4 Urban Design

Introduction

As one of the oldest communities in Pierce County, Buckley is a city that is unique in the region for its small town character and historic and recreational resources. The farmland that surrounds the city isolated it from extensive physical expansion and intense commercial development. Looking towards the future, Buckley is confronted with the challenge of trying to preserve its unique character while accommodating economic and population growth. Incorporation of an urban design strategy within the policy framework of Buckley's Comprehensive Plan will help guide the City in its efforts to preserve and enhance those unique characteristics of Buckley that create a sense of place for residents and visitors.

Urban design is like architecture at the city-scale: it considers the way buildings, streets and the spaces between them relate to one another with the goal of creating a vibrant, welcoming urban environment. Thoughtful urban design can work to help tie different areas of the city together visually and functionally. Urban design can help to establish Buckley as a niche destination in the region; one that draws people to the city looking to experience the town's unique small town and historic atmosphere, and to take advantage of Buckley's proximity to recreation opportunities. The Urban Design Element of Buckley's Comprehensive Plan is meant to guide the City in creating a more cohesive physical, economic, and social environment, and to help sustain and enhance quality of life in the context of future growth.

Existing Conditions:

In 1991 the City of Buckley adopted guidelines for redevelopment. These guidelines identify two key districts, the Downtown Review District and the Highway Review District, for which specific guidelines were drafted pertaining to such

elements as: the scale, detailing, setback requirements, sidewalk improvements, and details for renovation and construction of new and existing structures. As part of the adoption of these guidelines, the City established an Architectural Review Board comprised of local citizens appointed by the City Council. The Architectural Review Board reviews proposals for restoration and new development in the City's historic commercial core and the commercial and industrial corridor along Highway 410.

Urban Design Strategy:

Buckley is faced with the challenge of encouraging economic growth and accommodating population growth within the city, while at the same time trying to preserve the City's unique small town and historic character. As outlined in the following goals, policies, and objectives, the urban design strategy is intended to enhance, to make more visible, and to better connect those features of the city that set it apart from surrounding localities. A major task in the City's urban design strategy will be the development of urban design guidelines that compliment the guidelines for redevelopment. Another important task is the implementation of these guidelines and other zoning regulations that call for the development of physical and thematic connections between different areas of the city. The urban design strategy is intended to support the goals contained in other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

GOAL 4.1 ENHANCE THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL VITALITY ALONG THE MAIN STREET COMMERCIAL CORE.

Discussion. Thoughtful urban design has the potential to improve the Buckley downtown functionally as well as aesthetically. Good urban design is more than just beautification; it acts as a catalyst to improve economic vitality, public safety, and sense of community. In the

Buckley downtown, a thriving economy and a vibrant social atmosphere will go hand in hand. Urban design improvements can create a place where people want to visit and linger, and thus a place where businesses can succeed. Urban design will be a key element in helping to revitalize the downtown as the social and commercial heart of Buckley. To best achieve this goal, particular emphasis must be placed on the experience of the pedestrian. A pedestrian-friendly downtown will differentiate Buckley as a destination from other nearby automobile-oriented cities, and thus, will ensure the kind of face-to-face human interaction that is vital to a healthy community.

Concept sketch of a rebuilt Main St.

A small plaza like the one above can help integrate the trail with downtown.

POLICY 4.1.1 DEVELOP PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE BY WIDENING SIDEWALKS, AND INSTALLING CROSSWALKS, CORNER PLAZAS, BOLLARDS, STREET FURNITURE, ETC.

POLICY 4.1.2 ENHANCE STREET APPEAL WITH AMENITIES SUCH AS: NEWS KIOSKS, LIGHTING, WATER FOUNTAINS, TREES/PLANTER BOXES, PAVEMENT TREATMENTS, STREET NAMES, FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS.

POLICY 4.1.3 ENHANCE BUSINESS VITALITY THROUGH STOREFRONT TRANSPARENCY AND BY ALLOWING COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY TO SPILL OUT ONTO THE SIDEWALK.

POLICY 4.1.4 DEVELOP MIXED-USE BUILDINGS WITH HOUSING ABOVE COMMERCIAL SPACE.

GOAL 4.2 STRENGTHEN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TRAIL AND DOWNTOWN.

Discussion. **The trail represents an untapped resource for the revitalization of Buckley's downtown. Through attention to the relationship between the trail and downtown, the redevelopment of the trail may serve as a catalyst for the economic revitalization of the downtown. The intersection of the trail and Main Street, the nexus between two of Buckley's most important economic and recreational corridors, stands to unite two vital urban functions.**

POLICY 4.2.1 CREATE ADDITIONAL SIGNAGE TO INDICATE ATTRACTIONS IN DOWNTOWN.

POLICY 4.2.2 DEVELOP A VISUAL ACCESS CORRIDOR BETWEEN THE TRAIL AND DOWNTOWN, USING ELEMENTS SUCH AS PAVEMENT MATERIALS AND LANDSCAPING.

POLICY 4.2.3 DEVELOP A PLACE OF RESPITE ON THE BIKE PATH AS IT PASSES MAIN ST. TO ENCOURAGE TRAIL USERS TO STOP AND VISIT DOWNTOWN.

POLICY 4.2.4 CONSIDER NEW TRAIL BRANCHES LEADING DIRECTLY INTO THE DOWNTOWN.

POLICY 4.2.5 ENCOURAGE RETAIL CONSISTENT WITH RECREATIONAL USE ALONG THE TRANSITIONAL ZONE BETWEEN

THE TRAIL AND THE DOWNTOWN CORE THROUGH THE USE OF DEVELOPMENT TAX CREDITS OR OTHER INCENTIVES.

GOAL 4.3 FOSTER BUCKLEY'S ROLE AS A DESTINATION POINT BY ENHANCING THE TOWN'S VISIBILITY AND IDENTITY.

Discussion. Focusing on Buckley's identity, will serve to strengthen Buckley's sense of place, while projecting a distinct regional image for the town. This in turn will help foster community pride and increase Buckley's role in the regional tourist economy. Any theme Buckley chooses to guide its development should also reflect the town's values, history and proximity to the natural environment.

POLICY 4.3.1 DEVELOP A WAY FINDING SYSTEM THAT HIGHLIGHTS HISTORIC LANDMARKS, TOURIST FACILITIES, PEDESTRIAN CORRIDORS AND OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST IN THE DOWN TOWN AREA THROUGH THE USE OF SIGNAGE AND KIOSKS.

POLICY 4.3.2 DEVELOP A COMMON 'DESIGN THEME' THAT IS RELATED TO BUCKLEY'S HISTORY AND NATURAL SURROUNDINGS, TO GUIDE THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS, PUBLIC ART PIECES AND WAY FINDING SYSTEMS.

POLICY 4.3.3 DEVELOP VISUAL MARKER ON SR 410 TO SERVE AS A GATEWAY TO BUCKLEY, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON TRAVEL FROM ENUMCLAW.

GOAL 4.4 ENHANCE THE POTENTIAL FOR NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS THROUGHOUT BUCKLEY.

Discussion. Giving people the option to travel in Buckley without the use of a car has the potential to improve the physical, economic, and social health of the community. Physical health can be improved through the increased activity associated with non-motorized transportation. Creating better non-motorized access to downtown will also help bring more local customers to the downtown businesses. When people travel outside their cars, social interaction is much more likely, and community bonds are strengthened. Additionally, non-motorized transportation options greatly expand the opportunities of those who cannot afford a car, or cannot drive.

Pedestrian-scale signage implies that downtown is a place where people are welcome.

During the visioning process, Buckley residents showed strong support for extending the Foothills Trail.

POLICY 4.4.1 IMPROVE EXISTING PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE BY INSTALLING SIDEWALKS, CROSSWALKS, AND BIKE LANES WHERE NEEDED.

POLICY 4.4.2 WORK WITH REGIONAL TRANSIT OPERATORS TO PLACE A TRANSIT STOP IN THE BUCKLEY'S DOWNTOWN CORE.

POLICY 4.4.3 ENSURE THAT ALL NEW DEVELOPMENT PROVIDES ADEQUATE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE, SUCH AS SIDEWALKS, CROSSWALKS, AND BIKE PATHS.

POLICY 4.4.4 PROVIDE SAFE AND CONVENIENT PEDESTRIAN LINKAGES ACROSS SR 410 THROUGH THE USE OF SIGNALIZED CROSSWALKS OR A PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE.

POLICY 4.4.5 DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF WALKING AND/OR BIKING TRAILS TO ENCOURAGE CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN ADJACENT RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISIONS, AND BETWEEN RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND THE DOWNTOWN CORE.

POLICY 4.4.6 ELIMINATE BARRIERS TO PEDESTRIANS SUCH AS DEAD ENDS, UNNECESSARY FENCES OR OVERGROWN VEGETATION, AND CREATE DEDICATED CONNECTIONS SUCH AS PERMANENT PATHS OR STAIRWAYS.

GOAL 4.5 NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY OF BUCKLEY SHOULD STRENGTHEN THE QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC REALM AND FOSTER COMMUNITY INTERACTION.

Discussion. The quality of the built environment affects how people use space. For example, one rarely finds a small, cozy sidewalk café adjacent to a freeway or large parking lot. People are generally more comfortable in public places where they feel welcome and safe. The built environment also mirrors cultural values because when street networks isolate people from one another, community bonds weaken. These policies attempt to reinforce positive social interaction through maintaining Buckley's small town character.
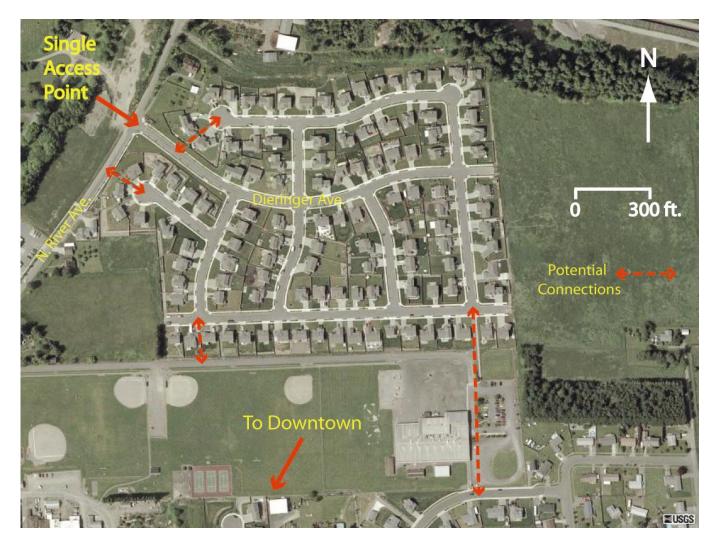
POLICY 4.5.1 UTILIZE BUILDING DESIGN THAT RELATES TO THE STREET THROUGH DESIGN ELEMENTS SUCH AS SMALL BUILDING SETBACKS AND FRONT PORCHES.

POLICY 4.5.2 ENCOURAGE ALLEYS WHEN DEVELOPING EXTENSIONS OF THE STREET NETWORK IN ORDER TO SCREEN

Work with Washington State DOT to make SR 410 safer for pedestrians.

FROM VIEW OVERHEAD WIRES, PARKING STRUCTURES, AND OTHER VISUAL BLIGHT.

POLICY 4.5.3 ENCOURAGE COMPACT GRID STREET PATTERNS RATHER THAN DEAD ENDS OR LONG BLOCKS THAT ARE MORE TYPICAL OF MODERN SUBDIVISIONS.

POLICY 4.5.4 WHERE DEAD ENDS EXIST, ENCOURAGE PEDESTRIAN PATHS AND 'CUT THROUGHS'.

Encourage pedestrian paths and 'cut throughs' where dead ends exist.

GOAL 4.6 IDENTIFY AND PRESERVE BUILDINGS WITH UNIQUE HISTORIC CHARACTER.

Discussion. **Historic buildings help give Buckley its sense of identity and history. These community treasures mark some of Buckley's most cherished places and offer a unique perspective to the town's past. Marking and restoring historic buildings reflects community pride and ensures that they will remain for future generations to enjoy.**

POLICY 4.6.1 THE CITY SHALL INVENTORY BUILDINGS WITH UNIQUE ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC CHARACTER WITHIN THE CITY OF BUCKLEY.

POLICY 4.6.2 DEVELOP DESIGN GUIDELINES TO GUIDE RENOVATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND NEW DEVELOPMENT ADJACENT TO THEM.