



# WEST KELSO SUBAREA PLAN





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**Draft Plan – January 12, 2015**

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## Plan Overview

Development of the West Kelso Subarea Plan took place during 2015 and early 2016. The process included a resident and property owner survey, stakeholder interviews, an Existing Conditions Report, two public workshops, an Alternatives Summary and this final product which includes a detailed preferred alternative.

The document provides an introduction to the project, introduces the vision and guiding principles that direct the plan, lays out the plan concept and actions based on the preferred alternative, and provides a matrix for implementing the various actions. The second half of the document profiles the public involvement process, reviews the three alternatives considered (including a No Action alternative), and summarizes the background information identified in the Existing Conditions Report.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

West Kelso is a mixed-use neighborhood located west of the Cowlitz River that the community wants to revitalize (See Exhibit 1). The neighborhood has many characteristics of a thriving neighborhood including single and multi-family housing, access to major retail along Cowlitz Way, a neighborhood school, a walkable street grid, and a pedestrian-scale main street commercial district. However, there are significant challenges that must be addressed for positive change to occur in the neighborhood. This plan is the first step in a long-term effort to revitalize the neighborhood consistent with the desires of the community. The vision statement, guiding principles, plan concepts, and actions are informed by community input, existing conditions, strategic opportunities, and best practices for community planning, design, and neighborhood revitalization to achieve success in West Kelso through a collaborative community effort and City leadership.

### Key Findings from Existing Conditions

The plan recommendations are informed by the existing conditions analysis. The following are key findings from the existing conditions report:

- The West Kelso neighborhood is home to around 750 residents
- West Kelso is a well-situated community with access to downtown Kelso, Longview and the I-5 corridor leading to Portland and Seattle
- West Kelso is isolated from the rest of Kelso by the Cowlitz River and is surrounded by the City of Longview
- The predominant land uses in West Kelso include a commercial core (19%) surrounded by low-density residential (40%), with a presence of government and educational uses (12%) (Cowlitz County)
- Most of the structures in the neighborhood were built prior to 1950, with limited new development in the last few decades
- Around 75 percent of residents are renters and 25 percent are owners (U.S. Census, 2010)
- In 2013, approximately 23 percent of all families and 40 percent of families with children under 18 years were living in poverty (U.S. Census, 2013)
- Median annual household income in West Kelso is \$26,165 compared to \$35,381 in Kelso and \$39,422 in Longview (U.S. Census, 2013)

- The neighborhood is faced with challenges such as crime and drug use, auto-oriented development, barriers to the river, lack of property maintenance, high traffic volumes, vacancies, a lack of urban design standards or guidelines, and high poverty rates
- Opportunities in the neighborhood include a presence of developable parcels, historic buildings, high traffic volumes, a good traditional street grid, the presence of small local businesses, good location, and an engaged community

### Exhibit 1. Regional Context Map



Source: BERK, 2015; Cowlitz County, 2015

Despite the neighborhood’s physical assets, West Kelso is currently facing significant real and perceived challenges towards the revitalization of the neighborhood. These challenges consistently came up during the public engagement process and include a declining or stagnant regional economy, safety concerns,

increasing rates of poverty, a lack of property maintenance, vacant or underutilized properties, and impacts associated with drug addiction and related property crimes. Other challenges include vacant or underutilized properties, auto-dominated corridors that impact connectivity and walkability, a lack of a neighborhood organization to participate in the revitalization effort, limited financial resources for implementation, limited activities for youth, and a lack of functioning parks and open spaces in the neighborhood. Exhibit 2 shows two vacant historic buildings in disrepair at the entrance to the neighborhood from Downtown Kelso.

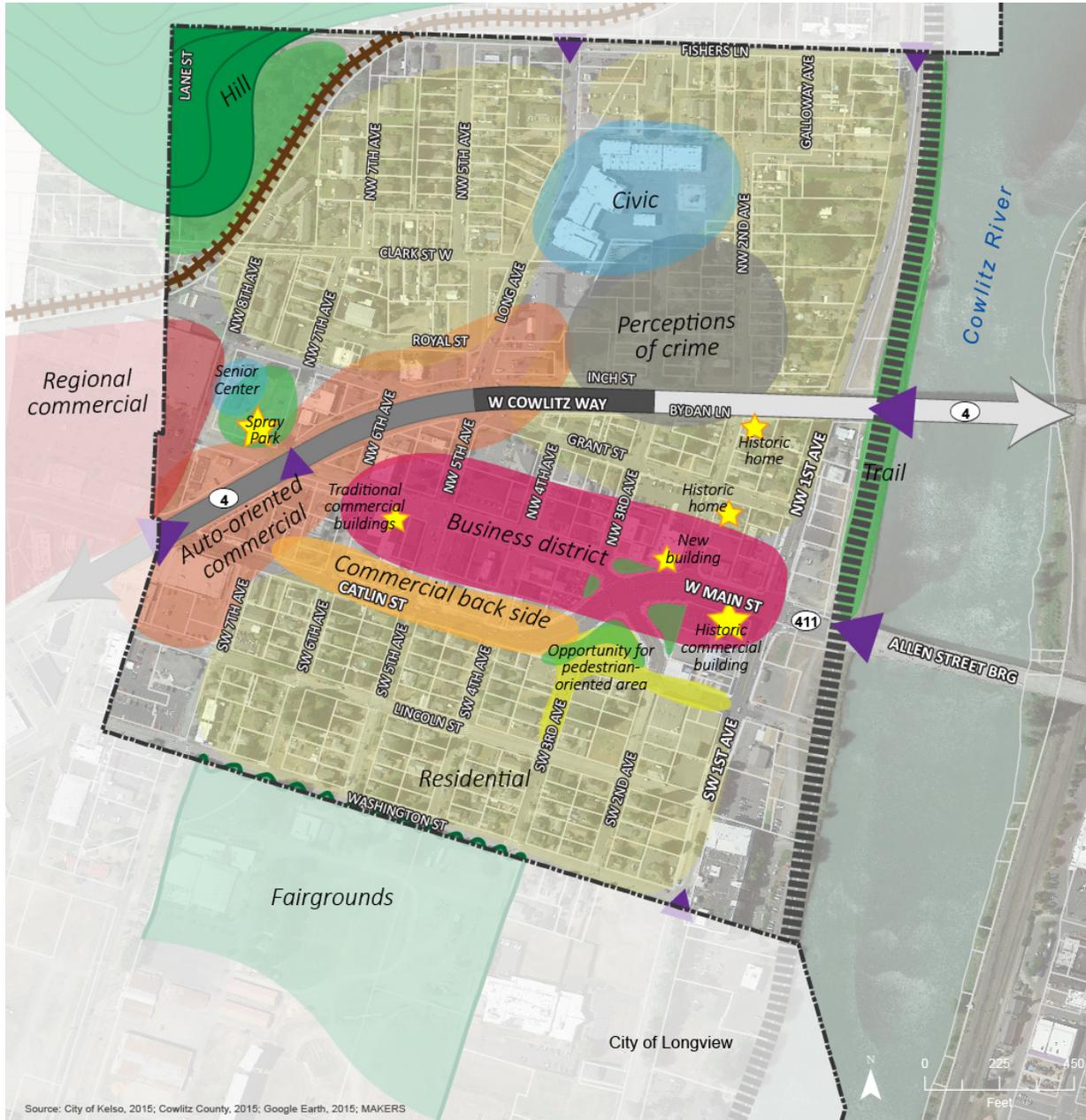
### Exhibit 2. Vacant Historic Buildings at the Entrance to the Neighborhood



Source: BERK, 2015

Although the challenges identified above are obstacles to West Kelso's revitalization, there is also an opportunity to build on existing assets, such as redevelopable and publicly owned properties, riverfront location, central location, walkability, proximity to transit corridors, and the community's desire for change. Exhibit 3 highlights the neighborhood's existing physical conditions. Exhibit 4 shows recent pedestrian-oriented development and streetscape improvements at the intersection of Catlin and West Main.

**Exhibit 3. 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

#### Exhibit 4. Recent Pedestrian-Oriented Development on West Main Street



Source: BERK, 2015

With the neighborhood's challenges, assets, and opportunities in mind, the West Kelso Subarea Plan is intended to be the catalyst for a larger neighborhood revitalization effort. As shown in Exhibit 5, a successful revitalization effort requires participation and partnerships between the City, the community, and the private sector to be effective. Only through a long-term sustainable effort will the community be successful in revitalizing West Kelso.

### Exhibit 5. Neighborhood Revitalization Process



Source: BERK, 2015

## 2.0 VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The vision statement and guiding principles reflect the ideal future for the West Kelso neighborhood and provide a framework for plan concepts and actions.

### 2.1 Vision Statement

The following statement reflects the community’s vision for the future in the West Kelso neighborhood:

*West Kelso is a safe, clean, and healthy neighborhood with a strong sense of community engagement and economic opportunities. The neighborhood is known for being a great place to live, raise a family, run a local business, or visit because of the attractive streets and buildings, and a thriving local business district. West Kelso is also a great place to walk with interconnected sidewalks, trails, parks, activities on Main Street, and a strong visual connection to the waterfront. Significant reinvestment by both the public and private sector continues to strengthen the neighborhood.*

### 2.2 Guiding Principles

The plans’ guiding principles reflect community values and input during the plan process. The plan concepts and actions are intended to support the revitalization of West Kelso and improved quality of life by implementing the guiding principles. Plan actions are directly connected to the guiding principles in the implementation section of the plan. Below is a summary of the guiding principles and additional context.

| Principle   | Context   |
|---|---|
| 1. <b>Safe Community.</b> In order to thrive, the West Kelso Neighborhood must be perceived as safe and inviting with low incidents of crime. | West Kelso currently struggles with both real and perceived challenges as a result of crime and drug use.                     |
| 2. <b>Clean Environment.</b> West Kelso must be clean and inviting for residents, employees,  | West Kelso is challenged by a lack of investment and vacancies. A clean environment will help the community be more inviting. |

and visitors and in order to attract renewed investment in the community.

3. **Healthy Community.** The West Kelso Neighborhood must support healthy lifestyles by providing high quality parks, open spaces, trails, and access to healthy foods as well as reducing drug addiction.
4. **Economic Opportunity for All.** West Kelso must support economic opportunity for West Kelso residents and the region by providing living wage jobs.
5. **Engaged Community for the Future of West Kelso.** The citizens of Kelso and West Kelso must be actively engaged in shaping the future of the neighborhood for the benefit of the community.
6. **Support Youth.** West Kelso must provide opportunities for kids to thrive by supporting an active and healthy lifestyle and by providing educational opportunities.
7. **Community Investment.** The community, including the City of Kelso, community organizations and the citizens, must commit to creating a better future for West Kelso.
8. **Support Local Businesses.** The local businesses in West Kelso should be supported by the local community to provide a range of goods and services and employment opportunities.
9. **Walkable.** One of West Kelso strongest assets is the interconnected street grid and sidewalk network that should be maintained and strengthened over time.
10. **Attractive.** West Kelso should be attractive and a place people want to live, work, and visit.

Currently, many of the lifestyle choices associated with a healthy life are unavailable or difficult to access in West Kelso.

Many of West Kelso's residents are living in poverty. The presence of more living wage jobs would allow residents living and working in West Kelso to afford expenses for themselves and/or their family at the current cost of living.

Many residents feel that there is little opportunity or assets in their neighborhood; however engagement by the community will need to play a role in revitalization efforts and implementation.

Residents worry about their children and the opportunities available to them in West Kelso.

There has been limited social or economic investment in recent years; but where it has happened (such as the Red Leaf building), positive change has occurred.

Many residents greatly value the small local businesses that exist and have specified that more local businesses are desired.

High traffic volumes, a lack of street lighting, and other factors contribute to a perception that West Kelso is not walkable. However the neighborhood has a good network that could use some improvement.

Residents expressed that the neighborhood lacks attractiveness for a variety of reasons, including unmaintained buildings and yards, issues with homelessness and crime, and the predominance of traffic.

## 3.0 PLAN CONCEPTS AND ACTIONS

The plan concepts and actions reflect the vision statement and guiding principles and are the specific steps the community should take to revitalize West Kelso. The plan concepts and actions address the following:

- Land Use and Zoning
- Streets and Circulation
- Parks, Trails, and Public Spaces
- Development Opportunities
- Organizational Development
- Public Health and Safety

Plan actions are also addressed in more detail in Chapter 4 including a timeframe for action, the responsible party, cost estimates, and the guiding principles associated with the action.

### 3.1 Land Use and Zoning

The proposed Future Land Use and Zoning maps for the preferred alternative are identified in Exhibit 6 and Exhibit 7 and reflect the existing conditions analysis and public input. The recommended land use and zoning changes are intended to:

- Provide an economic incentive for redevelopment and property investment by increasing densities in certain residential areas
- Support West Main Street as the primary neighborhood pedestrian-oriented retail street by requiring high quality design and encouraging infill development
- Allow for more diverse housing options including single and multi-family development

The major amendments are:

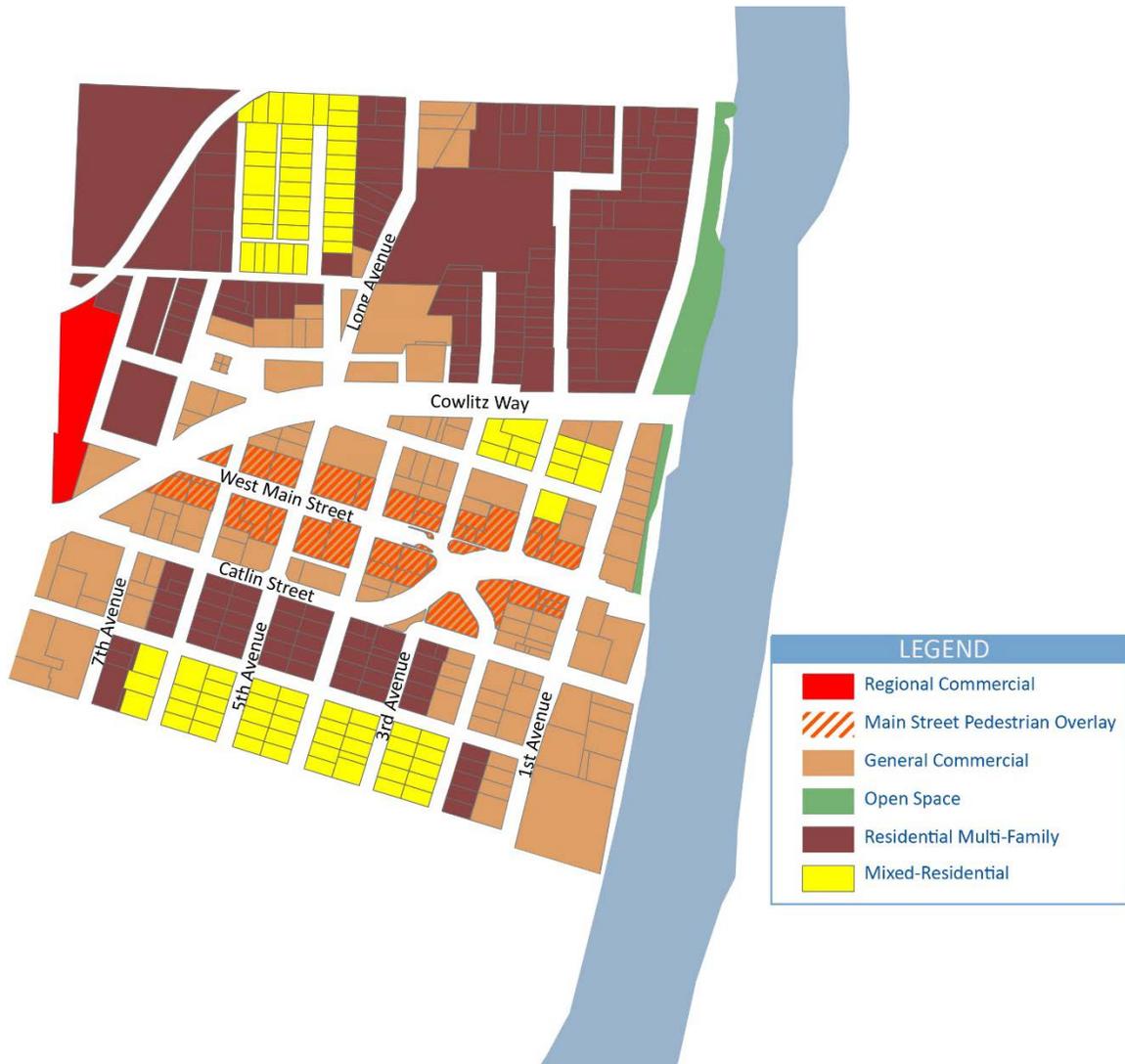
- Convert the area around NW 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave from single-family to multi-family
- Convert the area south of Catlin Street from single-family to multi-family
- Add the West Main Street Pedestrian Overlay along West Main Street
- Convert the remaining single-family zones to a new Mixed-Residential Zone

Exhibit 6. Proposed Future Land Use Map



Source: BERK, 2015

### Exhibit 7. Proposed Zoning Map



Source: BERK, 2015

### Land Use and Zoning Actions

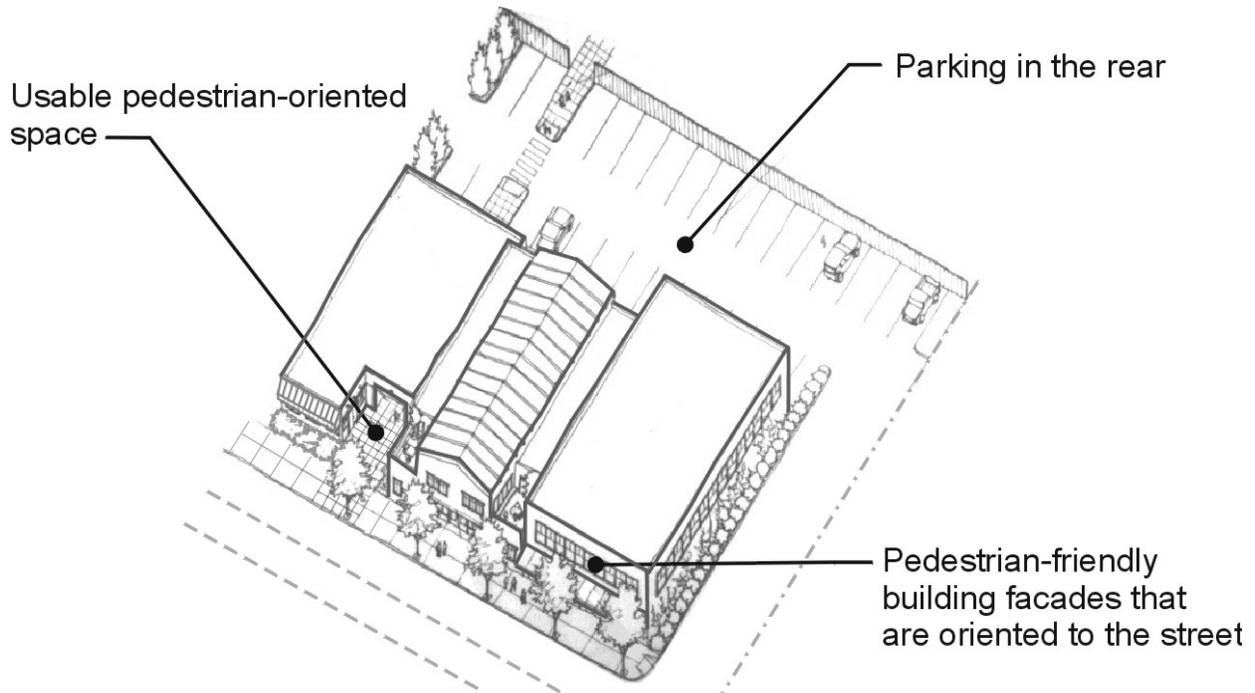
- LU-1. Implement the Future Land Use and Zoning Map amendments identified in Exhibit 6 and Exhibit 7.
  - a. Establish the Main Street Pedestrian Overlay
  - b. Rezone the area near NW 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue from RSF-5 to RMF
  - c. Rezone the area south of Catlin Street from RSF-5 to RMF in association with Phase II of the Main Street Realignment Project
- LU-2. Adopt the development regulations for the Main Street Pedestrian Overlay as contained in Appendix A.
- LU-3. Develop and adopt design guidelines for the commercial/mixed-use development and multi-family development consistent with the recommendations of this plan.
- LU-4. Eliminate the mixed-use requirement for multi-family development in the commercial zone outside of the Main Street Pedestrian Overlay.

- LU-5. Maintain and monitor the success of the City’s property and building maintenance enforcement program.
- a. Establish an ombudsman program within the existing code enforcement program where enforcement officers are assigned to focus on specific neighborhoods.
  - b. Consider the establishment of an annual inspection program for residential rental properties.

### West Main Pedestrian Overlay

The purpose of the West Main Pedestrian Overlay (WMPO) Zone is to support high-quality pedestrian-oriented design elements along West Main Street. Active first floor non-residential uses are required along the street while allowing for a mix of uses on the upper floors. Pedestrian-oriented design elements include transparent first floor storefronts, overhead weather protection, building width and articulation requirements, pedestrian amenities, reduced off-street parking requirements, and zero or minimal building setbacks. The intent of this zone is to require pedestrian-oriented design while allowing for creativity in the design of sites, buildings, and pedestrian space. Appendix A includes the draft regulations for the WMPO. Exhibit 8, Exhibit 9, and Exhibit 10 illustrate the standards in the WMPO.

#### Exhibit 8. Commercial and Mixed-Use Site Design Standards



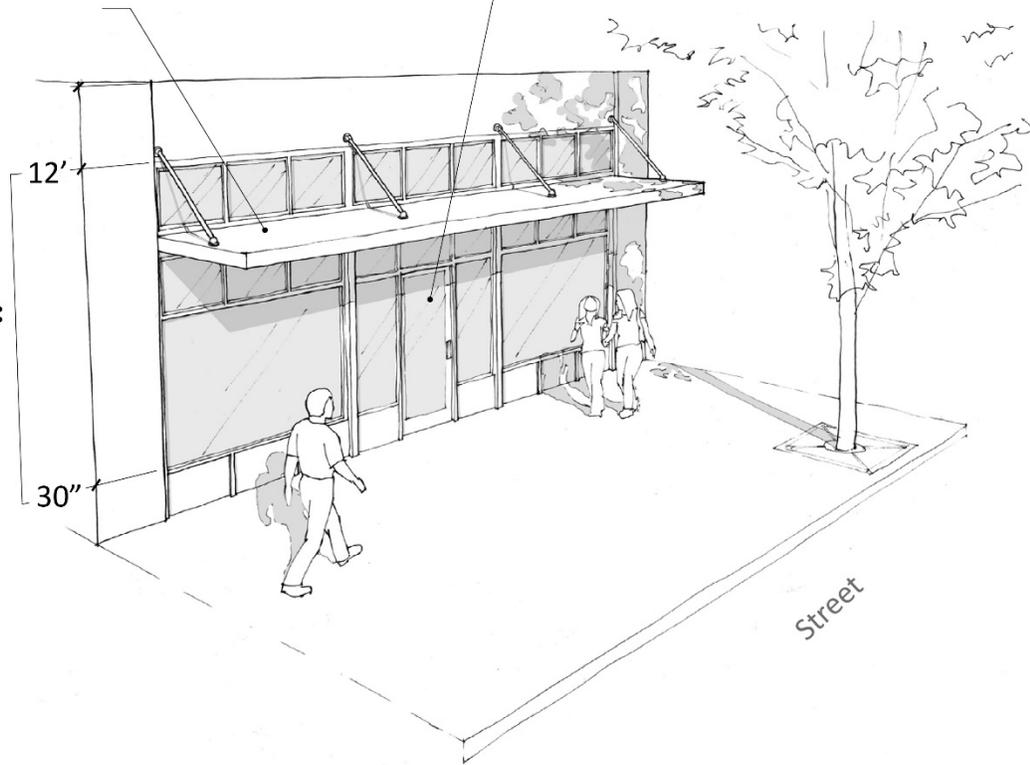
Source: MAKERS, 2015

### Exhibit 9. First Floor Design Standards

**Weather protection:**  
At least 5' deep along  
min. 80% of façade  
width

**Entry:**  
facing street

**Windows/  
transparency:**  
At least 60%  
of facade  
between 30"  
and 12'



Source: MAKERS, 2015

### Exhibit 10. Commercial Building Articulation Standards



Source: MAKERS, 2015

## Mixed-Residential Zone and Infill

The Mixed-Residential (MR) Zoning District is a new zone that allows a mix of residential development types including lower-density multi-family and single-family. Several areas in West Kelso are proposed to be rezoned from single-family to the MR zone. The increased density allowance of approximately 17 units per acre will provide an incentive for redevelopment and investment in residential properties within the zone and allow for more diverse housing options. Opportunities exist for infill development throughout the residential neighborhoods. Exhibit 11 gives an example of potential site concepts and design features of multi-family townhouse infill in a historically single-family neighborhood.

### Exhibit 11. Mixed-Residential Development



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

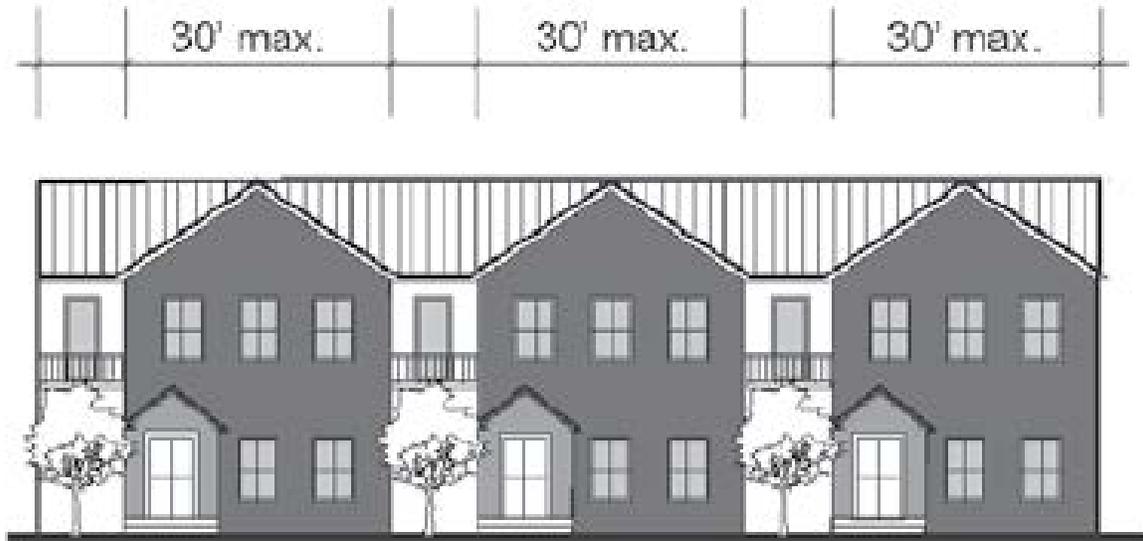
## Design Guideline Recommendations

The City should develop more detailed design guidelines for commercial, multi-family, and mixed-use development to further implement this plan. The WMPO includes some standards to address design. The new guidelines should integrate the standards in the proposed WMPO to address all types of development in a set of comprehensive design guidelines for the neighborhood or city-wide. Exhibit 12 illustrates the recommended building articulation standards. Further recommendations for multi-family design guidelines include (See Appendix B for the complete multi-family design guidelines recommendations):

- Orient buildings to a common courtyard or to the street

- Provide weather protection along the street and at building entrances
- Require parking to be the side or rear of the building
- Provide 150 square feet of private open space per residence for ground-related multi-family development
- Establish minimum building articulation standards to achieve consistent mass and scale of development

### Exhibit 12. Multi-Family Building Articulation Standards



Source: MAKERS, 2015

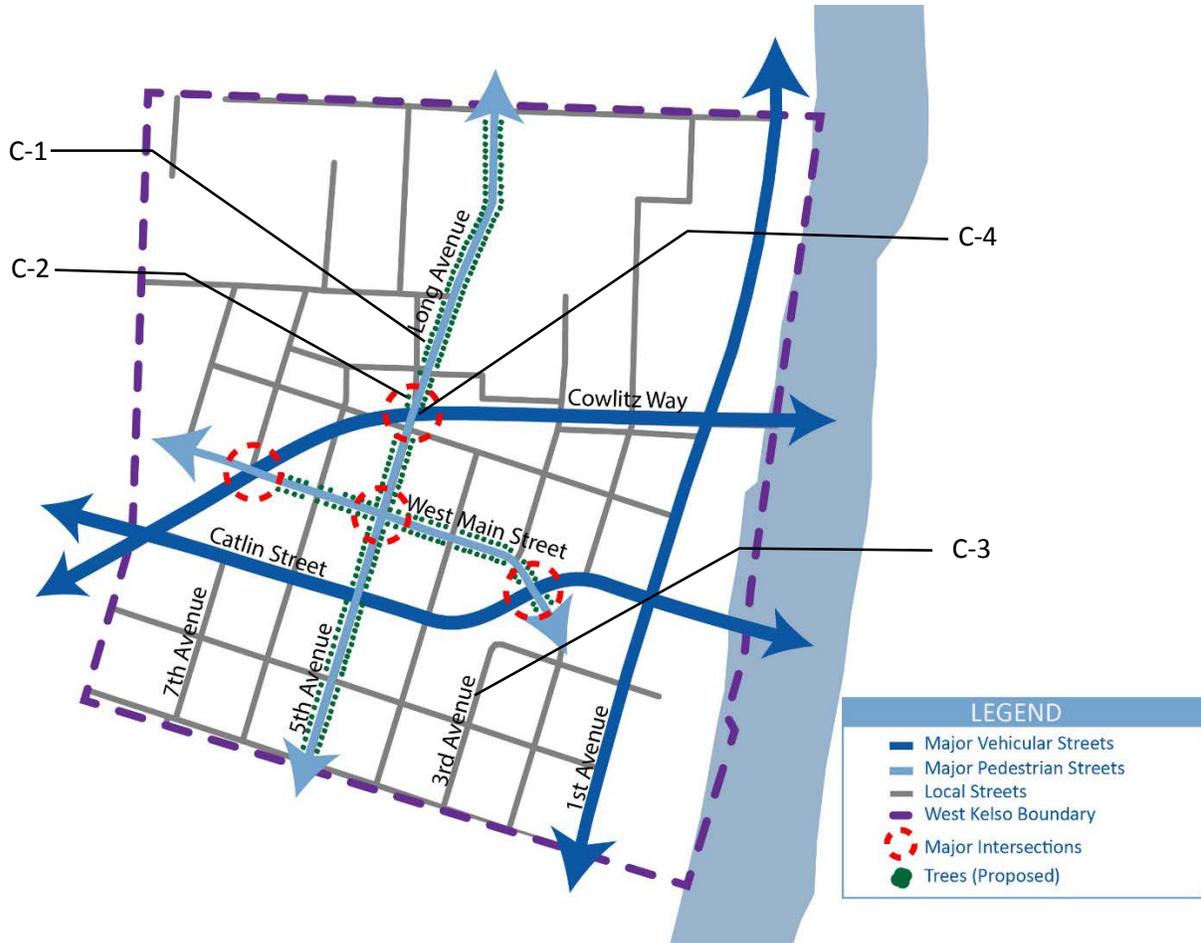
### Property Maintenance and Enforcement

The City recently updated the nuisance ordinance, adopted property maintenance standards, and has improved the code enforcement program with updated regulations and additional staff resources. In addition, the City has funding through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to purchase abandoned and inhabitable structures. The City should continue to monitor the success of this program while also considering the establishment of an annual inspection program for residential rental properties, which may be funded through inspection fees. Another option for consideration is assigning code enforcement officers to specific areas of the City so they can become more familiar with the particular issues in each neighborhood and build relationships with residents and property owners.

### 3.2 Streets and Circulation

Street and circulation improvements are identified in Exhibit 13 and are focused on improving neighborhood pedestrian connections, supporting the revitalization of West Main as the primary retail street, and improving the quality of residential streets.

### Exhibit 13. Street and Circulation Plan



Source: BERK, 2015

### Streets and Circulation Actions

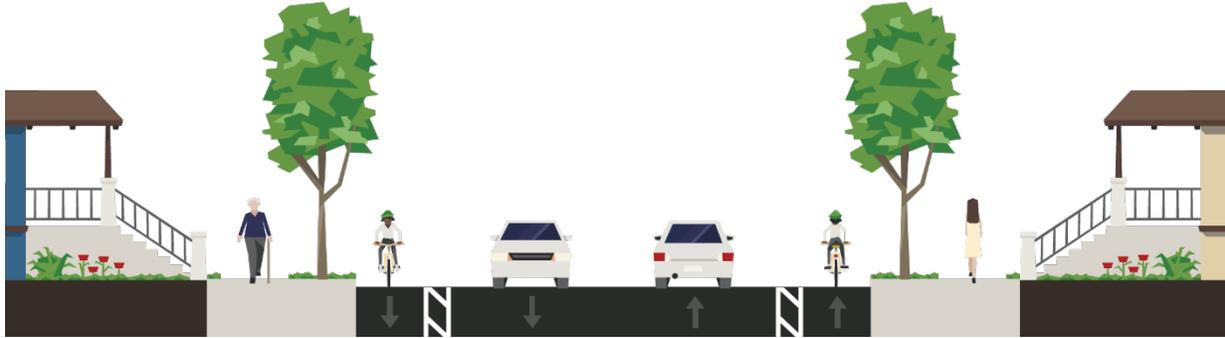
- C-1. Improve the streetscapes of Long Avenue and West Main Street with upgraded sidewalks, curbing, light, and landscaping as the principal pedestrian streets in West Kelso.
  - a. Complete construction of the West Main Streetscape Project.
  - b. Develop a conceptual design for pedestrian improvements to Long Avenue and major intersections.
- C-2. Improve the pedestrian crossings at major intersections as identified in Exhibit 13. Improvements may include textured cross walks, improved pedestrian signal timing, reducing crossing distances, eliminating unnecessary crossings, and landscaping.
- C-3. As reconstruction or maintenance occurs add curbing and lighting with sidewalk improvements on local access/residential streets.
- C-4. Vacate the Grant Street connection to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue while maintaining pedestrian and bicycle access along Grant Street east of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and vacate the street between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenues (see Exhibit 18).

### Long Avenue and West Main Street Improvements

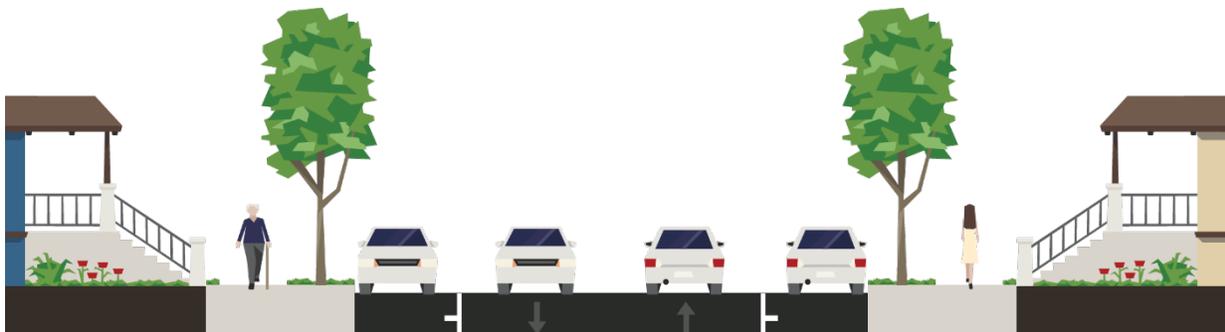
**Reconfigure the paved cross-section of Long Avenue.** The street is currently around 38 feet wide, with one travel lane in each direction. This leaves approximately 14 to 16 feet of underutilized paved street space (assuming 11 to 12 foot travel lanes). Long Avenue includes a 5 foot sidewalk, and a 5 foot landscape

strip on each side along most of the roadway. The underutilized paved street surface between the curbs could be reconfigured to include buffered bike lanes (see Exhibit 14) or on-street parking (see Exhibit 15). These cost effective changes would visually narrow the street width and reduce vehicle speeds. Bike facilities or increased on-street parking supply would be an added benefit.

**Exhibit 14. Long Avenue Reconfigured with Buffered Bike Lanes**



**Exhibit 15. Long Avenue Reconfigured with On-Street Parking**



Source: DKS Associates, 2015

**Add street trees and pedestrian amenities along Main Street and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue.** Main Street, between Cowlitz Way and Catlin Street, and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, between Catlin Street and Cowlitz Way, are planned to be primary pedestrian corridors. To enhance the pedestrian experience, add street trees and pedestrian amenities (e.g., benches, trash bins, bike racks). This would be an extension of the streetscape improvements recently constructed west of the Main Street/Catlin Street intersection.

**Exhibit 16. Examples of Sidewalk Landcaping and Pedestrian Amenities**



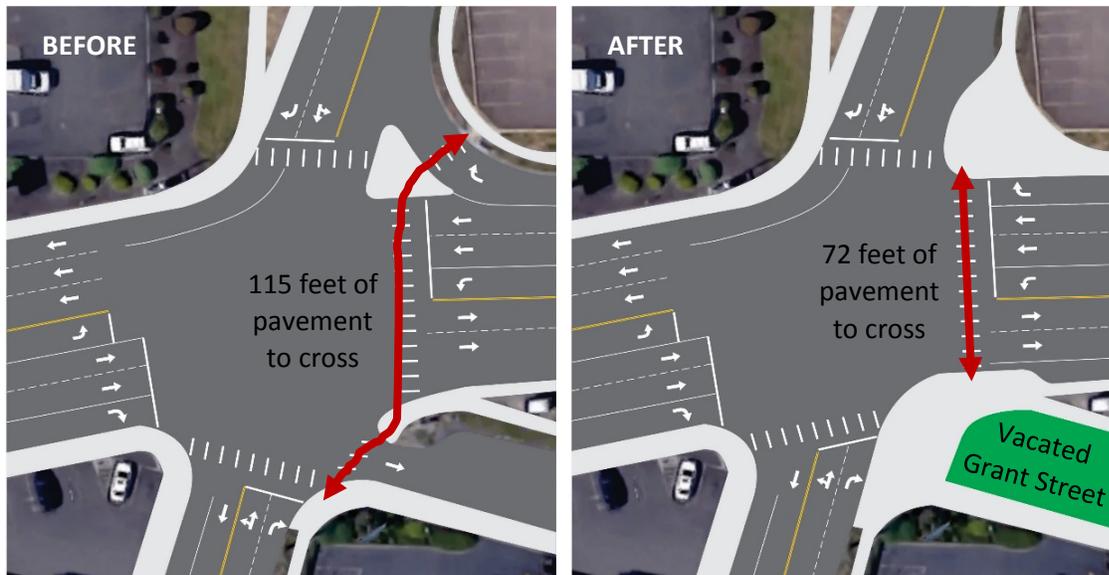
Source: NACTO

## Pedestrian Crossing Improvements

**Crossing improvements at the Cowlitz Way/5<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection.** Currently, only the crosswalk on the east leg of the intersection is open across Cowlitz Way. This crossing is nearly 115 feet in length, and pedestrians have to navigate across a narrow pedestrian island separating right-turning vehicles from the through travel lanes. This crossing distance could be reduced to approximately 72 feet by removing the island at the northeast corner of the intersection and extending the curb to the edge of the traveled way. The channelized westbound right-turn could be replaced with a traditional right-turn lane with consideration for truck turning requirements.

The curb at the southeast corner of the intersection could also be extended to the edge of the traveled way, and the recommended closure of the Grant Street approach to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue could be replaced with a wide sidewalk. See Exhibit 18 for more detail on the recommended improvements.

**Exhibit 17. Concept for the Cowlitz Way/5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Intersection**



Source: DKS Associates, 2015

Consideration should also be given to providing a crosswalk on the west leg of the intersection. The potential impacts to intersection traffic operations would need to be evaluated in cooperation with WSDOT.

**Crossing improvements at the West Main Street/5<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection.** Extend the curb at each corner of the intersection to the edge of the traveled way (into the on-street parking lanes), and add textured crosswalks (see Figure 5). This will narrow the street and associated pedestrian crossing distance, increase pedestrian visibility and slow travel speeds along the corridor. Consider implementing a pedestrian scramble crossing improvement at the intersection (see example in Exhibit 19) where all traffic stops for pedestrians crossing in all directions. This treatment would require modification of the signal timing.

### Exhibit 18. Example of a Pedestrian Scramble and Textured Crosswalk at a Signalized Intersection



Source: Chicago Tribune; NACTO

**Crossing improvements at the Cowlitz Way/West Main Street intersection.** Extend the curb to the edge of the traveled way (into the on-street parking lanes) along the West Main Street approaches to Cowlitz Way. This will narrow the street and associated pedestrian crossing distance of West Main Street. Update the signal timing to ensure pedestrian traffic is adequately accommodated. Consideration should also be given to opening up the crosswalk on the south leg of the intersection.

### Street Vacations

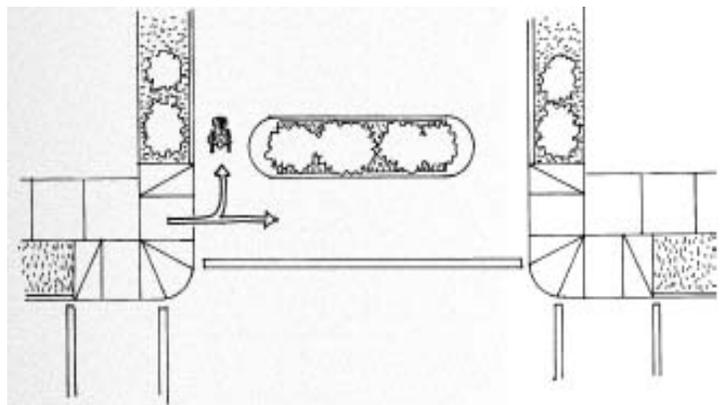
**Vacate 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue between West Main Street and Grant Street.** This could allow for expansion of the landscaped area near the Cowlitz Way/West Main Street intersection (see Exhibit 18). It would also eliminate the skewed approaches to Cowlitz Way that can obscure a driver’s vision while entering traffic. The 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue connections are not needed, other streets provide access to the adjacent properties.

**Close the Grant Street connection to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and vacate the street between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenues.** Grant Street intersects 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, just south of Cowlitz Way. Although Grant Street operates with eastbound only traffic flow between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Cowlitz Way intersection configuration remains awkward for drivers, and increases the crossing length for pedestrians crossing Cowlitz Way. Closing the street would allow the space to be repurposed for pedestrian and bicycle use only (See Exhibit 17).

### Exhibit 19. Examples of Roadway Closure



Source: FHWA



## Sidewalk and Lighting Improvements

**Improve lighting along residential streets, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, at the Cowlitz Way undercrossing.** These local streets provide a means for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross under Cowlitz Way. While both of the streets have existing sidewalks and traffic volumes low enough to be appropriate for shared-bicycle travel, the undercrossing of Cowlitz Way tends to be uninviting. These routes could be improved with pedestrian-scaled lighting.

**Sidewalk infill.** Complete sidewalk gaps along local streets, prioritize near Catlin Elementary School and connections to Cowlitz Way/Long Avenue intersection pedestrian crossing. A 5-foot curb tight sidewalk strategy could be implemented in the study area to help reduce costs and right-of-way needs associated with the infill improvements.

## West Main Streetscape Project

The West Main Streetscape Project is currently in the design phase and scheduled for construction in the near future. The project will include additional on-street parking, a road diet to two-travel lanes, improved pedestrian crossings, street trees, and lighting. See Exhibit 20 for the concept plan.

**Exhibit 20. West Main Street Concept Plan**



Source: Otak, 2015

## 3.3 Parks, Trails, and Public Spaces

A healthy neighborhood requires access to parks, trails, and public spaces. The West Kelso neighborhood has existing parks and public spaces that could be improved to support the neighborhood vision and implementation of the guiding principles. Exhibit 21 identifies proposed park, trail, and public space improvements.

### Exhibit 21. Parks, Trails, and Public Spaces



Source: BERK, 2015

### Parks, Trails, and Public Improvement Actions

- P-1. Improve the park at Catlin Hall for year-round use.
  - a. Establish a community garden
  - b. Improve the pedestrian entrances to the property
  - c. Install playground equipment
  - d. Install landscaping, lighting, and flexible event space
- P-2. Vacate 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW to expand Triangle Park as part of the West Main Streetscape Project.
  - a. Create a public plaza with hardscape, landscaping, lighting, and seating improvements
- P-3. Improve the trail along the Cowlitz River with a riverfront viewing area to include seating, landscaping, public art, and interpretive signage.
  - a. Develop trailhead with parking on the south side of the Allen Street Bridge
- P-4. Convert the landscaped area on the north side of the Catlin Street and West Main Intersection to a pedestrian-oriented plaza to include seating areas, public art, landscaping, and gateway elements.

### Catlin Hall and Triangle Park Improvements

Improvements to open space at the Kelso Senior Center (Catlin Hall) and the expansion of Triangle Park are shown in Exhibit 22.

The existing open space at Catlin Hall is proposed to be improved with facilities to support year-round use as a park. Improvements include community gardens, playground equipment, flexible event space, better pedestrian connections to the street, seating and picnic areas, and the existing spray park. These improvements, along with programs and events, would attract more diverse users on a regular basis.

Triangle Park, located on the east side Cowlitz Way from Catlin Hall, is proposed for expansion by vacating the portion of SW 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the east. Improvements include landscaping, street trees, new hardscape, and seating areas that will better connect the retail area along West Main Street to Catlin Hall across Cowlitz Way. Another public plaza is shown in Exhibit 22 on the north side of Cowlitz Way to connect Triangle Park with Catlin Hall. However, the property is currently privately owned.

**Exhibit 22. Catlin Hall and Triangle Park Improvements**

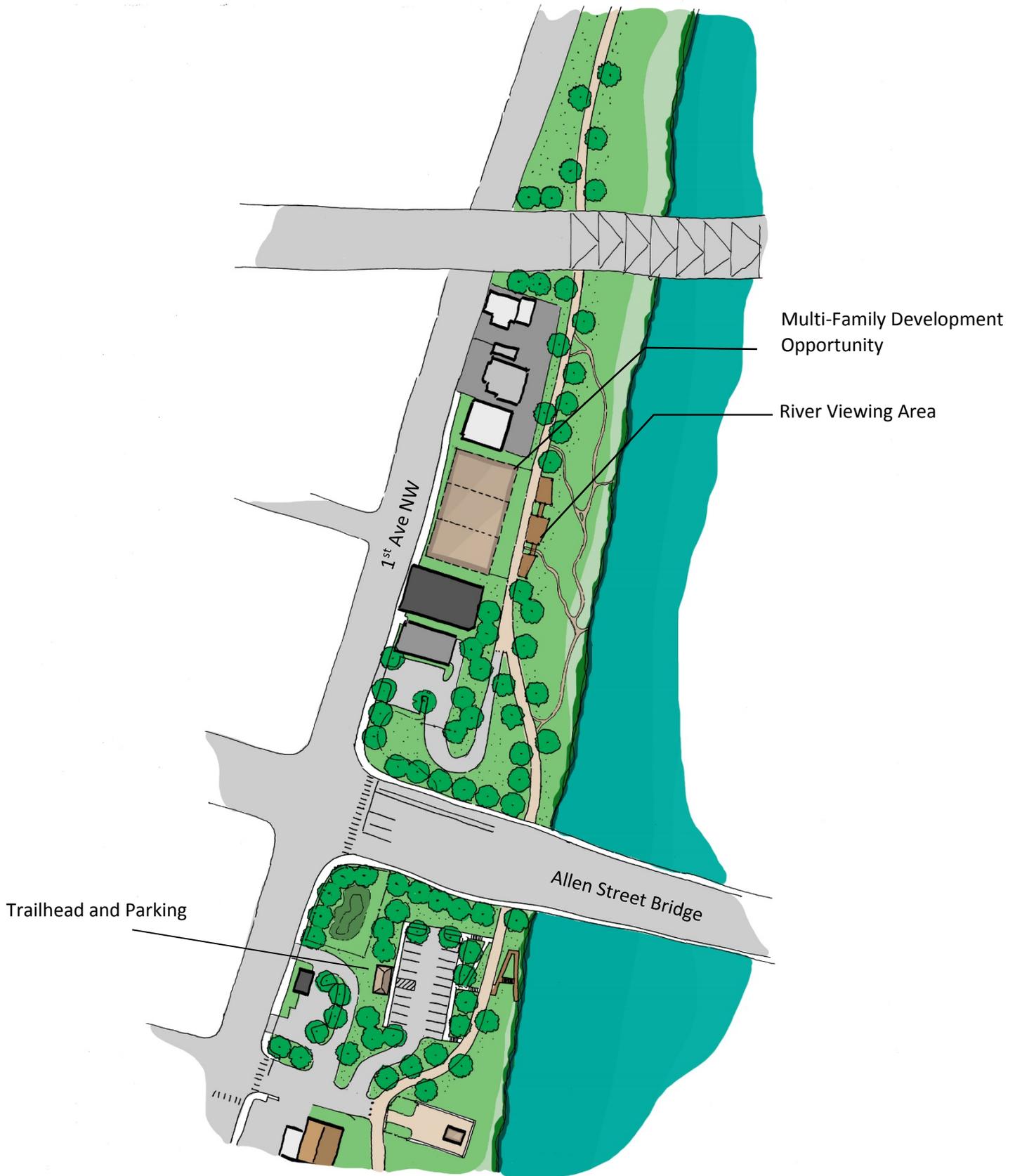


Source: Mackay Sposito, 2015; MAKERS, 2015

### Cowlitz River Trail Improvements

The existing trail and levee along the Cowlitz River are an opportunity to create a stronger connection to the waterfront in West Kelso. Exhibit 23 highlights the recommended improvements including a trailhead with parking south of the Allen Street Bridge, a waterfront viewing area with seating and interpretive signage, and additional landscaping and trees. Opportunities for multi-family development along the river also exist to take advantage of river views.

Exhibit 23. Cowlitz River Trail Improvements



Source: Mackay Sposito, 2015; MAKERS, 2015

### 3.4 Development Opportunities

West Kelso has significant development opportunities as shown in Exhibit 24. Parcels identified as redevelopment opportunities include:

- **Vacant:** Parcels classified as vacant by the Cowlitz County Assessor
- **Redevelopable:** Parcels where the improvement value is 50% or less than the value of the land
- **Publicly Owned (undeveloped):** Parcels owned by the City of Kelso and currently vacant or undeveloped. The properties were acquired during Phase I of the West Main Realignment Project.

Exhibit 24. Development Opportunities



Source: Cowlitz County Assessor, 2015; BERK, 2015

#### Development Opportunity Actions

- D-1. Issue a request for proposals (RFP) to develop the publicly owned properties that are suitable for private development.
- D-2. Contact property owners of vacant or redevelopable properties to discuss development opportunities, partnerships, and collaborative marketing opportunities.

## West Main Street and Catlin Street Infill Development

The City acquired several properties for additional right-of-way as part of Phase I of the West Main Realignment Project. However, not all of the property was needed to accommodate the project and may be used for new public or private development. Exhibit 24 shows the publicly owned properties near the intersection of West Main and Catlin. Several of the parcels are too small to support additional development, but could be improved for further public use. As shown in Exhibit 25 and Exhibit 26, the property on the north side of the intersection could support adjacent development while still accommodating an improved pedestrian-oriented plaza space. The properties to the south and east of the intersection could support additional development although the odd parcel shapes limit the type of buildings and land uses that could occur.

Exhibit 27 shows a potential concept for the parcel to the north of the Catlin and Main intersection if the City were to develop a plaza space with some active recreation opportunities. Ideally, the plaza would locate on Main Street away from the heavily-trafficked Catlin St (see location of plaza in Exhibit 26).

**Exhibit 25. West Main and Catlin Public Property Development Concept**



Source: Mackay Sposito, 2015; MAKERS, 2015

Some of the design features that could be developed as a result of new guidelines and regulations include those listed below (and depicted in Exhibit 26):

- The design guidelines would require “gateway” buildings to mark entrance to Main Street from Catlin Street
- The plaza is located on Main Street away from Catlin traffic while close enough to have a visual presence from Cowlitz, attract pedestrians, and anchor the eastern portion of Main Street
- The plaza is activated by the adjacent ground floor active uses, outdoor seating, play equipment and a food cart

- Landscaping along Catlin buffers pedestrians and provides a beautiful entrance to West Kelso
- Parking locates behind commercial buildings facing Main Street
- Buildings along Main Street follow Pedestrian Overlay Design Guidelines to create a safe, comfortable and beautiful pedestrian zone
- Street trees and landscaping unify Main Street while providing ecological benefits

**Exhibit 26. West Main and Catlin Rendering (Looking North across Catlin towards W. Main)**



Source: MAKERS, 2015

**Exhibit 27. West Main and Catlin Plaza Rendering (corner of Catlin and W. Main)**

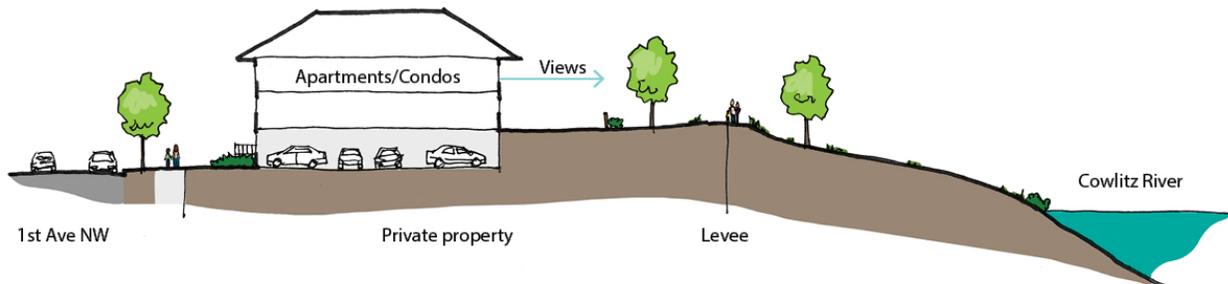


Source: BERK, 2015

### Riverfront Multi-Family Development

There are opportunities for multi-family infill development along the Cowlitz River that advantage of riverfront views from upper stories. Exhibit 28 shows infill development between 1<sup>st</sup> Ave NW and the river levee with parking on the first floor and two stories of residential units above with river views. The “eyes on the trail,” both from upper story windows and from ground floor connections and private yards, would help to make the trail feel safe. Exhibit 29 shows the river views from the third story residences. Exhibit 30 shows an example of a riverfront multi-family development in Renton, WA.

**Exhibit 28. Multi-Family Infill Development Section**



Source: MAKERS, 2015

Exhibit 29. View from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Story of Multi-Family Riverfront Development



Source: Google Earth, 2015; MAKERS, 2015

### Exhibit 30. Riverfront Multi-Family Development Example



Source: MAKERS, 2015

## 3.5 Organizational Development

### Organizational Development Actions

- O-1. Collaborate with West Kelso residents and businesses to establish a business a neighborhood revitalization organization focused on supporting businesses and neighborhood revitalization.
  - a. Support the initial funding of the organization during the first year with a service agreement with the City for neighborhood revitalization efforts.
- O-2. Support volunteer neighborhood cleanup efforts.

### Neighborhood/Business Improvement Organization

The City should support and facilitate the establishment of a neighborhood revitalization organization based on the Main Street Approach. Ideally the organization will become a 501(c)3 charitable organization for fundraising purposes. The organization should include business owners, residents, members of other existing community organizations, and the City. The City could provide some initial funding for the organization through the establishment of a service agreement based on neighborhood and business revitalization objectives. The organization would be charged with:

- Organizational development and fundraising
- Business recruitment and retention

- Organizing community events
- Marketing
- Small-scale improvements and landscape maintenance
- Managing public spaces

If successful, the organization should seek designation under the Washington Main Street Program. Designation under the program allows for donations to be made to the organization from businesses by donating a portion of their Business & Occupation (B&O) tax in exchange for a 75% credit from the WA Department of Revenue (DOR) and a charitable tax deduction.

### 3.6 Public Health and Safety

#### Public Health and Safety Actions

PH-1. Consider establishing an “Angel Initiative” program modeled after the program in Gloucester, MA. The program involves the City providing amnesty from arrest to addicts that request assistance from the City and are successfully enrolled in treatment.

#### Substance Abuse Treatment

The City of Kelso, including West Kelso, is faced with serious issues related to drug abuse and related crime. This is a challenge faced by many rural areas impacted by a decline in the resource-based economy. Fortunately, Kelso can draw from strategies used in these communities to deal with this issue. For instance, the City of Gloucester, MA developed a program where anyone who came to the police asking for help with drug addiction would not be arrested and would be placed in treatment. The program, called The Angle Initiative, has been very effective in increasing the number of people in treatment including 145 people during the first week. The program has now been modeled by many other communities. The program also connects addicts with a local person, deemed an “angel”, to provide support as they seek treatment.

## 4.0 IMPLEMENTATION

The detailed implementation plan, including the action, timeframe, responsible party, cost estimates, and relevant guiding principles are identified in Exhibit 31. The last column of the table below matches implementation actions with the pertinent guiding principle, or principles, that are identified in Section 2.0 VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES.

**Exhibit 31. Implementation Plan**

| Action #                   | Action   | Timeframe | Responsibility        | Cost       | Guiding Principles |
|----------------------------|--|-----------|-----------------------|------------|--------------------|
| <b>Land Use and Zoning</b> |  |           |                       |            |                    |
| LU-1                       | Implement the Future Land Use and Zoning Map amendments identified in Exhibit 6 and Exhibit 7. | Immediate | Community Development | Staff time | 3, 9, 10           |

| Action #                       | Action   | Timeframe | Responsibility                            | Cost   | Guiding Principles |
|--------------------------------|--|-----------|---|--|--------------------|
| LU-2                           | Adopt the development regulations for the Main Street Pedestrian Overlay as contained in Appendix A.   | Immediate | Community Development                     | Staff time                                   | 9, 10              |
| LU-3                           | Develop and adopt design guidelines for the commercial/mixed-use development and multi-family development consistent with the recommendations of this plan.  | 1-3 years | Community Development, Consultant Support | \$15k to \$20k                               | 10                 |
| LU-4                           | Eliminate the mixed-use requirement for multi-family development in the commercial zone outside of the Main Street Pedestrian Overlay.   | Immediate | Community Development                     | Staff time                                   | 4                  |
| LU-5                           | <p>Maintain and monitor the success of the City's property and building maintenance enforcement program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Establish an ombudsman program within the existing code enforcement program where enforcement officers are assigned to specific neighborhoods.</li> <li>b. Consider the establishment of an annual inspection program for residential rental properties.</li> </ul> | Ongoing   | Community Development                     | Staff time<br>HUD Funding<br>Inspection Fees | 1, 2, 3, 7, 10     |
| <b>Streets and Circulation</b> |  |           |   |  |                    |
| C-1                            | Improve the streetscapes of Long Avenue and West Main Street with upgraded sidewalks, curbing, light, and landscaping as the principal pedestrian streets in West Kelso.   | 3-5 years | Community Development and Public Works    | Restriping: \$2/linear foot<br>Street Trees: | 1, 2, 3, 9, 10     |

| Action #                                | Action  | Timeframe | Responsibility                         | Cost   | Guiding Principles      |
|---|---|-----------|--|--|-------------------------|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Complete construction of the West Main Streetscape Project.</li> <li>b. Develop a conceptual design for pedestrian improvements to Long Avenue and major intersections.</li> </ul>                            |           |  | \$40/linear foot   |                         |
| <b>C-2</b>                              | Improve the pedestrian crossings at major intersections as identified in Exhibit 13. Improvements may include textured cross walks, improved pedestrian signal timing, reducing crossing distances, eliminating unnecessary crossings, and landscaping. | 3-5 years | Community Development and Public Works | Cowlitz/5 <sup>th</sup> Avenue: \$15k                                  | 1, 2, 3, 9, 10          |
| <b>C-3</b>                              | As reconstruction or maintenance occurs add curbing and lighting with sidewalk improvements on local access/residential streets.  | Ongoing   | Community Development and Public Works | Sidewalk Improvements: \$15/linear foot<br>Lighting: \$160/linear foot | 2, 3, 9, 10             |
| <b>Parks, Trails, and Public Spaces</b> |   |           |  |  |                         |
| <b>P-1</b>                              | Improve the park at Catlin Hall for year-round use.   |           |  | \$600k to \$700k   | 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 10       |
| <b>P-2</b>                              | Vacate 7 <sup>th</sup> Avenue SW to expand Triangle Park as part of the West Main Streetscape Project.  |           |  | \$200k to \$235k   | 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10    |
| <b>P-3</b>                              | Improve the trail along the Cowlitz River with a riverfront viewing area to include seating, landscaping, public art, a trailhead with parking, and interpretive signage.   |           |  | \$800k to \$900k   | 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 |
| <b>P-4</b>                              | Convert the landscaped area on the north side of the Catlin   | 1-3 years | Community Development                  | \$50k  | 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10       |

| Action #                          | Action   | Timeframe | Responsibility        | Cost  | Guiding Principles |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------|-----------------------|---|--------------------|
|                                   | Street and West Main Intersection to a pedestrian-oriented plaza to include seating areas, public art, landscaping, and gateway elements.  |           | and Public Works      |   |                    |
| <b>Development Opportunities</b>  |  |           |                       |   |                    |
| <b>DO-1</b>                       | Issue a request for proposals (RFP) to develop publicly owned properties that are suitable for private development.  | 1-3 years | Community Development | Staff time  | 4, 5, 7, 8         |
| <b>DO-2</b>                       | Contact property owners of vacant or redevelopable properties to discuss development opportunities, partnerships, and marketing opportunities.   | Immediate | Community Development | Staff time  | 4, 5, 7, 8         |
| <b>Organizational Development</b> |  |           |                       |   |                    |
| <b>O-1</b>                        | Collaborate with West Kelso residents and businesses to establish a neighborhood revitalization organization focused on supporting businesses and neighborhood revitalization.   | Immediate | Community Development | Staff time, \$10k in seed money (HUD funding).                      | 4, 7, 8            |
| <b>O-2</b>                        | Support volunteer neighborhood cleanup efforts.  | Immediate | City of Kelso         | Staff time, \$5k to support clean-up logistics                      | 1, 2, 3, 7         |
| <b>Public Health and Safety</b>   |  |           |                       |   |                    |
| <b>PH-1</b>                       | Consider establishing an “Angel Initiative” program modeled after the program in Gloucester, MA. The program involves the City providing amnesty from arrest to addicts that request assistance and are successful in enrolling in treatment | Immediate | City of Kelso         | Staff time; partnerships with treatment providers; Local volunteers | 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7   |

## 5.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A public engagement plan was developed at the beginning of the project. The plan provided a description of the process of involving a broad selection of the public and stakeholders who may be impacted by or invested in the West Kelso Subarea Plan and its recommendations. The plan included goals, methods, and specific activities to be used for engagement.

A postcard was sent to addresses in West Kelso and the tax address for property owners in West Kelso. This postcard provided information about the project website, a project email address, and the date and location for two public workshops. In addition, it directed recipients to a survey, described below.

### 5.1 Survey

An online survey was open from early September through early November 2015. The survey solicited feedback from the community and stakeholders about their relationship to West Kelso and their priority concerns. There were 56 respondents.

Survey questions included:

- What are West Kelso's greatest assets?
- How can we get more community members involved in the process?
- What do you see as some key opportunities for improving the standard of living in West Kelso?
- What are some of the most important issues to address in this plan?
- What would you like to see accomplished with this plan?

Survey respondents identified drug use, crime, and economic development/jobs as the most important issues to be addressed in the plan.

### 5.2 Workshops

#### Workshop 1

The first public workshop for the West Kelso Subarea Plan was held on September 20, 2015 at Catlin Hall. Approximately 25 people attended. The workshop included a presentation on existing conditions, an open house display of existing conditions and opportunities for input, as well as a mapping exercise that asked participants to identify assets and challenges in the neighborhood, and to make suggestions for future land uses and design concepts.

### Exhibit 32. Workshop Mapping Exercise



Source: BERK, 2015; MAKERS, 2015

Challenges identified by workshop participants include stagnant rental rates; the lack of neighborhood gateways; drug addiction and related crime, a lack of property maintenance and disinvestment; homelessness; uncertainty about future development potential and property values; traffic; parking; and, a lack of local restaurants and businesses.

Opportunities for improvement identified include lighting on Main Street and Catlin Street, plazas near the new street realignment, trees, trails, street art, new townhouses, home improvement assistance, a woonerf<sup>1</sup>, improving West Main Street, and storefront retail.

Overall discussion themes that emerged from the workshop included concerns about public safety and drug use; property and building maintenance; Phase II of the West Main Street Realignment Project; support and opposition for maintaining single family neighborhoods; and, additional input on topics such as youth activities, waterfront connections, support for local businesses, and improved pedestrian and park facilities.

#### Workshop 2

A second public workshop for the West Kelso Subarea Plan was held on November 19, 2015 at Catlin Hall. Approximately 15 people attended. The workshop included an open house display of land use alternatives, design options, and public outreach results; a presentation on alternatives, design standards, and additional revitalization strategies; and, a survey and group discussion about the proposed land use alternatives.

Workshop survey responses indicated that most attendees preferred the Alternative 1 land use plan. These respondents were particular supportive of design alternatives such as pedestrianizing Main Street and improving the Spray Park. Other design alternatives that were supported include vacating the street

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<sup>1</sup> A woonerf is a road which uses design elements to reduce or slow the flow of traffic.

near Triangle Park to expand the park, improving the trail along the river, converting the area north of Catlin and Main Streets to a plaza space, and redeveloping the vacant parcels south of Catlin and Main to park or open space. The survey responses also indicated that workshop participants were supportive of the vision statement.

### Exhibit 33. Workshop Attendees Listen to Presentations



Source: BERK, 2015; MAKERS, 2015

Survey responses also indicated support for street art, street lighting, public plazas, pocket parks, riverfront viewing areas, and storefront improvements. Those survey-takers in attendance would like to see the city take more action on policing programs to help place those dealing with drugs in treatment, enforcement of nuisance laws, blight and vacant property laws, and the purchase by the city and redevelopment of distressed property. Lastly, neighborhood watch, community clean-ups, and a local business organization were actions that survey-takers would like to see more of through partnerships and community groups.

## 6.0 ALTERNATIVES

As part of the subarea planning process, three alternative land use and design scenarios were considered for West Kelso's future. One of the alternatives is a No Action Alternative, which proposed no changes to the current regulations. Alternatives 1 and 2, however, considered varying opportunities for changing land use and design regulations that would lead to future change in the built environment and the character of the neighborhood. The three alternatives are outlined below.

### 6.1 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative maintains the existing zoning designations for the study area including the Commercial West Kelso, Residential Multi-Family, Residential Single-Family-5, Open Space, and Major Retail Commercial Zones. Existing development standards would also be maintained. This existing zoning pattern concentrates single-family zoning (minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet) in the north, south, and

northeast areas of West Kelso. The central business district around West Main, Catlin and Cowlitz Way are zoned with a West Kelso-specific commercial zone. The remaining areas are predominantly zoned for multi-family with a minimum lot area per unit of 1,350 square feet and a maximum density of 32 units per acre.

## 6.2 Alternative 1

Alternative 1 maintains the existing zoning districts in the study area, but modifies the existing zoning district boundaries. A pedestrian-oriented design overlay is applied to the properties that front on West Main Street from the Allen Street Bridge to Cowlitz Way. New development within the overlay will require active first floor uses with pedestrian-oriented design. Key changes compared to the No Action Alternative, which are illustrated in Exhibit 34, include:

- Expanded RMF Zoning District boundary to include the RSF-5 zoned properties in the northeast corner of the study area around NW 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.
- Expanded RMF Zoning District Boundary south of Catlin Street in support of Phase II of the West Main Realignment Project. This action should be dependent on the completion of Phase II. This RMF zoned area is also intended to provide a buffer between the CWK Zone and the RSF-5 Zone to the south.
- Added Pedestrian Overlay on West Main Street and surrounding parcels.

**Exhibit 34. Alternative 1 – Proposed Zoning Map**



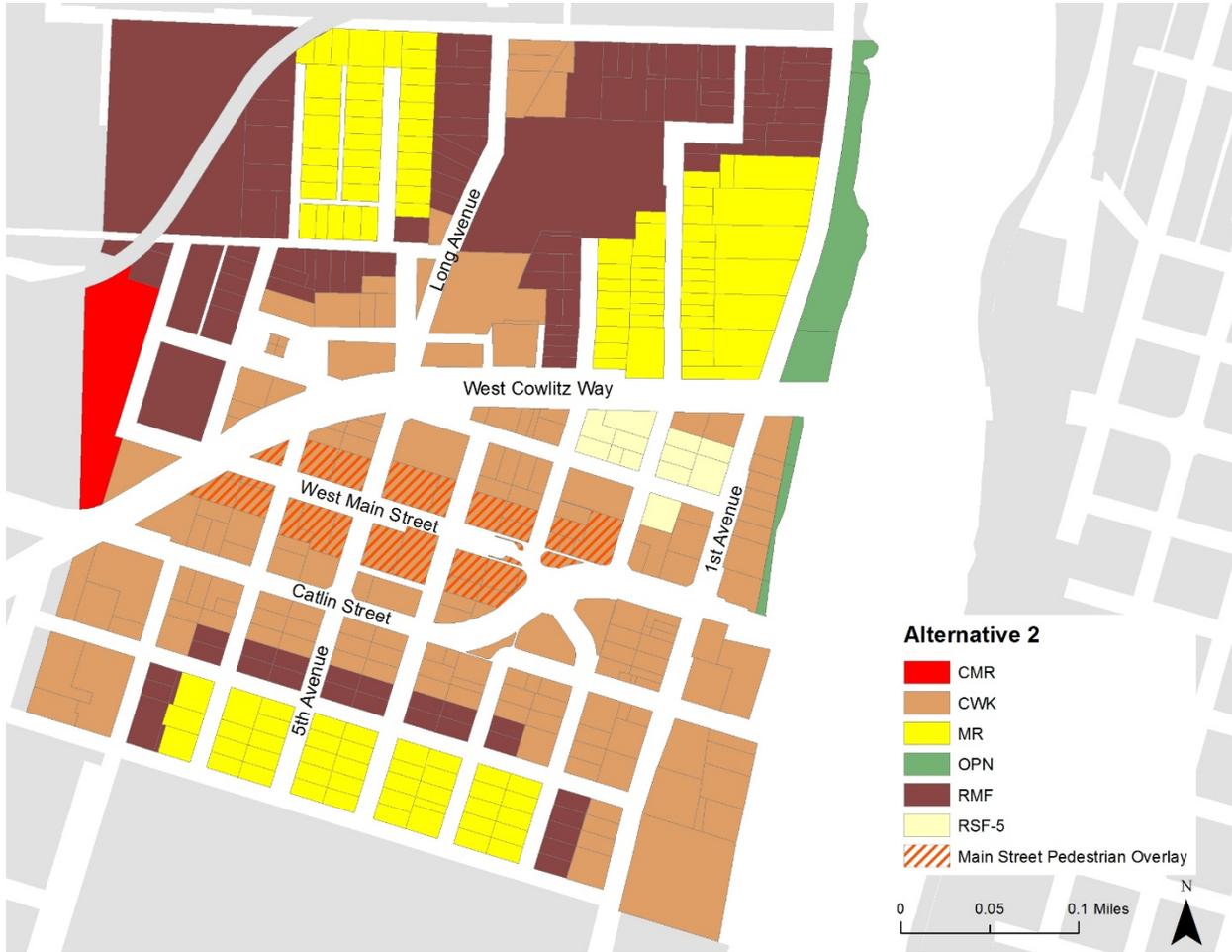
Source: BERK, 2015

### 6.3 Alternative 2

Alternative 2 is similar to Alternative 1 except existing RSF-5 zoned areas are converted to a new Mixed-Residential Zone that allows a mix of residential development types, including single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes, and smaller scale multi-family up to approximately 17 units per acre. Alternative 2 also includes the Main Street Pedestrian Overlay, but it doesn't extend to the east beyond the Catlin and West Main intersection. Key changes compared to the No Action Alternative, which are illustrated in Exhibit 35, include:

- New Mixed Residential Zone (MR) applied to the properties between Washington and Lincoln Streets (formerly RSF-5) and transition of the RSF-5 areas in the north and north east of the neighborhood to MR.
- Application of RMF Zoning District to those parcels north of Lincoln to create a buffer between the multi-family and commercial areas.
- Expand the CWK Zone south of Catlin Street in support of Phase II of the West Main Realignment Project. This action should be dependent on the completion of Phase II.
- Added Pedestrian Overlay on West Main Street and surrounding parcels, but unlike Alternative 1 it does not include properties that front on Catlin Street or on West Main east of Catlin Street.

Exhibit 35. Alternative 2 – Proposed Zoning Map



Source: BERK, 2015

## 6.4 Additional Options

Additional options were provided as part of the alternatives discussion. These options were organized into the following categories:

- **Public improvements**, such as street art, street lighting, signage, public plazas, riverfront viewing areas, and more.
- **Municipal action**, such as a policing program to help place those dealing with drug addiction in treatment, enforcement of nuisance laws, stricter blight and vacant property laws, and more.
- **Partnerships and community groups**, such as implementing a neighborhood watch, holding community clean-ups, and formation of a local business or main street organization.

Attendees at Workshop 2 expressed support for the additional options suggested. These recommendations are incorporated into the preferred alternative.

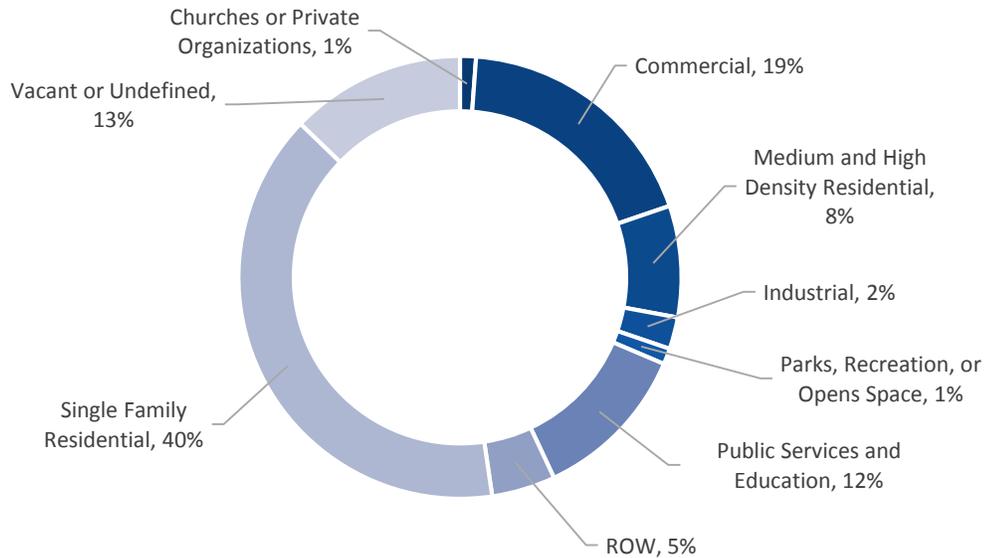
## 7.0 BACKGROUND

The existing condition information used in the development of the plan is summarized below. For more detailed information on existing conditions see the full Existing Conditions Report.

## 7.1 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 36 for distribution of land use acres.

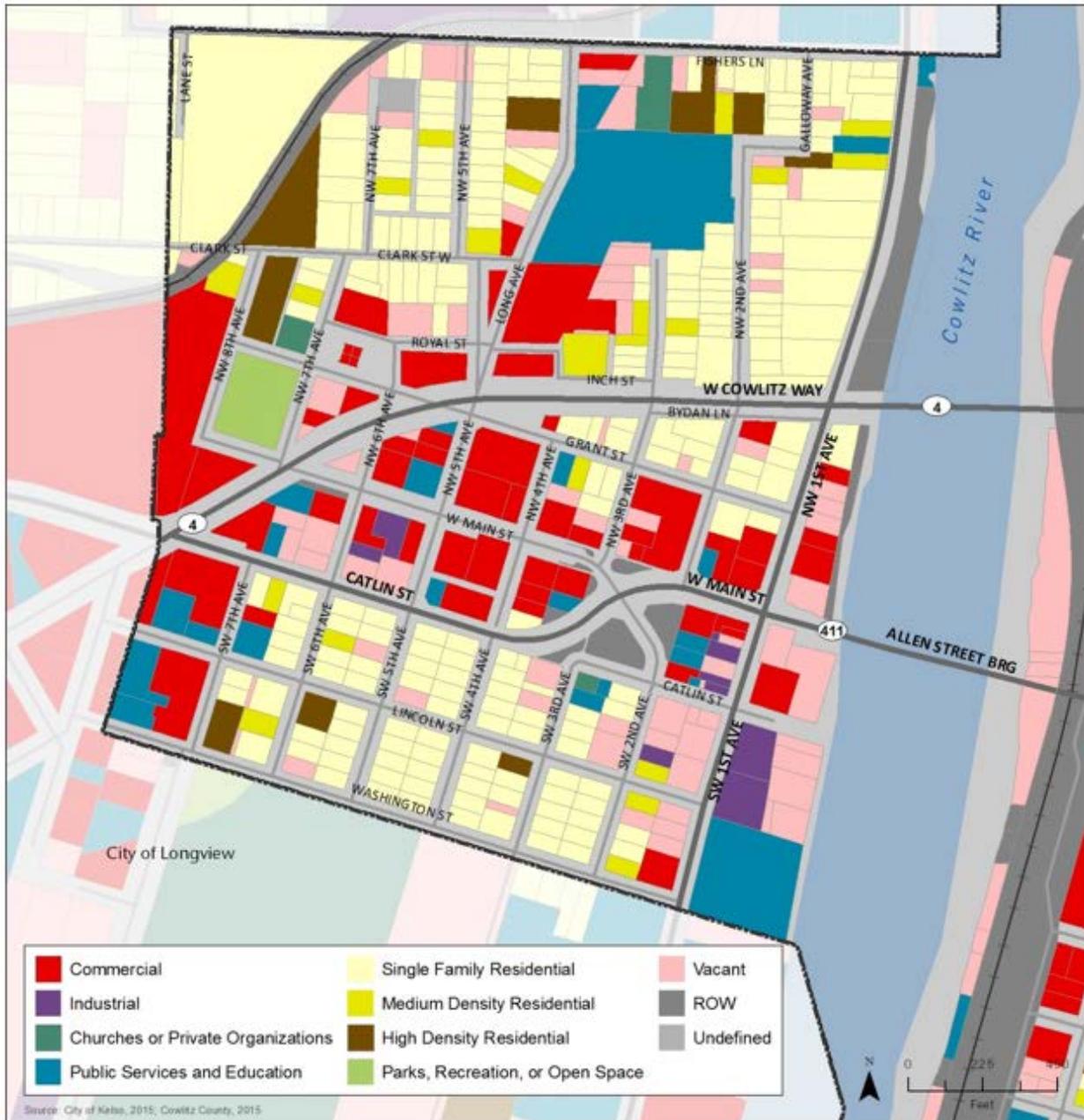
**Exhibit 36. Distribution of West Kelso Land Use (2015)**



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

Exhibit 37 shows existing land use by parcel for the West Kelso neighborhood. Eleven acres of land in the district are 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 37. 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 built before 1950.

### 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

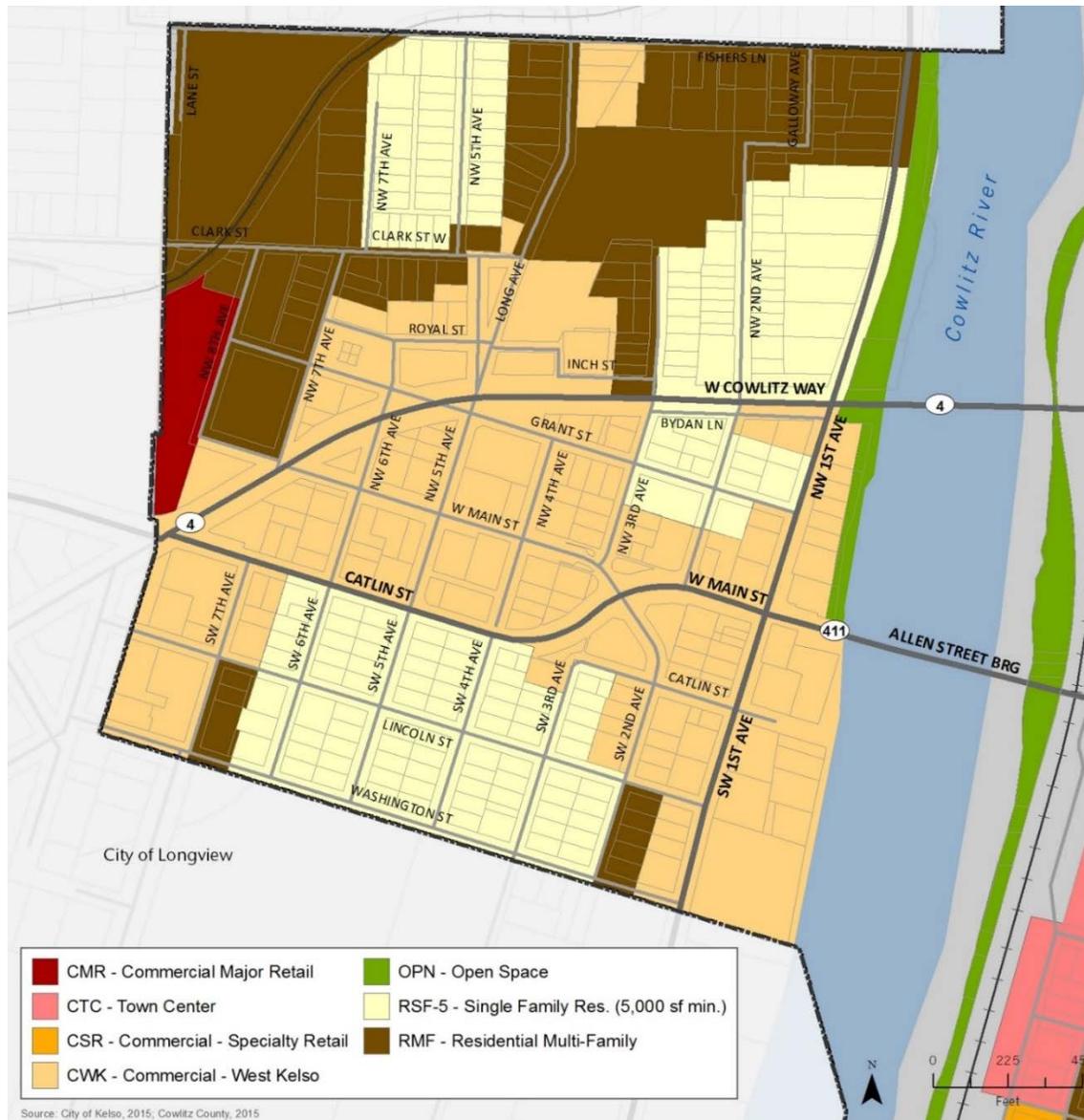
Subarea Plan. Current zoning acreage in West Kelso is shown in Exhibit 38 and a map of current zoning is shown in Exhibit 39.

**Exhibit 38. West Kelso Zoning Acres (2015)**

| Category   | Acres |
|--|-------|
| <b>CWK: Commercial West Kelso</b>                        | 41.0  |
| <b>Major Commercial</b>                                  | 2.6   |
| <b>OPN: Open Space</b>                                   | 0.5   |
| <b>RMF: Residential Multi-Family</b>                     | 20.0  |
| <b>RSF-5: Single-Family Residential (5,000 s.f. min)</b> | 23.0  |
| <b>Total</b>   | 86.6  |

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

**Exhibit 39. West Kelso Existing Zoning Map (2015)**



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

## 7.2 Built Environment

### Character

West Kelso has some distinct districts—a traditional business core, commercial areas, and residential zones—each with unique characteristics. However, the overall character of West Kelso is 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 Street to create the feel of a traditional “main street.” Buildings were frequently built with street frontages and zero-lot-lines (i.e., side-by-side). Relatively wide sidewalks provide a comfortable walking environment.

**Exhibit 40. Historic Buildings on Main Street at 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue**



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

The older West Kelso buildings (see Exhibit 40 and Exhibit 41) 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 41. Older commercial buildings on Main Street between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenues**



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

**Auto-Oriented Commercial**

Many auto-oriented developments line W Cowlitz Way, especially on the west side of West Kelso. These buildings are characterized by large setbacks from the street, drive-through uses, and/or parking between the business entry and the street (See Exhibit 42).

**Exhibit 42. Auto-Oriented Commercial Development on W Cowlitz Way Near Main Street**



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, such as the building in Exhibit 43. 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.

**Exhibit 43. Commercial Building Appropriate for Lght Industrial Uses on Catlin Street**  
(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 44), and others are from the 1940s, 1950s and later. A few multi-family developments are interspersed in the neighborhood.

**Exhibit 44. The Nat Smith House, a Historic Register Property**



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

Most residential areas are well-maintained and feel comfortable and safe due to the small blocks, human scale of the homes, and safe sidewalks. 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.

### 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, as depicted in Exhibit 45.

**Exhibit 45. River Levee (as seen from 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue at Main St) Acts as a Barrier**



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

### Gateways

Major gateways include the two bridges over the Cowlitz River, the Allen Street Bridge (see Exhibit 46), and the Cowlitz Way/Highway 4 Bridge (see Exhibit 47). These two gateways carry people from Kelso and I-5 and naturally act as major signifiers of entry into a different neighborhood.

### Exhibit 46. Highway Signs on the Allen Street Bridge



Source: Google Earth, 2015.

### Exhibit 47. Cowlitz Way/Highway 4 Bridge Entry into West Kelso



Source: Google Earth, 2015.

## Views

Both bridges provide views of the river, Kelso, West Kelso, and surrounding hills. The trail running along the levy, shown in Exhibit 48, also provides views of the Cowlitz River.

### Exhibit 48. Views from Trail



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

### Landmarks

Landmarks in or near West Kelso include:

- The Senior Center and Spray Park (see Exhibit 49)
- The historic building and mural on Main St near 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue (see Exhibit 50)
- 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 49. Senior Center and Spray Park



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

**Exhibit 50. Historic Building with Mural**



Source: MAKERS, 2015.

**7.3 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 51 shows an increase in poverty levels in every category between 2000 and the 2009 – 2013 American Community Survey.<sup>2</sup> The percentage of Kelso families with children under 18 living in poverty almost doubled during this time period.

**Exhibit 51. Poverty Levels**

|  | 2000 | 2009 - 2013 |
|--|------|-------------|
| <b>All Families</b>                          | 16%  | 23%         |
| <b>Families with children under 5 years</b>  | 29%  | 36%         |
| <b>Families with children under 18 years</b> | 22%  | 41%         |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2009 – 2013 American Community Survey ; BERK, 2015

During this period of analysis the median household income in Kelso grew less than \$6,000, or approximately 1.6% a year, to \$35,381. See Exhibit 52.

**Exhibit 52. Income Trends**

|                             | 2000     | 2009 - 2013 |
|-----------------------------|----------|-------------|
| <b>Per Capita Income</b>    | \$15,162 | \$16,431    |
| <b>Mean Family Income</b>   | \$29,722 | \$35,381    |
| <b>Median Family Income</b> | \$36,784 | \$43,179    |

<sup>2</sup> Please note that Exhibit 51 through Exhibit 54 display data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey 2009 – 2013 5-Year Estimates. These data are based on surveys conducted over a five year period. This period includes the most recent recession. Therefore income, poverty, and employment statistics are expected to reflect the impacts of the recession. These data do not show the extent to which West Kelso has recovered (or not) from the recession and, as a result, may exaggerate economic declines since 2000.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2009 – 2013 American Community Survey; BERK, 2015

The percentage of those over 16 in the workforce that are employed decreased 9% while the total number of unemployed almost doubled. See Exhibit 53.

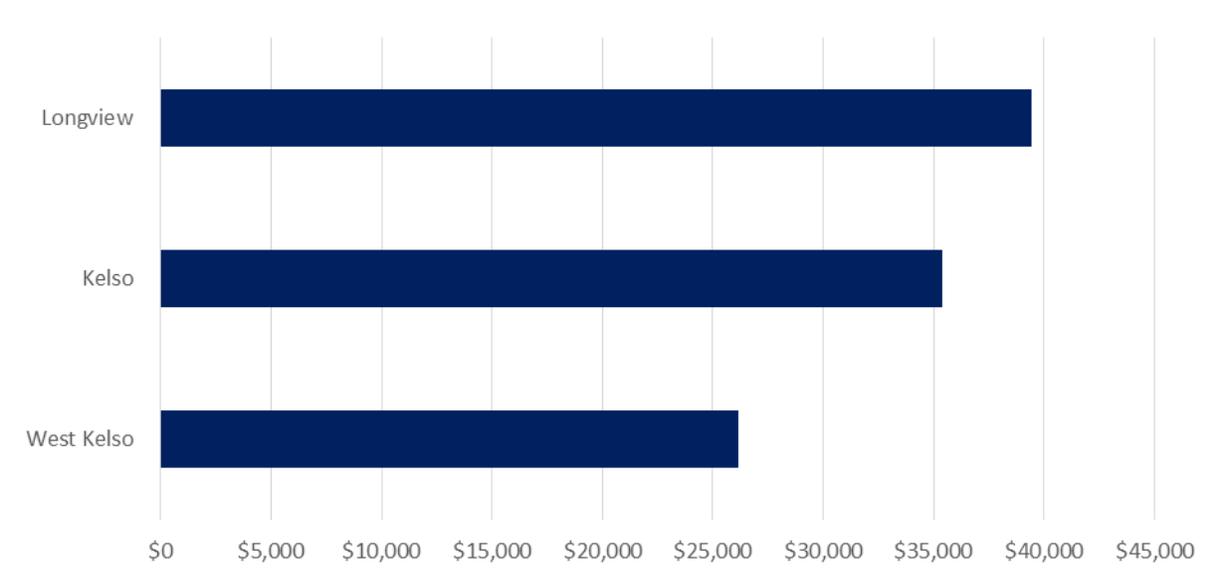
**Exhibit 53. Employment Trends**

|                   | 2000   |         | 2009 - 2013 |         |
|-------------------|--------|---------|-------------|---------|
|                   | Number | Percent | Number      | Percent |
| <b>Employed</b>   | 4,590  | 51%     | 3,922       | 42%     |
| <b>Unemployed</b> | 597    | 7%      | 1,051       | 11%     |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2009 – 2013 American Community Survey; 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 54. According to the 2009 - 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 54. Median Income in West Kelso, Kelso, and Longview**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 - 2013 American Community Survey

## 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 section above, these establishments provide easy automobile 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 has the potential to 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 of local residents 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, vacant lands, and parcels with low improvement values.

## Redevelopment Potential

There may be an opportunity to identify parcels that are redevelopable *and* whose owners may be interested in redevelopment. Redevelopable parcels are those where improvements are less than 50% of the value of the land. However, some of the parcels identified as redevelopable 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.

## 7.4 Comprehensive Plan and Development Code

### Introduction

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

### 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 5th 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 6th Avenue SW; and
- L. The improvement of housing opportunities throughout the neighborhood.

## 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.

## 7.5 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 splash 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.