and Catlin Street;
- H. Improved connections to the Regional Justice Center and the Expo Center;
- I. Improved connections to regional trails and bikeways;
- J. Preservation of the single family neighborhood south of Main Street;
- K. The possible vacation of a portion of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW; and
- L. The improvement of housing opportunities throughout the neighborhood.

Exhibit 53 highlights items in the Comprehensive Plan that most closely apply to the needs and future of West Kelso.

**Exhibit 53. Kelso Comprehensive Plan Audit**

Comp Plan Item	Why Relevant?
<b>VISION STATEMENT</b>	
The long river shoreline is an attractive destination for residents and visitors with views and access.	West Kelso sits along the Cowlitz River and could benefit from drawing more activity to the shoreline.
Small town community feel with a sense of history, yet adjustment for current times.	West Kelso could use an uplift, or “adjustment” for current times.
Develop and strengthen a healthy community of diverse backgrounds and assist those in need, enrich a diverse population, encourage individualism, and promote health, education, business, and civic associations.	Kelso could benefit from focusing on developing the health and diversity of West Kelso, providing assistance to those with needs.
Maintain stable, secure, and maintained neighborhoods that are the foundation of a high quality of life.	West Kelso can benefit from gaining added stability.

Each neighborhood has its own character and is a community asset.	West Kelso is a unique neighborhood due to its geographic isolation from the rest of Kelso and could benefit from strengthened character and sense of place.
Diverse people living in a diverse housing stock in well maintained and affordable residential areas.	West Kelso does not have a diverse housing stock and has challenges with the maintenance and appearance of the housing stock.
Strong and diverse economy with a mix of businesses and variety of employment opportunities.	Consistent with a vision for a strong and diverse city-wide economy, West Kelso should continue to diversify and strengthen the sub-economy in the neighborhood.
<b>GOALS</b>	
Goal #4: Improve the vibrancy and stability of residential neighborhoods and mixed-use development with housing for diverse income age groups, and lifestyles.	West Kelso is a predominantly residential neighborhood with some commercial activity that can benefit from mixed-use development that caters to diverse groups.
Goal #5: Provide a safe, family oriented environment in all residential neighborhoods	Given recent concerns about crime and safety in West Kelso, a focus on building a safe and family-friendly environment would benefit the neighborhood.
Goal #6: Respect the cultural heritage and history of the community.	West Kelso is going through a planning process that will help bring needed focus and investment to the neighborhood, but it will be important to respect the existing heritage and history.
Goal #8: Protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment.	The natural environment is an important asset city-wide. As new investment and changes occur in West Kelso, it will be essential to give the natural environment consideration.
Goal #10: Actively involve all citizens in the governance of their community	The West Kelso planning process should be fair and inclusive.
<b>POLICIES</b>	
Fiscal Policy #1: New development should pay for the costs associated with providing required services.	As new development comes into West Kelso, the burden should be upon the developing parties.
Land Use Policy #1: Support more intensive use of land and actively seek to provide the same or higher levels of services more efficiently and cost effectively.	There are areas in West Kelso where more intensive use of land may be appropriate.
Land Use Policy #6: Additional opportunities for multi-family housing should be provided in and near downtown, as well as in South and West Kelso in accordance with the outcomes of the West Kelso Subarea Plan.	There are intentions to provide multi-family housing in West Kelso.

Land Use Policy #7: Higher density housing should provide adequate opportunities for onsite recreation and/or contribute their fair share to off-site recreational opportunities.	Consistent with policies city-wide, any high density housing development in West Kelso will contribute to recreation opportunities.
Land Use Policy #14: In conjunction with the West Main Realignment Project, the nonresidential areas of West Kelso should feature a mix of uses in a pedestrian friendly environment in accordance with the outcomes of the West Kelso Subarea Plan.	West Kelso should build off the West Main Realignment Project.
Land Use Policy #15: Actively work with Cowlitz County to renovate and expand as necessary the Regional Justice Center at its current location in West Kelso.	Kelso can benefit from maintaining a partnership with Cowlitz County in West Kelso.
Land Use Policy #16: Initiate in partnership with the City of Longview, affected residents, businesses, and property owners a sub-area planning process for West Kelso/East Longview.	The West Kelso Subarea Plan should be created in partnership with the parties listed. This will help catalyze beneficial activity in West Kelso and create opportunities.
Land Use Policy #20: Opportunities to provide safe and responsible use of shorelines should be encouraged.	West Kelso is located along the shoreline of the Cowlitz River, an asset that should be incorporated into the planning process.
Land Use Policy #23: Reduce regulations and administrative restrictions that serve to restrict or constrain desired types of private investment.	West Kelso, particularly along the West Main Realignment area, can benefit from increased investment.
Land Use Objective #8: Explore the feasibility of potentially vacating a portion of Catlin Street near 1st Ave SW in West Kelso to accommodate the expansion of the Regional Justice Center.	Kelso should consider this during the Subarea Plan planning process.
Land Use Objective #15: Consolidate and reduce the number of commercial zones - Merge the Town Center and the West Kelso Zones into a General Commercial Zone This may involve the development of overlay districts or special conditions.	Kelso should consider how this will affect West Kelso and how it will align with the vision of the Subarea Plan.
Transportation Policy #4: Improve multi-modal access to commercial areas.	West Kelso and the West Main Realignment area should be accessible.
Housing Policy #1: Continue to support the efforts of for-profit developers and non-profit organizations to provide a range of housing opportunities in the community.	West Kelso, like other areas of the City, would benefit from for-profit and non-profit housing projects.
Housing Policy #2: Encourage the development of housing opportunities that enable residents to remain in the community over time.	Housing that enables residents to stay will increase stability in West Kelso.
Housing Policy #3: Actively support the repair, renovation, and replacement of existing housing with an emphasis on providing a wider range of	West Kelso has a mix of housing stock, some of which will benefit from repair and some of which will likely end up replaced.

housing opportunities and more intensive housing developments.	
Housing Policy #4: Create more opportunities for individuals and families to “age in place” or “downsize” without having to move out of Kelso.	West Kelso could provide an affordable community for aging in place.
Parks and Recreation Policy #2: Identify and prioritize future opportunities for the public acquisition of land for parks and open space	As West Kelso grows, areas in the neighborhood should be identified for parks and open space.
Parks and Recreation Policy #5: Support the development of new opportunities for water dependent recreational opportunities such as kayaking and canoeing.	Since a large portion of Kelso’s shoreline is in the West Kelso neighborhood, plans for West Kelso could incorporate this policy.

Source: City of Kelso Comprehensive Plan, Adopted February 17, 2015.

### 6.3 Development Code

The zones in West Kelso are regulated by Kelso Municipal Code’s development regulations. The West Kelso Commercial Zone applies only in West Kelso, but will likely be merged with a more general commercial zone that will be used throughout Kelso. As part of the Subarea Plan, an additional overlay may be used in West Kelso’s commercial areas.

Exhibit 54 calls out those elements of the Municipal Code that are related to West Kelso and Exhibit 55 shows the development standards for zones that regulate in West Kelso.

#### Exhibit 54. Kelso Development Code Audit

Location	Development Code Item	Why Relevant?
17.20.070	<b>Residential Single-family 5 Zone</b> - To provide for vital single-family neighborhoods of higher density where compatible existing development patterns and critical area and where there are adequate services and infrastructure available to support higher density development.	A good portion of West Kelso’s land is zoned RSF-5, which allows for a compact single family development pattern.
17.20.080	<b>Residential Multifamily Zone</b> - To provide areas for the highest density of residential development and for the establishment of professional offices, when said offices are deemed to be compatible with the existing and future development within the district and adjacent districts.	Much of the northern end of the neighborhood is zoned RMF, which allows for a mix of uses and higher density residences.
17.20.090	<b>Open Space Zone</b> - To ensure that certain areas of the city, which are characterized by environmental sensitivity and intrinsic value, be preserved for the most part in their original undisturbed and/or natural state.	Areas along the Cowlitz River north of the Allen Street bridge are zoned Open Space. There are no areas within the neighborhood zoned Open Space.
17.20.110	<b>West Kelso Commercial Zone</b> – Intended to provide commercial uses that complement downtown Kelso and benefit from automobile access near the state routes, while creating a pedestrian-friendly retail area. A variety of	The West Kelso Commercial Zone is flexible and allows for uses that are appropriate, while still recognizing downtown Kelso as the town center. This zone, however, may be merged

	commercial uses are allowed that offer goods and services for the convenience of the city residents and may have an auto orientation.	with other commercial zones as a result of policies identified in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan.
<b>17.20.140</b>	<b>Major Retail Commercial Zone</b> - Provides for large areas to accommodate larger commercial retail stores and shopping centers that are intended to serve the commercial and retail needs of the city and surrounding region.	Only a small portion of West Kelso is zoned for major retail along the boundary with Longview.
<b>Ordinance 3574</b>	Adopts West Kelso Revitalization Plan, 2004 (Also known as the West Kelso – Catlin Street Subarea Plan)	The West Kelso Subarea Plan will be an update to the 2004 plan.

Source: Kelso Municipal Code, 2015.

### Exhibit 55. West Kelso Development Standards

Zone	Min Area	Max Area	Max Res. Density	Min. Lot Width	Min. Lot Depth	Setback			
						Front	Street Side	Side	Rear
<b>CMR</b>	N/A	N/A	Unrestricted*	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0
<b>CWK</b>	N/A	N/A	Unrestricted*	N/A	N/A	0 Min, 5' Max	0 Min, 5' Max	0	0
<b>OPN</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>RSF-5</b>	5,000	N/A	32.3	50'	60'	20'	7'	5'	10'
<b>RMF</b>	5,000	11,000	8.7	50'	60'	20'	7'	5'	10'

\*Upper floor residential uses are limited only by the physical constraints of the structure and required parking.

Note: CMR = Commercial Major Retail, CWK = Commercial – West Kelso, OPN = Open Space, RSF-5 = Single Family Residential (5,000 sf min.), RMF = Residential Multi-Family.

Source: (Kelso Municipal Code, 2015)

## 6.4 Summary

Kelso's 2015 Comprehensive Plan and existing code have many policies that are relevant to the West Kelso neighborhood. The policies and regulations that will most affect the future of the neighborhood include topics addressing housing and the commercial corridor created by the West Main Realignment Project. As future development occurs, policies that may apply include those related to mixed use development and diversification of commercial and housing types, in order to serve a large variety of residents and visitors.

The West Kelso Subarea Plan can build off of the vision and code that applies city-wide and further refine guiding goals, policies, and regulations to fit the specific needs of the West Kelso neighborhood, its residents, business owners, and surrounding stakeholders.

## 7.0 ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Neighborhood revitalization requires strong partnerships between the City, business and property owners, and community groups. Each group has an important role to play in the revitalization effort. The City cannot do it all and to sustain a revitalization effort over time requires consistent resources,

partnerships, and commitment. Below is a summary of the organization capacity to sustain a revitalization effort:

### **City of Kelso**

The City of Kelso has signaled a commitment to the revitalization of West Kelso by investing significant time and resources to improving the neighborhood. The City's efforts include:

- Completion of Phase I of the West Main Realignment Project
- Design for the West Main Streetscape Project
- Initiating the West Kelso Subarea Plan
- Efforts to improve property and building maintenance through code enforcement and purchasing properties in disrepair

### **Volunteer Kelso**

Volunteer Kelso is a new community group focused on improving conditions and the quality of life in the City of Kelso. The group, which has approximately 500 followers on Facebook, routinely organizes neighborhood cleanups, including in West Kelso, and provides a forum for discussing community issues and concerns. A similar group was formed in South Kelso aimed at revitalizing the South Kelso neighborhood.

### **Rotary Club**

The Rotary Club developed the spray park at the Kelso Senior Center and meets regularly to discuss community issues. The Rotary could be a partner with the City and other community organizations in the revitalization of West Kelso.

### **West Kelso Merchants Association**

West Kelso does not have a merchants association. An informal group was formed during Phase I of the West Main Realignment Project, but does not appear to be active today. A merchants association, if formed, may be beneficial to the revitalization of West Kelso and could give local merchants a way to voice their interests.

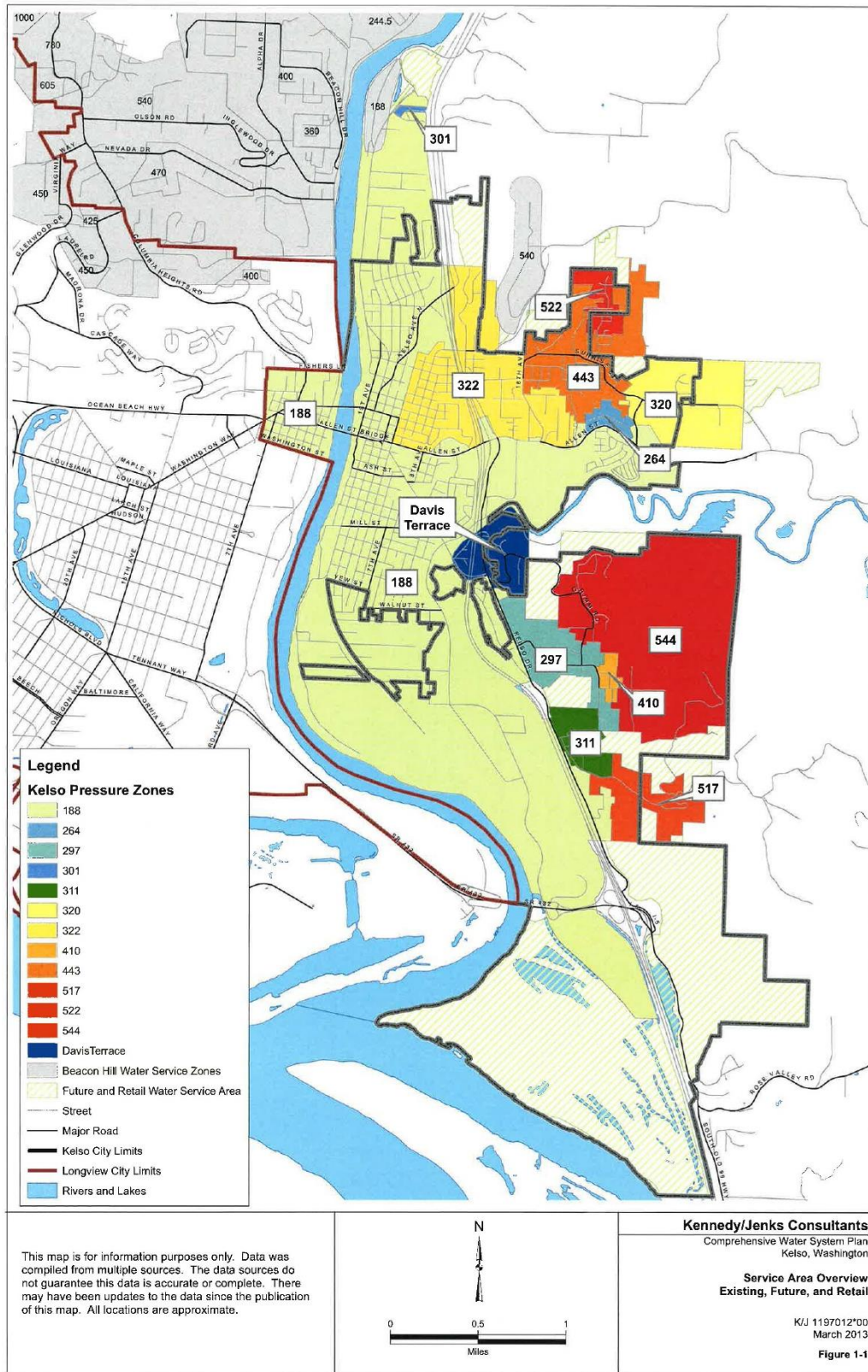
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## APPENDIX A – INTERVIEW LIST

- Mayor David Futch – City of Kelso
- Chris Borenstadt – Resident/Volunteer Kelso
- Holly Budge – Principal at Catlin Elementary
- Ray Vandervalk – Red Leaf Coffee
- Don Lemmons – Property Owner
- Chief Andrew Hamilton – City of Kelso
- Don Rodman – Rodman Realty
- Chris Roewe – Woodford Realty

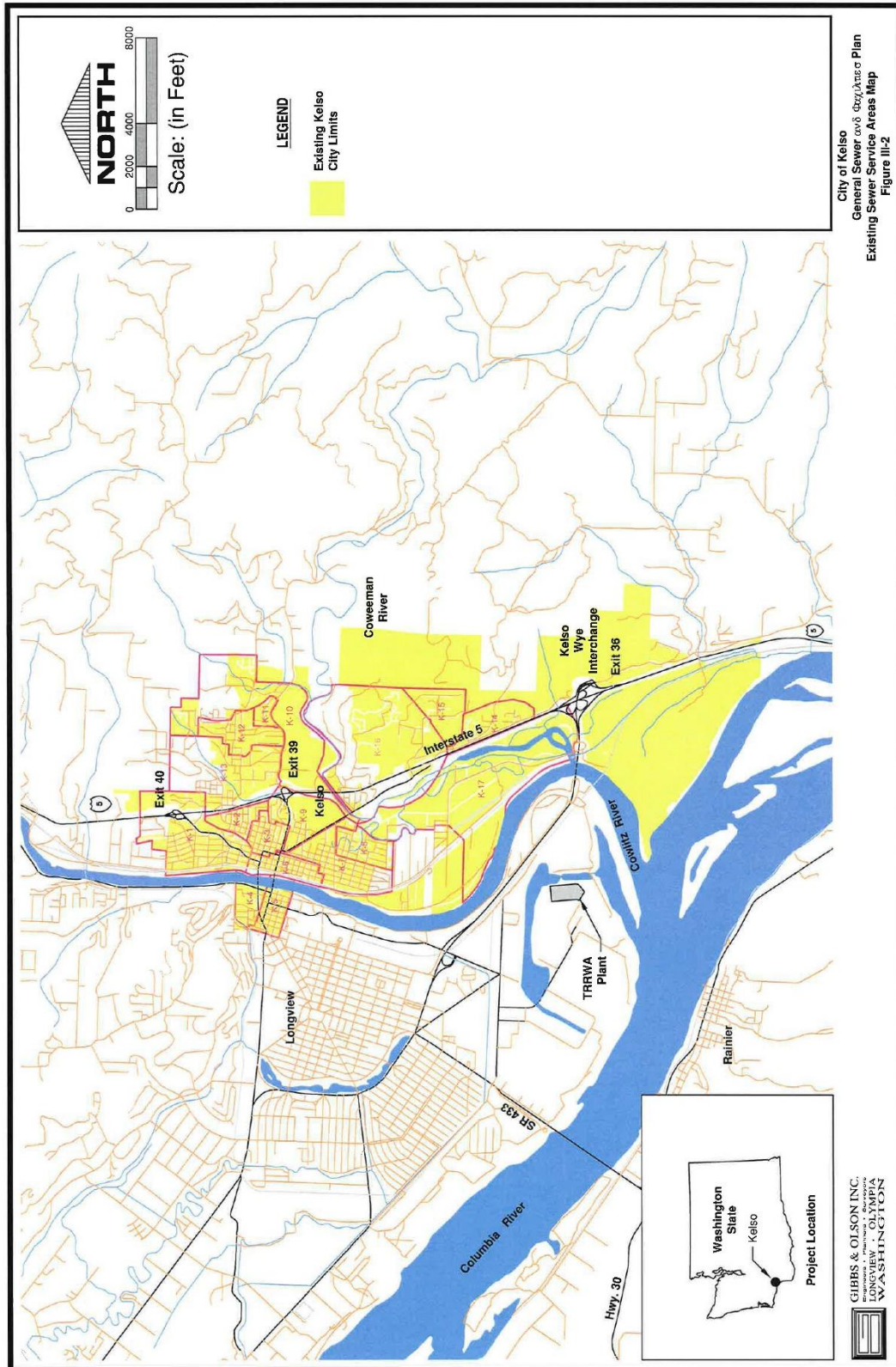
## APPENDIX B – KELSO PRESSURE ZONES



Source: MacKay Sposito, 2015; Kennedy/Jenks Consultants, 2013.



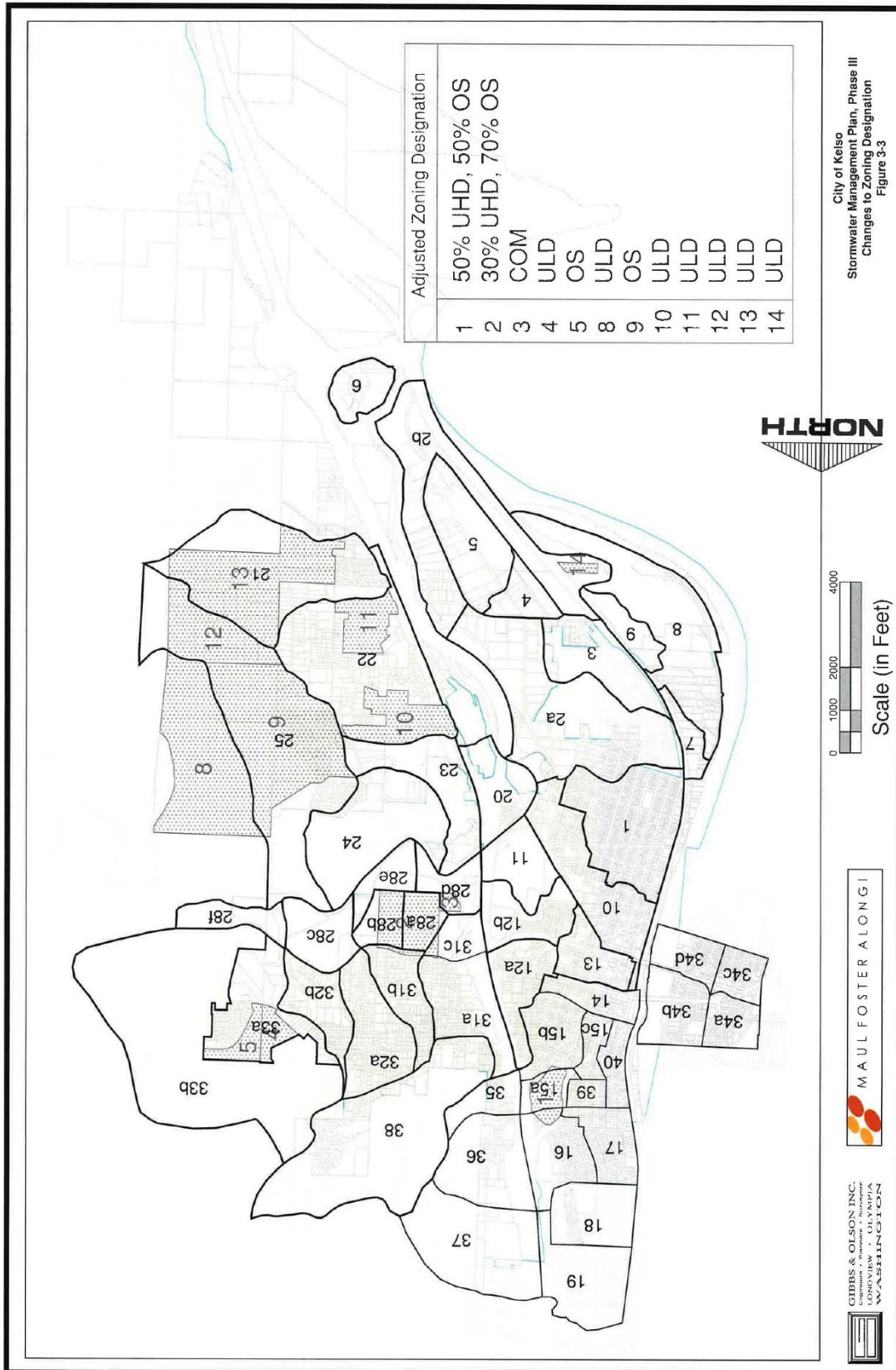
# APPENDIX C – SEWER SERVICE AREAS



MacKay Spósito, 2015; Gibbs & Olson, Inc.

Source:

## APPENDIX D – SSWM CHANGES TO ZONING DESIGNATIONS



Source: MacKay Sposito, 2015; Gibson & Olson, Inc.; Maul Foster Alongi