ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to all that helped and participated in the creation of the Downtown Business District Subarea Plan.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction
   Background ........................................................................................................................... 1
   Existing Conditions ............................................................................................................ 2
   Districts .............................................................................................................................. 3
   Existing Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies ............................................................ 4
   Purpose ............................................................................................................................... 5

Chapter 2: Planning Process
   Economic Analysis ........................................................................................................... 6
   Public Participation .......................................................................................................... 6

Chapter 3: Framework
   Objectives ......................................................................................................................... 7
   Framing Observations ....................................................................................................... 7
   General Strategies ............................................................................................................ 8

Chapter 4: Goals, Policies, and Implementation Strategies
   Proposed Goals and Policies ............................................................................................. 9
   Implementation Strategies ............................................................................................... 9

Appendices
   Appendix 1: Economic Study .......................................................................................... 18
   Appendix 2: Public Participation ...................................................................................... 22
   Appendix 3: Design Standards ......................................................................................... 30
      A. Purpose ....................................................................................................................... 30
      B. Site Planning .............................................................................................................. 30
      C. Pedestrian Access, Amenities, and Open Space Design ........................................... 41
      D. Vehicular Access and Parking Design ...................................................................... 56
      E. Building Design ......................................................................................................... 59
      F. Signage ....................................................................................................................... 80
      G. Lighting ..................................................................................................................... 87
      H. Definitions ............................................................................................................... 89
Chapter 1: Introduction

Background
Old Town Mukilteo is the historic downtown of the city. Located near the waterfront, Old Town was the original fishing village, trading post, and a port-of-entry when Mukilteo was first founded in 1858. The entire Old Town area developed as a traditional small town with commercial uses mixed in with residential uses; side by side and in the same buildings. Commercial uses that have historically located in Old Town include restaurants, taverns, dry goods stores, hotels, offices, a gas station, pharmacy, bank and post office.

Rosehill School anchored the Old Town community when it was built in 1893. The original building burned down in 1928 and was rebuilt that same year. In 1973 the school closed and was deeded to the City in 1977 for use as a community center. The City has drawn up plans for a new community center to replace the 1928 Rosehill school structure and to create a new plaza at 3rd Street and Lincoln Avenue.

Mukilteo was incorporated in 1947 with a population of 775. The original city boundaries included all of Old Town and areas south to 76th Street SW, west of Mukilteo Speedway and to 70th Street SW, east of the Speedway. In 1955 the City’s first zoning ordinances divided the City into residential, commercial and industrial districts.

The first Old Town district was similar to the district today except:
- parcels on the west side of Mukilteo Speedway all the way south past 6th Street were included; and
- no parcels on 3rd Street were included except for the northeast corner of 3rd Street and Lincoln Avenue.

By 1970 the commercial district in Old Town no longer included the west side of Mukilteo Speedway between the railroad tracks and 6th Street. Starting in the 1980s individual parcels on the north side of 3rd Street were added to the Old Town commercial district (first between Lincoln and Park Avenues and then between Park and Loveland Avenues). The commercial district boundaries reached their current configuration in 1998 when the Downtown Business District was changed to include all of the parcels on the north side of 3rd Street between Lincoln and Park Avenues.

In 1998 residents requested evaluation of Old Town being designated an historic district with a focus on the residential neighborhoods. MAKERS Architecture + Urban Design assisted City staff with the evaluation, survey and related code amendments. Although surveying revealed no consensus by residents to create an historic district, there was consensus on two issues:
1. Residents did not want sidewalks and curbs added to residential streets.
2. View protection would not be addressed through using side or rear yard setbacks.
Existing Conditions

The Downtown Business District still retains its fishing village charm, but has lost some of its vibrancy and has struggled at times with retaining businesses. It has small-scale commercial buildings, 2- to 3-story mixed-use buildings surrounded by single-family homes. The community center property, located in the Public – Semi Public Zoning District, is a significant place in Old Town. The current land uses are shown in the following map.

Note: In this document, the term “Old Town” refers to the study area including residential areas whereas “Downtown Business District” (DB) and “commercial district” refer to the DB zone only.
**Districts**

When the planning began for the Downtown Business District, the study area was drawn to encompass a larger area so that potential land use actions in adjacent areas could be considered and local participants presented with a full range of options. It was important that the residents in these areas be actively engaged in the planning process because of the potential changes and impacts to the residential area.

Three of the City’s zoning districts are located within the study area – DB (Downtown Business), PSP (Public – Semi Public) and RD 7.5 (Single Family Residential – minimum lot size 7,500 square feet). The following map locates the boundaries of the study area and of those zoning districts.
Existing Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies

The City of Mukilteo’s 2008 Comprehensive Plan contains several goals and policies supporting the purposes and objectives of this plan and supporting a vital business district in Old Town. Following are a list of goals and policies relevant to Old Town and/or the Downtown Business District that were in place prior to this planning process. These existing goals and policies helped to guide the priorities for the planning process and the plan itself. GD means General development goal. LU means Land Use policy while TR means Transportation policies.

**GD1:** Preserve the existing, owner-occupied, residential quality of life of each neighborhood and throughout the residential portion of the City by keeping high volumes of traffic out of residential neighborhoods.

**GD2:** Encourage City entryways, commercial development, and redevelopment near the urban waterfront to reflect the waterfront atmosphere of the City.

**GD3:** Ensure compatibility of adjacent land uses through the use of buffers, landscaping, and quality building design to maintain property values, safe living environments, and the City’s unique identity and distinctive entryways.

**GD4:** Promote economic development and redevelopment to provide for a tax base that is balanced so the tax burden is shared among residential, commercial and industrial properties.

**LU3:** Encourage the creation of employment opportunities that result from market demands for new and expanding businesses within the community and that are consistent with its character.

**LU7:** Property rights of landowners shall be respected by protecting these rights from arbitrary and discriminatory actions by the City.

**LU18:** Encourage urban design planning in conjunction with a waterfront redevelopment plan which sets design standards for public and private properties, and includes a design strategy for the downtown and future uses in the Federal Tank Farm. (LU24)

**LU21:** Develop a functional and aesthetically pleasing downtown and commercial areas that soften the impact of the automobile, provides for alternative modes of transportation connections from site to site. (LU27)

**LU22:** Strengthen old and new residential neighborhood identity by defining boundaries, signage and designating landmarks (built and natural), that promotes community well-being and the area’s unique identity. (LU28)

**LU23:** Provide compatible transitions between areas of different land use intensity and to soften new development. (LU29)

**LU39:** Work with downtown property and business owners to identify historical attributes that can be incorporated into new building designs. (LU48)

**LU43:** Development should result in conveniently located retail businesses to meet the needs of citizens and visitors. (LU52)

**LU44:** Economic development shall be considered a part of any integrated strategy to attract new beneficial businesses, retain existing beneficial businesses, professional services, and industries, as well as providing a mechanism to meet City services and capital facility needs. (LU53)

**LU46:** Land use and permit processes shall be streamlined to make locating businesses in the City of Mukilteo relatively easy, but not at the expense of existing residential areas or protecting critical environmental areas. (LU55)

**TR3:** Development of the Multimodal/Intermodal terminal and redevelopment of the Tank Farm site, shall employ the following urban design techniques: a network of public paths, a waterfront promenade, a chain of waterfront parks, recreational opportunities such as a new marina or visitor dock and boat launch, new mixed use/commercial opportunities, public amenities downtown (e.g. benches, street lights, water fountains, etc.), and pedestrian oriented streetscapes.

**TR22:** Public transportation facilities shall be integrated into land development where appropriate and into the design and maintenance of public roads. The City shall also encourage mixed-use projects and land-use relationships, which decrease dependency on the automobile (e.g., locating industrial/office, restaurants, and service commercial in one area). Any traffic impact mitigation ordinance may recognize enhancements to public transit and ride sharing as mitigation. Fees to mitigate the impact of development proposals on the City’s street system by the construction of transit facilities may be considered by the City as mitigation measures. (TR25)

(Editor’s note: After the 2009 Comprehensive Plan amendments were adopted some of the above policy numbers changed. The numbers in parentheses are the 2009 policy numbers)
Purpose

The primary impetus for drafting this subarea plan arose from applications to add to the Downtown Business District (DB) by rezoning some of the surrounding parcels zoned single family residential (RD 7.5). The trend started in the 1980s, with two applications for lots on 3rd Street being approved. It continued into the 1990s. In 1998 the remaining single family parcels on the north side of 3rd Street, between Lincoln and Park Avenues, were rezoned to DB. In the 2000s the trend continued with some inquiries and rezone applications, but no rezones were approved. Each rezone inquiry, whether it resulted in an application or not, seemed to generate more controversy than its predecessor. Rezone applications submitted in 2007 for the remaining parcels on the north side of 3rd Street between Park and Loveland Avenues that were not already zoned DB raised community awareness of the need to develop a vision for the Old Town Commercial district, starting with agreeing on what size the DB zoning district should be. Therefore, this plan establishes boundaries for the Downtown Business District which would be the basis for responding to inquiries to rezone property to DB and would be a primary review criterion if rezone applications are submitted.

This plan is also intended to identify measures to improve the vitality of Old Town in both its commercial and residential areas. One tool that can be used to achieve this is amending and customizing development regulations to recognize the unique needs of the Downtown Business District which significantly differs from the City’s other commercial districts. Appendix 3, Design Standards, provides a detailed framework and content to serve as a basis for future development regulations and standards.

Another tool that can revitalize the district is to improve the area’s infrastructure. The specific capital improvements identified in this plan, such as sidewalks, lighting and gateway entries, will create a distinct and recognizable commercial district for residents and visitors alike and make it a pedestrian-friendly area. City Council consideration of implementing a broad set of tools and funding improvements will assist in increasing the viability of commercial activity in the area.
Chapter 2: Planning Process

Economic Analysis
An early step in studying the Old Town area, and specifically the Downtown Business District, included an economic analysis of the outlook and opportunities of the study area. Property Counselors performed the analysis which is Appendix 1 of this plan. Their report lays out the challenges and opportunities facing the business district. This analysis determined the Downtown Business District:

- Is small and lacks focus.
- Does not currently have the demand generators in terms of residential base, employment base, or visitor activity to support traditional small downtown scale of development.
- Does not need to expand its boundaries to make it viable; rather it needs to be more cohesive, with infill development.
- Will have to rely on a mix of resident, employee and visitor spending to support growth and mixed use development.
- Would benefit from additional residential development as part of mixed use buildings to increase spending for local businesses.
- Will have to serve a market area larger than its immediate area if it is to support development larger than a convenience market.
- Would realize a near-term opportunity to attract additional spending through the organization and promotion of a quality visitor experience.

The information gathered in the economic analysis helped to shape and inform the planning process for Old Town. It is important to understand that land does not need to be added to the business district, but that adding more people within walking distance and creating a more cohesive district are necessary if a vital business district is to be achieved. The business district can take advantage of existing amenities such as views, the character of the neighborhood, and adjacent activities to help attract a regional market. This analysis was presented to the public during the public participation process, which is described below and in Appendix 2.

Public Participation
In order to plan for the future of Old Town, the public was engaged in two workshops. The first workshop, in June 2008, focused on gathering information about the overall priorities of the community for Old Town. Attendees of the public workshop broke up into groups to discuss a series of questions related to the study area, filled out a visual preference survey, and worked on a mapping exercise. In the second workshop, the public was given an opportunity to evaluate three sets of alternatives for Old Town. Working in groups, the community first evaluated land use alternatives that focused on the possibilities for the Downtown Business District and then evaluated potential transportation and streetscape improvements. The results of these meetings and more details on what was discussed can be found in Appendix 2.
Chapter 3: Framework

The framework for the Downtown Business District Subarea Plan – objectives, framing observations and general strategies – were formed by combining the background information and analysis discussed in Chapter 1 with the feedback received in the public participation process discussed in Chapter 2. This framework was then used to define the goals, policies, and implementation strategies discussed in Chapter 4.

Objectives
The goals and policies from the 2008 Comprehensive Plan, the Economic Analysis, and the information gathered through the public participation process led to the development of the following key objectives for the Downtown Business District Subarea Plan:

- **Objective 1:** Retain a viable business district.
- **Objective 2:** Protect the quality of the surrounding residential neighborhood.
- **Objective 3:** Foster stability and certainty regarding land use issues in the area.
- **Objective 4:** Upgrade civic infrastructure as necessary with special focus on parking.
- **Objective 5:** Enhance the district’s attractiveness and identity.

Framing Observations
In addition to the key objectives, there are a number of elements that came up during the preparation of this subarea plan that have helped frame the recommendations for the Downtown Business District. With regard to the substantive land use issues, the following five findings stand out:

- **Finding 1:** Nearby residents are opposed to land use changes that they perceive as threats to the single-family character of their neighborhood.
- **Finding 2:** Expansion of the business district would not necessarily strengthen Old Town’s economic performance. Infill on underutilized lots and additional residents would provide more benefit than business area expansion.
- **Finding 3:** Brewery Creek ravine provides a divider and buffer between residential and commercial/mixed uses and is an opportunity for retaining a natural environment in Old Town.
- **Finding 4:** Actions are necessary to foster Old Town’s businesses. Because there is not sufficient local population, the district must rely on visitor and employee spending as well as a somewhat larger residential base. A quality visitor experience is key to this strategy.
- **Finding 5:** There are numerous changes that may occur in or near Old Town, including ferry terminal/parking operations, new community center, redevelopment, Sounder transit service, waterfront redevelopment, and a parking management program that could dramatically impact Old Town.
Because of these facts, the subarea plan recommendations are based on a strategy emphasizing the following principles:

**Principle 1:** Do not expand the business district east of Park Avenue except where it is already east of there. There are no factors or changes envisioned that would ever justify expansion of any part of the business district east of Loveland Avenue.

**Principle 2:** Undertake small-scale physical improvements and business improvement activities. Entryways into Old Town could be improved. Also, some of the Downtown Business District streets do not have adequate sidewalks to promote pedestrians walking east-to-west on 2nd Street.

**Principle 3:** Protect Old Town’s small-scale, turn-of-the-century character. Design guidelines/standards emphasizing provisions for pedestrian-oriented streetscapes, small-scale late 19th, early 20th century building character, and garden landscaping will be the most important action. Appropriate streetscape elements to the scale and character of Old Town will also reinforce these qualities.

**Principle 4:** Improve communication between the City and the neighborhood.

**General Strategies**

**Strategy 1:** Protect single family residential neighborhoods by discouraging through traffic, especially east of Loveland Avenue and north of 5th Street.

**Strategy 2:** Preserve the Brewery Creek ravine as a permanent natural corridor/buffer within the Downtown Business District.

**Strategy 3:** Define what a quality visitor experience is and facilitate business coordination to promote it.

**Strategy 4:** Facilitate pedestrian movement between the Downtown Business District and the Waterfront Mixed Use zone with a dedicated pedestrian bridge.
Chapter 4: Goals, Policies, and Implementation Strategies

Based on the planning process and the framework laid out above, the following goals, policies, and implementation strategies establish the overall vision for the Downtown Business District Subarea Plan and strategies for implementing that vision. The proposed goals and policies will be added to the City’s Comprehensive Plan as part of the 2009 update process. The proposed implementation strategies will be adopted by ordinance into the zoning code as development regulation code amendments or by resolution as development standards.

Proposed Goals and Policies

The following policies, to be a part of this subarea plan as well as the City’s Comprehensive Plan, reflect the vision for Mukilteo’s Old Town commercial district. Some of the proposed polices reflect some of the recommendations found later in this plan.

OT1: Develop the Downtown Business (DB) District to have its own unique identity and to be a pedestrian-friendly environment.

OT2: Create well-defined edges for the Downtown Business District to distinguish it from the adjacent residential areas. Protect the residential areas from negative impacts associated with commercial activity.

OT3: Facilitate redevelopment of existing single family residential uses currently located in the Downtown Business District into mixed use and commercial uses that reflect the area’s history as a fishing village, port-of-entry and trading post.

OT4: Regularly review City decision-making and investment related to Old Town, in both its commercial and residential areas, for conformance with existing Comprehensive Plan policies and capital projects. The results of the review should be widely communicated to City residents.

OT5: Consider regulations to allow increased residential density as part of mixed used development in the Downtown Business District provided the impacts of the increased density are mitigated.

OT6: Capital improvements to add sidewalks, lighting, landscaping and other infrastructure needs typical for commercial districts and that promote a pedestrian-friendly environment should be considered in the Downtown Business District.

Implementation Strategies

The following recommendations include implementation strategies for land use, streetscape and transportation improvements, parking, and public communication and plan review. These strategies are followed by a table summarizing the recommendations to implement the strategies that include budget estimates for each recommendation, potential funding sources, a timeline for implementation, and other pertinent information.
Land Use Strategies
Based on the residents’ responses to rezoning options, the economic report findings that a larger business district is not needed and staff input, the Plan proposes land use changes only on 5th Street west of Brewery Creek. However, the following actions are recommended:

REC-1: The portion of the Downtown Business District north of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad tracks should be rezoned to Waterfront Mixed Use.

REC-2: Encourage an increased population density in the Downtown Business District.
This can be accomplished by repealing the existing commercial to residential ratio requiring 1,000 square feet commercial floor space per each dwelling unit, which only allows residential use as an accessory use, to a formula which requires street/sidewalk level commercial use while allowing residential which would be limited by maximum building heights. An absolute limit on the number of dwelling units can be imposed but is not really necessary as bulk and parking standards limit how many units are feasible.

REC-3: The parcel on the southeast corner of 5th Street and Lincoln Avenue should be added to the Downtown Business District.

REC-4: Adopt design guidelines for the Downtown Business District and codify those guidelines.
Adopt design standards and guidelines for the Old Town Business District is an important step to implement the goals and objectives of this plan. The design standards will ensure that the character of Old Town is maintained and enhanced.

Streetscape and Transportation Strategies
In terms of pedestrian access and streetscape quality, Old Town is deficient in several respects. The following projects are recommended to support the businesses, provide pedestrian and vehicular access, and reinforce Old Town’s visual character. As funding allows, 5th Street as a whole and 3rd Street and 2nd Street within the business district core should be the key streets to receive improvements.

Existing conditions at 5th Street and Lincoln Avenue.
The Downtown Business District’s streets are categorized as “pedestrian-oriented”, “secondary” and “high-visibility” streets, with each type having different requirements. The following map shows the various types of streets.
REC-5: Install gateway improvements along SR 525.
Most motorists traveling to the ferry or heading north on 5th Street rarely venture into Old Town to frequent the restaurants and other services. Gateway improvements inviting them to explore the area east of SR 525, such as a sign at 5th and SR 525, lights, and/or hanging planters along the landscaped islands, or improved floral landscaping, would make Old Town’s “front door” more welcoming and could advertise local businesses.

REC-6: Install sidewalks, lighting, and pedestrian amenities on 2nd Street.
Second Street is the heart of the Old Town Business District but has only intermittent sidewalks and no amenities. The right-of-way and pavement are wide enough to support sidewalks and on-street parking on both sides. Because this improvement should provide continuity between SR 525 and Loveland, it should be constructed in one project. Funding might come from a Local Improvement District (LID) assessment plus City funds.

REC-7: Install pedestrian lights and street trees on 3rd Street between Park Ave and Lincoln Ave.
There are adequate sidewalks in most places on 3rd Street, but street trees and pedestrian lights with banners or planters would reinforce Old Town’s character and encourage pedestrians to visit shops and attractions along the street. The planned new community center will include parking along 3rd Street, which should be screened from the right-of-way. Property owners should be required to install street trees and conduit for street lighting when properties are redeveloped. The lighting can be installed at one time when property owners are willing to assess themselves for the construction. The City should contribute to the cost of the lighting system according to an agreed-upon formula.

REC-8: Install human-scale public art along pedestrian pathways in the Downtown Business District
Public art located next to sidewalks would assist in the creation of a pedestrian-friendly environment by creating visual interest variety and opportunities for public interaction.

REC-9: Improve the alley between 2nd and 3rd Streets from SR 525 to Park Avenue.
This alley has the opportunity to provide both better pedestrian and vehicular access and a redevelopment opportunity. The alley should be improved to function as a woonerf. A woonerf – or “living street” in Dutch, where the concept originated – design allows
pedestrians and cars to share the right-of-way and gives pedestrians equal priority, allowing the alley to transform into a pedestrian-friendly street. Improvements might include textured and/or colored pavement, pedestrian lighting, and vegetation planters to define parking areas. This project is especially appropriate for joint property owner/City funding as the adjacent property owners will realize a significant property value benefit.

Existing conditions in the alley between 2nd Street and 3rd Street.

**REC-10: Install curbs, gutters, and sidewalks on west side of Park Avenue.**

Although a lower priority than other public improvement proposals, improvements to Park Avenue are important for pedestrian access and safety. This plan recommends installing curbs, gutters, and sidewalks on both sides of the street, with angle parking on one side (although to do this would require more right-of-way then currently exists). This improvement is particularly important if a bridge is constructed along Park Avenue from Mukilteo Lane to the waterfront.

Existing conditions on Park Avenue.

**REC-11: Construct a footbridge between Mukilteo Lane and the waterfront at Park Avenue or Loveland Avenue.**

A bridge from Old Town to the waterfront was a high priority among work session participants. While this is an expensive project, such a bridge might be coordinated with redevelopment and transit improvements on the waterfront.
Parking Strategies
Throughout the public process for this subarea plan, many people expressed concerns about parking in Old Town. The City is exploring a variety of measures, including parking at Rosehill Community Center, a residential parking zone (RPZ), and management of on-street parking. This plan recommends that the City continue the effort.

REC-12: Update parking code to include requirements for employee parking for all commercial areas and develop a parking management plan for the Downtown Business District.

REC-13: Retain flexibility for future parking development at the new community center.
The construction of a new community center provides some parking opportunities for this area. A future parking garage can be constructed on the site off of 3rd Street if parking demand makes it necessary.
## Implementation Strategies Summary
The table below summarizes the recommended actions, with lead participants, timeframes, and estimated budgets suggested.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Budget Estimate*</th>
<th>Potential Funding</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Purpose &amp; other notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Land Use</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REC-1 Rezone northern portion of DBD to WMU</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Consistency of development regulations for the waterfront</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REC-3 Add SE corner of 5th St. and Lincoln Ave. to DBD</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Solidify the intersection as an entryway into the DBD</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>REC-4 Codify design guidelines for DBD</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Maintain and enhance the character of the DBD and Old Town.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Streetscape and Transportation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REC-5 SR 525 gateway improvements</td>
<td>$170,000 - $260,000</td>
<td>City funding</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Welcome people to Old Town with signs, lights, baskets, landscaping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REC-6 2nd Street sidewalks, lighting &amp; pedestrian amenities</td>
<td>$600,000 - $936,000</td>
<td>LID; City funding</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>As the heart of Old Town, 2nd St needs pedestrian improvements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REC-7 3rd St pedestrian lights and street trees</td>
<td>$150,000 - $230,000</td>
<td>Rosehill dev; City funding</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Reinforce Old Town’s character with pedestrian amenities on 3rd St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REC-8 Install public art along pedestrian pathways</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>To assist in creating a pedestrian friendly environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REC-9 Improve alley between 2nd St and 3rd St</td>
<td>$160,000 - $250,000</td>
<td>LID plus City funding</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Provide better pedestrian and vehicular access on alley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REC-10 Park Ave curbs, gutters, and sidewalks</td>
<td>$84,000 - $130,000</td>
<td>City funding</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Curb, gutter and sidewalks will improve pedestrian access and safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REC-11 Footbridge between Mukilteo Lane and waterfront</td>
<td>Multi million dollar project</td>
<td>WSDOT, ST Grants, City</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>A footbridge would improve access to the waterfront from Old Town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REC-12 Update parking code and evaluate and implement parking management strategies</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>N.A. TBD</td>
<td>2010-11 2010-15</td>
<td>To include employee parking requirements into all commercial zones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These cost estimate ranges use a low estimate of hard costs and a high estimate that includes an increase of 20% for contingency costs and in addition to that an increase of 30% for fees, taxes, permits, etc. This results in a total increase from the hard costs of 56%.