



City of Issaquah Economic Vitality Task Force

FINAL STRATEGIC PLAN: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Prepared for the City of Issaquah  
by Lund Consulting Inc.  
Community Attributes  
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## Acknowledgments

The following people contributed in ways both large and small to the work of the task force, for which we are grateful:

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FINAL STRATEGIC PLAN: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS  
NOVEMBER 2006**

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## INTRODUCTION

The City of Issaquah's vision statement:

*"The City of Issaquah is committed to quality living through preservation and enhancement of the community's unique human and natural resources."*

and the economic vitality goal from the City of Issaquah's comprehensive plan:

*"Enhance Issaquah's quality of life through a balanced economic vitality strategy."*

are the springboards from which the City of Issaquah Economic Vitality Task Force has leapt to create a strategic plan for economic vitality. While we build from existing and past plans and programs, we must also acknowledge the undeniable fact of growth in Issaquah over just the past five years. Our economic vitality and quality of life depend upon our ability to accommodate growth, channel it appropriately, and accept it wisely.

The Issaquah area was first called "Squak," a Native American name that referred to the calls and squawks of the many water birds which frequented the boggy land, swamps, and creeks of the valley. Several years later, the citizens changed the town's name to Gilman, after Daniel Gilman, who was responsible for bringing the railroad to the area. Gilman was incorporated in April 1892 as a "fourth-class town."<sup>1</sup>

Issaquah is one of only four cities in King County that was incorporated before 1900. In 1899 the city's name became Issaquah. Mining and lumber were its first economic bases. Boeing's first wooden seaplane took off from Lake Sammamish, at the northern edge of Issaquah.

<sup>1</sup> "Town" and "City" of Issaquah: Municipal History, prepared by Linda Ruehle ([www.issaquahhistory.org](http://www.issaquahhistory.org))

## ECONOMIC VITALITY: A BACKGROUND

### 1995 comprehensive plan

By 1995, Issaquah, no longer a “fourth class town,” was a city in its own right, and growing, in fact growing even more rapidly than the fast-growing Puget Sound region in which it is located. As part of a comprehensive plan required by the state of Washington’s growth management act (GMA), Issaquah adopted its first strategic plan for economic vitality in 1995. Planning for economic development was included as one of GMA’s thirteen planning goals.

Issaquah adopted the term “economic vitality” as the theme for its economic development plan, which provided us the opportunity to establish guiding policies for Issaquah’s sustained economic growth. Pursuant to a King County planning mandate, the economic vitality element was quantitative in nature, requiring estimates of the number of new jobs to be created over a twenty-year period. Issaquah was asked, in its planning, to manage job increases by taking an active approach to provide for and encourage the type of economic activity that will provide stability for the local economy, as well as the vitality of the entire region. The notion of “economic vitality” has remained consistent since the first plan.

### City of Issaquah 2006 economic development and vitality goal

A City goal for economic vitality was established for 2006. As part of its goal, the City of Issaquah elected to appoint a task force to make recommendations to the City on economic vitality. The direction from the city council reads, in part:

*Convene an ad hoc committee to identify the community guiding principles of economic development with the goal of promoting the economic vitality of the community. The ad hoc committee will:*

- *Review the economic vitality element of the comprehensive plan for adequacy and make suggestions for improvements.*
- *Develop a strategy for aggressively pursuing the type of economic development we desire.*

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### Community partners

The following agencies, departments, individuals, corporations, boards, and commissions represent a broad spectrum of the community, and will be integral in the implementation of the economic vitality strategic plan:

A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH)  
AtWork  
Bellevue Community College  
Business community (Gilman Village, Rowley Properties, Costco, restaurants)  
Cascade Land Conservancy  
City of Issaquah Building Department

City of Issaquah Department of Parks and Recreation—  
Parks and Open Space  
City of Issaquah Park Board  
City of Issaquah Planning Department  
City of Issaquah Planning Policy Commission  
City of Issaquah Resource Conservation Office  
Compassion House  
Downtown Issaquah Association  
Eastside Human Services  
Eastside Transportation Partnership  
Enterprise Seattle  
Homeowners associations

## Appointment of a task force

Aware that there are various ways to achieve the goal of developing a strategic plan for economic vitality, the City of Issaquah elected to appoint an advisory task force that would weigh background information, identify issues, and lay out a set of recommendations and strategies to meet the goal of a healthy, vital and sustainable community.

A key to the City's economic vitality goal was to identify a cross-section of the community, and to charge them with the broad task of reviewing the City's economic health and make recommendations on ways to strengthen and sustain our community's economic vitality. The outcome of the task force work would be to produce a strategic plan, which will include an action plan that would detail top priorities and projects to achieve and sustain economic vitality for the community.

## TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Our fifteen task force members come from varied walks of life and different perspectives. We believe that the task force represents a healthy cross-section of Issaquah. Task force members served as volunteers, and each one brought not only her or his perspective to the table, but also a genuine desire to be of service to the community we cherish. Please see the inside front cover for a list of task force members.

## TASK FORCE PROCESS

According to the City's economic vitality goal, the outcome of the task force work is to produce a strategic plan, which will include an action plan that would detail top priorities and projects to achieve and sustain economic vitality for the community.

Because Issaquah is rooted in a strong tradition of public participation in decision making, it was determined that the economic vitality task force would conduct a series of general community meetings on their findings and recommendations, as the most effective way to involve and assure strong community

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Issaquah Alps Trails Club  
 Issaquah Art Collective  
 Issaquah Arts Commission  
 Issaquah Chamber of Commerce  
 Issaquah Environmental Council  
 Issaquah Historical Society  
 Issaquah Press  
 Issaquah School District  
 Issaquah Schools Foundation  
 King County Library  
 King County Metro Transit  
 Kiwanis Club

Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust  
 Pedestrian and bicycle clubs  
 Pomegranate Center  
 Rotary Club  
 Save Lake Sammamish  
 Sound Transit  
 Sustainable Seattle  
 The Trust for Public Land  
 University of Washington  
 Village Theatre

## Task Force History and Process

### 1995:

*Comprehensive plan update, including an economic vitality element*

### April 2006:

*Task force appointed by City  
Consultant team hired*

### May 2006:

*First task force meeting  
Vision statement and guiding principles*

### June 2006:

*Schedule and proposed path  
Economic profile  
Stakeholder interviews (II)*

### July 2006:

*Task force meetings 2 and 3  
Task force member surveys (I)  
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities,  
Threats analysis  
Definitions: "economic vitality," "sustainability"  
Draft strategic plan 1: goals, objectives,  
policies, strategies*

### August 2006:

*Task force meeting 4  
Draft strategic plan 2: synthesize strategies  
Develop performance measures*

### September 2006:

*Public forum: presentation of draft strategic plan  
Public comments  
Draft strategic plan 3: refined strategies and action items*

### October 2006:

*Task force meeting 5  
Prioritize action items  
Final draft strategic plan  
Public forum: presentation of final draft strategic plan*

### November 2006:

*Task force meeting 6  
Finalize plan  
Present final strategic plan to City Council*

participation. An important expectation of the task force in this process was to seek stakeholder input as a part of its work.

The task force centered its planning process around six working meetings, and two public forums. The consultant team provided information, analysis, and technical assistance to the task force. Specific products included a review of past documents and plans relevant to economic vitality, development of an economic profile for Issaquah, an outline of economic opportunities, analysis of economic threats and strengths, and a survey of twenty community leaders, representing various elements of Issaquah's economy.

A history of the task force's work is shown at left.

## PLAN APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENTATION

### City Council Approval

Approval and adoption of the strategic plan by the City of Issaquah gives it legal standing, as well as recognition as an official City policy and program.

The strategic plan presented herein contains 36 actions that are prioritized for the short (one to three years) or medium term (four to seven years). Approximately 60 additional strategies are identified for the longer term (eight to 50 years), or as lesser priorities.

The strategies were developed with an eye toward implementable actions. In the midst of the plan development process, the task force directed staff to ensure that strategies developed for the economic vitality plan should be able to be translated into specific actions with measurable results.

### Assign Responsibilities and Implement

"It takes a village to raise a child," is an oft-heard quotation. In the same vein, it takes an entire community of committed citizens and organizations to implement and realize a strategic plan. With the workload shared among a broad collective, each priority action item finds a home and an advocate. We have identified a list of stakeholders, to share responsibility for implementation of the 95 action items identified in the strategic plan for economic vitality (see previous pages). It is up to the city council or to the organizations or individuals themselves to assign responsibility for implementation.

### Review and Update

We intend to revisit the strategic plan annually, and to work with the City to create a "report card" to assess success. We will identify successes, barriers to implementation, and changes in priorities. We will work with our partners to revise strategies accordingly.

## POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

### Vision, goal, and overarching themes

At the first meeting of the task force, we expressed many thoughts about what “economic vitality” means to us. Our various voices identified characteristics of economic vitality, with the common themes of growth, connectivity, and preserving our environment for future generations:

After several meetings, we came to define “economic vitality” as follows:

*Economic vitality is a community’s capacity to be economically competitive, resilient, and attractive to private and public enterprise. A community with economic vitality enables its citizens to enjoy jobs in balance with a quality of life that sets the standards for long-term sustainability.*

We also developed a “vision” for an economically vital Issaquah. We envision an Issaquah that:

**Has maintained the environment and preserved open space.** We place a high value on Issaquah’s beauty and recreational potential. We hope for a future that manages growth with a deliberate protection of the surrounding environment.

**Is an environmentally and socially sustainable community.** We hope that Issaquah will become a model of sustainability, with an emphasis on preserving natural resources and using low-impact building techniques. This vision of sustainability includes an emphasis on meeting social and cultural needs of its inhabitants through inclusive processes that encourage bringing stakeholders into the process and building connections among community members.

**Has a successful economic niche.** We hope that Issaquah can maintain its area of specialty and develop it into a strong market that supports growth. We find particularly favorable the current focus on art for the downtown area.

**Is a vibrant, mixed-use village.** We envision a downtown core that is pedestrian-friendly and comprised of a mix of residential and commercial spaces as well as new and older renovated buildings. While portions of Issaquah will remain suburban, we hope to maintain the small-town feel of the downtown core and surrounding neighborhoods.

**Has planned for and implemented transportation solutions.** There must be a balance and variety of transportation types and facilities in Issaquah’s future, in order to address our transportation challenges.

**Is supportive of local, independent businesses.** We believe that local, independent businesses must continue to be supported and that the flow of resources in and out of the city is relatively balanced. The presence of local businesses in the local retail landscape supports Issaquah’s unique character.

### Objective and Themes

The opportunity to accept growth and employ vision and intent to develop a livable community is a core value to Issaquah’s residents. Issaquah remains a desirable place to live and do business. Therefore, the ability to “do devel-

### Voices from the task force

At the first meeting of the economic vitality task force, members expressed their thoughts about what economic vitality means to them. From these initial voices ultimately came the strategic plan for economic vitality:

*Growth — quality of life, and sustainability*

*Aspirations aligned*

*A cherished natural environment*

*Sustainable for our future*

*Controlling our future, accomplishing goals, future-focused*

*Anticipating needs, flexible*

*Network (e.g., schools, roadways) to support community, within limits of its capacity*

*The town is connected, through community networks and physical links*

*A place where it is easier to walk*

*Knit community together*

*Affordable*

*Creative development approaches*

*Growing, but with an overall reduced impact on resources*

*Progress and belonging to the greater world*

*Natural assets*

*Residents flourish*

opment right” and design a livable place is one of our greatest opportunities. This process must begin by translating our vision of what Issaquah should be into a consistent implementation plan, through informed land use policies and balanced regulation of development. Issaquah has the ability to prepare for and build its own future, rather than just letting it happen.

Our economic vitality is enhanced by our natural environment, our sense of history, excellent mobility, and encouragement of the arts and culture. Thus, our plan focuses on the creation of commerce and jobs with concurrent focus on our natural environment and quality of life. Economic vitality benefits all citizens, whether business owners, property owners, recreation facility users, renters, shoppers, or visitors.

Consistent with these elements, we offer this overarching theme for the economic vitality strategic plan:

*Enhance Issaquah’s livability through affordable housing, coordinated social services, public services, arts and cultural opportunities, protection and enjoyment of the natural environment, an enhanced transportation network, land use management, excellent education opportunities, and a balanced economy.*

The following strategic themes are identified by the task force:

- A. Place-making and design guidelines.
- B. Effective mobility.
- C. Continue to protect the natural environment.
- D. Promote arts, culture, and recreation.
- E. Business development.
- F. Enhance services, housing, and education.

As we develop the vision into a strategic plan, we will consider short-term, medium-term, and long-term strategies and priority actions.

## **THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ECONOMIC VITALITY**

What kind of a community do we want for ourselves and our children—to live, work, and play in?

The following is a list of potential strategies and action items, arranged by theme. From over fifty potential strategies and two hundred possible actions, task force members identified priority actions that are most critical for Issaquah’s economic vitality. Task force members considered priority actions that could be completed in the short term (one to three years), medium term (four to seven years), and long term (eight to fifty years). Thirty-six (36) short- and medium-term priority actions are identified, out of a total of 95 recommended actions for economic vitality. The priority actions are shown with the strategies below. The complete list of strategies and actions is located in the appendix to this report.



### A. Place-making and Design Guidelines

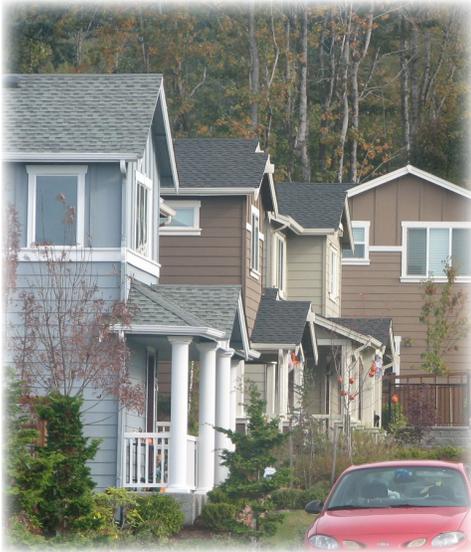
Issaquah's small-town feeling is one of its unique characteristics. The rapid growth in the areas outside of the historic core of the city presents a challenging opportunity for place-making, however. A "new urbanism" design philosophy is integral to our vision of Issaquah's future development, and to our identity as a community.<sup>2</sup> Embracing new urbanism along with "smart growth"<sup>3</sup> will provide Issaquah with a philosophical design approach to physical development, and strategies to embrace and channel growth. By combining the key features of new urbanism and smart growth, the future Issaquah will be a well-designed, connected community, with mixed uses, ample ways to get around, preserved open spaces, and a small-scale character that celebrates design details.

The new urbanism/smart growth approach should identify unique areas, set standards for sub-area plans, provide for public education about the goals and process, and set a long-range timeframe, so that expectations are in line with the time needed to see change occur. As stated above, our philosophy for future development also allows us to build physical as well as social connections among Issaquah's various neighborhoods. Knitting together and thereby strengthening the fabric of the community, from downtown to the Highlands and other areas north of the freeway, the new neighborhood at Talus, and older neighborhoods south and east of downtown, is one of the objectives of this strategy area.

Downtown Issaquah presents a unique opportunity for place-making. Downtown, or the cultural and business district (CBD), encompasses the businesses lining Front Street, and extends toward Gilman Village, and Sunset Way. For many people with whom we spoke, downtown Issaquah is the physical and emotional center of Issaquah, a place that is cherished by residents and visitors

<sup>2</sup>The Congress for the New Urbanism is a source for information on this topic: <http://www.cnu.org/>

<sup>3</sup>"Smart growth" refers to a range of activities and strategies that are undertaken by communities that are supportive of growth, but are concerned about sprawl, traffic, and loss of community character. Smart growth focuses on pedestrian-oriented communities and strong downtowns: <http://www.smartgrowth.org>



*Higher housing densities may allow for more people to enter the housing market.*

alike. Preserving and enhancing the heart of Issaquah is critically important to Issaquah’s economic vitality. As downtown already has a unique character and flavor, the emphasis here is on preservation and adaptive re-use, or “old urbanism.” We note and encourage the recent investment in older buildings along Front Street. Our plan seeks to build upon the historic heritage of Front Street, and entice more arts-related businesses into the retail mix.

**Finding: Developing a city layout that works is essential.** We are concerned over increasing sprawl and the loss of the downtown residential area. Some recent development lacks in quality and architectural merit. Our community is particularly challenged by the presence of an interstate highway running through and dividing it.

**Finding: Accommodating an increase in population and shift in demographics is of key concern.** One of the challenges to preserving Issaquah’s character is building the infrastructure to accommodate anticipated increases in population and density. We are concerned that the influx of new residents will overshadow the needs of the long-term, generally older population.

Design standards are essential. However, guidelines are preferred to design prescriptions. We strive to provide a reasoned framework with explicit restrictions, and wish to promote creativity and ongoing development as we build Issaquah. We must keep in mind that the eclectic architectural styles and eras represented in our city make Issaquah a “real” town, and not a “theme” town.

**1. Revise the City’s zoning and other regulations in order to permit higher densities in specific areas.**

*The model for higher density development in target areas may include detached assisted dwelling units in Olde Town (unit over the detached garage, for example). This greater density near or in downtown would promote vitality, and enhance safety.*

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| PRIORITY | a. Encourage redevelopment and reuse of existing structures in Issaquah’s Cultural and Business District (CBD). Emphasize mixed-use development and redevelopment: buildings that combine commercial, office, retail and residential uses.                     |
| PRIORITY | b. Allow higher density and “smart growth” development in the targeted areas. Allow a range of building heights from 3 to 5 stories (45-65 feet), and residential densities up to 20 dwelling units per acre. Focus affordable housing efforts in these areas. |
| PRIORITY | c. Encourage a high density-mixed use region within Issaquah, from E. Lake Sammamish Parkway west to Lake Sammamish State Park, and downtown Issaquah north to I-90 and west along Gilman Boulevard and Newport Way.   |

**2. Incorporate new design standards into new development and redevelopment.**

*Our models for design standards are historic district redevelopments or New Urbanist developments that are pedestrian-oriented, containing a mix of uses, and pleasant places to stroll.*

**PRIORITY** a. Consider mixed-use “makeovers” for the Commons, the Meadows, and Gilman Boulevard properties, using the following as retail or mixed-use models: University Village, Seattle; Third Street Promenade, Santa Monica; and the Gaslamp Quarter, San Diego.

**PRIORITY** b. Develop a street furniture program: bus stops, informational kiosks, way-finding, signage, and lighting. Incorporate design standards, while allowing different designs for different parts of the city; encourage designs that provide cover and weather protection.

**3. Develop neighborhood plans incorporating design guidelines.**

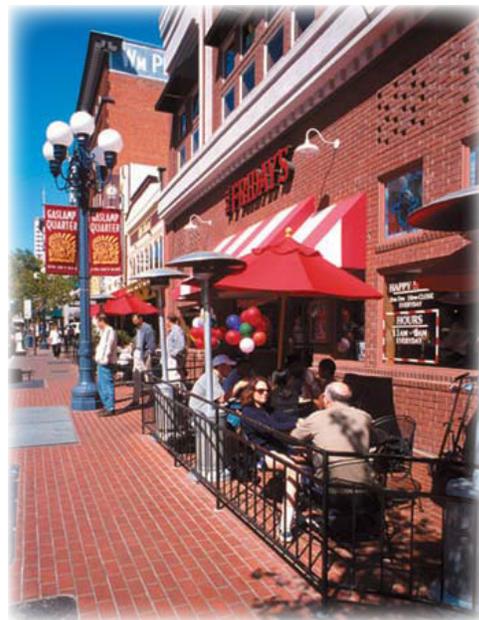
*One of the unifying themes of the plan is an expressed desire for connectivity throughout the city. Connecting all of Issaquah’s various neighborhoods to each other, and planning for future neighborhood development, is a key element of the strategic plan. We hope that future plans for Issaquah’s neighborhoods, including those north of I-90, would include strategies to make them more pedestrian-oriented areas, along the principles of New Urbanism.*

- Develop a master plan for the SR 900/I-90 sub-area, near the new Hilton.
- Working with neighborhood residents and businesses, develop neighborhood plans, with short- and long-term strategies, to enhance neighborhood identity and vitality. Focus on infill development. Connect neighborhoods to downtown and transportation nodes.
- Focus on building a walkable community: create and encourage more walking paths in new developments and higher density areas.

**4. Develop a downtown revitalization plan, and make physical improvements.**

*Encouraging businesses that create a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere and have eye-appeal, as well as those having a greater density of businesses and residents, would bring more people downtown, in turn enhancing its vitality. Managing the flow of traffic on Front Street would also improve its character.*

**PRIORITY** a. Encourage redevelopment and reuse of existing downtown structures. Encourage mixed-use buildings that combine commercial, office, and residential uses. Allow a range of building heights and residential densities. Encourage boutique retail, art-related businesses, and restaurants on the ground floor. Promote greater density of business and residents downtown by encouraging second-story use of downtown buildings for offices and residences.



*Our models for design standards are historic district redevelopments or New Urbanist developments that are pedestrian-oriented, containing a mix of uses, and pleasant places to stroll. (Gaslamp Quarter, San Diego)*



*Excessive vehicular traffic on Front Street diminishes its appeal as a desirable destination, and as an area for pedestrians to stroll or gather.*

- Provide for maintenance. Public open spaces need to be well maintained, and offer weather protection; streetscapes must be periodically improved and maintained
- Calm or divert vehicular traffic on Front Street to enhance its appeal as a desirable destination, and as an area for pedestrians to stroll or gather. Incorporate gateways and other physical improvements with traffic calming elements as a means of geographically defining and identifying downtown, and to improve walkability and pedestrian safety.
- Develop a revitalization plan, together with the Olde Town sub-area plan for the Cultural and Business District (CBD). Work in cooperation with all downtown stakeholders, and other economic development organizations.

#### **5. Revise existing design guidelines to permit New Urbanism and smart growth development.**

- Specify design criteria that are consistent with New Urbanism principles, in the areas of building height, density, parking, streetscape, and design.
- Coordinate design standards with transportation and parking management strategies to encourage alternatives to surface parking

#### **6. Design guidelines can be visionary, and long-term.**

- Put a lid over I-90. Cover it with soccer fields and parks. Incorporate transit.

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### **New Urbanism and Smart Growth**

Below are some of the characteristics of New Urbanism and Smart Growth. For more information, visit the websites mentioned on page 3.

- Flexibility: accommodating a variety of designs and development approaches, including a wide range of housing opportunities and choices;
- Long-term considerations: designing a community that we will be proud of in years to come;
- Connections: building physical connections throughout the community, promoting social connections through physical connectivity;
- Sidewalks, curbs and gutters: good and complete infrastructure as the backbone for all future development;
- Detail: attention to the execution of design guidelines;
- A mix of land uses;
- Compact building design;
- Walkable neighborhoods with distinct character;
- Preservation of open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas;
- A variety of transportation choices;
- Predictable development decisions;
- Community and stakeholder collaboration.



## B. Effective Mobility

There is disagreement among Issaquah residents over whether our traffic “problem” is any worse than any other local community. According to some, the town is clogged with vehicular traffic. According to others, our traffic is better than other communities on the Eastside. However, there is agreement about two things: excessive motor vehicle traffic, notably along Front Street and in the vicinity of the area’s shopping centers, lessens Issaquah’s appeal as a desirable destination, diminishes the overall quality of life, and is inconsistent with our vision of a healthy and sustainable community at the foothills of the Cascade Mountains. Second, there is a need to provide and promote alternative modes of transportation: better local transit service, and more and safer pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Some form of traffic management is needed: multi-modal linkages and redevelopment within the city limits will enhance the viability of multi-modal transportation, targeted local roadway improvements will improve traffic safety and flow, and significant regional investment in roads and transit may help to alleviate congestion in and around Issaquah.

**Finding: Traffic is a commonly cited challenge.** Traffic congestion negatively impacts the quality of life and vitality of Issaquah. We acknowledge the challenges of building consensus and overcoming financial limitations in rectifying traffic challenges. We stress the need for a more holistic solution that includes multiple transportation options.

**Finding: Accessibility is an asset.** Issaquah has easy access to Interstate 90, with good access to Seattle and Bellevue. Additionally, the large park and ride facilities allow excellent bus connections to other points in the county.

Our goals for mobility may sound conflicting: make the roads safer for



### 3. Connect the entire city via a tram or shuttle.

**PRIORITY**

a. Increase service and expand the service area on the free bus circulator within Issaquah (Metro Transit route 200). The goal is service operating every 5 to 10 minutes, with the majority of the community within a quarter-mile walk from the circulator route. Ensure that both park & ride facilities, major employers, retail areas, and all neighborhoods and urban villages are connected. Expand to include service to natural features: trailheads serving Squak, Tiger, and Cougar mountains, or South Cove and Lake Sammamish, for example. Consider a distinct image for the shuttle, such as an old-fashioned “trolley” theme, for system identification.



*Make it easier for people who live here to travel within Issaquah without using a car. Fast and frequent service is essential to success of any local shuttle or tram.*

### 4. Be mindful of Issaquah’s role in the overall regional transportation system, while building a local transportation system with community benefits.

*Look regionally for benefits to Issaquah: improvements to the regional roadway network, and improvements at outlying locations along I-90, have impacts on Issaquah.*

**PRIORITY**

a. Encourage the location of park-and-ride facilities in Snoqualmie Ridge.

- Advocate for solutions to traffic problems outside the city limits to address local congestion.

### 5. Make bicycling and walking safer and more attractive.

*Pedestrian-friendly walkways and bike paths help economic vitality. Therefore, emphasize pedestrian orientation and opportunities for people to walk and interact with each other through the development of an urban corridor that links the entire city and all of its activity areas.*

**PRIORITY**

a. Create pedestrian emphasis districts that support pedestrian mobility. Make downtown Issaquah a pedestrian center, enhancing its role as a gathering place.

- Provide more pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity throughout Issaquah: connect neighborhoods to downtown, key transportation nodes, trailheads, employment, shopping, and each other through a multi-modal network of sidewalks, trails, and pathways.
- Provide more bicycle facilities: bicycle lanes adjacent to roadside curbs, bicycle parking at retail, bicycle rental facilities in proximity to off-road bike trails.
- Use engineering and enforcement to enhance pedestrian safety: redesign roadways, sidewalks, intersections, and crosswalks for enhanced pedestrian safety, with areas near schools as priorities; enforce driver behavior at crosswalks; install lighted crosswalks.



*A non-motorized network is consistent with the New Urbanism philosophy, and can be a design element in the city’s physical landscape, the focus of recreational tourism, and an indicator of a “green” Issaquah.*

## 6. Encourage alternatives to single occupancy vehicles.

*Models for such programs are in existence in the Northwest: Seattle has developed an extensive program (“Way to Go, Seattle”) to reduce car use and encourage other modes for commuting.*

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>PRIORITY</b> | a. Create and promote transportation alternatives to single occupancy vehicles (SOVs). Encourage area employers to provide transportation demand management programs, and create incentives for participation. Survey commuters on existing driving patterns, and develop alternative strategies. |
|-----------------|---|

## 7. Develop an integrated parking management strategy.

*For almost all communities, parking is often cited as the “number one” complaint of downtown shoppers, businesses, and commuters. Often, the real need is not so much more parking as it is an effective strategy to ensure that everyone who wants to travel to and within the community can do so conveniently. That may not necessarily mean that people will park their cars immediately next to the theatre or store or restaurant. In many cities, managing parking through a single parking management agency is a first step.*

- Conduct a parking survey: inventory the number of spaces (by location and type), and conduct a survey of use, by time of day, and day of week. Identify where parking needs are most acute, and how those needs may be met.
- Develop a parking strategy: integrate the parking strategy with other city strategies, such as pedestrian amenities and walkability, downtown development and character, and urban design. Consider revision of development regulations for parking: allow on-street parking to count toward total parking requirements for building developments. Consider a local improvement district (LID) for downtown parking.
- Enhance the role of local park and ride facilities: provide ready shuttle access to downtown for those who park. Integrate with the free local circulator bus service. Create a local improvement district (LID) to fund increased shuttle service between the two park and ride lots.



### C. Continue to Protect the Natural Environment

Issaquah is blessed with its natural surroundings, and is known for its diversity of scenery and other natural amenities. Mountains, forests, lakes, and creeks are coexisting ecosystems that we enjoy in abundance. This natural environment is also a source of attraction for residents, visitors, and businesses to our area. There is a synergy between enhancing Issaquah's economic vitality and protecting and promoting our natural environment. Issaquah has unexplored potential to achieve this equilibrium.

Our challenge lies with encroaching suburban sprawl, increasing motor vehicle travel, overzealous enjoyment of the region's natural features, and insufficient resources to protect all of Issaquah's land, water, and air.

Our response is a set of economic vitality strategies that supports our vision to preserve Issaquah's natural environment, while recognizing the role of the natural environment in enhancing the economy of our community. The strategies and actions are purposely not regulatory in nature. The intent is to promote, encourage, and reward environmentally responsible behavior, making it a community norm.

**Finding: Issaquah's natural beauty is our most cherished asset.** Issaquah's environmental attributes have a great deal of value and are worthy of preservation.

**Finding: Preserving Issaquah's character is of paramount concern.** The challenge for Issaquah is to accommodate growth without diminishing the quality of life.

**Finding: Environmental amenities are an opportunity to be enjoyed.** Issaquah enjoys a uniquely scenic environment with many recreational attractions that can bring the community many desired impacts. We emphasize the



*Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design (LEED) is a rating system that provides a benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of “green” buildings. LEED standards recognize performance in five key areas: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality. Fire Station 73 in Issaquah was built to LEED standards.*

*For more information, visit the U. S. Green Building Council website at: [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org).*

*“Built Green” is a trademark program of the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties. Built Green establishes standards for residential construction that support efficient use of energy and natural resources, and promotes environmentally friendly building practices. The entire Issaquah Highlands is a certified Built Green community.*

*For more information, visit the Built Green website at: [www.builtgreen.net](http://www.builtgreen.net)*

necessity of protecting and maximizing the benefits from the environment in every municipal decision.

The intent of the strategies is to promote, encourage, and reward environmentally responsible behavior, making it a community norm.

**1. Implement environmentally friendly land use and building code changes.**

*Be strong stewards of our natural areas, without discouraging development.*

**PRIORITY** a. Identify natural areas to be protected, as well as areas for higher density and “smart growth” development. Allow transfer of development rights to the development areas in return for open space and natural area preservation.

**PRIORITY** b. Emphasize and encourage “green” design in design standards. Provide “built green” incentives. Support buildings and methods meeting LEED standards for energy efficiency in development and construction projects. Use public buildings and facilities as models.

- Work with stakeholders to develop an evaluation of land use plans and zoning needs to accommodate business growth in an environmentally sensitive manner. Specify criteria or encourage an appropriate range of business types.
- Ensure the use of best available science in code development, especially code that is relevant to environmental protection.
- Provide innovative solutions to development conflicts between the natural and built environment, including transferring density out of critical areas, development mitigation such as land or wetland banking off site, retention of forested hillsides and steep slopes, off-site storm water retention, and wetland enhancement or creation.

**2. Respect the environment in a comprehensive and holistic manner.**

*In order to sustain our community’s future success, we seek to improve our quality of life, which includes preserving our natural environment. We recognize the many elements that comprise the natural environment, and their interconnectedness. We also recognize that some environmental decisions are made at the local, or community level, and others, particularly those affecting air quality or the water quality of Lake Sammamish, must be made at a regional level.*

**PRIORITY** a. Enhance water quality and salmon habitat near creeksides and shorelines.

**PRIORITY** b. Review and amend as necessary Issaquah’s plans, policies and regulations to preserve the natural environment.

**PRIORITY** c. Perform a holistic study of environmental threats to streams, lakes, and hillsides in order to select the most effective solutions.

**PRIORITY** d. Preserve open space and views: ensure that the Tiger Mountain view corridor is preserved, as well as other views from the valley to the hills. Preserve forested hillsides in new development.

- Collaborate with other jurisdictions and non-profit organizations on environmental protection.

**3. Enable environmentally friendly behavior.**

**PRIORITY** a. Create incentives for exceeding City requirements for environmental protection and enhancement in the areas of green design; provision of green space; low-impact development; storm water retention; shoreline and creekside development; and construction incentives to mitigate parking requirements.

**PRIORITY** b. Educate landscape professionals to ensure that they understand best practices for environmental stewardship. Develop a roster of approved landscape professionals, and approved plantings (especially near shorelines and creeksides).

**PRIORITY** c. Identify and recognize best environmental practices. Use Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife education and best practices models.

**4. Attract environmentally friendly businesses and facilities.**

- Identify parcels that could be suitable as incubators for environmentally friendly businesses: promote new business startups and expansions that meet environmental objectives and provide information and assistance to such businesses seeking to locate within the community. Promote “sustainable” businesses that produce sustainable goods, teach others how to engage in sustainable practices, and/or use sustainable practices. Leverage Issaquah’s natural assets toward economic vitality.

**5. Educate the public on environmental issues.**

- Make use of the City of Issaquah’s Resource Conservation Office as a training partner in environmental education. Educate on recycling, irrigation, and appropriate uses of water.
- Educate people on invasive species, and what can be done about them; on local animal species and their habitats; and educate youth on the importance of the natural environment.



*Issaquah’s natural beauty is our most cherished asset. We treasure our mountain views, and wish to preserve them.*



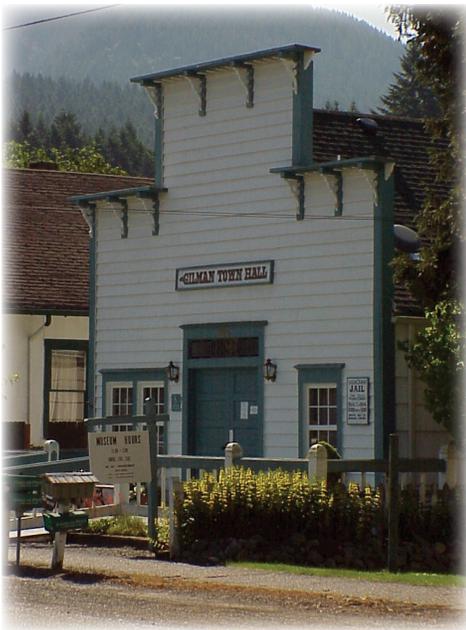
#### D. Promote Arts, Culture, and Recreation

Arts and heritage are at the forefront of our vision for Issaquah's future. This vision can inspire us with grand ideas, and long-term strategies. We recognize that Issaquah does well in its ability to attract visitors for shopping and special events; our plan seeks to tap the potential to attract residents and visitors to enhanced cultural, artistic, and recreational opportunities and facilities. A greater emphasis on the arts, culture, and recreation will yield not only personal enjoyment and enrichment, but enhance the economic vitality of our community as well.

**Finding: Issaquah's sense of history is one of our strengths.** Issaquah has a rich history and sense of belonging that gives it a small town feeling. As one of the most historic cities in western Washington, we have a vital downtown core of historic buildings that contributes to our sense of community.

Promoting Issaquah as a regional visitor destination will encourage greater use of and appreciation of Issaquah's treasures, and enhance the city's economic vitality. Yet we also wish to keep our small town charm, and keep Issaquah as vital as it is now: small is beautiful!

**Finding: The arts bring quality of life to Issaquah in education, facilities, visitors, and visual delight.** The arts are an integral part of the City's vision for economic vitality: central, not an afterthought. Economic activity is drawn to where there is art. As a casual observer can see on Front Street during Art Walk, encouraging public gatherings through the arts facilitates community building and is a strong cornerstone for community vitality.



*In Issaquah, our sense of history is one of our greatest assets.*

### 1. Promote “destination” businesses.

*Issaquah already has several “destination” businesses. Other area communities are encouraging the clustering of specific types of businesses, such as wineries. Proximity to Seattle, the unspoiled environment, local arts and entertainment venues, and its historical feel are assets that could be built upon to increase the number of visitors to Issaquah. Issaquah’s attractions should be leveraged to enhance economic vitality.*

**PRIORITY** a. Promote a relationship between entertainment, dining, and other cultural activities.

- Promote Issaquah as a place for retreats and spas, active retirement communities, hotels and restaurants, and foster a better mix of retailers in order to draw more people.
- Enhance the downtown experience by the presence of more local restaurants, with seasonal outdoor seating, and serving all day long. Cross-promote to enhance a visitor’s experience: retain people who come here to shop or go to an event (Salmon Days, or the art walk), to stay for dinner or theatre; coordinate Front Street open houses with the art walk. Encourage more arts-related businesses along Front Street.

### 2. Promote Issaquah as an arts destination.

*Arts and heritage are already attracting people and their dollars to our economy. We must do all we can to emphasize these, and capitalize on an already thriving arts culture. Create a community that will be attractive to “the creative class.” Do this through encouragement and fostering of the arts in Issaquah.*

**PRIORITY** a. Encourage creation of a performing arts center, possibly in affiliation with the high school, or as part of the municipal campus. Explore the feasibility of developing the center in partnership with non-profit groups.

- Upgrade the Village Theatre (First Stage). Explore additional arts facilities such movie houses, small theaters, and an amphitheater in the Highlands.
- Partner with the City and existing groups to continue the momentum of the arts scene, emphasizing the arts as an essential component of economic vitality. Continue the City’s support of the Issaquah Arts Commission.
- Promote public acquisition of additional works of art. Create a downtown sculpture park. Ease restrictions on the placement of art in public places.

### 3. Provide additional parks and park facilities.

**PRIORITY** a. Provide more parks. Use parks bonds to improve the places we love.



*The arts, particularly in public spaces, create gathering places and build community.*



*There is a need for parks for both active and passive recreation: a downtown park, small neighborhood parks, and more soccer fields are desired.*

**4. Leverage Issaquah’s natural assets toward economic vitality, and “brand” Issaquah’s natural setting as a recreational destination.**

*Natural assets, which include hiking in nearby mountains, Issaquah Creek, and Lake Sammamish, are Issaquah’s treasures, but are shared with the greater Puget Sound community, many of whose residents come to Issaquah for outdoor recreation.*



*Provide paths and trails to connect all of Issaquah’s natural features and “treasures.”*

**PRIORITY**

a. Promote Issaquah’s natural recreational attractions as a means to enhance tourism and economic vitality. Provide an interconnecting network of pedestrian, bicycle and recreational trails that link the city’s urban activity areas with recreational trails. Create a “string of pearls” linking all of Issaquah’s “treasures ” by trails and walkways. Create maps and directional signs identifying the location of Issaquah’s historic, cultural, recreational, and environmental amenities.

**PRIORITY**

b. Increase access to natural resources: provide paths and trails connecting parks, creeks, Lake Sammamish and other natural amenities. Provide a continuous trail system along the creek. Provide benches and other amenities along the creek trail, and along other trails.

**5. Develop a marketing and branding campaign for Issaquah.**

*Promote Issaquah as an outdoor destination. With all of our recreational opportunities, Issaquah does not need any gimmicks; its placement at the foothills of the Cascades is its greatest attraction to visitors. Simply encourage more ways for people to enjoy the natural environment and recreate:*

- Expand the city’s budget for marketing, and market Issaquah as an arts and outdoor recreation destination, set against a backdrop of an historic small town.
- Enhance communications to market Issaquah: utilize a radio frequency to promote local events and activities; sponsor a community events website; create a television campaign; and produce printed material, such as maps.
- Expand cultural events programming. Rotate programs, and encourage creativity in programming to keep activities fresh. Encourage more evening family events, such as concerts , and longer opening hours for facilities.

**6. Support cultural activities and historic preservation; ensure support for new and existing cultural facilities.**

- Support the arts and historic preservation: consider tax breaks for supporting arts and historic preservation, and less restrictive codes for renovating older buildings.
- Enhance the long-term viability of existing cultural facilities.

**7. Improve and support visitor facilities and services.**

- Investigate the possibility of a host training program to instruct volunteers in customer service requirements and visitor services. Use visitor services to promote and provide a central listing for hotels and bed and breakfast inns.



*Issaquah’s “treasures” were defined by the City of Issaquah in 1993, and include unique natural features, view corridors, historic landmarks, and cultural and popular icons that are emblematic of the city, such as Boehm’s Chocolates and the Triple XXX Root Beer Drive-In.*



## E. Business Development

Economic growth is necessary to achieve other objectives, such as environmental quality, quality of life, and urban design. Issaquah should be equally welcoming to prospective residents and businesses that are necessary to its economic vitality.

We seek to balance economic development policies with our vision to preserve Issaquah's unique character and the natural environment, while managing growth in a way that is consistent with the City's ability to provide adequate facilities and services. The focus is on what business development and the natural environment can do "together."

In recent years, Issaquah has grown rapidly – much more rapidly than other cities in the Puget Sound region. Through annexation and growth, Issaquah's population doubled in the ten years between 1995 and 2005. To leverage our economic vitality, we must take advantage of location and geography. Issaquah enjoys many advantages due to its location as a gateway between the Cascades and the Puget Sound urban environment, as well as its proximity and ease of access to both Bellevue and Seattle. Issaquah's future economic strategy rests on optimizing our strategic location among expected growth areas for quality development.

**Finding: A strong employment base is one of Issaquah's assets.** The degree of development, strong retail base, and presence of strong employers has contributed to a large and relatively stable tax base that allows for long-term, strategic planning.

**Finding: Responsive and proactive leadership is one of the City's strengths.** There is a strong commitment to keeping the city livable and city leadership has been proactive in planning for managed change. City staff are



*Build trust among all parties: ensure transparent and clear decision-making, so that business may flourish.*

thought to be cooperative and receptive to improving. The City of Issaquah encourages citizen input to find solutions to local problems.

**Finding: The regulatory environment is a concern.** While the challenge for leaders to overcome the lack of consensus over development was acknowledged, there are critiques that the regulatory process is not realistic, fair or equitable, or financially feasible. Some believe this has cost Issaquah missed economic opportunities.

**Finding: Potential for increased economic growth is one of Issaquah’s opportunities.** Issaquah has the amenities to attract successful business. Issaquah is fortunate to have the potential for economic growth. Its high quality of life, relative wealth, and growing economy allows it more potential and options than other communities. Having a modern communications infrastructure (voice, video, data) is key to our future vitality.

**1. Create a predictable regulatory environment.**

*Build trust among citizens, government and business: ensure transparent and clear decision-making, and excel at communications with citizens and business.*

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| PRIORITY | a. Troubleshoot permits and policies that impede business activities—create a city ombudsman.  |
| PRIORITY | b. Streamline regulatory compliance. Use a focus group to identify areas for improvement and ways to improve permit processes.   |
| PRIORITY | c. Review the permit appeals process and amend, if necessary, to ensure efficiency and responsiveness to the public. Create a mediation process to resolve disputes regarding density in designated zones, and similar issues. |

- Establish City review time guidelines to provide more predictability to applicants for segments of the review process that are under City control. Issue permits within a specified number of days.
- Provide adequate funding and staffing levels to meet and maintain City review time guidelines. Educate staff on needs of business and real estate development, including training about the international building code.
- Provide pre-permit application meetings with applicants to identify specific permit and design requirements and other issues that may affect the permit process. Assist businesses and individuals in obtaining information useful in development siting decisions.

**2. Provide implementation tools.**

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| PRIORITY | a. Create a City staff position to assist with economic development advocacy, including business retention, regulations and permitting, marketing and visitor services. |
|----------|---|



*Create an advocate for economic development at City Hall.*

- Consider a local improvement district for capital facilities.

### 3. Maintain a balanced economic jobs mix.

*Balance economic development policies with our vision to preserve Issaquah's unique character and the natural environment, while managing growth in a way that is consistent with the City's ability to provide adequate facilities and services.*

PRIORITY

- a. Consider the following business types for inclusion in Issaquah's mix: technology-focused businesses, new retail operations, professional and office-based businesses and services, medical facilities, ecologically-focused businesses, and tourist-based businesses.

- Develop an approach to attract upscale businesses to the community.

### 4. Collaborate and partner with citizens and business organizations.

- Include the private sector in review updates of the land use code to improve responsiveness to private sector and community needs and market changes. Use this public-private partnership to clean up old and outdated regulations and to implement community vitality objectives.
- Build constituencies beyond City borders in the business and development community to encourage their support and assistance. Develop private-public partnerships to implement the economic vitality plan.
- Seek ways to assist the private sector in understanding City processes, and City staff in understanding business and real estate development needs.
- Enhance coordinated use of technology to improve customer service and government responsiveness.

### 5. Seek to attract a mix of large and small businesses.

*Issaquah is home to many small businesses, and several large companies. In the recent past, larger regional and international businesses have located in Issaquah, adding a new dimension to Issaquah's economic fabric. Issaquah's challenge will be to balance this new growth with existing businesses. Achieving a balance of large and small businesses is vital to maintaining a healthy, vibrant economy and preserving Issaquah's small town charm. We seek to promote an environment that is friendly to business, but that seeks a balance between large and small, and local and national employers.*

- Focus on tools to attract major employers, and structure incentives and taxing plans.
- Promote and patronize local businesses and small businesses. Host a summit on incubator businesses.

### 6. Attract and retain high-paying jobs.

- Develop strategies to identify desirable businesses at risk of departing town, and methods to encourage them to remain. Conduct exit interviews with businesses that do leave. Work with enterprise Seattle to attract and retain businesses.



*Technology-focused businesses should be part of our future jobs mix.*

- Create incentives such as density bonuses, administrative review and/or parking credits for start-up businesses, and for businesses that provide community benefits such as higher than average wage jobs.

### **7. Create places for businesses to launch and thrive.**

- Promote new business startups and expansions that meet community economic development objectives; provide information and assistance to such businesses seeking to locate here.
- Inventory available (or potentially available) land and office space for development or redevelopment. Assess the availability of sufficient land where large corporations can locate. Provide adequate land within the city through zoning and within the potential annexation areas through inter-local or pre-annexation agreements to accommodate planned growth.



### F. Enhance Services, Housing, and Education

The areas of housing, social and public services, and schools were, surprisingly, among the first that were mentioned by our task force. These “quality of life” issues are fundamental to the future of our community, and are thus essential to be in place and successful in order to have a vibrant, desirable, and economically vital place. Economic vitality is driven by the people who choose to live here. Concern for the social environment of the community is consistent both with the community values of Issaquah, and with the creation of economic vitality.

**Finding:** Issaquah’s future economic vitality rests on generating sufficient tax base to enhance public services and facilities at levels that enhance the quality of life of the entire community. However, limited municipal funds to provide these services is a concern. It will remain a challenge to achieve a balance between raising revenues for city services, and keeping tax levels competitive for business.

**Finding:** Excellent schools are fundamental to economic vitality. “Good schools” are listed in the very first economic vitality objective of the city’s comprehensive plan. People relocate to Issaquah, and continue to live here, in part, because of the excellence of the public schools. Because a quality education system has an impact on our ability to attract business and employees, school excellence should be sustained and supported, in part through creative partnerships and communication between the school district and the community.

As the world continues to globalize, we should not confine our efforts at identifying models excellence to our own community, region, or country. Instead, we look to the world stage for the best examples of excellence in public



*Our future economic vitality rests upon our ability to provide housing, education, and public services for ourselves and our children today.*

education. To achieve world-class schools, they must be competitive in the world. This requires that languages be taught beginning at the Kindergarten level, and continuing through to grade 12. Languages should be selected based on global competition (for example, Mandarin Chinese).

Also, recognizing that not all students are bound for college or university, we encourage and promote diverse educational, vocational, and technical training.

**Finding: Availability of housing for Issaquah’s current and future residents remains a concern.** Issaquah has proportionately more high-density housing than any other Eastside community, and also the highest percentage of owner-occupied multifamily housing in the county. The comprehensive plan states that, “the City will need to address affordable housing concerns to provide opportunities for those employed in retail or service jobs to live in close proximity to places of employment.” In spite of that, it is recognized that housing in Issaquah is not available for all those who work here. Issaquah’s population will continue to grow, and housing must be provided for an increasing population.

**1. Establish a human services commission.**

*Our intent is to provide more access to services and more visibility about service needs; to improve coordination; and to be more effective, eliminate duplication, and fill in gaps in needed services.*

**PRIORITY** a. Establish a human services commission. Identify human service and public service needs, including areas of overlap and gaps in service.

**PRIORITY** b. Co-locate similar services at a centrally located human services campus.

**2. Seek additional funding and support for education.**

*As a community, Issaquah is immensely generous to its schools, but many of the decisions regarding public schools are made not here, but in Olympia. The task force recognizes that public education is a critical issue to our economic vitality, and we express broad-based and sustained community support for public education and appropriate funding levels.*

**PRIORITY** a. Business, government, and the entire community maintain effective state-level advocacy for funding of public schools, especially on issues affecting Issaquah. Work with the Issaquah Schools Foundation as an agent or coordinating organization for fundraising.

- Enhance education by working with local organizations to develop programs and support: provide incentives for businesses that provide specialized education, higher education, and employee training; work with the school



*Issaquah is immensely generous to its schools, but many of the decisions regarding public schools are made in Olympia.*

district, the local arts commission, and the Washington State Arts Commission to develop and fund an arts curriculum and related arts programs.

**3. Recruit a branch of a college for higher and continuing education.**

*We note with enthusiasm that Bellevue Community College will offer painting and other art classes in Issaquah beginning in January 2007.*

PRIORITY

- a. Identify strategies, policies and programs that would sustain and support a branch of Bellevue Community College (BCC) and other higher education programs in Issaquah.

**4. Support the City of Issaquah's involvement in providing housing solutions.**

*"Affordable" housing is an extremely difficult issue that all successful cities and towns struggle with. Costs of land and construction continue to rise. We wish to encourage and welcome developers who specialize in affordable housing, and we support the City's continued commitment to ARCH.*

- Continue Issaquah's participation in ARCH (A Regional Coalition for Housing). Create incentives, such as tax credits and grant programs, to encourage construction and improved availability of affordable housing.

**5. Establish innovative partnerships to achieve outstanding schools.**

- Identify steps to create private/public partnerships to achieve outstanding public schools: encourage partnerships, mentoring programs, seminars, and other business-sponsored programs to recognize and award academic excellence. Foster collaboration between businesses and educators on cooperative strategies to develop the skills needed in the workforce.

**6. Ensure continuity of police and fire service.**

- Pursue funding sources to ensure provision of public safety and public facilities.



*Recruit a branch of a college for higher and continuing education in Issaquah. (photo: Bellevue Community College)*

**SUMMARY OF PRIORITY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

*Priority actions, those to be completed within the short and medium ranges (one to seven years), are shown in blue.*

**A. PLACE-MAKING AND DESIGN GUIDELINES**

| STRATEGY  | PRIORITY ACTIONS  |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Revise the City’s zoning and other regulations in order to permit higher densities in specific areas.</p> | <p>a. Encourage redevelopment and reuse of existing structures in Issaquah’s Cultural and Business District (CBD). Emphasize mixed-use development and redevelopment: buildings that combine commercial, office, retail and residential uses.</p> <p>b. Allow higher density and “smart growth” development in the targeted areas. Allow a range of building heights from 3 to 5 stories (45-65 feet), and residential densities up to 20 dwelling units per acre. Focus affordable housing efforts in these areas.</p> <p>c. Encourage a high density-mixed use region within Issaquah, from E. Lake Sammamish Parkway west to Lake Sammamish State Park, and downtown Issaquah north to I-90 and west along Gilman Boulevard and Newport Way.</p> |
| <p>2. Incorporate new design standards into new development and redevelopment.</p>                              | <p>a. Consider mixed-use “makeovers” for the Commons, the Meadows, and Gilman Boulevard properties, using the following as retail or mixed-use models: University Village, Seattle; Third Street Promenade, Santa Monica; and the Gaslamp Quarter, San Diego.</p> <p>b. Develop a street furniture program: bus stops, informational kiosks, way-finding, signage, and lighting. Incorporate design standards, while allowing different designs for different parts of the city; encourage designs that provide cover and weather protection.</p>   |
| <p>4. Develop a downtown revitalization plan, and make physical improvements.</p>                               | <p>a. Encourage redevelopment and reuse of existing downtown structures. Encourage mixed-use buildings that combine commercial, office, and residential uses. Allow a range of building heights and residential densities. Encourage boutique retail, art-related businesses, and restaurants on the ground floor. Promote greater density of business and residents downtown by encouraging second-story use of downtown buildings for offices and residences.</p>   |

## SUMMARY OF PRIORITY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

*Priority actions, those to be completed within the short and medium ranges (one to seven years), are shown in blue.*

### B. EFFECTIVE MOBILITY

| STRATEGY  | PRIORITY ACTIONS   |
|---|--|
| 1. Use roadways to their maximum capacity.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Alleviate traffic congestion downtown.</li> <li>b. Address I-90 connections with over- and underpass options.</li> </ul>   |
| 2. Advocate for increased service and coverage on Issaquah's transit routes.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Advocate and lobby King County and Sound Transit for more transit funding for Issaquah, as well as current and future annexed areas, in order to increase the service frequency and coverage area of regional transit service. Lobby for inclusion in Sound Transit phase 2 planning.</li> </ul>   |
| 3. Connect the entire city via a tram or shuttle.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Increase service and expand the service area on the free bus circulator within Issaquah (Metro Transit route 200). The goal is service operating every 5 to 10 minutes, with the majority of the community within a quarter-mile walk from the circulator route. Ensure that both park &amp; ride facilities, major employers, retail areas, and all neighborhoods and urban villages are connected. Expand to include service to natural features: trailheads serving Squak, Tiger, and Cougar mountains, or South Cove and Lake Sammamish, for example. Consider a distinct image for the shuttle, such as an old-fashioned "trolley" theme, for system identification.</li> </ul> |
| 4. Be mindful of Issaquah's role in the overall regional transportation system, while building a local transportation system with community benefits. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Encourage the location of park-and-ride facilities in Snoqualmie Ridge.</li> </ul>   |
| 5. Make bicycling and walking safer and more attractive.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Create pedestrian emphasis districts that support pedestrian mobility. Make downtown Issaquah a pedestrian center, enhancing its role as a gathering place.</li> </ul>   |
| 6. Encourage alternatives to single occupancy vehicles.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Create and promote transportation alternatives to single occupancy vehicles (SOVs). Encourage area employers to provide transportation demand management programs, and create incentives for participation. Survey commuters on existing driving patterns, and develop alternative strategies.</li> </ul>  |

**SUMMARY OF PRIORITY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

*Priority actions, those to be completed within the short and medium ranges (one to seven years), are shown in blue.*

**C. CONTINUE TO PROTECT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

| STRATEGY   | PRIORITY ACTIONS   |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Implement environmentally friendly land use and building code changes.</p> | <p>a. Identify natural areas to be protected, as well as areas for higher density and “smart growth” development. Allow transfer of development rights to the development areas in return for open space and natural area preservation.</p> <p>b. Emphasize and encourage “green” design in design standards. Provide “built green” incentives. Support buildings and methods meeting LEED standards for energy efficiency in development and construction projects. Use public buildings and facilities as models.</p>  |
| <p>2. Respect the environment in a comprehensive and holistic manner.</p>        | <p>a. Enhance water quality and salmon habitat near creeksides and shorelines.</p> <p>b. Review and amend as necessary Issaquah’s plans, policies and regulations to preserve the natural environment.</p> <p>c. Perform a holistic study of environmental threats to streams, lakes, and hillsides in order to select the most effective solutions.</p> <p>d. Preserve open space and views: ensure that the Tiger Mountain view corridor is preserved, as well as other views from the valley to the hills. Preserve forested hillsides in new development.</p>  |
| <p>3. Enable environmentally friendly behavior.</p>                              | <p>a. Create incentives for exceeding City requirements for environmental protection and enhancement in the areas of green design; provision of green space; low-impact development; storm water retention; shoreline and creekside development; and construction incentives to mitigate parking requirements.</p> <p>b. Educate landscape professionals to ensure that they understand best practices for environmental stewardship. Develop a roster of approved landscape professionals, and approved plantings (especially near shorelines and creeksides).</p> <p>c. Identify and recognize best environmental practices. Use Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife education and best practices models.</p> |

**SUMMARY OF PRIORITY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

*Priority actions, those to be completed within the short and medium ranges (one to seven years), are shown in blue.*

**D. PROMOTE ARTS, CULTURE, AND RECREATION**

| STRATEGY  | PRIORITY ACTIONS   |
|---|--|
| 1. Promote “destination” businesses.  | a. Promote a relationship between entertainment, dining, and other cultural activities.  |
| 2. Promote Issaquah as an arts destination.   | a. Encourage creation of a performing arts center, possibly in affiliation with the high school, or as part of the municipal campus. Explore the feasibility of developing the center in partnership with non-profit groups.   |
| 3. Provide additional parks and park facilities.  | a. Provide more parks. Use parks bonds to improve the places we love.  |
| 4. Leverage Issaquah’s natural assets toward economic vitality, and “brand” Issaquah’s natural setting as a recreational destination. | <p>a. Promote Issaquah’s natural recreational attractions as a means to enhance tourism and economic vitality. Provide an interconnecting network of pedestrian, bicycle and recreational trails that link the city’s urban activity areas with recreational trails. Create a “string of pearls” linking all of Issaquah’s “treasures ” by trails and walkways. Create maps and directional signs identifying the location of Issaquah’s historic, cultural, recreational, and environmental amenities.</p> <p>b. Increase access to natural resources: provide paths and trails connecting parks, creeks, Lake Sammamish and other natural amenities. Provide a continuous trail system along the creek. Provide benches and other amenities along the creek trail, and along other trails.</p> |

**SUMMARY OF PRIORITY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

*Priority actions, those to be completed within the short and medium ranges (one to seven years), are shown in blue.*

**E. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

| STRATEGY   | PRIORITY ACTIONS   |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Create a predictable regulatory environment.</p> | <p>a. Troubleshoot permits and policies that impede business activities—create a city ombudsman.</p> <p>b. Streamline regulatory compliance. Use a focus group to identify areas for improvement and ways to improve permit processes.</p> <p>c. Review the permit appeals process and amend, if necessary, to ensure efficiency and responsiveness to the public. Create a mediation process to resolve disputes regarding density in designated zones, and similar issues.</p> |
| <p>2. Provide implementation tools.</p>                | <p>a. Create a City staff position to assist with economic development advocacy, including business retention, regulations and permitting, marketing and visitor services.</p>   |
| <p>3. Maintain a balanced economic jobs mix.</p>       | <p>a. Consider the following business types for inclusion in Issaquah’s mix: technology-focused businesses, new retail operations, professional and office-based businesses and services, medical facilities, ecologically-focused businesses, and tourist-based businesses.</p>   |

**SUMMARY OF PRIORITY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

*Priority actions, those to be completed within the short and medium ranges (one to seven years), are shown in blue.*

**F. ENHANCE SERVICES, HOUSING, AND EDUCATION**

| STRATEGY   | PRIORITY ACTIONS   |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Establish a human services commission.</p>                             | <p>a. Establish a human services commission. Identify human service and public service needs, including areas of overlap and gaps in service.</p> <p>b. Co-locate similar services at a centrally located human services campus.</p>   |
| <p>2. Seek additional funding and support for education.</p>                 | <p>a. Business, government, and the entire community maintain effective state-level advocacy for funding of public schools, especially on issues affecting Issaquah. Work with the Issaquah Schools Foundation as an agent or coordinating organization for fundraising.</p> |
| <p>3. Recruit a branch of a college for higher and continuing education.</p> | <p>a. Identify strategies, policies and programs that would sustain and support a branch of Bellevue Community College (BCC) and other higher education programs in Issaquah.</p>  |

### Issaquah Economic Centers

