

LA CENTER JUNCTION SUBAREA PLAN



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ABSTRACT

The City of La Center has coordinated subarea planning for La Center Junction at the intersection of La Center Road and I-5. The Subarea Plan will provide a roadmap for future development and economic opportunity for an area spanning both sides of I-5 from NE 299th Street on the south to the east fork of the Lewis River on the north.

The planning process is intended to identify the specific improvements necessary to serve the La Center Junction, estimate costs, and develop a funding strategy for near-term implementation. The ultimate goal is to provide an employment area to benefit the people of La Center and north Clark County.



Key steps in this process include:

- take an inventory of existing infrastructure (roads, sewer, water, electrical, etc.) in the area
- identify preferred development to achieve the economic goals
- identify needed infrastructure to serve the preferred development.
- identify financing mechanisms to fund infrastructure improvements

The Subarea Plan will create a framework to ensure that appropriate sewer, water, and other infrastructure is extended to make the area “shovel ready” for new development.

The Subarea Plan will be compatible with county-wide planning policies and the La Center Comprehensive Plan. It will comply with policies and goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan for Land Use, Transportation, Capital Facilities and Utilities, Economic Development, Urban Growth and Annexation, Environmental, and Government Coordination.

This document details the purpose, methods, assumptions, policies, facilities, environmental issues, finances, land use and transportation options, and other topics and considerations associated with the study and development of a Subarea Plan. It also outlines the public involvement opportunities and methods, provides public meeting minutes, and answers many frequently asked questions about the project.

FACT SHEET

Project Title

La Center Junction Subarea Plan

Project Description

The City of La Center, Washington, has developed a Subarea Plan to guide future development of an area that encompasses an estimated 940 acres in the vicinity of the La Center Road Junction with Interstate 5. The subarea spans both sides of I-5 from NE 299th Street on the south to the East Fork of the Lewis River on the north.

The ultimate goal for this project is jobs. The Subarea Plan seeks to foster economic development opportunities in the Junction area to create jobs for the people of La Center and north Clark County.

The planning process has inventoried existing infrastructure and studied existing conditions in the area, developed a preferred land use and development alternative, identified new and improved infrastructure to serve the preferred alternative, and outlined funding resources and financial strategies to achieve the project goals.

The subarea planning process began in early 2009 and has included stakeholder interviews, community open houses and workshops, and presentations before the City Planning Commission and City Council.

Following careful study and discussion, Alternative Y was selected as the preferred alternative. At full build out, it is estimated to result in 3,700 new jobs and housing for 800-900 new residents. Zoning designations for the area include a mix of Community Commercial, Light Industrial, Employment Campus, Mixed use, Medium Density Residential, and Low Density Residential.

The subarea planning process has studied and detailed:

- policies and regulations associated with such a project
- existing conditions such as land use characteristics; critical areas and other natural resources; zoning; public facilities such as transportation, potable water, stormwater, wastewater, parks, trails and open spaces, schools; and public services such as fire protection, law enforcement, public health and safety, higher education, and other government services
- economic conditions and opportunities
- land use alternatives
- Traffic and environmental impacts and impacts on junction-area and downtown businesses
- Needed infrastructure improvements
- Potential revenues and funding strategies

The subarea plan also includes a sequence of action steps prior to development, as development occurs, and ongoing.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **La Center Junction Subarea Plan** identifies the specific improvements necessary to serve the I-5 junction, estimate the cost of such improvements, and develop a funding strategy for near-term implementation.

The planning area covers 939 acres, of which 842 acres is held in private ownership. About 366 acres are unencumbered by critical areas or rights-of-way and are expected to be privately developed.



Intent

The intent is to more closely link land use and transportation improvement decision-making, and to provide a coordinated set of land use and transportation recommendations to be used by the Planning Commission and City Council in their reviews and evaluations of development proposals.

Vision

La Center's vision for the I-5 junction centers on employment. Development of the subarea is expected to result in about 4,000 jobs.

The city intends to facilitate four specific types of development identified in the *2008 Economic Development Plan*:

- **Retail** - Provide the quality of life amenities that are important to build a healthy community and to attract the necessary workforce required by the other target industries.
- **Material Supply** - Companies in this sector manufacture a wide range of products—from plywood panels, to steel pipe, to tools, to wallpaper—and distribute them to wholesalers, retailers, home and hardwood stores or sell directly to contractors.
- **Electronics** - This cluster has over 10,000 employees across 435 businesses in the Portland Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), and is heavily comprised of manufacturers of audio and video equipment, circuit boards, electronic components, and measuring instruments.
- **Logistics & Distribution** – Although easy to recruit, firms within this cluster are typically land-extensive and job-poor. La Center should focus on recruiting logistics and operations enterprises (versus warehousing) to conserve acreage.

Other desired uses include higher education such as a small college or a university satellite campus, and medical services.

BRIEFLY

The City completed its first **economic development plan** in 2008. Targeted industrial clusters include:

- retail
- material supplies
- electronics
- logistics & distribution

Goal

The City of La Center's long-term goal is for the La Center Junction to provide employment for the benefit of the citizens of La Center and north Clark County (Policy 1.4).

Preferred Alternative

Alternative Y was selected as the preferred alternative. This alternative is anticipated to result in 3,700 new jobs and an additional 800 to 900 residents.

Infrastructure Improvements

To accommodate this demand, infrastructure improvements totaling about \$41.2 million (in 2010 dollars) will be needed over the next 20 years. They include:

- Subarea arterial-collectors (\$21.4 million)

- I-5 Interchange improvements (\$10.7 million)
- Sewer main extension (\$7.5 million)
- Trails (\$1.5 million)

The first two projects are already programmed within the La Center Urban Area Capital Facilities Plan. The City's estimated share of these costs is \$1.8 million.

Revenues

Offsetting revenues include, impact fees and system development charges (45%), other private contributions (40%), state and federal grants (10%), and local government funds (5%).

Various tax revenues from the fully developed subarea are expected to provide the City with \$15-17 million over the next 40 years. An additional \$148 million to \$167 million of various tax revenues will go to other local and state agencies.

BRIEFLY

Action Steps listed in Chapter 7 include follow-on actions stemming from the City's 2008 Economic Development Plan including:

- Establish a city economic development lead
- Conduct an economic development marketing program
- Enhance business retention and expansion efforts
- Enhance economic position within region



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN?

The La Center Junction Subarea Plan was developed to provide land use, transportation, and capital improvement recommendations that are necessary to plan for urban growth. The purpose of this plan is to more closely link land use and transportation improvement decision-making and to provide a coordinated set of land use and transportation recommendations to be used by the Planning Commission and City Council.

This subarea plan is intended to identify the specific improvements necessary to serve the I-5 junction, estimate the cost of such improvements, and develop a funding strategy for near-term implementation.

DEFINED

Subarea

A Subarea is a neighborhood, district, or other area that needs to be studied in greater detail than provided for in the Comprehensive Plan.

WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE AREA?

19th Century

Early settlers such as John Timmen, Aurelius Wilkins, and John Pollock took claims along the East Fork of the Lewis River near the current site of La Center in the early 1850s. In those days, rivers were the primary means of travel. La Center, platted in 1874, was located at the head of navigation on the East Fork of the Lewis River and became a center of trade for northern Clark County.



20th Century

La Center continued to grow with the area's agriculture and logging industries and was officially incorporated on August 27, 1909. Growth continued apace because Washington's main north-south route west of the Cascades (State Road No. 1 / Pacific Highway) swept through town. But when the new "River of Commerce" (Interstate 5) was completed in 1969, it bypassed the town.

21st Century

Since then, the City has conducted a focused effort to reconnect to the current "River of Commerce" (Interstate 5) and create opportunities for local jobs and economic diversity for its citizens. In 2007, Clark County approved the City's request to include in the City's urban growth area over one square mile of commercial and industrially zoned land at the I-5 junction. A key component of the County's approval was a contingency to add an additional 120 acres in the southwest quadrant should the Cowlitz Tribe succeed in acquiring trust status for their 152 acres of land in the northwest and southwest quadrants of the interchange.

Size of Subarea

This subarea plan covers approximately 940 acres at or near the La Center Junction which could fall under the City's jurisdiction in the next 20 years. Of that, about 840 acres is held in 82 privately owned parcels—the rest being held in public rights-of-way for roads.

The City's adoption of this expanded urban growth area occurred on the same day that the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board significantly reduced the City's urban growth area. This decision has since been overturned in Superior Court, but final legal resolution is still many months away. Nonetheless, the City retains a significant footprint at the I-5 Junction.

Economic Development Plan for the Subarea

The City recently completed its first economic development plan that highlighted the need to ensure appropriate sewer, water, and other infrastructure is extended to make sites "shovel ready." This plan describes in detail the anticipated development, necessary supporting infrastructure, the expected cost, and the public and private sectors role in financing these improvements.

WHAT METHODOLOGY WAS USED FOR THIS STUDY?

Subarea studies generally seek to identify needed infrastructure improvements based upon anticipated conditions 20 years into the future. Common examples include transportation studies that identify needed road improvements. Our process follows a relatively standard approach with the exception of looking at a broader range of public facilities and services than is typical. Major steps in this study include:

- Identify legal requirements – Staff researches federal, state and local regulations and policies for guidance, opportunities, or restrictions on how the subarea can be developed. In particular, the *La Center Urban Area Comprehensive Plan* and *La Center Municipal Code* identify local goals, policies and regulations currently in place.

READ MORE

Clark County et al v. Western Washington GMA Hearings Board

Information about this case can be found in Appendix I.

READ MORE

Economic Development Strategy Action Study (2008)

A complete copy of the study can be found in Appendix G.

- Inventory Existing Infrastructure – Staff researches available capacities, alignments, and conditions of roads, sewer, water, electrical and data lines, etc. Current land uses and constraints are also inventoried and characterized.
- Identify Preferred Development – Staff concurrently reviews land constraints and estimates generalized building footprints and occupancies at full build out. This should include the entire area of the UGA southwest of the East Fork of the Lewis River. It should also be coordinated with local ports and commercial realtors.
- Identify Needed Infrastructure – Staff applies the preferred land use to existing infrastructure and determines where improvements in infrastructure (such as sewer mains and pump stations, stormwater facilities) are needed. Alternatives would be explored to determine least-cost improvements.
- Outside Consultant Review and Financing Analysis – The City would then turn over its assumptions and conclusions to an outside consultant for review and comment. A financing plan is also developed.
- Final Report & Action Plan – Staff collates all materials and develops a near-term action plan. The action plan should include an analysis of how the City can pre-approve or otherwise expedite investments consistent with the subarea plan.



WHAT ASSUMPTIONS HAVE BEEN MADE?

In order to estimate future demand on public facilities and services, a number of assumptions must be made. Fortunately, exhaustive modeling and verification by Clark County and others over the past 15 years have removed a substantial amount of guesswork from these equations.

POPULATION & EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

- Commercial lands are expected to generate 22 employees per net acre.¹
- Light Industrial / Employment Campus lands are expected to generate 9 employees per acre.
- Single-Family Residential lands are expected to accommodate 4 households per gross acre (3.6 HH/ac. net).
- Multi-Family Residential lands are expected to accommodate 12 households per gross acre.
- Industrial properties assumed to have a Floor-to-Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.3 (30% of land is in buildings)

READ MORE

Zoning Designations

Details on zoning and land use designations can be found in **Chapters 2 and 3**.

¹ Countywide, new building permits indicate an employment density observed in commercial and industrial areas at 7.9 and 8.2 employees per acre respectively. Battle Ground and Camas industrial employment density appears to be on target, which is 15.5 and 11.0 employees per acre respectively.

READ MORE

The Growth Management Act is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

DEFINED

Infrastructure Factor

Percentage of land needed for roads and other infrastructure.

- Commercial properties assumed to have an FAR of 0.2.
- Mixed use properties assumed to have a commercial FAR of 0.2, and 8 households per gross acre.
- Net buildable acres are calculated on a parcel-by-parcel basis by removing areas identified below from the parcel's gross acreage (Chapter 18.300 La Center Municipal Code [LCMC]).
- Under the Growth Management Act (GMA), La Center is required to have a minimum average residential density of 4.0 units per net acre. The current measured rate is 4.6 per acre.
- Clark County population forecasting uses a population density rate of 2.59 persons per household.
- Clark County uses targeted employment rates of 20 employees per commercial acre; 20 employees per business park acre; and 9 employees per industrial acre.
- Clark County uses infrastructure factors of 27.5 percent for residential development and 25 percent for industrial and commercial development.
- Currently built land will be redeveloped, absorbing five percent of the projected population and job growth.
- Clark County uses a residential market factor of 10%, but no market factors for commercial, industrial, or business park. This is a marked difference from a 50% market factor for industrial lands in the early days of GMA.

CRITICAL AREAS

DEFINED

Market Factor

An external agent that affects demand (e.g., diminishing supply of developable land).

BRIEFLY

A **Category IV wetland** is roughly defined as hydrologically isolated wetland ≤ 1 acre with 1 wetland class and , dominated by non-native monotypic vegetation; or ≤ 2 ac with one class and $>90\%$ cover of non-native plant.

- Development within high-value habitat conservation areas is generally prohibited. Other habitats, because they commonly overlap with other critical areas, generally receive protections.
- Type S (Shoreline of the State) streams such as the East Fork of the Lewis River were assumed to have buffers of 250 feet.
- Type F (Fish bearing) streams such as Brezee and McCormick were assumed to have buffers of 200 feet.
- Type Np (Non-fish bearing, perennial) streams were assumed to have buffers of 75 feet (one-half of 150 feet due to allowable mitigation).
- Type Ns (Non-Fish bearing, seasonal) streams were assumed to have buffers of 37.5 feet (one-half of 75 feet due to allowable mitigation).
- Development within Floodways and Floodway Fringe areas is prohibited.
- Hydric soils – Are assumed to be Category IV wetlands; wetland buffers are assumed to be 25 feet due to allowable mitigation.
- Slopes greater than 25% are discounted 100% as development in these areas is prohibited under Section 18.300.090(E) LCMC.
- Landslide Hazards are discounted 100% as development in these areas is prohibited without a special geo-technical engineering report. There are no mapped areas of active or historic landslides in the

subarea. However, nearly all areas of potential instability are also areas with slopes greater than 25%.

STORMWATER

LCMC 18.320 requires developments to comply with the Puget Sound Manual (1992) for stormwater control. Developments over 1 acre in size are required to have a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) construction stormwater permit from Department of Ecology (DOE) and meet Western Washington Stormwater Management Manual (WWSMM) requirements for erosion and sediment control during construction.

WAS THE COMMUNITY INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING PROCESS?

RCW 36.70A.140 requires the City to “establish and broadly disseminate to the public a public participation program identifying procedures providing for early and continuous public participation in the development and amendment of comprehensive land use plans and development regulations implementing such plans.”

City Council Resolution 09-309 adopted a public participation schedule for the subarea planning effort. This effort included three general topic open houses, a smaller work session regarding the northeastern quadrant, and three community newsletters—in addition to public hearings held before the City Planning Commission and City Council.



June 23, 2009 Open House & Workshop

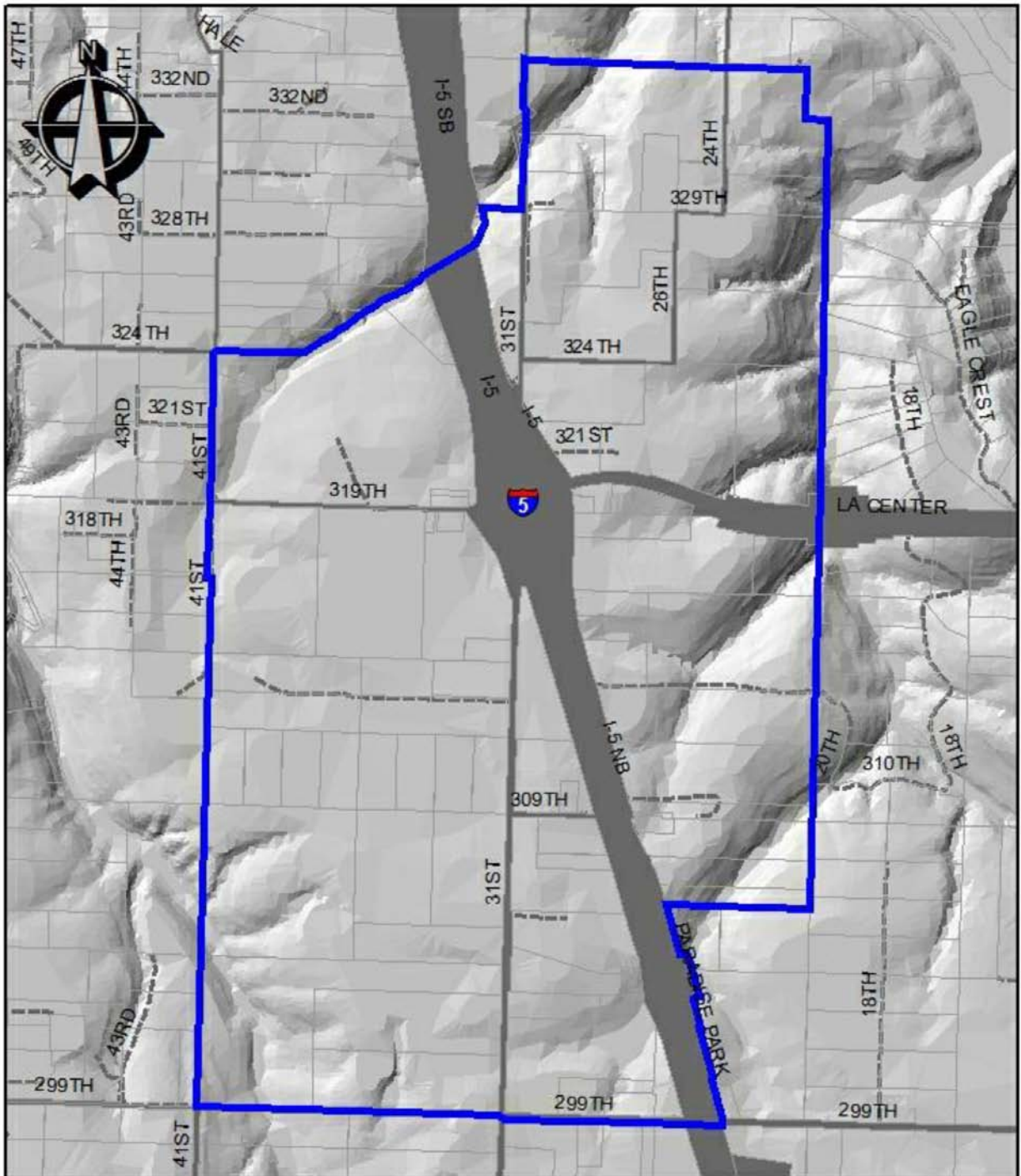
READ MORE

Details on the public participation program can be found in **Appendix J**.

Minutes of the four public workshop/open houses and small group meeting can be found in **Appendix K**.

The Stakeholder Interview Summary Report can be found in **Appendix L**.

Figure 1: Subarea Boundary





CHAPTER 2

POLICIES & ASSUMPTIONS

Land use planning is now heavily regulated in certain counties of Washington state because of past rapid growth. The most significant change brought about by the Washington State Growth Management Act was the requirement that adequate public facilities and services be in place prior to, or concurrent with, new development. In short, this effectively requires that previously 'hidden' costs of development—the need for more schools, roads, traffic signals, etc.—be paid for by those who benefit, instead of the general taxpayer.

WHAT IS THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT (GMA)?

The Washington State Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A) was adopted in 1991 because “uncoordinated and unplanned growth posed a threat to the environment, sustainable economic development, and the quality of life in Washington.”

Rather than centralize planning and decision-making at the state level, the GMA built on Washington's strong traditions of local government control and regional diversity. The GMA:

- established State goals
- set deadlines for compliance

- offered direction on how to prepare local comprehensive plans and regulations
- set forth requirements for early and continuous public participation

Within the framework provided by the mandates of the GMA, local governments have many choices regarding the specific content of comprehensive plans and implementing development regulations.

BRIEFLY

GMA goals guide local jurisdictions in determining their vision for the future and in developing plans and regulations that provide for growth without sacrificing the livability of communities in the future.

The goals of the GMA are to:

- discourage sprawling development
- encourage development in urban areas with adequate public facilities
- encourage economic development throughout the state consistent with comprehensive plans
- encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems
- provide for the protection of property rights
- require that adequate public facilities and services necessary to support development be available when new development is ready for occupancy

Many of these planning goals directly relate to specific planning requirements in the GMA.

- In 1995, a 14th goal regarding shoreline management was added to the GMA.
- A 15th goal, addressing climate change, may be adopted in the near future.

Under the law, La Center may make minor amendments to its comprehensive plan no more frequently than once a year. Major updates, when population projections and urban growth boundaries are established, are restricted to every five to seven years.

COUNTY-WIDE PLANNING POLICIES

In order to achieve the preferred vision of Clark County as a collection of distinct communities surrounded by open space, agriculture, and forest uses, Clark County and each of its cities adopted general framework policies. These process-oriented county-wide planning policies were originally adopted by the County in August 1992, and have been regularly amended.

The policies provide a framework within which the county can bridge the gap between the general land use concepts presented in the Community Framework Plan and the detailed (parcel level) 20-Year Plan required by the State Growth Management Act.

READ MORE

A complete listing of the relevant countywide planning policies, along with pertinent city comprehensive plan policies can be found in **Appendix B**.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS & POLICIES OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The following partial list of comprehensive plan policies specifically addresses development of the I-5 Junction.

LAND USE

- 1.4.1 The La Center Junction, the intersection of the La Center Road and Interstate-5 (I-5), should become an employment area for the benefit of the citizens of La Center and north Clark County. Annexation of the La Center Junction is the primary land use objective of this policy.
- 1.4.2 The City shall consult with Clark County, City of Ridgefield and interested property owners, parties and agencies in the process of developing adequate capital facilities for the Junction.
- 1.4.3 Planning for the I-5 Interchange area should address the following objectives:
 - a) The plan should encompass lands on both sides of I-5 south to NE 299th Street and north to the Lewis River.
 - b) Employment activity at the La Center Junction should be dedicated to Employment Campus and or Light Industrial use with limited commercial activity. Heavy industrial uses are disfavored.
 - c) Preference shall be given to developments which provide jobs, goods or services primarily for the local area.
 - d) Transportation, utility, or other improvements required for initial development at the Junction should be paid for by public and private funds.
 - e) Development at the Junction which may adversely impact the commercial viability and survival of downtown La Center is discouraged.
 - f) Development at the Junction which provides low levels of employment (fewer than 9 employees per acre) shall be discouraged.
 - g) Development at the Junction should be consistent with minimum design standards, including signage which should be limited to 30 feet in height; outdoor storage areas, if any, shall be fully screened from surrounding uses and rights-of-way; and landscaping shall be provided along commercial and industrial property lines, as necessary, to provide a visual buffer of structures from public rights-of-way, including the I-5 freeway.

READ MORE

Annexation

More detailed information on this topic can be found in **Appendix L**.

DEFINED

Employment Campus

Districts intended to provide primarily office and research and development uses in park-like setting emphasizing aesthetics and compatibility.

Light Industrial

Districts are intended to contain uses that will not generate excessive noise, pollution, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation and other nuisance characteristics.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1.7 The City's long term goal is for the La Center Junction to provide an employment area, for the benefit of the citizens of La Center and north Clark County, at the intersection of the La Center Road and Interstate-5 (I-5), hereinafter called the La Center Junction. (See Policy 1.4.)

URBAN GROWTH & ANNEXATION

- 8.3.7 Development of the I-5 Junction and the Timmen Road /La Center Road intersection is a priority for the City of La Center. Development in these areas concurrent with or after annexation shall be undertaken with careful planning to efficiently use available land to best serve La Center and the general north county area.

MUNICIPAL CODE

The following zoning districts are found within the subarea. Uses indicated with an asterisk* deserve additional scrutiny.

ZONING (TITLE 18 & LCMC)

COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL (C-2)

This is a more land-extensive, auto-oriented commercial area intended to provide for the regular shopping and service needs for the community as a whole and adjacent service areas.

Most commercial developments are approved through a 'site plan review' process. Buildings may be up to 60 feet tall. The minimum lot size is 10,000 square feet. Commercial developments must provide screening and buffering when abutting residential districts. Maximum lot coverage is determined by compliance with screening and buffering standards contained in municipal code.

DEFINED

Site Plan Review

A process to review site plans for specific types of development to ensure compliance with all appropriate land development regulations and consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

Examples of currently permissible uses include:

- Lumber and other building materials stores and yards, with only incidental cutting and planting of products sold
- Markets < 15,000 square feet of gross floor area (SF GFA)
- Professional offices < 10,000 SF GFA
- Restaurants
- Single purpose/specialty retailers < 10,000 SF GFA

The following may currently be permitted through a conditional use permit:

- Adult Entertainment
- Drive-through, drive-in, or drive-up facilities
- Freight transportation terminals
- General retailer, 25,000 to 200,000 SF GFA
- Hardware, home repair and supply stores > 100,000 SF GFA
- Hotels/motels
- Motor vehicle dealers, new and used, including auto, truck trailer, boat, recreational vehicles and equipment
- Yard and garden supplies, including nurseries

DEFINED

Conditional Use Permit

A more extensive review of proposed uses that have unique needs or different impacts than those uses commonly allowed outright within a particular zone.

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL / EMPLOYMENT CAMPUS (LI/EC)

It is the city's intent that industrial uses be encouraged as an essential element for a vital economic base for the population of La Center and to provide suitable areas for a variety of industrial uses including manufacturing, wholesale trade and distribution activities. The industries located in this district can be characterized as clean, or not involving heavy industrial or manufacturing activities, and are generally compatible with surrounding uses.

It is the intent of the City to segregate the current LI/EC zoning into separate districts.

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL (LI)

The light industrial districts are intended to contain uses that will not generate excessive noise, pollution, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation and other nuisance characteristics.

Conditional uses are those which may have some nuisance characteristics that may be mitigated and where such uses may be appropriately sited in La Center. Light industrial districts are only intended to be located in areas with relatively level topography, adequate water and sewerage facilities, and access to arterial streets and highways.



Examples of currently permissible uses include:

- Automobile, boat, truck, tractor, motorcycle, recreational vehicle, manufactured home and other vehicle service, rental and leasing, new and/or used
- Cold storage plants, frozen food lockers and ice manufacture
- Commercial recreation facilities (enclosed only)
- Distribution facilities (without a square footage cap)*
- Machine shops
- Manufacturing, fabrication, assembling, processing, canning, packaging, compounding, storage and treatment activities

The following may currently be permitted through a conditional use permit:

- Bulk gasoline storage and fuel oil distributors
- Churches, cemeteries, and customary accessory buildings and uses subject to municipal code.*

EMPLOYMENT CAMPUS (EC)

Employment campus districts are intended to provide primarily office and research and development uses in park-like setting emphasizing aesthetics and compatibility. This district includes opportunities for flex office space and areas that emphasize office uses over manufacturing uses.

Examples of currently permissible uses include:

- Day care centers
- Offices
- Printing, publishing, bookbinding and blueprinting establishments





Timmen Road Mixed-Use Area

- Research and scientific laboratories
- Restaurants*
- Services, business, health, miscellaneous and personal
- Warehouses, wholesale and storage establishments, mail order houses and distribution facilities ≤ 50,000 SF GFA

The following may currently be permitted through a conditional use permit:

- Retail trade establishments ≤ 15,000 SF GFA
- Churches, cemeteries, and customary accessory buildings and uses subject to municipal code.*

MIXED USE (MX)

This district is currently tailored to the Timmen Road Mixed-Use District. The district is intended to provide the community with a mix of mutually-supporting retail, service, office and medium or high density residential uses. Developments typically include a mix of residential, office and commercial uses within a single structure. The residential component is required to provide an average of 8 to 18 dwelling units per acre. Buildings may be up to 60 feet tall, excluding architectural features such as steeples, chimneys, flagpoles, etc.

Examples of currently permissible uses include:

- General services such as branch banks, printing, professional offices, and outpatient clinics
- Markets < 35,000 SF GFA
- Medium density residential (Integrated multi-family/commercial or mixed use structures, townhouse, or condominiums, from 8 to 18 residential units per net acre)
- Nursery schools and daycare facilities
- Single-family detached and single-family attached
- Personal services such as laundries, barbers and beauty shops

The following may currently be permitted through a conditional use permit:

- Markets- Greater than 35,000 square feet of gross floor area
- Retail sales > 5,000 SF GFA*
- Sanitaria, convalescent and rest homes
- Vocational schools
- Yard and garden supplies, including nurseries*



MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (MDR-16)

This zoning district is intended to provide for higher density residential development opportunities with a minimum density of 8 to 16 dwelling units per net acre. It also satisfies Growth Management Act requirements for diversity in housing stock.

Allowable products include attached single-family dwellings (such as

townhouse, duplexes, and triplexes) and detached multi-family dwellings such as apartments or condominiums. Small lot detached single-family residences (known locally as 'patio' homes) are also permitted within this district.

LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (LDR-7.5)

This is the City's typical single-family detached housing with a minimum allowable density of 4 dwelling units per acre. Minimum lot size is 7,500 square feet.

TRANSPORTATION STANDARDS (TITLE 12, LCMC)

STREETS

In general, developers must provide all streets internal to a development and 'half' of those streets on which the development fronts. In special cases, developers must also improve off-site streets if those streets are substandard. Neighborhood streets are typically 32 to 36 feet wide. Cross circulation—intersections with other local streets—must be provided every 800 feet.



ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Access management is a practice of improving the design and placement of driveways and medians along a publicly funded arterial street. The goal is to limit traffic conflicts, improve safety, and preserve the street's capacity.

TRAFFIC CALMING

Traffic calming seeks to reduce excessive vehicle speeds, improve safety, and enhance the quality of life within an area. The most efficient and cost-effective traffic calming measures are incorporated into the original design of neighborhood streets. Most common 32 to 36 feet wide street designs are only effective when on-street parking is commonplace. If the parking areas are not used, the effective travel lane widths equal that of freeway lanes—often with commensurate speeds. The City currently has a limited traffic calming program.

PARKING

The City currently requires a minimum number of parking spaces with all new developments. This is typical for a small city such as La Center. However, as urban areas become denser, jurisdictions typically flip this requirement and impose parking maximums.

Parking in downtown La Center is perceived to be relatively scarce even though there are approximately 700 off-street parking spaces available. Over half of this supply is associated with the City's four non-tribal card rooms. The City is currently investigating how to increase on-street parking.

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

The city currently has limited on-street bicycle lanes, but bicycle lanes are planned for all arterial streets.

There are numerous streets in the downtown area without sidewalks. The City is retrofitting some existing sidewalks with ADA ramps at intersections. All new urban streets are required to have sidewalks on both sides--except

BRIEFLY

Traffic Calming Goals

Improve neighborhood livability.

Create safe and attractive streets for residents, pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit users.

Reduce the negative effects of motorized vehicles on the environment.

Promote pedestrian, bicycle, and transit use.



where terrain is particularly challenging.

The City continues the practice of acquiring parks and trails as development occurs. The current parks master plan calls for some 22 miles of trails throughout the community.



CHAPTER 3

EXISTING CONDITIONS

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE LAND AT THE JUNCTION?

The study area includes all four quadrants of the Milepost 16 interchange of Interstate 5 as adopted by Clark County in September, 2007. The subarea also includes 120 acres west of I-5, between the original urban growth boundary and NW 299th Street. This area is to be included in La Center's urban growth area to offset the loss of 152 acres should the Cowlitz Indian Tribe succeeds in its bid to create a new reservation.

In May, 2008, the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board removed three of the four quadrants from La Center's urban growth area because it found Clark County erred in de-designating resource lands. That decision is under appeal. Because of precedent in *City of Arlington v. CPSGMHB*, 164 Wn.2d 768, 193 P.3d 1077 (2008), the City believes it will ultimately prevail. We have therefore included the entirety of the original urban growth area.

LAND USE CHARACTERISTICS

Including publicly owned rights-of-way, there are 939 acres within the subarea. There are 82 privately held parcels within the subarea totaling 840 acres. Approximately 233 people live within the subarea.

Table 1: 2009 Land Uses

Land Use	Number	Acres	Dwelling Units
Convenience Store - w/ pumps & tanks	1	4.22	0
Distribution warehouse	1	28.02	0
Light Manufacturing Building	3	5.93	0
Mobile home converted to real property	5	24.32	5
One or more mobile homes not affixed to the land	1	2.15	1
Single family residence on commercial land	1	4.34	1
Single family unit not sharing structure with other uses	29	365.81	29
Small retail building (< 10,000 SF)	3	2.37	0
Storage Warehouse	1	6.84	0
Unused land timbered	1	40.00	0
Unused or Vacant Land - No improvements	36	358.05	0
Totals	82	842.05	36

Table 2: Net Acreage (Preferred Alternative)

Category	Acres
Gross Area	939.00
Public Rights-of-way	230.72
Critical Areas	287.03
Separate Hydric Soils (assumed as Cat IV wetlands)	55.42
Net Acres	365.83

BRIEFLY

Critical Areas discussed in this section include:

- Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas
- Riparian Habitat
- Endangered or Threatened Species Habitat
- Priority Habitat & Species Areas
- Local Habitat Areas
- Frequently Flooded Areas
- Severe Erosion Hazard Areas
- Landslide Hazard Areas
- Seismic Hazard Areas
- Slopes With Gradients of 25 Percent or Greater
- Wetlands

Total assessed property value is \$19.8 million, even though the total sale price is listed at nearly \$47.0 million. The bulk of this is some \$38.6 million paid by Salishan-Mohegan, LLC, for 152 acres (2000 through 2006).

CRITICAL AREAS

Critical areas are valuable and fragile natural resources with significant development constraints that, in their natural state, provide many valuable social and ecological functions. The attendant buffers of critical areas are essential to the maintenance and protection of the sensitive land, its functions and values. The loss of social and ecological functions provided by critical areas, especially wetlands, riparian zones and fish and wildlife habitat, is considered detrimental to public welfare.

Conservation of critical areas has associated natural resource benefits, including:

- improved air and water quality
- maintenance of fish and wildlife habitat
- decreased erosion and sedimentation to streams
- absorption of pollutants
- preservation of rare plant and animal species

RCW 36.70A.170-.172 requires the designation and protection of critical areas using 'best available science.' In certain circumstances, La Center will

allow the transfer of density from critical areas in exchange for enhanced protections.

Critical areas include:

CRITICAL AQUIFER RECHARGE AREAS

Typically co-located with public drinking water sources, these lands are susceptible and/or vulnerability to discharges of contaminants from land use activities.

RIPARIAN HABITAT

Riparian habitat areas are those areas immediately adjacent to waterways that contain elements of both aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems that mutually influence each other. Although riparian areas comprise only a small portion of the surface landscape, approximately 90 percent of Washington's land-based vertebrate species prefer, or are dependent upon, riparian habitat for essential life functions. Riparian habitat areas may include frequently flooded areas, critical recharge areas and wetlands.

ENDANGERED OR THREATENED SPECIES HABITAT

Areas that have a primary association with federally listed endangered or threatened species of fish or wildlife and which if altered may reduce the likelihood that the species will maintain and reproduce over the long term. Many of these sites have been identified and mapped by the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW). Development of such lands shall be controlled in accordance with a site specific fish and wildlife management plan consistent with the WDFW's priority habitats and species management recommendations and prepared by a qualified consultant.



PRIORITY HABITAT & SPECIES (PHS) AREAS

Areas within which state-listed monitor or candidate species or federally listed candidate species have a primary association, and which if altered may reduce the likelihood that the species will maintain and reproduce over the long term.

LOCAL HABITAT AREAS

Habitats of local importance include a seasonal range or habitat element with which a given species has a primary association, and which, if altered, may reduce the likelihood that the species will maintain and reproduce over the long-term. These might include areas of high relative density or species richness, breeding habitat, winter range, and movement corridors. These might also include habitats that are of limited availability or high vulnerability to alteration, such as cliffs, talus, and wetlands. The city or private citizens may nominate areas for consideration as local habitat areas and for inclusion on the critical areas map. The City does not currently have Local Habitat Areas.

FREQUENTLY FLOODED AREAS

Areas within, or adjacent to, the 100-year floodplain identified on federal flood insurance study (FIRM) maps. Two distinct areas are recognized within the Flood Plain (FP) district: the floodway area, and the floodway fringe area. The

DEFINED

Floodway

The channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height.

floodway is delineated on Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood insurance rate maps. The “floodway fringe” lies between the boundary of the floodway and the limits of the 100-year floodplain.

SEVERE EROSION HAZARD AREAS

Erosion hazard areas are those areas containing soils that may experience severe to very severe erosion, according to the United States Department of Agriculture’s Soil Conservation Service.

LANDSLIDE HAZARD AREAS

Landslide hazard areas are areas potentially subject to risk of mass movement due to a combination of geologic, topographic, and hydrologic factors.

SEISMIC HAZARD AREAS

Seismic hazard areas are areas subject to severe risk of damage as a result of earthquake induced ground shaking, slope failure, settlement, or soil liquefaction.

DEFINED

Floodway Fringe

The Floodway Fringe is the area that would be inundated during a 100-year flood. The intent is to require special site planning and construction standards in this area to minimize the threats to personal safety and damage to property caused by flooding.

SLOPES WITH GRADIENTS OF 25 PERCENT OR GREATER

Lands with slopes of 25 percent or greater are considered unbuildable and development is not allowed within La Center. Slopes between 15 percent and 25 percent are generally considered buildable. However, the city may require substantial evidence that such slopes are geologically stable if there is evidence that similarly situated slopes have demonstrated substantial instability in the past.

WETLANDS

Wetlands constitute important natural resources which provide significant environmental functions including:

- control of flood waters
- maintenance of summer stream flows
- filtration of pollutants
- recharge of ground water
- provision of significant habitat areas for fish and wildlife

Uncontrolled urban-density development in and adjacent to wetlands can eliminate or significantly reduce the ability of wetlands to provide these important functions, thereby detrimentally affecting public health, safety, and general welfare.

OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES

SHORELINE MANAGEMENT ACT

Adopted by the public in a 1972 referendum, the act intends “to prevent the inherent harm in an uncoordinated and piecemeal development of the state’s shorelines.” The SMA has three broad policies:

- Encourage water-dependent uses: “uses shall be preferred which are consistent with control of pollution and prevention of damage to the

READ MORE

Extensive information on the state’s **Shoreline Management Act** can be found at:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/sma/>

natural environment, or are unique to or dependent upon use of the states' shorelines..."

- Protect shoreline natural resources, including "...the land and its vegetation and wildlife, and the water of the state and their aquatic life..."
- Promote public access: "the public's opportunity to enjoy the physical and aesthetic qualities of natural shorelines of the state shall be preserved to the greatest extent feasible consistent with the overall best interest of the state and the people generally."

The East Fork of the Lewis River is a regulated "Shoreline of the State" but lies just outside the subarea.

The city is currently updating its Shoreline Master Program and anticipates state approval in 2012.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

There are no listed historic sites within the study area. Although several structures are of an eligible age, all have been significantly altered. The majority of land within the subarea has a moderate to high probability of containing archeological artifacts.

ZONING

Zoning within the subarea includes:

LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

(LDR-7.5) - This district provides for predominantly single-family residential development with densities of four dwelling units per gross acre. In addition, public facilities, churches, institutions and other special uses may be allowed in this designation if certain conditions are met. The district allows slightly higher densities if on-site critical areas receive additional protections.



MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

(MDR-16) - This district provides land for single family attached housing, patio homes, garden apartments, and other "multi-family" developments ranging from 8 to 16 dwelling units per gross acre. Public facilities and institutions are allowed under certain conditions.

MIXED USE

(MX) - This district is intended to provide the community with a mix of compatible urban retail service, office, and residential uses. Pedestrian and transit orientation shall be accomplished through design requirements governing such elements as scale, bulk, street orientation, landscaping, and parking.

COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL

(C-2) – This zoning district is intended to serve a broader semi-regional population of 10,000 to 30,000. The *La Center Urban Area Comprehensive Plan* strongly discourages "strip commercial" development because it promotes excessive vehicular traffic. This traffic greatly reduces the capacity of the abutting publicly-funded streets and increases the potential number of

READ MORE

More information about the **La Center Urban Area Comprehensive Plan** can be found on the "City Planner" page of the City of La Center web site.

www.ci.lacenter.wa.us

traffic accidents. The linear nature of these developments, the number of driveways crossing sidewalks and the lack of alternative cross-traffic or pedestrian circulation make these areas convenient and accessible only to automobile traffic.

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL

(LI) zoning district is intended for light manufacturing, warehousing and other land uses. Services and uses which support industrial uses are allowed in these areas but limited in size and location to serve workers within the light industrial area. Industrial lands are located in areas of compatible land uses and in areas with arterial access to the regional transportation network.

EMPLOYMENT CAMPUS

(EC) zoning district is intended to provide the community with compatible offices and attractive new non-polluting industries. Such areas are designated for more intensive job-related land uses that pay family wages, such as professional offices, or research and technology related industries located in a campus like setting.

URBAN PUBLIC FACILITY

(UP) - This district includes public parks, playgrounds, open spaces, schools, electrical substations, natural resource preservation or enhancement, and similar uses subject to the applicable provisions of the La Center Municipal Code.

The following table details the current zoning coverage of the subarea. Net developable acreages are determined by subtracting critical areas from gross (total) acres.

Table 3: Zoning (Preferred Alternative)

Zoning	Net Acres
Low Density Residential (LDR-7.5)	2.07
Medium Density Residential (MDR-16)	16.90
Mixed Use (MX)	11.05
Community Commercial (C-2)	42.02
Industrial (LI/EC)	293.79
	365.83

READ MORE

The **La Center Municipal Code** can be accessed from the “City Planner” page of the City of La Center web site.

www.ci.lacenter.wa.us

WHAT PUBLIC FACILITIES ARE AT THE JUNCTION?

TRANSPORTATION

STREETS



Interstate Highway System – The nation’s freeways are a network of limited-access highways in the United States that was the largest public works project in history. They are owned, built, and operated by the states. The distribution of virtually all goods and services involves Interstate Highways at some point. Residents of American cities commonly use urban Interstates to travel to their places of work. Examples include:

- Interstate 5

Arterials / Collectors – Arterial roads are roads that predominantly carry through-traffic between suburbs or to a region’s central city. Arterials are generally state highways and major roads within the county. Collector roads collect and distribute through-traffic between the arterial network and local roads. Both of these facilities are publicly funded. Examples include:

- NW 31st Avenue (NW 299th Street to NW 319th Street)
- NW 319th Street / La Center Road (NW 31st Avenue to eastern subarea limits)

Local Streets - These are either public or private roads that have no significant through-traffic function and principally provide property access. Maintenance and operations of private roads are the responsibility of private property owners. Examples of local streets include:

- NW Paradise Park Road
- NW 319th Street (NW 31st Avenue to western subarea limits)
- NW 299th Street



PARKING MANAGEMENT

The City currently requires a minimum number of parking spaces with all new developments. This will likely remain appropriate for the subarea because it is expected to develop in a more auto-oriented manner than downtown La Center.

Table 4: Typical Off-Street Parking Requirements

Use	Minimum Number Of Parking Spaces
Eating and/or drinking establishments	1 per 200 square feet
Most commercial establishments	1 per 400 SF
Industrial or manufacturing	1 per 500 SF
Commercial storage or warehousing	1 per 1,000 SF

ACCESS MANAGEMENT

There are currently no access management regulations within the City of La Center.

TRANSIT SERVICES

There is currently no transit service to the subarea. C-TRAN provides Dial-a-Ride service to La Center thrice daily. Residents may call ahead and receive ‘to-the-door’ service in addition to meeting transit vehicles at normal stops. The City provides a 131-space park & ride facility across from Community Park and along NE Lockwood Creek Road. In the evenings, this facility also doubles as parking for the adjacent park and high school athletic events.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

C-Tran

(360) 696-4494

www.c-tran.com

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

There are no bicycle or pedestrian facilities currently in the subarea.

POTABLE WATER

The subarea is within the Clark Public Utilities service area although the subarea does not currently have customers within the subarea.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Clark Public Utilities

(360) 992-3000

www.clarkpublicutilities.com

STORMWATER

There are no public stormwater facilities within the subarea.

WASTEWATER

The area is not currently served by sewer. The City of La Center operates and maintains both conveyance and treatment systems for its residents. A significant upgrade to the existing treatment facility is underway with a conversion to newer membrane bio-reactor (MBR) technology.

PARKS, TRAILS & OPEN SPACES

There are no public parks, trails or open space within the subarea.

SCHOOLS



Public education is provided by Ridgefield School District No. 122. The district operates two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school for about 2,100 students. Over the next six years, the district is proposing a \$154 million capital facilities program to:

- construct a new high school
- convert the existing high school to a middle school
- convert the existing middle school to an elementary school
- improve and expand an existing elementary school
- secure future school sites

FOR MORE INFORMATION

360-619-1301

www.ridge.k12.wa.us

The La Center School District No. 101 recently sought a change in the shared boundary with the Ridgefield School District to better balance local tax revenues for the school districts. The net impact would be that tax revenues from the subarea would go to La Center versus Ridgefield schools. Although the regional Educational Service District ultimately denied the request, the resulting tax inequity will likely remain a significant issue.

WHAT PUBLIC SERVICES ARE PROVIDED TO THE JUNCTION?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Clark County Fire & Rescue

(360) 263-5500

www.clarkfr.org

Clark County Fire Marshal

(360) 397-2186

Clark County Sheriff's Office

(360) 397-2295

FIRE PROTECTION

Fire Districts 11 and 12 recently consolidated to form Clark County Fire & Rescue which serves the La Center and Ridgefield areas. This agency provides review services for residential developments. Clark County Fire Marshal provides review services for non-residential developments.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Clark County Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement services beyond our city limits. Regional or shared law enforcement and correction facilities provided by the county include the main jail, the Jail Work Center, the Juvenile Detention Center, the Clark-Skamania Drug Task Force, the 911 Emergency Center (CRESA), and a leased facility for the Child Abuse

Intervention Center (CAIC). The study area is located within the Clark County Sheriff's West Precinct.

The La Center Police Department provides limited response beyond city limits on an as-available basis.

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

Clark County Public Health works to:

- Prevent disease and injury
- Promote healthier choices
- Protect food, water and air
- Prepare for emergencies

Public Health operates "behind the scenes". While not as visible as law enforcement or fire fighting, they are just as vital to the safety and well being of the community. For example, Public Health responds to outbreaks of diseases and controls their spread to prevent further illness. Public Health inspects restaurants to ensure the food you eat is safe. Public Health monitors the quality of vaccines used to immunize you and your family. And Public Health enforces regulations to make sure septic systems operate properly and pose no threat to human health.

There has recently been an increasing awareness of the impacts of infrastructure planning on public health. Local land use laws can preempt or encourage farmers' markets and neighborhood grocery stores, or promote sidewalks, parks and other environmental components that encourage physical activity.

HIGHER EDUCATION

CLARK COLLEGE

Clark College is a community college providing two-year transfer degree studies, technical training and basic skills classes to nearly 13,000 full-time and part-time students each quarter. It is the second largest college in the Washington State system of 34 community and technical colleges.

The main campus is located on 101 acres in Vancouver's historic Central Park just east of the Interstate 5 freeway and north of the Columbia River and Fort Vancouver Historic Reserve. Classes are also offered at Clark College at Washington State University Vancouver in Salmon Creek and Clark College at Town Plaza, located two miles east of the main campus.

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY – VANCOUVER

Washington State University began offering courses in Southwest Washington in 1983 as part of the Southwest Washington Joint Center for Education. In 1989, the University formally established Washington State University Vancouver as a branch campus of the state's land-grant institution. The Salmon Creek campus opened in 1996. In the fall of 2006, WSU-V admitted freshmen and sophomores for the first time and began offering lower-division courses.

Locally, the university offers 16 Bachelor's degrees, 9 Master's degrees, 1 Doctorate degree, and more than 35 fields of study. There are currently about 2,800 enrolled students.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Clark County Public Health

(360) 397-8000

www.clark.wa.gov/public-health

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Clark College

(360) 699-6398

www.clark.edu

WSU - Vancouver

(360) 546-WSUV

www.vancouver.wsu.edu

OTHER GOVERNMENT SERVICES

LIBRARY

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Fort Vancouver
Regional Library

www.fvrl.org

Port of Ridgefield

360.887.3873

www.portridgefield.org

The Fort Vancouver Regional Library District (FVRLD) serves an area of approximately 4,200 square miles and nearly 410,000 people in four counties. The District provides a total of 70,405 square feet of library space in eight branches serving the county. Regional library service to the planning area is provided through the La Center Community Library, located at 1411 East Lockwood Creek Road, La Center, and the Ridgefield Community Library, located at 210 North Main Avenue, Ridgefield.

PORT OF RIDGEFIELD

The entirety of the subarea falls within the Port of Ridgefield's boundaries. The port's primary purpose is to bring quality jobs, economic diversity and prosperity to its district. The district covers approximately 57 square miles and is governed by three port commissioners elected to 6-year terms. The assessed property value within the district totaled approximately \$1.2 billion in 2008 with a property tax levy rate of 16¢ per \$1,000 of assessed property value (e.g., \$32 on property assessed at \$200,000).

OTHER UTILITIES

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Northwest Natural Gas

www.nwnatural.com

ELECTRICITY

Electricity is provided by Clark Public Utilities.

NATURAL GAS

Natural gas is provided by Northwest Natural Gas.

HAZARDOUS PIPELINE (NATURAL GAS)

Williams Northwest Pipeline operates a large-diameter high-pressure natural gas pipeline which bisects the La Center urban area. This pipeline corridor lies immediately northeast of the study area. A second parallel pipeline lies dormant and is considered obsolete. Although the probability of a catastrophic failure of the pipeline is very low, the potential dangers are significant. Because of that, the City adopted regulations prohibiting high-occupancy uses within 250 feet of the pipeline and limits their development within 641 feet.

READ MORE

A **Hazardous Pipeline** information sheet can be found in **Appendix L**

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Telecommunication infrastructure comes in three physical forms: telephone lines, cable lines, and telecommunications (wireless) towers.

Telephone lines can double as data lines. Cable lines may also double as data lines with a significant boost in bandwidth. The subarea is not currently served with wireless local area networks (Wi-Fi or wireless internet) although there is commercial 3G access available to subscribers. Figure 5 displays current facilities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Waste Connections Inc.

www.wasteconnections.com

Clark County

www.clark.wa.gov/recycle

WASTE / RECYCLING

Waste Connections Inc. provides waste collection and recycling services throughout the subarea under contract with Clark County.

Figure 2: Current Land Uses

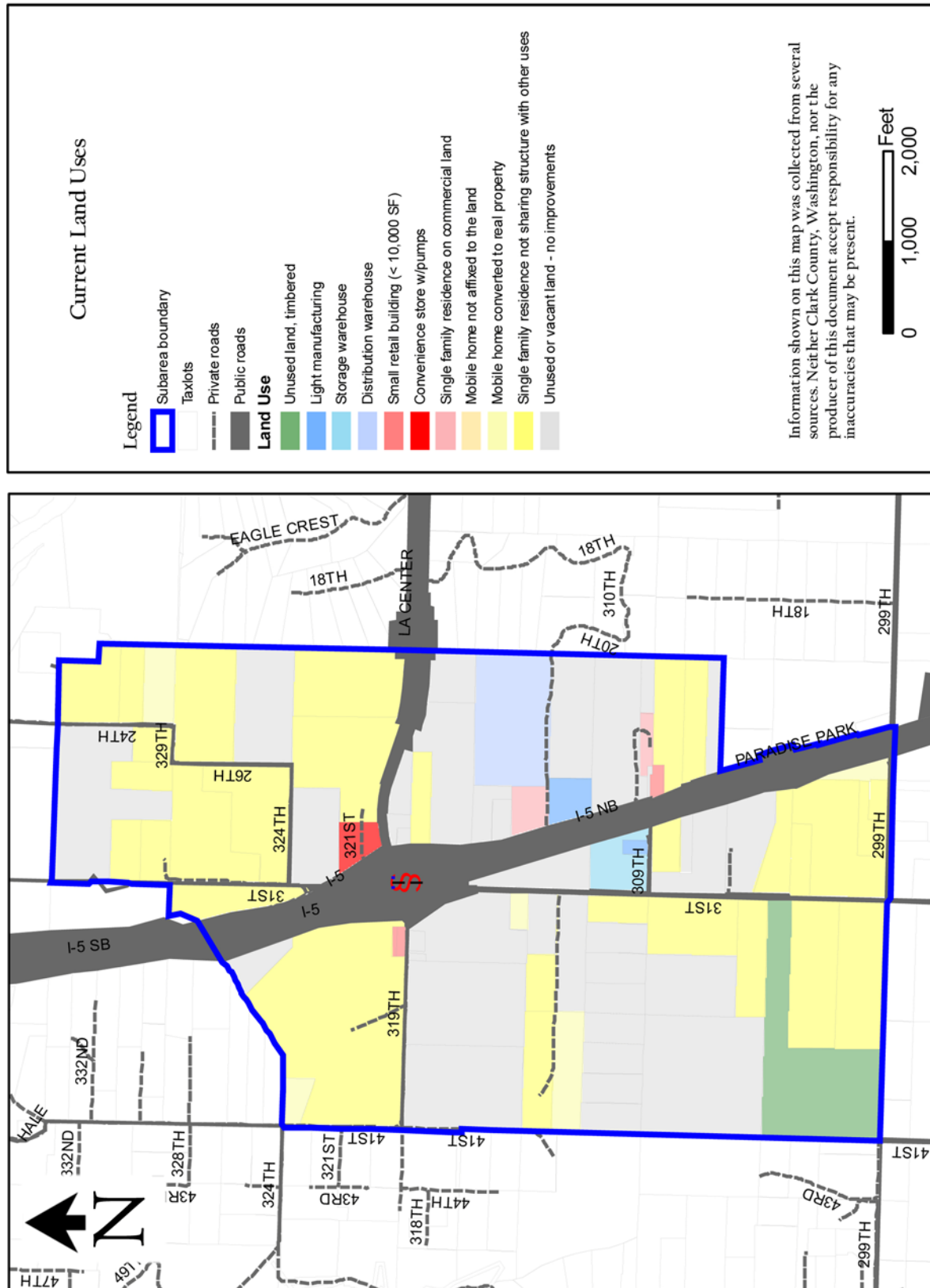


Figure 3: Critical Areas

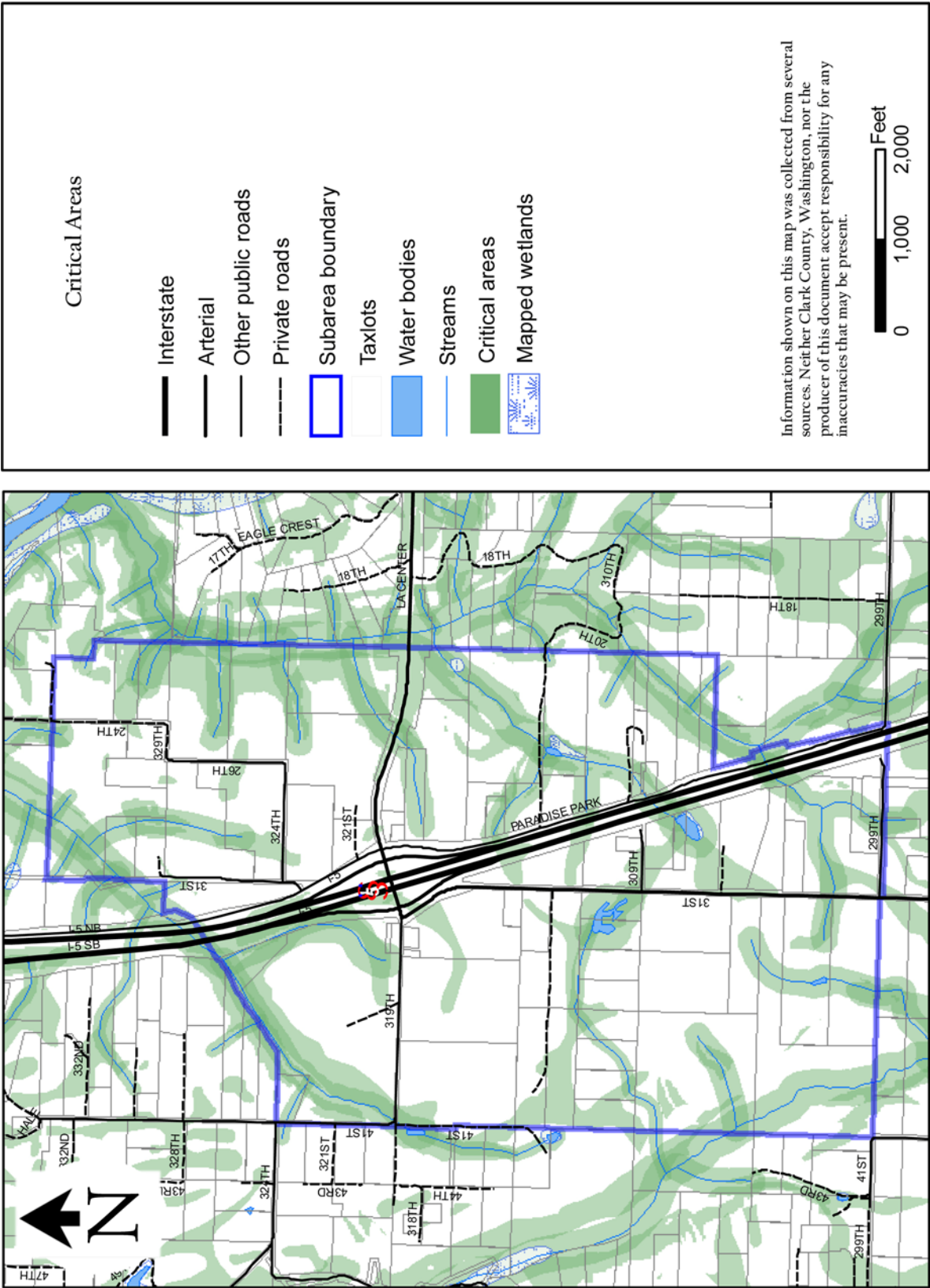
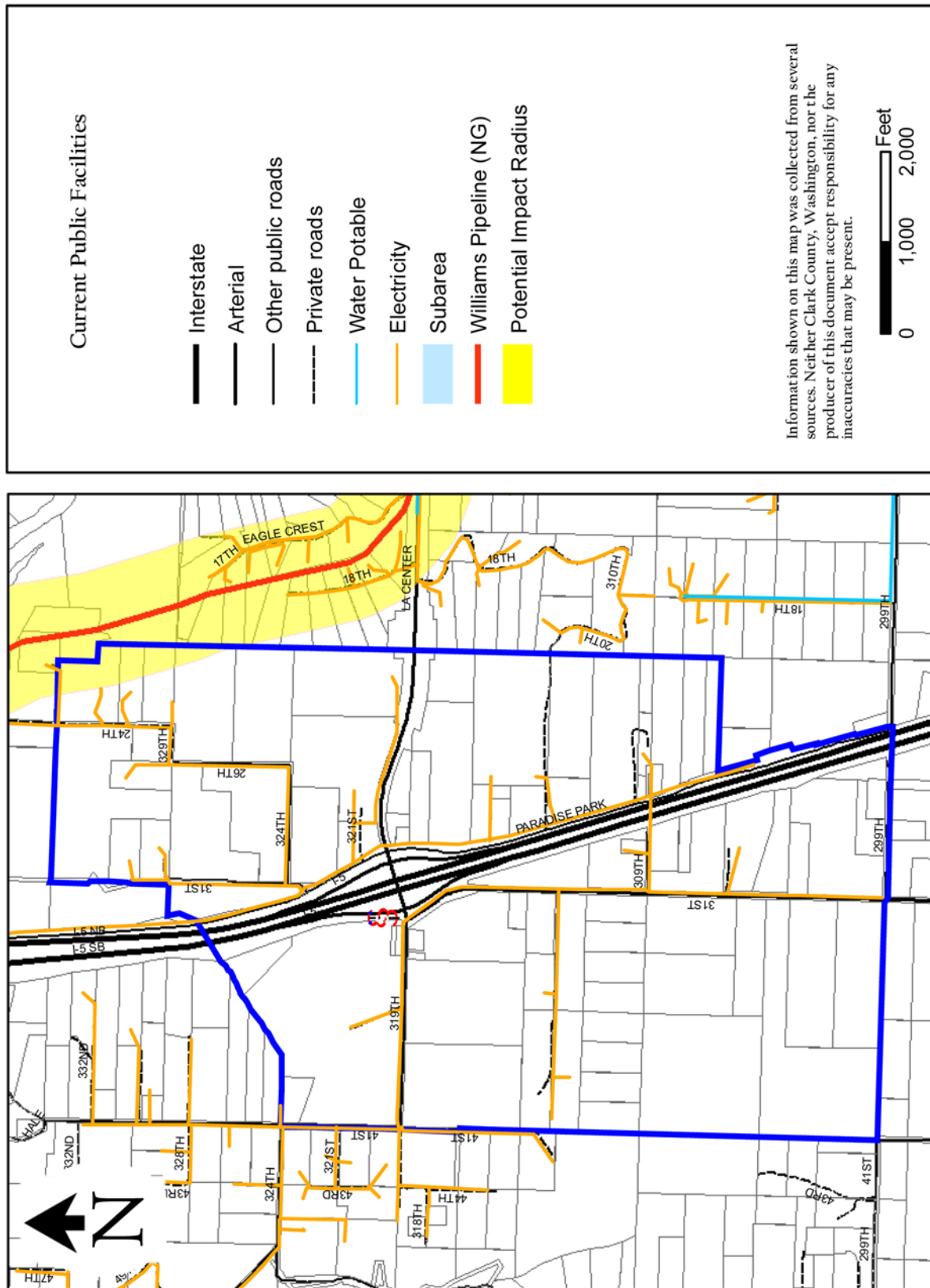


Figure 4: Current Public Facilities



Special Districts



Information shown on this map was collected from several sources. Neither Clark County, Washington, nor the producer of this document accept responsibility for any inaccuracies that may be present.

A vertical scale bar with a black line. To the left of the line are the numbers 0, 2,500, and 5,000. To the right of the line is the word Feet.



CHAPTER 4

PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT

WHAT ABOUT THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STUDY?

The *Economic Development Strategic Action Study for La Center, WA* (2008) provided the city with an overview of its economic condition, what it could grow into, and how to make a diverse economic engine a reality. The study identified current and proposed industrial clusters—groups of similar businesses—which are critical to a robust local economy.

The development of competitive clusters is one of the key generators of regional wealth. A cluster develops when businesses in interrelated industries choose to locate in close proximity to take advantage of a region's inherent advantages. These businesses then become interdependent on each other, enhance their operating environments, and ultimately become more competitive on the global landscape. When this happens, these businesses become the experts in their field. They become more profitable, grow faster, and pay higher wages.

CURRENT CLUSTERS

The current local economy is highly dependent upon one industrial cluster—non-tribal card rooms.

HOTELS & ENTERTAINMENT

“Hotels & Entertainment”, which includes card rooms and restaurants, is the most concentrated industry in La Center, with fourteen times the employment

READ MORE

Economic Development Strategy Action Study (2008)

A complete copy of the study can be found in **Appendix G**.

DEFINED

Clusters

A cluster is concentration of interconnected businesses operating in close proximity. They generally increase the productivity with which companies can compete, nationally and globally.

concentration of the U.S. average. In total, 11 businesses with more than 700 employees comprise this important cluster, which serves as the foundation for the community's tax base.

AGRICULTURE

La Center is home to a number of small farms and agriculturally related businesses, resulting in a cluster 2.69 times as large as the national average. Given La Center's small size and still predominantly rural character, a strong agricultural cluster is to be expected.



ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES

Energy & Natural Resources employment in La Center is more than four times as concentrated as the U.S. as a whole. However, the industry in La Center is comprised of only two establishments totaling 30 employees, insufficient to classify it as a legitimate cluster despite its high ratio.

COMMUNICATION SERVICES

La Center's Communication Services industry – which includes two businesses and 27 employees – is not adequately large and integrated enough to constitute a true cluster.

PROPOSED CLUSTERS

Given localized and national conditions, the economic development plan recommended targeting four industrial clusters for future growth:

RETAIL

Retail districts comprise about 10% of most urban areas in the U.S. Sales tax revenues generated by these areas are considerable—but so is the traffic.

QUOTABLE

“The goal of developing this (10% retail) cluster within La Center is to provide the quality of life amenities that are important to build a healthy community and to attract the necessary workforce required by the other target industries.”

The goal of developing this target cluster within La Center is to provide the quality of life amenities that are important to build a healthy community and to attract the necessary workforce required by the other targeted industries. In addition, establishing a strong retail sector has a positive impact on the growth of tourism in the region, which provides an injection of outside dollars. Finally, retail is an important contributor to the tax base of many communities, and thus a key contributor to the provision of City services.

Smaller retail stores frequently cluster together to form a destination area. These smaller stores are typically less than 20,000 square feet but can be as large as 50,000 square feet. Boutique retail stores fall within this retail class as do common chains such as McDonalds, Kinkos, and Starbucks. Typically costing less than \$1 million to open, these shops provide a small but stable source of income.

“Big box” retail stores often serve as sales tax anchors for rural communities. While property tax for a \$20 million store like Walmart may only amount to \$25,000, the average Walmart has \$54 million in sales per year. This provides a substantial boost to a smaller town or city tax base, allowing more flexibility in economic development spending.

MATERIAL SUPPLIES

The material supplies industry consists of producers of wood, paper, concrete, and fabricated metal products and other suppliers of the building materials and consumer goods industries. Companies in this sector manufacture a wide range of products—from plywood panels, to steel pipe, to tools, to wallpaper—and distribute them to wholesalers, retailers, home and hardware stores or sell directly to contractors. Also included in this industry are sawmills, lumber companies, and others that provide the raw materials that go into the manufacture of finished products



Most material supply operations are relatively small, with an average of 30 employees and less than 25,000 square feet of industrial space. Although larger operations have sales reaching \$13 or \$14 million a year, the more typical material supplies company will not rise above \$6 million. A typical material supplies company could be expected to generate approximately \$100,000 in sales tax revenue per year, excluding additional tax revenue from localized spending by the company and its employees.

The economic development plan suggested that material supplies should be the largest sector in the subarea.

LOGISTICS & DISTRIBUTION

This cluster is often referred to as “low-hanging fruit” because of the ease with which these businesses can be attracted. However, they are land-extensive and job-poor. La Center should focus on recruiting logistics and operations enterprises versus distribution centers as the latter can consume vast amounts of acreage for a minimal number of jobs and very little tax revenue. Mid-sized warehouses typically occupy 750,000 square feet, but it is not unusual to occupy as much as 1.5 million square feet. Despite its small size, Ridgefield has some 34 businesses engaged in trucking and other aspects of logistics and distribution, making it a legitimately concentrated industry.



This cluster should be limited to no more than 25% of the subarea.

ELECTRONICS

Electronics producers vary greatly in size. While most average 50 employees, many large firms, (e.g., AMD, Intel, LG, etc.) have significant operations employing over 1,000 people. This cluster has over 10,000 employees across 435 businesses in the Portland Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), and is heavily weighted with manufacturers of audio and video equipment, circuit boards, electronic components, and measuring instruments.



With its proximity to Portland and high quality of life, it is not unrealistic to expect La Center to attract a small to mid-sized electronics firm in the mid to long term, employing between 50 and 100 employees, with sales in the tens of millions annually.

OTHER DESIRED USES

- Higher education such as a small college or a university satellite campus.
- Medical service(s).

BRIEFLY**Carcieri v. Salazar
(USSC 07-526)**

This US Supreme Court case declared that a tribe may receive benefits under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 if the tribe was under federal jurisdiction (or should have been) when the act was passed.

Congress is expected to clarify the Act's language shortly.

WHAT LAND USE ALTERNATIVES WERE CONSIDERED?

COWLITZ INDIAN TRIBE

The most significant issue at the I-5 Junction—and within La Center's urban area—is whether the federal government will take 152 acres into trust for the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. Removal of the land from the jurisdiction of Clark County or La Center would replace land use, zoning, and planning priorities with those of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe—a sovereign nation. If approved, the Tribe will likely construct a one million square foot casino/hotel resort in the subarea's northwest quadrant, estimated to cost about \$500 million.

The City has declined to negotiate mitigation with the tribe because this is viewed as tacit approval of the project. Without an agreement, federal approval would also eradicate any potential city tax revenues arising from the property.

This study reviews impacts with and without the Cowlitz Indian Tribe project.

ALTERNATIVE X

This alternative consists of the currently adopted comprehensive plan land-use designations and zoning. This schema was developed during the process leading up to the 2007 Comprehensive Plan update.

Table 5: Zoning (Acres)

	Alternative X		Alternative Y	
	Gross	Net	Gross	Net
Low Density Residential (LDR-7.5)	9.06	2.07	9.06	2.07
Medium Density Residential (MDR-16)	38.37	10.97	38.37	16.90
Mixed Use (MX)	46.89	19.58	46.89	11.05
Community Commercial (C-2)	88.86	42.02	88.86	42.02
Industrial (LI/EC)	658.87	291.90	658.87	293.79
Totals	842.05	366.54	842.05	365.83
Jobs		3,728		3,668
Households		299		338

READ MORE

Summaries of all project open houses and workshops can be found in **Appendix K**.

ALTERNATIVE Y

During the May 6, 2009, Open House, it was requested that the city explore an alternative approach to zoning in the northeast quadrant. Another, more focused public workshop was held May 19 to develop this alternative approach. This option differs from Alternative X only in the northeast quadrant of the junction.

In brief, this alternative reduces the Mixed Use district and shifts it northward to abut an enlarged Multi-Family zone. This provides an area of industrial/employment campus zoning straddling the north-south collector and avoids industrial truck traffic within the residential area.

COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

The impacts of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe project are of such significance that they warranted a separate analysis. A federal environmental impact statement has been developed by the Tribe's representatives.

Alternative Y could be expected to result in about 60 fewer jobs and an additional 39 households than Alternative X.

READ MORE

The **Cowlitz Tribe Environmental Impact Statement** can be found under: "The Project/Documents" link at:

www.cowlitzcasino.com

WHAT TAXES SOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

Taxes are critically important to the continued maintenance of public infrastructure and services by local governments.

GAMBLING TAX

The current city budget is largely reliant on a 10% tax of the gross gambling receipts of the four non-tribal card rooms. This income currently amounts to 65% of the city's overall operating budget of \$3.5 million per year.

RETAIL SALES & USE TAX REVENUE

Retail sales tax has generated about \$200,000 annually for the past decade. This amounts to less than 4% of the current city operating budget. Most Washington jurisdictions rely heavily upon sales tax revenues.

PROPERTY TAX REVENUE

Residential and commercial property values are anticipated to increase by 3.5% per year for the next 20 years¹.

The current assessed value of all privately held parcels within the subarea is \$19.6 million. With the current city millage rates (\$1.244 per thousand), this would equate to an additional \$24,000 annually in property taxes to the city. Nearly two-thirds of these properties are used for single-family residences. Development of these properties to urban levels will likely result in an eight to tenfold increase in assessed values even without further development—or \$240,000 per year in property taxes.

DEFINED

Millage Rate

The term is derived from the root word mill, which means "thousand." Millage rates are most often found in property taxes, where the expressed millage rate is multiplied by the total taxable value of the property to arrive at the property taxes due.

REAL ESTATE EXCISE TAX

Properties are expected to turn-over at a rate of about 10% per year² in a normal economy. This turn-over produces Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) which, for La Center, has averaged about \$85,000 per year over the last nine years. REET income amounts to 0.50% of the sale price.

No gambling tax revenues are expected from the subarea because there are currently no plans to shift non-tribal card rooms into the subarea. A tribal casino/resort would also not generate significant revenues due to their sovereign nation status.

¹ See Appendix X - Return on Investment

² *ibid.*

OTHER TAX REVENUES

The City does not currently impose utility taxes. Each business operating within the City of La Center must purchase a Business License (\$50 per year regardless of revenue, size, etc.).

OTHER FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

CONSTRUCTION

Washington State Office of Financial Management estimates 16 jobs are created per \$1 million in construction costs.³

WAGES

Average wages among the various trades vary from \$26,000 per year for retail to \$66,000 per year for office. Wages constitute the core of all personal income and are also the foundation of most retirement schemes.

Educational attainment is a significant contributor to wage levels. Since 1990, La Center has improved its educational attainment tremendously, cutting in half the percentage of residents without a high school diploma. During this same period, household income levels rose by 100%.

Improved access to higher education should prompt higher educational attainment, more knowledge-based industries and ultimately higher wages.



RETAIL LEAKAGE

The residents in the La Center trade area make annual retail purchases of \$37.5 million, yet only \$6.9 million of these purchases occur at establishments located in the City of La Center. This indicates the presence of a very substantial retail leakage in La Center—over \$30 million in annual purchases escape outside the City and thus fail to be captured by La Center businesses.⁴

The large retail leakage present in La Center must be addressed in order to capitalize on the spending patterns of existing residents, diversify the tax base, and solidify the City's economic footing. The recent addition of developable property to La Center's urban growth area opens the door for significant retail development, particularly adjacent to I-5. Although proximity to Oregon and its lack of sales tax serves as a hindrance to the capture of retail dollars north of the border, rising fuel costs and prime interstate land provide a tremendous opportunity for La Center to reduce retail leakage.

³ WA OFM 2002 I-O Multiplier Report.

⁴ *Economic Development Strategic Action Plan for La Center* (2008).

WHAT IS THE OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE ALTERNATIVES?

MANDATORY CRITERIA

CONSISTENCY WITH RELEVANT FEDERAL AND STATE STATUTES

Although the federal Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act have land-use implications, the state's Growth Management Act (GMA) constitutes the most stringent set of land use requirements for local jurisdictions. Taxation—also largely regulated at the state level—is becoming increasingly important since property tax caps were passed by initiative in the past decade.

Under GMA, jurisdictions must provide sufficient land to accommodate 20 years of population growth. The state develops population projection ranges for each county. The county then selects the 20 year population target. Local jurisdictions then mutually allocate growth amongst themselves given their available and developable land supply and growth preferences. Employment, however, is not subject to such limitations.

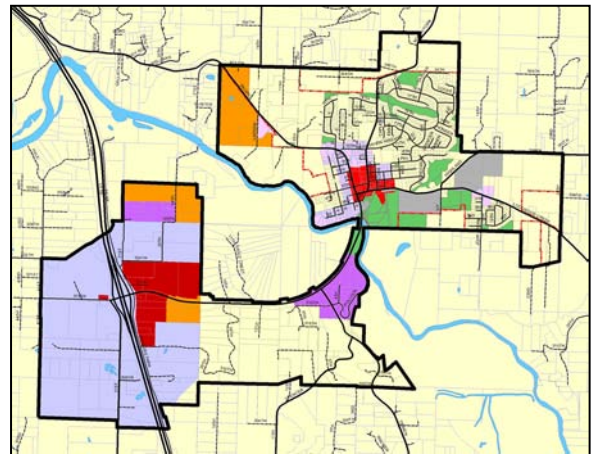
Alternatives X and Y are consistent with this regulatory framework. A tribal casino/resort would supersede state law because of the tribe's sovereign nation status.

MAXIMIZE THE EFFICIENT USE OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The two alternatives (X & Y) are so similar that no significant differences in public facilities and services were identifiable.

CONSISTENCY WITH POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The current urban growth area is designated by Clark County to receive an additional 5,645 persons for a 2024 population of 8,008. City planning estimates the land supply to be sufficient to accommodate 9,827 residents in 2024. Alternative Y would add an additional 100 residents—well within existing margins of error.



*La Center Urban Growth Boundary
(Clark County)*

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CRITERIA

CONSISTENCY WITH APPLICABLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS AND POLICIES

Alternative X reflects the current land use designations and zoning four within La Center Urban Area Comprehensive Plan (2008). The plan's goals and policies were developed in support of these designations.

Alternative Y alters the location of designations and zoning in the northeast quadrant of the subarea, but retains roughly the same acreages per zoning district. This alternative is also consistent with the comprehensive plan.

MEETS LOCATIONAL CRITERIA (IF ANY)

There are two locational criteria within the La Center Urban Area Comprehensive Plan (2008).

- “Areas planned for medium density residential use may be located near commercial uses and transportation facilities in order to efficiently provide these services.”
- “Industrial lands are located in areas of compatible land uses and in areas with arterial access to the regional transportation network.”

Both alternatives X and Y provide commercial uses near medium density residential zones, either with commercial or mixed use zoning. Both alternatives will be served with sufficient arterial streets.

In the future, care should be exercised when developing separate Light Industrial (LI) and Employment Campus (EC) zoning district regulations with an eye toward buffering between different zoning districts.

BEST IMPLEMENTS APPLICABLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES

Alternative Y was selected as the Preferred Alternative by the community during an open house on August 11, 2009. The Planning Commission concurred on August 18, 2009.

BRIEFLY

The purpose of this study is to define the anticipated development of the I-5 Junction, identify necessary supporting infrastructure, and develop a plan for financing these infrastructure improvements.

OTHER CRITERIA

MEETING THE STATED PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this study is to define the anticipated development of the I-5 Junction, identify necessary supporting infrastructure, and develop a plan for financing these infrastructure improvements. This study is being developed because the City is in need of a significant number of new jobs to improve its economic diversity.

Both alternatives provide the potential for an order of magnitude increase in jobs of all types.

GENERATES JOBS

Alternative X would generate 60 more jobs than Alternative Y (less than 1% difference).

- Alternative X would generate approximately 3,728 jobs.
- Alternative Y would generate about 3,668 jobs and \$151 million in annual wages.

Table 5 does not account for lands that will not redevelop within the next 20 years—estimated at 10%—nor does it account for vacancy rates which can typically run between 5 - 15%.

GENERATES REVENUE FOR THE CITY

Both alternatives will generate significant sales and property tax revenues for the City.

The primary difference is the eight fewer acres for mixed use zoning in Alternative Y.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS TO BUSINESSES AT THE JUNCTION

Alternative X would provide an additional eight acres of Mixed Use and two acres of industrial land over Alternative Y. This amounts to nearly double the Mixed Use zoning as Alternative Y, but only a 1% decrease in industrial land.

STREET NETWORK PROVIDES SAFE AND EFFICIENT MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

Retail businesses prefer areas with high traffic volumes and quick access. Industrial uses prefer lower traffic volumes and require specialized road standards to accommodate the size and weight of heavier truck traffic.

All new streets within the urban growth area shall be provided with sidewalks and some will receive designated bike lanes.

The current practice of isolating commercial parking areas from each other has come under scrutiny because this unnecessarily adds very localized traffic onto fronting collectors and arterials which are largely funded by the general public.

TRAFFIC IMPACTS

An appropriate street network is required to adequately provide safe and efficient movement of people and goods. Major concerns include the need for traffic signals at specific intersections and improvements to the I-5 interchange.

The largest impact on traffic is obviously from a potential new tribal casino/resort in the western half of the subarea.

The differences in trip generation and attraction between Alternatives X and Y were insufficient to warrant separate analyses.

I-5 Interchange - The Cowlitz Indian Tribe has discussed potential improvements of the I-5 interchange with WSDOT as mitigation for additional traffic from a casino/resort. It should be noted that no official engineering proposals, agreements, etc have been submitted to WSDOT for review and approval. No allowances were required or made for other development within the subarea.

As part of this study, five options were developed to explore how best to accommodate all future traffic within the subarea for the least cost. Two were later discarded as impractical. Some options include the assumed full build-out of a tribal casino/resort and include improvements proposed by the Cowlitz Indian Tribe.

Arterials – The City's capital facilities plan anticipates a new collector-arterial running north and east from La Center Road to a new bridge spanning the East Fork Lewis River. Although expensive, a second crossing of the East Fork Lewis River (extending from the interchange area to NW 14th Avenue) would relieve the downtown area of considerable congestion and would also provide secondary access for emergency medical services currently located southwest of La Center. Finally, it would also improve the livability and vitality of the downtown area by reducing traffic volumes.

Additional collector-arterials will be needed in all four quadrants in any scenario.

Local Streets – Development of the subarea will require a significant number of new local streets to connect developing properties with the arterial system. These facilities—in addition to other infrastructure improvements—will be the responsibility of the developers of private property.

POTENTIAL IMPACT TO DOWNTOWN

There could be two primary impacts to downtown businesses as a result of subarea development.

DEFINED

Collector

A low- or moderate-capacity road which usually leads traffic from local roads or sections of neighborhoods to activity areas within communities, arterial roads or (occasionally) directly to freeways. In rural municipalities with no arterial roadways, these roadways can provide the highest mobility.

Arterial

An arterial road is a moderate or high-capacity road immediately below a highway level of service. An arterial road carries large volumes of traffic between areas in urban centers. Usually noted for the lack of residential entrances directly onto the road. Designed to carry traffic between neighborhoods, and have intersections with collector and local streets. Arterial roads also link to expressways and freeways.

- Direct competition with downtown businesses could occur. For example, a grocery store at the Junction may directly compete against smaller convenience store operations. Given construction costs, most new development will seek market niches that are not currently served or are marginally served.
- Transportation improvements such as a second bridge across the East Fork Lewis River could relieve some traffic within the downtown core and allow for additional, more intense, development there.



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The City last revised its critical areas ordinance in early 2007. These regulations are based on best-available science⁵ rather than zoning. Net developable acreages were identified by subtracting mapped critical areas and associated buffers from gross acres. In addition, set-asides for public rights-of-way and parks/trails also reduced the amount of developable land.

The subarea will not be directly affected by a state-mandated update of the City's Shorelines Master Program anticipated in 2012.

POTENTIAL FOR PROVIDING GOODS AND SERVICES CURRENTLY UNAVAILABLE LOCALLY

La Center's retail trade area includes approximately 5,000 residents with income totaling nearly \$110 million. The residents in the La Center trade area make annual retail purchases of \$37.5 million, yet only \$6.9 million of these purchases occur at establishments located in the City of La Center. This indicates the presence of a very substantial retail leakage in La Center; over \$30 million in annual purchases escape outside the City and thus fail to be captured by La Center businesses⁶.



Both alternatives provide significant opportunity for new businesses to serve local needs. However, our limited demographic size will not support certain retail uses—such as a department store—unless other external conditions change buying behavior (e.g., \$4/gallon gas). Thus some level of retail leakage will continue.

POTENTIAL PUBLIC USES (I.E., PARKS, TRAILS, ETC.)

The City recently updated the Parks Trails & Open Space element of the comprehensive and capital facilities plans. Although there are a number of county and city trails planned within the subarea, there are no parks *per se*. Municipal code requires larger multi-family developments provide active open space / family parks at a ratio of 0.25 acres per 35 dwelling units.

⁵ RCW 36.70A.172

⁶ *Economic Development Strategic Action Study for La Center, WA* (2008), page 28

Table 6: Parks & Open Space

	Alternative X	Alternative Y
Multi-family dwellings	131	202
Acres of open space	0.9	1.4

POTENTIAL IMPACT TO TOURISM

Tourism—for a number of reasons—becomes an increasingly attractive and important retail development strategy for many small towns and cities. In addition to local residents, tourism draws dollars from even larger numbers of out-of-town visitors thereby expanding the economic base. The numbers of retail businesses in tourism-oriented areas are roughly double that of a non-tourism community. Tourism also serves to offset retail leakage.

An assessment of local attractions and a visitor profile are key steps toward forming an effective tourism industry.

USE OF MINIMUM DESIGN GUIDELINE STANDARDS

Although low, there is some community interest in developing minimum design guidelines for development within the subarea.

WAS THERE A PUBLIC DISCUSSION ABOUT CRITICAL ISSUES?

An exercise was developed so that open house participants could weigh-in on critical issues. Each participant was provided one red dot (1.0 point) and three green dots (0.33 points each) to vote for the importance of various evaluation criteria. Meeting the stated purpose and need, impacts to junction businesses, and potential impact to tourism were not considered overly important.

Table 7: Community Ranked Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Results
Provides local goods & services	4.00
Generates jobs	2.67
Traffic impacts	2.00
Generates revenue for the city	1.33
Environmental impacts	1.00
Impacts to downtown businesses	0.33
Potential public uses (parks, trails)	0.33
Use of minimum design guideline standards	0.33



June 23, 2009 Open House & Workshop

WHAT IS THE VISION FOR THE SUBAREA?

La Center's vision for the I-5 junction centers on employment. Development of the subarea is expected to result in about 4,000 jobs.

The city intends to facilitate four specific types of development identified in the *2008 Economic Development Strategy Action Study*:

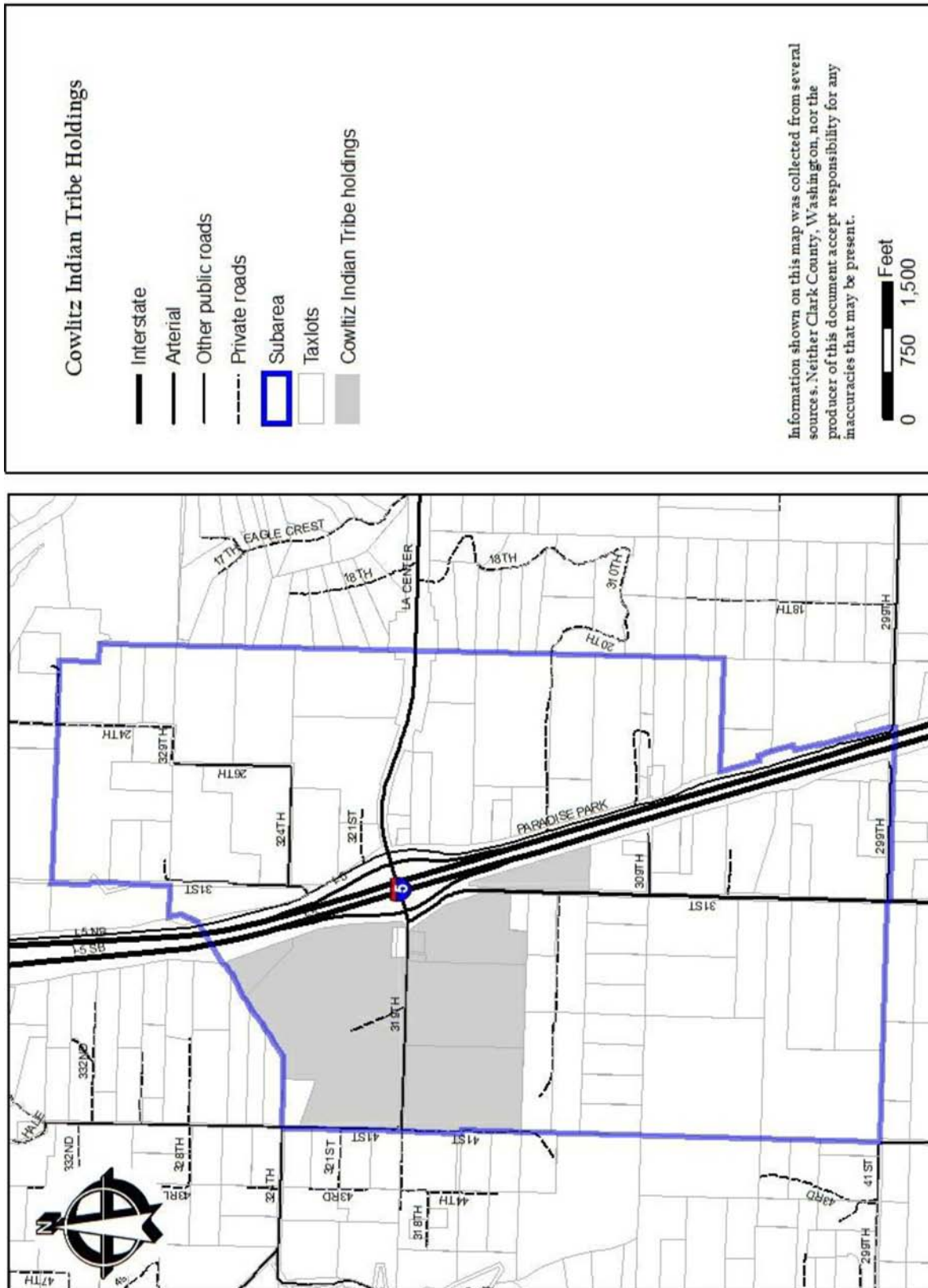
READ MORE

A copy of the **2008 Economic Development Strategy Action Study** can be found in **Appendix G**.

- **Retail** - to provide the quality of life amenities that are important to build a healthy community and to attract the necessary workforce required by the other target industries.
- **Material Supply** - companies in this sector manufacture a wide range of products—from plywood panels, to steel pipe, to tools, to wallpaper—and distribute them to wholesalers, retailers, home and hardwood stores or sell directly to contractors.
- **Electronics** - This cluster has over 10,000 employees across 435 businesses in the Portland MSA, and is heavily comprised of manufacturers of audio and video equipment, circuit boards, electronic components, and measuring instruments.
- **Logistics & Distribution** – Although easy to recruit, firms within this cluster are typically land-extensive and job-poor. La Center should focus on recruiting logistics and operations enterprises (versus warehousing) to conserve acreage.

Other desired uses include higher education such as a small college or a university satellite campus and medical services.

Figure 6: Cowlitz Indian Tribe Holdings



4 - 14



Figure 8: Alternative X

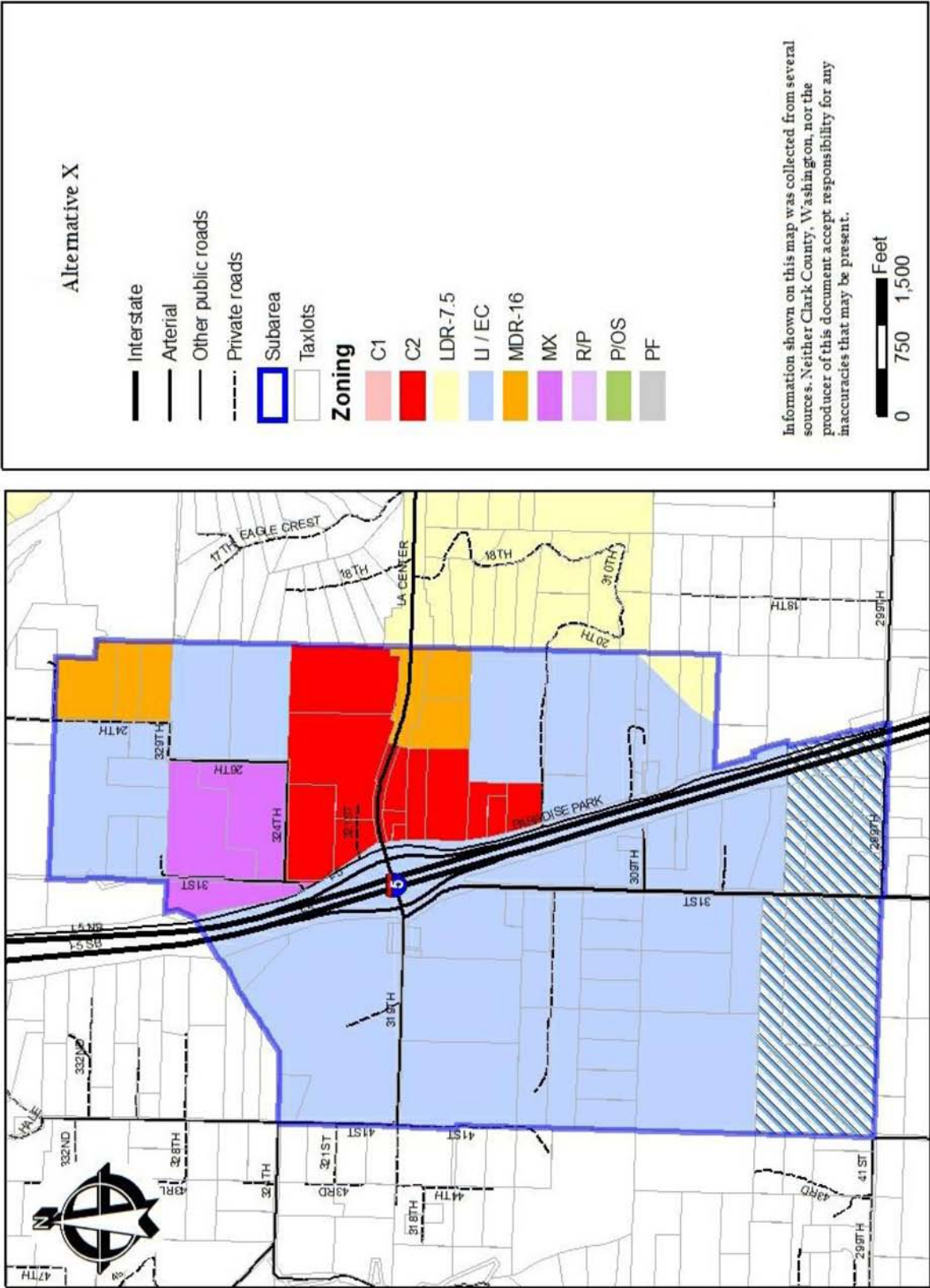
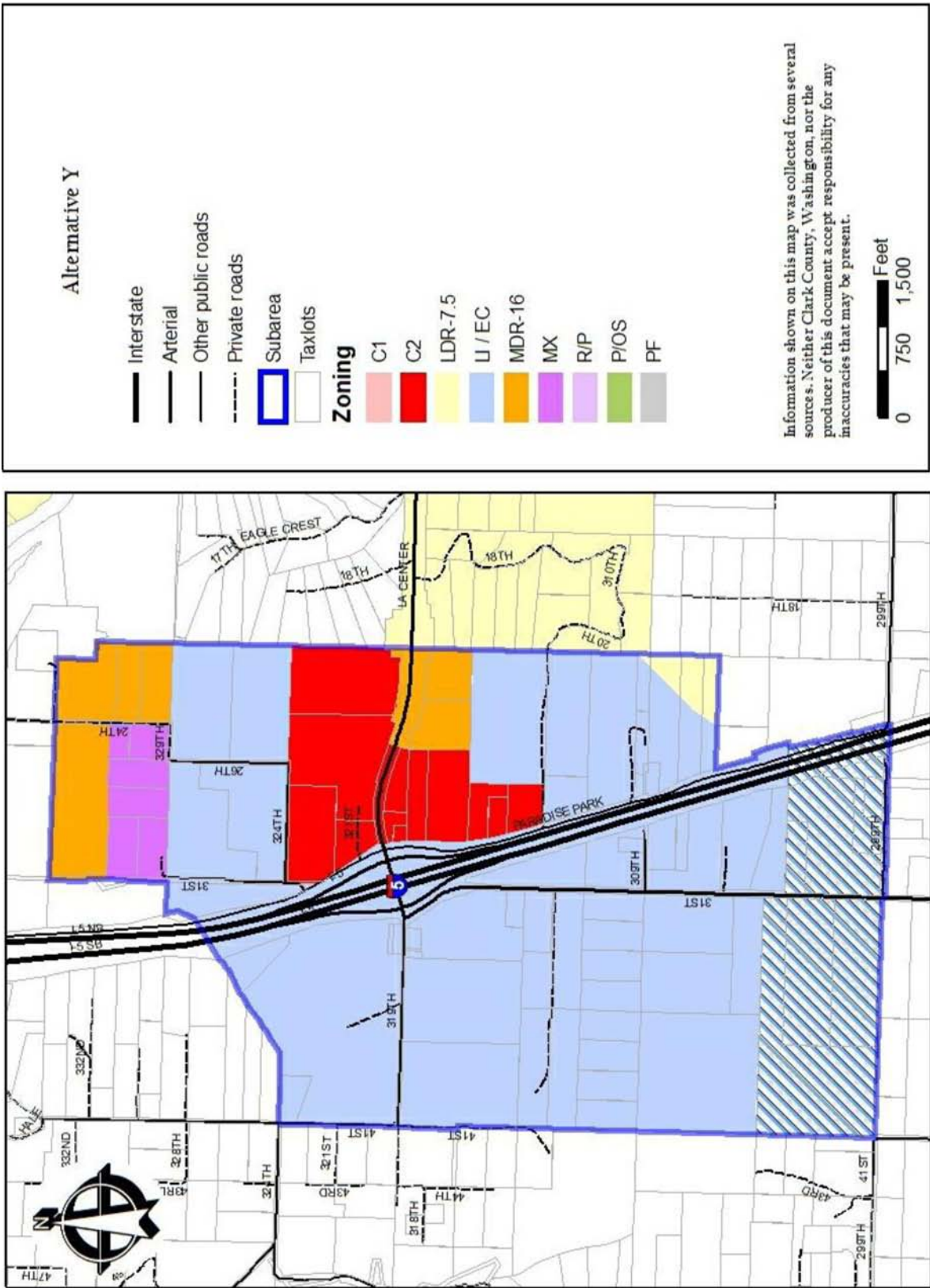


Figure 9: Alternative Y





CHAPTER 5

NEEDED INFRASTRUCTURE

Public facilities and services, as well as privately vended utilities, will be extended and upgraded to serve future development in the planning area.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

TRANSPORTATION (CITY)

The transportation analysis assumes the existing interchange will need to be improved because only two lanes are provided on the I-5 / La Center Road overcrossing. This configuration does not allow for left-turn lanes and the closely spaced local street intersections reduce the efficiency and safety of the current design.

Consistent with transportation modeling for Clark County, the analysis year for the subarea plan is 2030. Because the subarea was not assumed to develop in the latest modeling prepared by the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, trip generation potential for the area was added to the background 2030 traffic volumes already anticipated. This trip generation potential was estimated based on the City's proposed zoning and review of developable acreages.

READ MORE

Southwest Washington
Regional
Transportation Council

www.rtc.wa.gov

I-5 INTERCHANGE

Three options were developed for further review, based on consideration of access requirements, safety, intersection spacing, roadway connectivity, and

impacts on sensitive lands. In this analysis, the alternatives are addressed in more detail including roadway widths, intersection traffic control, and costs.

As the area develops, the existing roadways and interchange of La Center Road with I-5 will need to be improved to handle increased traffic volumes and provide access to properties in the area.

Alignment options were reviewed with the following considerations:

- Need for interchange improvements
- Relocation of Paradise Park for intersection spacing
- Relocation of NW 31st Avenue for intersection spacing
- Minimizing impacts on sensitive lands
- Providing access to properties in the area
- Providing local connectivity throughout the subarea and to Ridgefield
- Minimizing access locations (driveways and cross-streets) on La Center Road
- Ability to accommodate casino-resort traffic
- Right-of-way needs
- Costs of construction



READ MORE

For the Return on Investment Analysis (see **Appendix F**), an estimated cost of \$32.2 million was used..

With each option, the necessary roadway widths and intersection traffic control are identified as needed to accommodate traffic volumes anticipated with development of the subarea in 2030.

Each option alternatively addresses the probable traffic generated by La Center's growth and/or a casino-resort that would result from federal approval of a new reservation for the Cowlitz Tribe.

Option 1 maintains the existing diamond interchange configuration while relocating the south approaches of NW 31st Avenue and Paradise Park Road to La Center Road away from the interchange. The north approach of Paradise Park Road would be closed, with traffic re-routed to NW 324th Street and a new extension of NW 26th Avenue south to La Center Road.

- The construction cost estimate is \$25.7 million with right-of-way acquisition estimated at 16.5 acres.

Option 1 with casino-resort. With the addition of traffic from the proposed casino-resort, two through lanes would be needed in each direction on the structure, increasing the width from five to seven lanes. The option works well with the tribe's plan to realign 319th Street to the south, and would not change the alignments east of the freeway other than increasing the width of La Center Road as it approaches the interchange.

- The construction cost estimate is \$27.7 million with right-of-way acquisition estimated at 16.0 acres.

Option 2 also maintains the existing diamond interchange, but provides an additional overcrossing of I-5, connecting NW 31st Avenue on the south with

READ MORE

Drawings of the **transportation options** can be found at this end of this section, starting on page 5-11.

NW 26th Avenue on the north. A new connector road would be provided between NW 319th Street and NW 31st Avenue, and Paradise Park Road south of La Center Road would connect with the new roadway. As with Option 1, the north approach of Paradise Park Road would be closed, with traffic re-routed to NW 324th Street and a new extension of NW 26th Avenue south to La Center Road.

- The construction cost estimate for Option 2 is \$30.3 million with right-of-way acquisition estimated at 17.0 acres.

Option 2 with casino-resort. Development of a casino would require widening of La Center Road from five to six lanes through the interchange, and from three to five lanes west of the interchange. One additional lane would also be required on the off-ramps with the casino.

- The construction cost estimate is \$32.2 million with right-of-way acquisition estimated at 19.5 acres.

Option 3 introduces a partial cloverleaf interchange, with southbound ramps on the north side of La Center Road, and northbound ramps on the south side of La Center Road. This allows local street connections of NW 31st Avenue and the north approach of Paradise Park Road to remain near their current alignments, intersecting La Center Road opposite the ramps. A new extension of NW 26th Avenue south to La Center Road would still be provided, with the south approach consisting of a realignment of Paradise Park Road. One less signal would be needed on La Center Road than with Options 1 and 2.

- The construction cost estimate is \$27.5 million with right-of-way acquisition estimated at 17.5 acres.

Option 3 with casino-resort. Development of the casino would require widening of La Center Road through the interchange to provide a right-turn lane to the southbound loop ramp, and from three to five lanes west of the interchange. One additional lane would also be required on the off-ramps and a second southbound on-ramp would be needed to I-5 with the casino.

- The construction cost estimate increases to \$29.5 million with right-of-way acquisition estimated at 19.5 acres.



ARTERIALS/COLLECTORS

The need for new and realigned local and arterial street connections was reviewed for the subarea. Considerations in review of alignment alternatives included the following:

- Utilization of existing roadways to the extent possible
- The need to improve intersection spacing at the I-5 interchange
- Limiting access locations on La Center Road, an arterial
- Providing access to parcels
- Avoidance of sensitive areas
- Providing direct connections where possible

Many of the key roadway and bridge investments needed in the subarea are already programmed in the current adopted 20-year Capital Facilities Plan.

24th/26th Avenue. The City of La Center has included in its Comprehensive Plan a new bridge across the East Fork Lewis River. This bridge would be located in the area north of the subarea and east of I-5. It has been assumed the roadway approaching the future bridge would follow the alignments of 24th / 26th Avenues. Utilizing the existing road alignments reduces the need for new right of way and additional road construction.

Currently, a short section of 329th Street connects between 24th and 26th Avenues with 90-degree turns. In anticipation of development within the subarea and of the future bridge connection, this alignment would need to be improved for safety and capacity. The most logical alignment is to smooth out the curves with a centerline radius of 500 feet, resulting in an “S” curve between 24th and 26th Avenues. The corners remaining between the new alignment and the existing 90-degree curves could be used for stormwater treatment.



Other alignment options were considered as well. Longer radii on the “S” curve would require more right-of-way. Shorter radii on the “S” curve would reduce roadway speed and capacity below acceptable levels. Simply extending the existing alignment of either 24th or 26th Avenue would impact more sensitive areas. Therefore these options were dismissed in favor of the former option.

We have assumed an extension of 26th Avenue south from 324th Street to a new intersection at La Center Road, as shown in the Transportation Element of the City’s Capital Facilities Plan. This new road connection would provide a continuous roadway alignment between La Center Road and a new bridge and allow for increased spacing from the I-5 interchange.

31st Avenue provides a local street connection to the City of Ridgefield. The roadway becomes 45th Avenue within the city limits of Ridgefield and intersects Pioneer Street (State Route 501) at a recently constructed roundabout. As both cities continue to develop, this roadway will become an important route between the cities and will provide access to developing areas.

The intersection of 31st Avenue with 319th Street is located only 100 feet from the I-5 southbound ramp terminal. WSDOT has indicated this spacing will need to be addressed before any improvements are made to the interchange. WSDOT does not have a minimum spacing standard for the



interchange, but we recommend a minimum of 600 feet be provided between freeway ramps and the nearest intersection to provide adequate distances for queuing, maneuvering, and developing turn lanes.

A realignment of 31st Avenue to the west is limited by the presence of sensitive areas south of 319th Street.

The Cowlitz Tribe's casino-resort project proposes relocating the 31st Avenue/319th Street intersection approximately 600 feet west of the southbound I-5 ramps. We have considered an additional alignment further to the west, approximately 1,500 feet from the southbound I-5 ramps, which would allow the roadway to provide access to industrial parcels within the subarea. This alignment would route the roadway to the west along a 313th Street alignment, then north along a 38th Avenue alignment.

Paradise Park Road runs along the east side of I-5, north and south of La Center Road, with an intersection only 125 feet east of the I-5 northbound ramp. As with 31st Avenue on the west side of the interchange, this intersection would need to be relocated to the east with any interchange improvement.

Moving the roadway to the next property line would only result in intersection spacing of 450 feet, and would leave an offset with 26th Avenue — the roadway alignment towards a future bridge.

An alternative aligning the south approach of Paradise Park Road opposite an extension of 26th Avenue was also considered, creating an intersection on La Center Road 1,000 feet from the I-5 northbound ramp. Access to the north approach of Paradise Park Road would be provided through the existing alignment of 324th Street, and Paradise Park Road would terminate in a cul-de-sac north of La Center Road to provide access to existing parcels.

324th Street currently provides access from Paradise Park Road to the properties at the northeast quadrant of the subarea. It will continue to provide access between Paradise Park Road and 26th Avenue (new road alignment to a future bridge), as well as access to adjacent properties.

If the existing Paradise Park Road intersection with La Center Road is closed and traffic routed to 26th Avenue along 324th Street, improvements would be needed at the current alignments of 31st Avenue with Paradise Park Road and 324th Street. An alignment connecting 324th Street directly to Paradise Park Road at the current 31st Avenue intersection is recommended. This would provide a 90-degree intersection, as opposed to the current skewed approach of 31st Avenue. A new intersection would be provided for 31st Avenue at 324th Street, approximately 275 feet to the east of Paradise Park Road.

LOCAL STREETS

Additional local streets will be needed to connect private properties with the arterial system. The cost of constructing all necessary local streets is to be borne by the land developer.



READ MORE

C-Tran's **La Center Connector** and Ridgefield Connector provide fully accessible dial-a-ride and regular stop service within each City and from there, to the 99th Street Transit Center at Stockford Village Monday through Friday.

Read more at:
www.c-tran.com/Clark-County-Commute.html

TRANSIT

The City of La Center is currently served by C-TRAN's hybrid fixed-route service that includes dial-a-ride functionality. This service is expected to continue into the foreseeable future and will likely expand commensurately with overall travel demand.

SIDEWALKS, TRAILS & BIKE LANES

The City intends that all new arterials and collectors within the urban growth area shall have on-street bike lanes. These facilities are included in the estimated costs for arterials and collectors.

POTABLE WATER

Clark Public Utilities (CPU) is the purveyor of potable water within the subarea. CPU is in the process of acquiring and/or constructing four well-heads along the north shore of the Lewis River just west of the I-5 Bridge. These wellheads will be connected to a pumping and pre-treatment facility located in the triangle of NW Paradise Park Road and NW 31st Avenue, in the northeast quadrant of the I-5 interchange. From there, the extension of water mains is not constrained and will be consistent with the utility's plans. The cost of extending water mains (approximately \$35 to \$55 per linear foot) is to be borne by the land developer.

Water mains will generally follow public rights-of-way.

READ MORE

Complete text of the 1992 *Stormwater Management Manual for the Puget Sound Basin* can be found at:

www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/9175.html

STORMWATER

Stormwater is rainfall that runs off buildings, pavement, yards and fields. It picks up pollutants and carries them to streams, lakes and wetlands. Poor stormwater management causes erosion, flooding, decreased groundwater recharge, may pose a serious health risk and impact fish habitat. Practices such as the use of bio-filtration swales and detention/filtration basins are typical but are now under re-consideration by the state. Green infrastructure methods such as low impact developments, open drainage and constructed wetlands rather than piped systems, maximizing tree coverage, and the use of pervious paving materials appear to be part of a new emerging system.

Developments are required to comply with La Center's stormwater regulations in LCMC 18.320 which are based upon the 1992 *Stormwater Management Manual for the Puget Sound Basin*. Developments greater than one acre must obtain and comply with the current *Western Washington Stormwater Management Manual* during construction.

All compliance costs are borne by the land developer. These costs vary widely but typically range from 10 to 20 percent of the total project cost.

WASTEWATER (CITY)



The City is currently upgrading its wastewater treatment plant to membrane bioreactor technology at a cost of about \$11M. Treatment capacity for about 0.7 million gallons a day (MGD) is expected to be online in 2010. Capacity can then be increased incrementally—to 2.8 MGD—with the purchase of additional membranes and a reconstructed outfall.

Connection to the City's utility requires a one-time system development charge of \$7,800. Current monthly rates are \$51 per equivalent residential unit (ERU).

Conveyance—the connection from developed property to the plant—is the sole responsibility of the land developer. “Leap-frog” development, which bypasses buildable land, will pay a premium for the privilege. This initial cost may be offset by a latecomers’ agreement or local improvement district.

The city has developed a preliminary design for extension of a sewer main running along La Center Road to the I-5 junction after studying four different alternatives. They included:

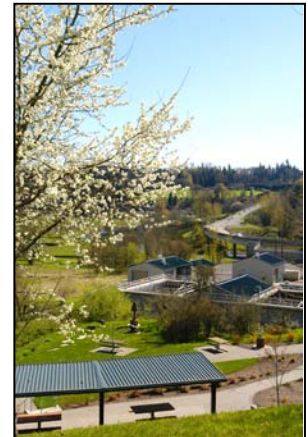
- A gravity collection system that crosses the East Fork west of the La Center Bridge,
- Two siphon systems that cross the La Center Bridge, and
- A forced-main system that pumps sewage across the La Center Bridge.

In addition, different means of phasing in construction of the collection system—to reduce initial capital costs—were considered. This included building lift stations in phases, piping layouts to allow for future parallel piping, and constructing different routes.

The recommended collection system alternative consists of a main to run along La Center Road, a sewage lift station at McCormick Creek and a siphon under the La Center Bridge. During final design, a computer hydraulic analysis is needed to determine the suitability and best location for a siphon. If a siphon will not work, a lift station near the La Center Bridge would be required.

The La Center Road Lift Station would consist of two separate submersible lift stations completed in two phases. In the first phase, a 10” force main would be needed from the La Center Road Lift Station to the top of the hill at approximately NW Eagle Crest Drive. At the La Center Bottoms Siphon a force main would connect with the existing 8” force main located in La Center Road south of the bridge. An 8” force main underneath the bridge would be installed to connect existing force mains on both sides of the bridge. In the second phase, a second 8” force main from the La Center Bottoms Siphon would be bored under the river to the influent manhole in front of the wastewater treatment plant. A gravity collection system would serve the Junction area down to the La Center Road Lift Station. A gravity collection system would also serve the Timmen Road Area down to the La Center Bottoms Siphon. Gravity collection systems would be sized to handle the 20-year build-out flows and would not be done in phases. Additional lift stations would be needed for the area west of I-5 and north of NW 324th Street.

The preliminary design cost estimate for the recommended alternative is \$4.88 Million for the first phase and \$2.75 Million for the second phase. These costs are for the sewer system along La Center Road from the bridge to the I-5 Junction. Possible financing alternatives for this collection system backbone include latecomer fees, creation of a Local Improvement District, working with the Port of Ridgefield, or a public-private partnership.



PARKS, TRAILS & OPEN SPACES

There are no proposed parks within the subarea. However, quarter-acre “family parks” are required for each 35 units of medium density residential

development. This is expected to yield roughly two acres of parks within the MDR-16 zoning districts.

The current Capital Facilities Plan calls for six city trails within the subarea, four of which are on-street. The fifth follows one of McCormick Creek's tributaries as it winds along the subarea's southeastern border. The sixth City trail would follow an unnamed tributary to the East Fork Lewis River in the subarea's northeast quadrant. All told, there are 5.4 miles of on-street and off-street trails.

In addition, Vancouver/Clark Parks envisions trails along the East Fork Lewis River, Paradise Park Road, McCormick Creek, and Allen Canyon Creek. Finally, WSDOT lists I-5 as a bicycle route.

These facilities are funded through Park Impact Fees paid by residential developers. The current Park Impact Fee (PIF) rate is \$4,000 per new dwelling unit.

Table 8: Subarea Trails

ID	Site	Project Description	% within subarea	Length (mi)	Est. Cost
T1	Paradise Point trail	Design / construct a Type 3 trail	100.00%	0.19	\$46,000
T2	West-side connector	Design / construct a Type 5 trail	100.00%	1.93	\$541,000
T5	La Center Road pathway	Design / construct a Type 5 trail	26.93%	1.01	\$282,496
T17	Tri-Mountain Trail	Design / construct a Type 3 trail	100.00%	0.44	\$104,000
T18	NW 31st pathway	Design / construct a Type 5 trail	100.00%	1.02	\$285,000
T19	NW 299th pathway	Design / construct a Type 5 trail	100.00%	0.80	\$224,000
				5.39	\$1,482,495

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Ridgefield School District serves the subarea and currently has a total student population of 2,121. Their *Capital Facilities Plan* (2008-2014) forecasts enrollment growth to be on the order of 10,000 to 16,000 students by 2027 with a general district population of 59,000. This equates to a 500% to 800% student growth rate over 20 years.

The district intends to meet this demand by building a new 1,200 student high school, converting the existing high school to a middle school, and converting the existing middle school to an elementary school. Additional capacity will be provided at the new middle and elementary schools.

The capital facilities plan identifies the cost at \$154 million with heavy reliance (nearly 90%) upon voter approved bonds.

According to the district's current capital facilities plan, "The District has a limited history of passing capital project bond elections to address the needs of the growing student population. In November 2005 and May 2006 the voters did not pass bond issues that are required to construct a new high school. The district's voters did, however, approve a bond to purchase the new high school property and they approved the most recent maintenance and operation levy."

Roughly \$10 million would come from impact fees assessed on new development. The current impact fee for a single family household is \$4,490.97.

READ MORE

Information on the Ridgefield School District's 20-Year Capital Facilities Plan can be found on the district's web site. At the top of the home page, click the "General District Information" link.

www.ridge.k12.wa.us

PUBLIC SERVICES

FIRE RESPONSE & EMERGENCY MEDICAL

Clark County Fire & Rescue (formerly Clark County Fire District 12) provides basic fire response and, by contract, emergency medical services to the subarea. Funding is provided under an operating levy and occasional capital improvement bonds coordinated by CCF&R.

LAW ENFORCEMENT (CITY)

There is no additional need for law enforcement beyond that envisioned within the *La Center Urban Area Capital Facilities Plan* (2008)¹. Revenue for police services is provided by the La Center General Fund, the Criminal Justice Fund and occasional grants-in-aid.

OTHER GOVERNMENT SERVICES

PORT OF RIDGEFIELD

The port continues to promote North Clark County as a premier area for industry and technology. The port will continue to partner with business interests, local and state agencies, schools, higher education, utilities, and others to provide coordinated infrastructure and services and is seeking additional property to ensure an adequate industrial land inventory for future economic development. The port is funded by a property tax levy and revenues generated from its property holdings.



OTHER UTILITIES

ELECTRICITY

Clark Public Utilities (CPU) is the electricity purveyor within the subarea. The extension of electrical power to properties (c. \$180/linear foot) is the financial responsibility of the land developer. CPU has purchased a 5-acre piece of property at the northeast corner of NW 324th Street and NW 24th Avenue for a future substation to serve the junction area.



NATURAL GAS

NW Natural Gas provides natural gas within the subarea. The extension of gas mains to properties is the financial responsibility of the land developer.

Williams Pipeline operates a large-diameter, high-pressure interstate transmission line for natural gas which is located immediately east of the subarea.



¹ Approximately 25 to 26 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Telecommunications is provided under a non-exclusive franchise agreement with the City. Current franchisees include TDS (land-line phone) and Comcast (cable TV and internet). Extension of telecommunications service is the responsibility of the land developer.

WASTE & RECYCLING

Waste Connections Inc., under contract to Clark County, provides for expansion of services to cover annexations.



SUMMARY

The City of La Center is responsible for the provision of adequate transportation, wastewater and parks/open space infrastructure. The following table identifies the anticipated costs of providing basic infrastructure necessary for the development of the subarea.

Chart 1: Public Infrastructure Investment by Type

Total Cost = \$41.2 million (2010 dollars)

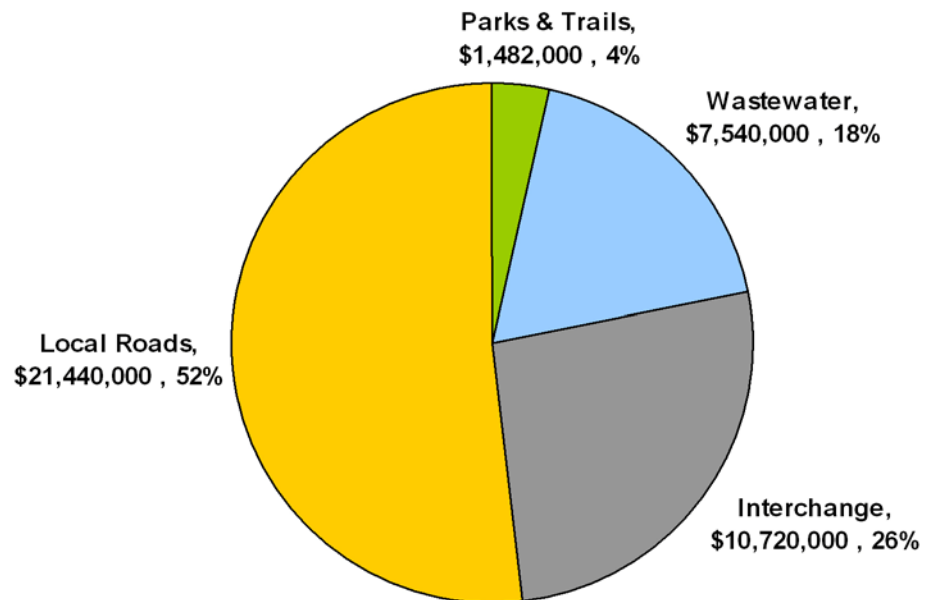


Figure 10: Transportation Option – 1A

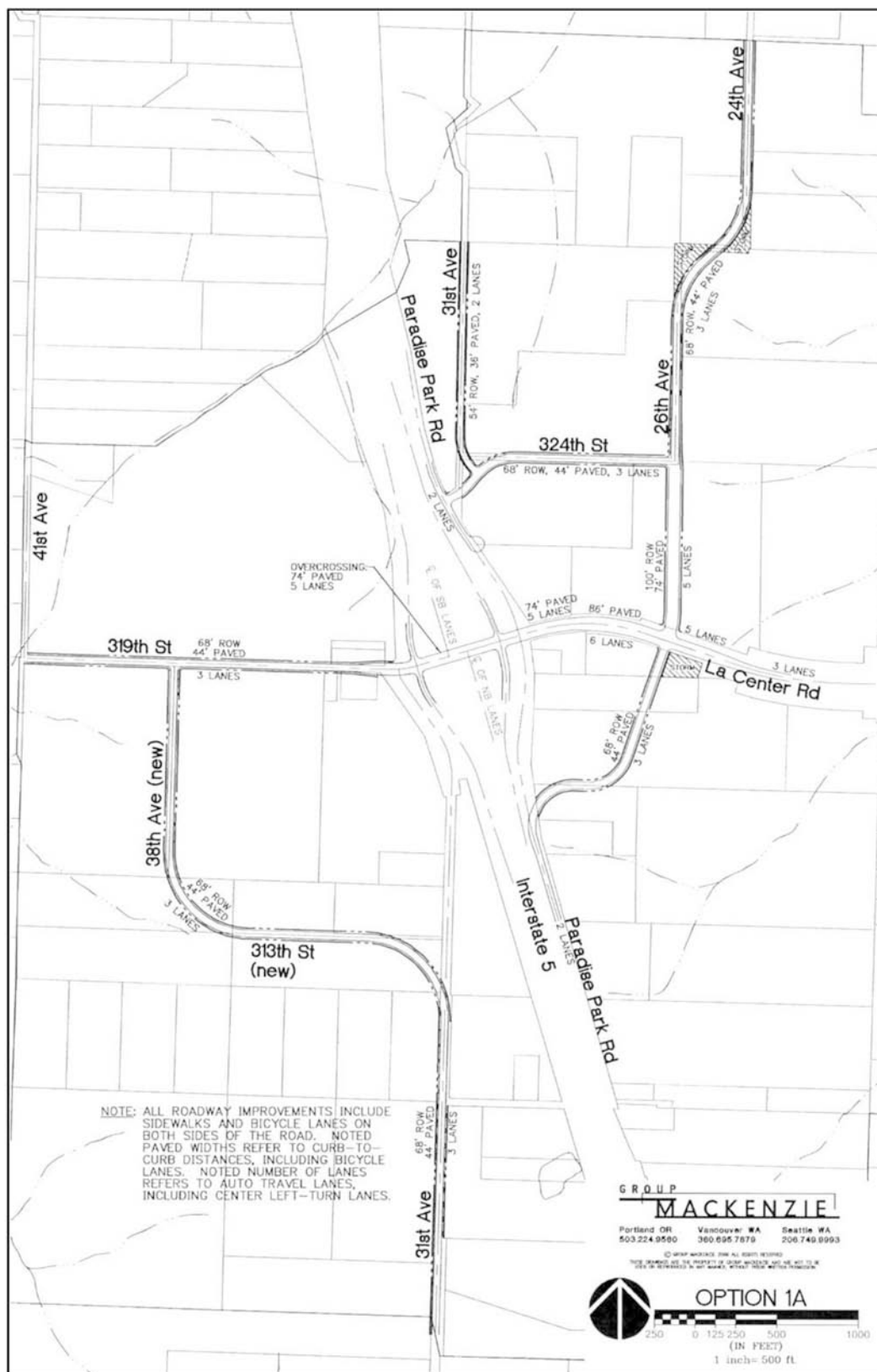


Figure 11: Transportation Option – 1B

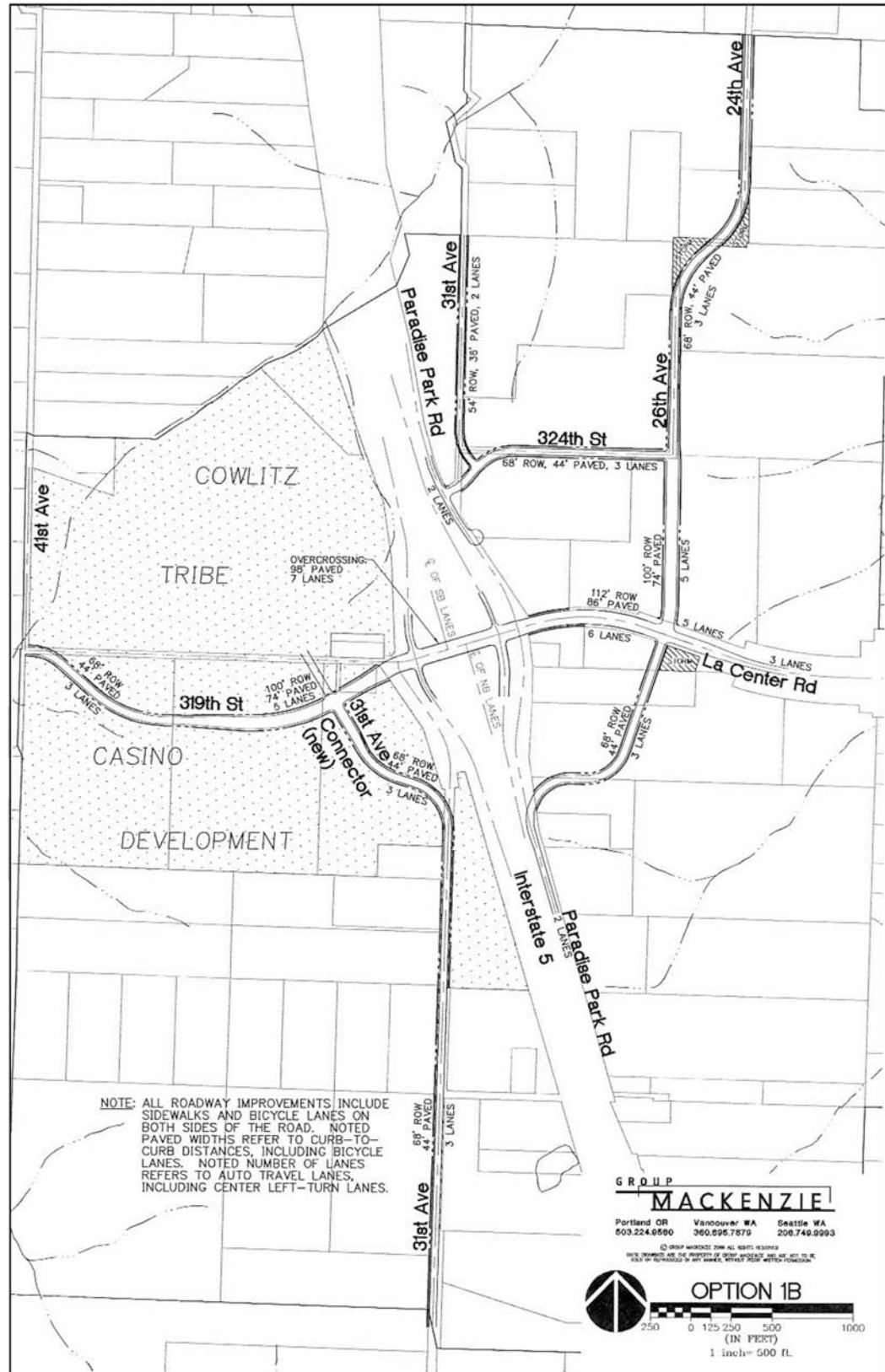


Figure 12: Transportation Option – 2A

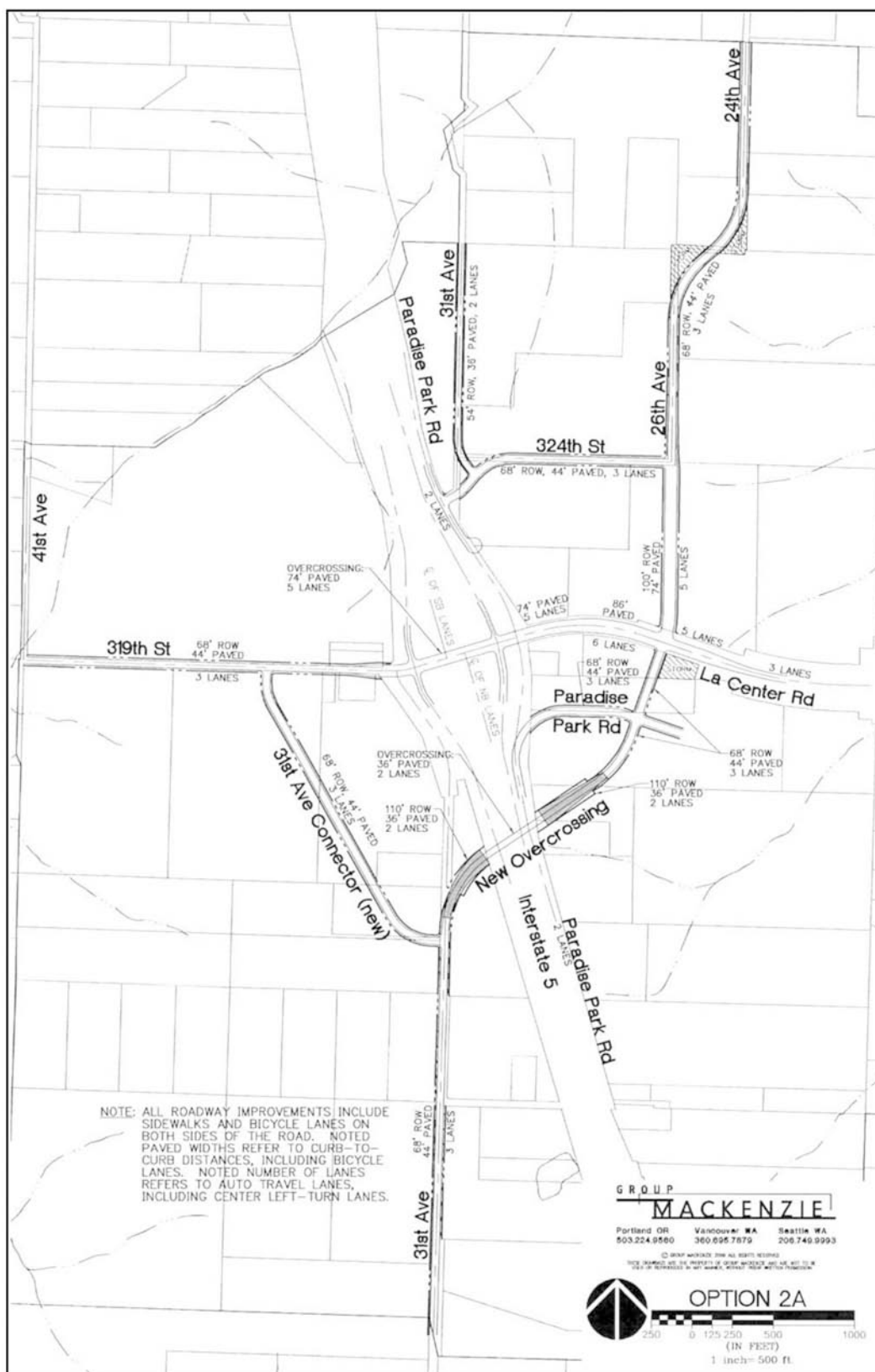


Figure 13: Transportation Option – 2B

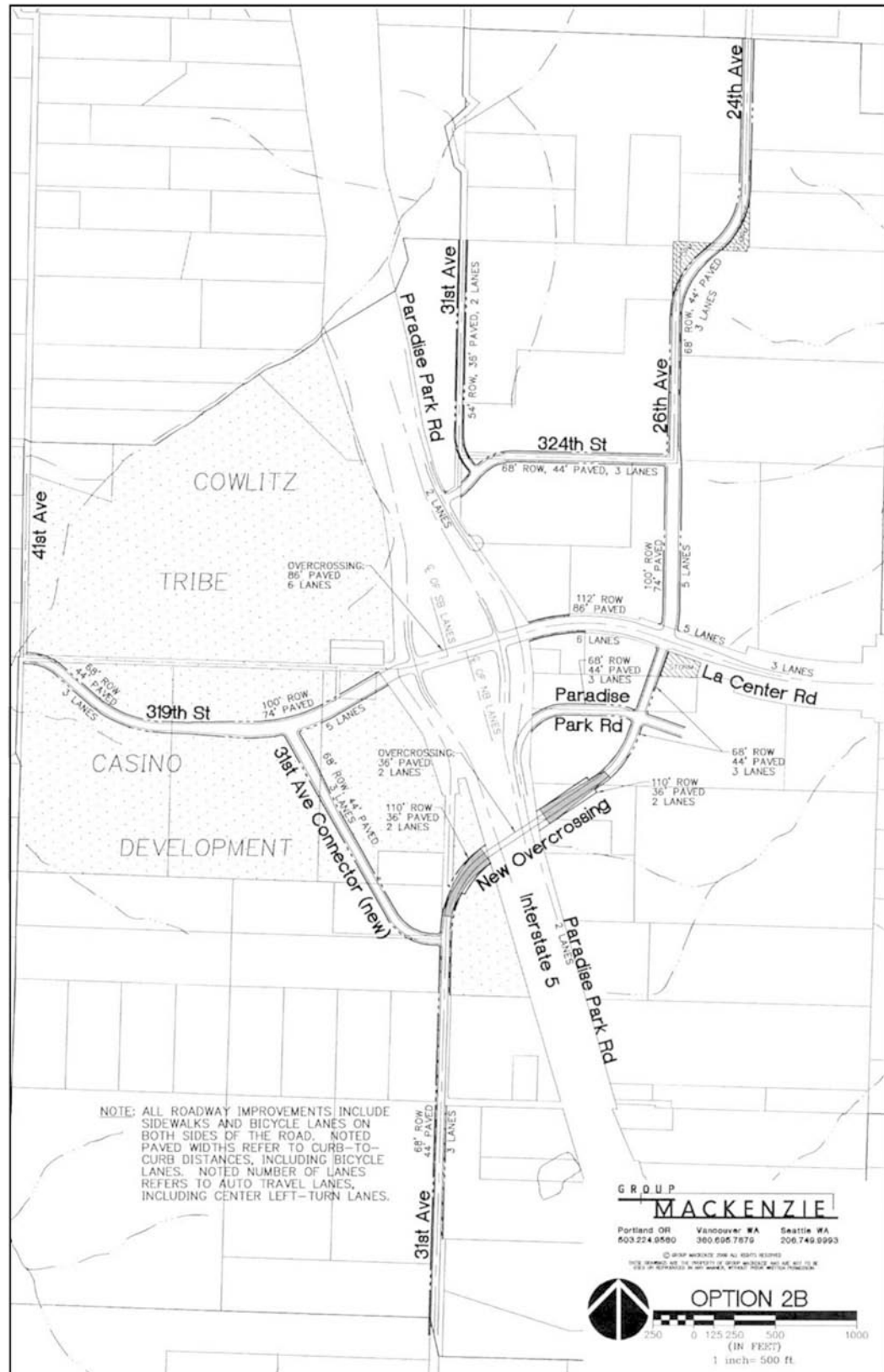


Figure 14: Transportation Option – 3A



Figure 15: Transportation Option – 3B

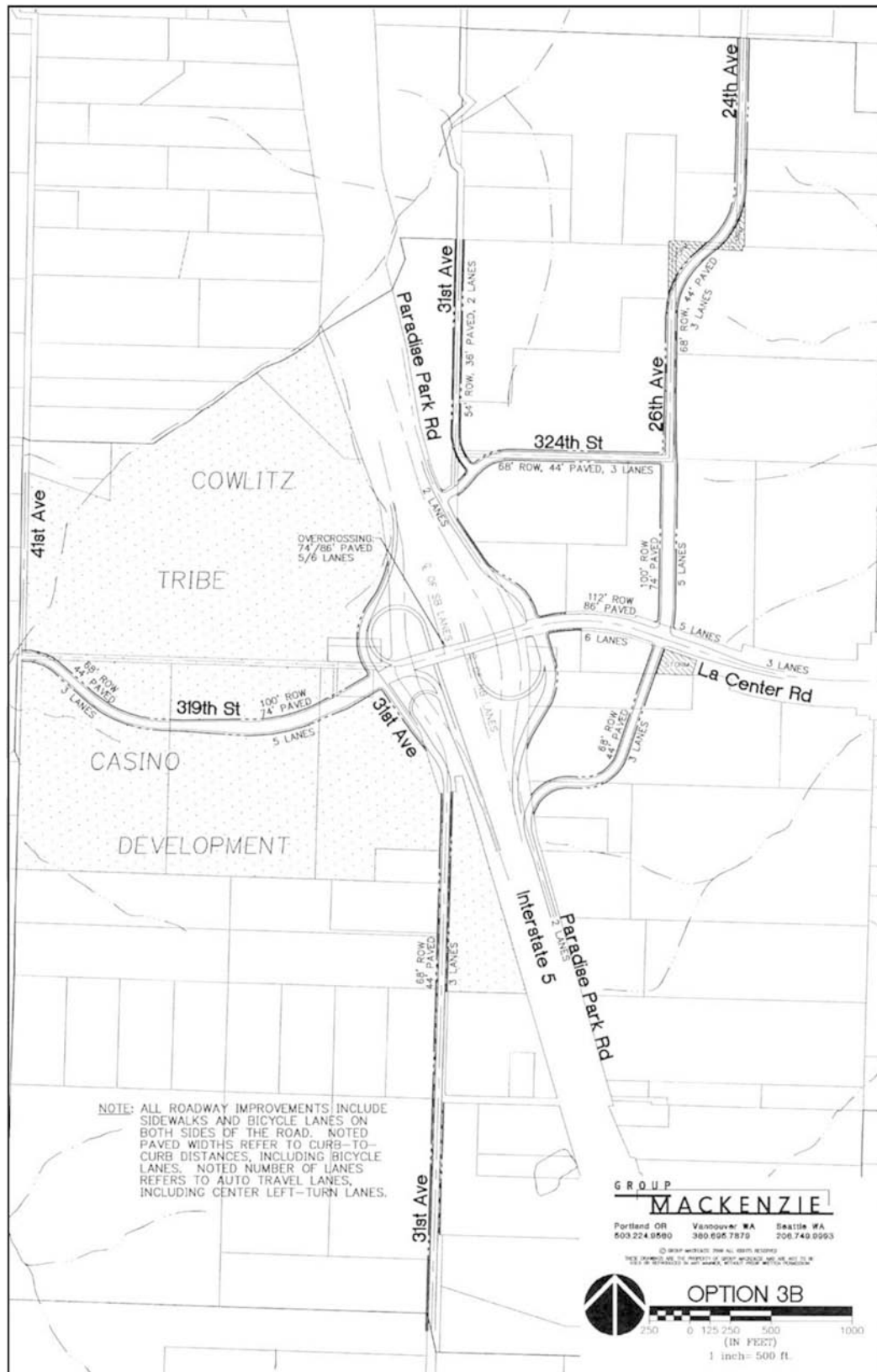
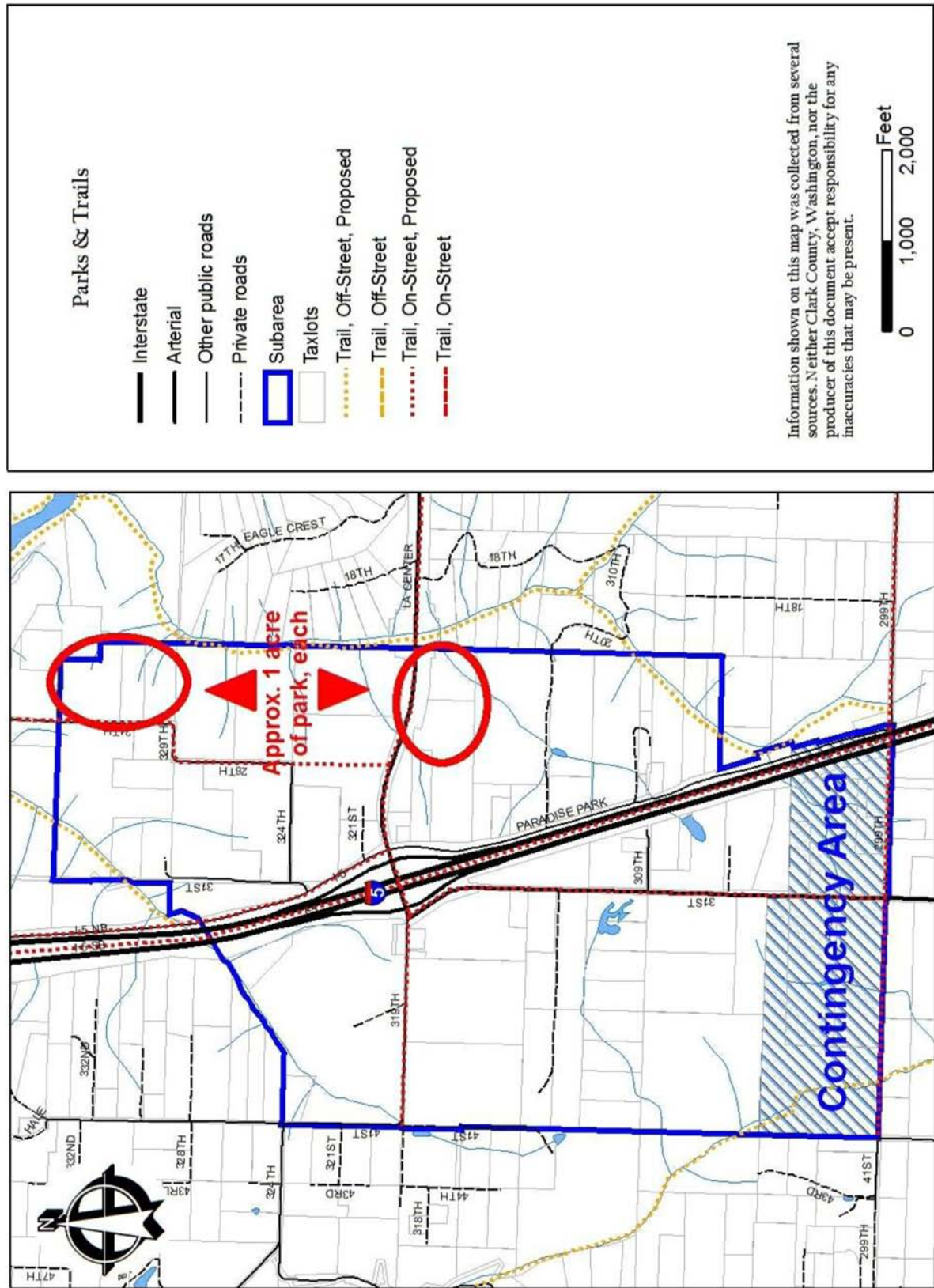
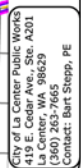


Figure 16: Parks & Trails



LA CENTER JUNCTION SEWER SYSTEM





CHAPTER 6

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The previous chapter identified various infrastructure improvements necessary to prepare the subarea for urban levels of development. This chapter addresses the associated funding and financing issues.

TRANSPORTATION

Under the Washington State Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A), the transportation financial analysis must include:

- An analysis of a jurisdiction's funding capability, comparing needs against anticipated revenues.
- A multi-year financing plan based on identified needs.
- If anticipated funding falls short of identified needs, a strategy is required to show how additional funding will be raised or how land use assumptions will be reassessed to ensure that the level-of-service standards will be adjusted accordingly.

POTENTIAL REVENUES

In the previous chapter, we identified needed transportation improvements and estimated their cost to be \$25.7 million to \$32.1 million. Funding will mainly come from impact fees and other developer contributions. For the purposes of the Return on Investment Analysis (Appendix F), a cost estimate of \$32.2 million was used.

TRAFFIC IMPACT FEES

DEFINED

PM Peak Hour Trips

The numbers of vehicles passing a given point during the busiest hour between 3 and 6 p.m.

A Traffic Impact Fee (TIF) is assessed on new development to pay for transportation improvements needed to serve the new growth. The City of La Center uses the proportionate share of new PM Peak Hour Trips to existing PM Peak Hour Trips to determine the appropriate traffic impact fee rate to be assessed on new development.

The *Transportation Impact Analysis* (Appendix C) completed by Group Mackenzie identified 347 existing PM Peak Hour Trips and a potential of 3,450 PM Peak Hour Trips within the subarea. Using those numbers, the proportionate share for new development would be 91% of transportation improvement costs.

The actual share to be assessed would be based on a funding strategy that assumes a combination of:

- grants
- traffic impact fees
- city general funds
- county road funds
- private development contributions

BRIEFLY

PM Peak Hour Trips

347 = Current

3,450 = Potential

FRONTAGE IMPROVEMENTS

A significant portion of the arterial-collector system and nearly all local streets will be funded and built by new development as growth occurs. To mitigate their impacts, new developments are required to improve or build streets along their frontage. These frontage improvements must be proportional to the development's impacts.

A traffic impact fee credit is issued whenever these frontage improvements mesh with capital projects listed in the impact fee program. In effect, the impact fees collected to complete a project are transferred to private developers when they construct the project instead of the City.

DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS

Occasionally, the City and a private developer may strike a contract to complete off-site improvements necessary to make the development viable. These development agreements are almost always a condition of the development's approval and detail the necessary improvements and processes agreed to by the parties.

FEDERAL GRANTS

The following is a non-inclusive list of the more commonly used federal grant programs:

Bridge Replacement & Rehabilitation - Rehabilitation or replacement of local agency bridges.

Surface Transportation Program (STP) - Construction of improvements on federally classified roads.

STP Hazard Elimination Program - Construction of improvements to enhance safety by eliminating hazards.

STP Enhancement Program - Construction of non-motorized transportation projects.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality - Construct projects that improve air quality (general capacity increasing projects are not eligible).

STATE GRANTS

The following is a non-inclusive list of the more commonly used state grant programs:

WSDOT Nickel Gas Tax II Package New - Special tax for specified project list.

**IT'S YOUR NICKEL.
WATCH IT WORK.**

WSDOT School Safety Enhancements - Construct projects for traffic and pedestrian safety improvements near schools.

Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) Small City BRAC Program - Match program to assist small cities with the required match for federally funded bridge projects.

TIB Small City Pedestrian Safety and Mobility Program - Funds to enhance and promote pedestrian mobility and safety.

TIB Small City Program Funds - Funds to preserve and improve the roadway system.

Rural Arterial Program - County road and bridge reconstruction.

Arterial Preservation Program - Preserve existing paved county arterial road networks.

LOANS

While the above revenues are anticipated to cover program costs over time, additional funds are often needed to capitalize projects. Loans often become the primary financing mechanism in these cases.

Public Works Trust Fund Construction Loan Program – This is a revolving low interest loan fund to help local government finance critical public works needs. This program was recently used to fund La Center's wastewater treatment plant upgrade.

FUNDING STRATEGY

The city would rely on a combination of Traffic Impact Fees (TIF), grants, general funds, private developer reimbursements, and developer frontage improvements to complete the necessary transportation improvements.

- Frontage improvements by developers would pay for most of the new collectors that run on either side of I-5.

INTERCHANGE FUNDING

The interchange improvements and the improvements to La Center Road from I-5 to the first intersection on either side of I-5 would be a large single project that would be managed by WSDOT.

- The estimated cost of this interchange is around \$10.7 million.

Large transportation projects like this are typically funded from numerous funding sources. In this case funding from state, county, and city funds could contribute to completion of the project. The table below gives a breakdown of a potential funding scenario in terms of percentages and costs.



Table 9: I-5 Interchange Funding

Funding Source	%	Amount
Traffic Impact Fees	35%	\$3,752,000
Federal Grant (WSDOT)	20%	\$2,144,000
City General Fund	5%	\$536,000
TIB State Grant Match	5%	\$536,000
County Road Fund	5%	\$536,000
Developer Contributions	30%	\$3,216,000
	100%	\$10,720,000

COLLECTOR FUNDING

The roughly \$21.4 Million cost of the remaining collectors and roads needed would be paid for by a combination of TIFs, developer frontage improvements, and general funds. The table below provides a breakdown of the potential funding scenario for these projects.

Table 10: Subarea Collector Funding

Funding Source	%	Amount
Traffic Impact Fees	30%	\$6,432,000
City General Fund	5%	\$1,072,000
Developer Contributions	65%	\$13,936,000
	100%	\$21,440,000

The combination of these funding scenarios would require a city commitment of \$1.6 million from the general fund. \$10.2 million would come from TIFs collected within the subarea.

SEWER

POTENTIAL REVENUES

Revenues for the sanitary sewer utility are primarily derived from two sources:

- a system development charge (SDC) solely for treatment capacity on an equivalent residential unit (ERU) basis¹.
- monthly billing rates.

System development charges (SDCs) offset capital costs, while monthly billings address maintenance and operations.



SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT CHARGE (SDC)

With the current SDC rate of \$7,800 and an anticipated growth of 4,595 ERUs over the next 20 years the city is expected to generate \$35.7 million for capital improvements over the next twenty years. This revenue will be used to pay for wastewater treatment plant improvements and to pay off existing debt for previous treatment system improvements. Adjustments to this rate may be necessary to address variances from anticipated growth rates, altered capital costs, debt service, etc.

LOANS

Public Works Trust Fund Loan Program - The City has historically relied on low-interest (0.5%) Public Works Trust Fund loans for funding of wastewater capital improvements. The State of Washington has eliminated future loans from the Public Works Trust Fund at this time, however, due to budget concerns. The table below lists the existing PWTF loans the City of La Center still needs to pay off.

Table 11: Public Works Trust Fund Loans

Loans	Amount	Remaining	Repayment
PC08-951-021	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	2028
PW-06-962-pre-119	\$1,000,000	\$541,667	2011
PW-02-691-015	\$1,904,926	\$1,306,991	2022
PW-01-691-pre-111	\$299,200	\$191,593	2021
PW-00-691-015	\$1,064,619	\$653,597	2020
PW-99-691-pre-015	\$128,700	\$67,739	2019
PW-5-94-784-008	\$499,100	\$132,887	2014

USDA Rural Development Program – USDA Rural Development provides grants and loans for wastewater system improvements to communities with a population under 10,000. The median household income of the community and the current sewer service rate helps determine whether the community is eligible for grants and the interest rate of the loans. Due to the relatively high incomes of residents in La Center, the wastewater system would probably not

BRIEFLY

Public Works Trust Fund

The mission of the Public Works Board (administrator of the Public Works Trust Fund) is to provide financial and technical assistance to Washington communities for critical public health, safety, and environmental infrastructure.

www.pwb.wa.gov

¹ Conveyance infrastructure costs are to be borne solely by the benefitting property.

be eligible for grants and the interest rate would be at the market level which is currently 4.25%. At this rate, it may be better to use reserves to pay for improvements because the loan would cost more than what the city could make in interest with its reserves.

FUNDING STRATEGY

READ MORE

More information about the **Capital Facilities Plan** can be found on the “City Planner” page of the City of La Center web site.

www.ci.lacenter.wa.us

The wastewater treatment plant improvements needed to serve the junction area are part of the existing approved *La Center Urban Area Capital Facilities Plan*. Generally, those improvements will be paid for by loans that are paid back through SDC's and monthly rates. If a Public Works Trust Fund loan is not available for the next needed improvement, the City may need to use reserves or apply to the USDA Rural Development program for a loan.

The collection system improvements described in this subarea plan need to be funded differently. Expansions of collection systems do not qualify for Public Works Trust Fund or Rural Development loans. La Center would also not qualify for economic development loans that are designated for economically distressed communities. Current City policy is to require developers to pay for all collection system improvements required to connect to the existing sewer system.

The 20-year cost to install a collection system in La Center Road is an estimated \$7.6 million which could be cost prohibitive for individual developers within the subarea. Other funding options that remain include using general fund reserves and being repaid as customers connect to the system, creating a local improvement district, or working with the Port of Ridgefield.

The advantage of using a local improvement district or the Port of Ridgefield is the ability to issue bonds to pay for the improvements. Municipal bonds are very expensive compared to government loans, however, and it is very hard to find buyers in today's financial markets. Resorting to bonds to pay for improvements should only be used when all other options have been eliminated.

The city has existing reserves that could pay for the improvements upfront. The city could then recover the costs through a collections system SDC that would apply only to development in the area served by the improvements.

- Based on the projected average daily demand of 689,070 gallons per day from the *Junction Sewer Pre-Design Report*, the urban growth area south of La Center Bridge that includes the junction subarea has a potential of adding 2,297 ERUs to the wastewater system.
- The 20-year cost of the backbone improvements along Center Road is \$7.6 Million. Dividing that amount by the 2,297 ERUs would create a collection system SDC of \$3,309 per ERU.
- Adding that to the current treatment system ERU of \$7,800 would create a total wastewater SDC of \$11,109 per ERU for development within the subarea.
- The city could assess a collection system surcharge on the monthly sewer fees instead of the SDC. Spreading out the SDC of \$3,309 over 20 years would equate to a \$13.78 collection system surcharge per ERU not counting any possible interest collected for spreading out the SDC over 20 years.

If a private developer or group of developers does not come forward to pay for the collection system improvements, the recommendation is for the city to use its reserves to pay for the improvements and then assess a collection system SDC on all new users to that system. This would be the cheapest alternative in terms of interest paid by the city for the improvements. Loans or bonds could be used if reserves are too low to pay for the improvements.

PARKS, TRAILS & OPEN SPACES

In general, the City will rely heavily on Park Impact Fees (PIF) and grants to fund needed park improvements (approximately 70 to 80%). Other funding will need to be provided from Real Estate Excise Tax revenues, the City's General Fund, bonds, levies, user fees, gifts, or donations.

POTENTIAL REVENUES

Park impact fees and grants fund the bulk of most parks programs within Southwest Washington. Grants are particularly important to overall parks funding, but are difficult for small cities to compete for.

PARK IMPACT FEES (PIFs)

Park Impact Fees are charged to new residential building permits as a way to pay for increased demand for parks, trails and open space. The funds are dedicated to park projects identified in the city's adopted capital facilities plan. The types of public park facilities that can benefit from impact fees include: planning, acquisition, site improvements, necessary off-site improvements, construction, engineering, architectural permitting, financing, administration, and capital equipment pertaining to parks.

Park impact fees cannot be used as the only source for park acquisition; nor can they be used for operating or maintenance expenses associated with parks. Current policy allows for PIF credits when a developer makes a contribution in the form of easements, dedications or payments in lieu of fees, toward parks, recreation, and trail system improvement projects identified in the La Center Capital Facilities Plan. La Center's current PIF rate is \$4,000 per dwelling unit.

La Center's 2006 population was 2,315 and the 2024 population is estimated to be 9,827. About 2,800 new dwelling units are anticipated overall. At the adopted impact fee rate of \$4,000 dollars per unit, this would generate \$11 million over the course of the current comprehensive plan.



STATE GRANT PROGRAMS

Most state grants for parks, trails, and open space are administered by the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO).

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) – Provides grants for the purchase, improvement, or protection of aquatic lands for public purposes, and for providing and improving access to such lands. It is guided by concepts originally developed by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, including re-establishment of naturally self-sustaining ecological functions related to aquatic lands, providing or restoring public access to the water, and increasing public awareness of aquatic lands as a finite natural resource and irreplaceable public heritage.



Boating Facilities Program (BFP) – These funds assist in acquiring, developing, and renovating boating facilities, including launching ramps, transient moorage, and support facilities on fresh and salt waters.

Firearms and Archery Range Recreation Program (FARR) – Acquire, develop, and renovate public and private nonprofit firearm range and archery training and practice facilities.

Non-highway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities Program (NOVA) – Helps develop and manage recreation opportunities for such activities as cross-country skiing, hiking, horseback riding, mountain bicycling, hunting, fishing, sightseeing, motorcycling, and riding all-terrain and four-wheel drive vehicles.

Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) - Administers two grant programs for protection and restoration of salmon habitat. The board also supports feasibility assessments for future projects and other activities.

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) – Provides funding for parks, water access sites, trails, wildlife habitat, and farmland preservation.

Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) – For acquiring, developing, equipping, maintaining, and improving youth and community athletic facilities. The program was approved by Washington voters as part of Referendum 48, which provides funding for the Seattle Seahawks stadium.

FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAMS

Boating Infrastructure Grant Program – Provides funding for recreational transient boating facilities, targeting the needs of recreational boats 26 feet and larger.

Recreational Trails Programs – Provides funds to rehabilitate and maintain recreational trails and facilities that provide a backcountry experience.

Land and Water Conservation Fund – Provides funding to assist in preserving, developing, and assuring accessibility to outdoor recreation resources including but not limited to parks, trails, wildlife lands, and other lands and facilities desirable for individual active participation.

THE CITY'S GENERAL FUND

The City should target at least \$50,000 dollars on average per year to fund park improvements. While the General Fund is the primary source of City revenue and is reserved for many other services that often take priority over parks funding, nonetheless the City will need some limited funds on hand for parks. Furthermore, many grants require the City to match available funds that are offered and the City must identify a funding source.

The City should pursue grant funding, which will require either staff or consultant time. The RCO funding cycle begins in 2009 and 2011 and the applications for each are due in 2008 and 2010. The six-year funding strategy assumes the City could acquire \$100,000 per year or \$600,000 over this six-year period.

REAL ESTATE EXCISE TAX (REET)

Washington law authorizes cities to impose excise taxes on the sale of real property, referred to as Real Estate Excise Tax. In 2005, La Center generated \$96,160 and \$255,779 in 2006.

Although land sales have not occurred as often as in 2005 to 2006, it is anticipated that, once the economy recovers, property in La Center will continue to be bought and sold at a steady rate in the next six years. The City's informal policy is to periodically dedicate REET revenues to parks.

BONDS & LEVIES

Municipal bonds may be general obligations of the issuer or secured by specified revenues such as impact fees or real estate excise taxes. Interest income (generally paid to bond holders semi-annually) is often exempt from the federal and state income tax.

A property tax levy (RCW 36.68) specific to parks must be approved by 60% of the affected voters. Such levies run for six years and may not exceed sixty cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value. With a total assessed value of about \$19.8 million, a subarea-wide parks levy could only generate \$12,000 per year or less. This revenue would, of course, increase as development occurs and property values rise.

USER FEES

Many local jurisdictions assess user fees at public parks, swimming pools and along local streets (parking meters). Permits and licenses can also be included in this category. While user fees are a small share of federal and state revenue, they make up 20 percent of revenues raised in local jurisdictions. Even so, the revenues generated are usually insufficient to offset ongoing operations and maintenance.

GIFTS AND DONATIONS

The City anticipates a very modest level of gifts and land donations. For funding, it is assumed the City would receive an average of \$50,000 per year in the form of either land donations or gifts. This equates to one acre of land being donated every four years.

LOANS

Because impact fees and other funding tend to trickle in over time, there may be an occasional need for loans to generate enough project capital. Such loans should be considered financing tools rather than funding. The low-interest Public Works Trust Fund loan program is a common example.

FUNDING STRATEGY

- The adopted capital facilities plan for parks, trails & open space totals some \$49.5 million through 2024 for a calculated park impact fee of over \$13,000 per dwelling unit.
- At the current adopted rate of \$4,000 per dwelling unit, the program would only generate \$11 million.
- Aggressive grant solicitation could result in an additional \$10 million to \$15 million.
- This leaves nearly \$20 million to be funded by the city's General Fund, Real Estate Excise Tax revenue, gifts and donations.

A more practical funding limit for the program is about \$28 million where at least 80% of the funding comes from impact fees and grants. This would result in a more acceptable \$4 million load on other revenues, and assumes



the current rate remains in place. Look for future changes in the parks program reflecting these changes.

With the bulk of the subarea in non-residential zoning, the focus will primarily be on trails. Roughly 5.5 miles of trails are planned at a cost of about \$1.5 million, with the bulk being on-street facilities. Because on-street trails are relatively inexpensive when constructed with street improvements, these facilities can be accommodated even within a significantly reduced parks program.

In addition, current city code requires multi-family housing to provide one-quarter acre of 'family' park for every 35 dwelling units. Given the net buildable acreage in the subarea and present parcelization, this would result in roughly 2 to 6 acres of 'family' parks. At a minimum, each park will include play structure(s), benches, bike racks, paved paths, and an 'undeveloped' play area.

Table 12: Trails Funding

Funding Source	%	Amount
Park Impact Fees	40%	\$592,800
State Grants	40%	\$592,800
City General Fund	10%	\$148,200
Real Estate Excise Tax	5%	\$74,100
Developer Contributions	5%	\$74,100
Total	100%	\$1,482,000

“RETURN ON INVESTMENT”

Although public entities do not typically operate under a return on investment paradigm, it is useful to determine long-term city tax revenues to identify the upper end of reasonable investment within the subarea. The City will begin to receive property and sales tax revenues as soon as properties are developed. These tax revenues will eventually offset any City funding of infrastructure within the area and provide funds for city operations, maintenance and other future services.

To develop tax revenue projections, subarea acreages were classified as Commercial (Retail), Commercial (Office), Mixed Use, Light Industrial (Material Supply), Light Industrial (Logistics and Distribution), and residential according to the preferred alternative (Alternative Y).

Average assessed values, based on recent comparable assessments, were assigned and multiplied by the current city property tax millage rate (1.17262 per thousand).

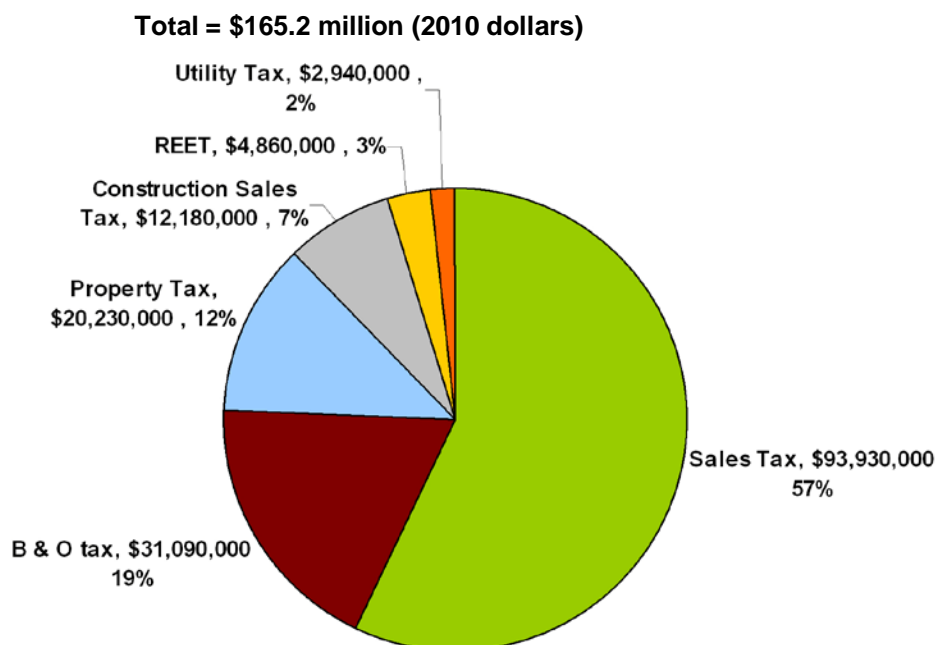
For sales & use tax projections, acreages were converted to enclosed square footage through assumed floor area ratios (FARs). Although sales per square foot vary widely (\$50-\$825), taxable sales per square foot were estimated at \$100 to \$200 based on the type of land use. Multiplying the estimated sales per square foot by the estimated square footage provides projected sales tax revenues, for the entire subarea at build-out.

At full build-out, the subarea could produce tax revenues totaling \$165 to \$182 million over the next 40 years. Of that, La Center would receive \$15 to

17 million, for a return on its investment between 8:1 and 10:1 (9:1 being the local average).

Although the state is clearly the major recipient of taxes, bear in mind that the state funds education, as well as social, health and other human services by itself. Nonetheless, the city will vigorously pursue state grants in exchange for this added state revenue.

Chart 2: Net Present Value of Projected Revenue by Source to 2047



SUMMARY

Total capital expenditures are expected to be about \$41 million in 2010 dollars. The following table details expected revenues and expenses.

Table 13: Revenue & Expenditure Summary

	Roads	Sewer	Parks
REVENUES			
Traffic Impact Fees	\$10,184,000	-	-
Sewer Sys. Dev. Charges	-	\$7,540,000	-
Park Impact Fees	-	-	\$592,800
Federal Grants	\$2,144,000	-	-
State Grants	\$536,000	-	\$592,800
Clark County Road Fund	\$536,000	-	-
Real Estate Excise Tax	-	-	\$74,100
City General Fund	\$1,608,000	-	\$148,200
Developer Contributions	\$17,152,000	-	\$74,100
	\$32,160,000	\$7,540,000	\$1,482,000
EXPENDITURES			
I-5 interchange	\$10,720,000	\$0	\$0
Subarea collectors	\$21,440,000	\$0	\$0
La Center Road Sewer Main	\$0	\$7,540,000	\$0
Trails	\$0	\$0	\$1,482,000
	\$32,160,000	\$7,540,000	\$1,482,000



CHAPTER 7

ACTION STEPS

INITIAL ACTIONS

ANNEXATION

The benefitting area(s) should be annexed to the City of La Center before any capital improvements are made.

EXTEND WASTEWATER MAIN TO JUNCTION

The city has developed a preliminary design for extension of a sewer main running along La Center Road to the I-5 junction after studying four different alternatives. The recommended collection system consists of a main to run along La Center Road, a sewage lift station at McCormick Creek and a siphon under the La Center Bridge. The initial cost estimate for the recommended alternative is \$7.63 million over two construction phases.

SECONDARY ACTIONS

24TH/26TH AVENUE (COLLECTOR)

The City of La Center is planning a new bridge across the East Fork Lewis River. This bridge would be located in the area north of the subarea and east of I-5. It is assumed the roadway approaching the future bridge would follow the alignments of 24th / 26th Avenues because utilizing the existing rights-of-way reduces the need for property acquisition and additional road construction.

31ST AVENUE (COLLECTOR)

31st Avenue provides a local street connection to the City of Ridgefield. The roadway becomes 45th Avenue in the city limits of Ridgefield and intersects Pioneer Street (State Route 501) at a recently constructed roundabout. The intersection of 31st Avenue with 319th Street is located only 100 feet from the I-5 southbound ramp. A realignment of 31st Avenue to the west is limited by the presence of sensitive areas south of 319th Street. WSDOT has indicated this spacing must be addressed before any improvements are made to the interchange.

PARADISE PARK ROAD (COLLECTOR)

Paradise Park Road runs along the east side of I-5, north and south of La Center Road, with an intersection only 125 feet east of the I-5 northbound ramp. As with 31st Avenue, this intersection would need to be relocated to the east with any interchange improvement.

324TH STREET (COLLECTOR)

An alignment connecting 324th Street directly to Paradise Park Road at the current 31st Avenue intersection is recommended. This would provide a 90-degree intersection, as opposed to the current skewed approach of 31st Avenue. A new intersection would be provided for 31st Avenue at 324th Street, approximately 275 feet to the east of Paradise Park Road.

INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENTS

As the area develops, the existing I-5 interchange will need to be improved to handle increased traffic volumes and provide access to properties in the area. Three options were developed for further review, based on consideration of access requirements, safety, intersection spacing, roadway connectivity, and impacts on sensitive lands. In this analysis, the alternatives are addressed in more detail including roadway widths, intersection traffic control, and costs. Each option alternatively addresses the probable traffic generated by La Center's growth and/or a casino-resort that would result from federal approval of a new reservation for the Cowlitz Tribe. No further work is anticipated until a federal decision regarding the Cowlitz Tribe is made.

AS DEVELOPMENT OCCURS

PARADISE POINT TRAIL (T1)

This rustic trail (cedar chips and gravel, 6-8' wide) will be approximately 0.2 miles in length and would provide connection between the proposed County trail located along Paradise Park Road to the east end of Paradise State Park and the proposed East Fork of the Lewis River Regional trail system.

WEST-SIDE CONNECTOR (T2)

This on-street pathway will be approximately 2.0 miles in length and begins at the intersection of 31st Avenue and 324th Avenue following the roadway to the proposed west side bridge over the East Fork of the Lewis River then completing the circuit by following a future major collector roadway north to NE 14th Avenue, eventually linking the south and north side of town and to a future school.

LA CENTER ROAD PATHWAY (T5)

This on-street pathway is approximately 3.75 miles in length and would parallel Pacific Highway and NW La Center Road. This trail will link Interstate 5 to downtown and eventually toward the northwest part of the City. It will also provide access to regional trails, boat launches, and trail heads.

TRI-MOUNTAIN TRAIL (T17)

This rustic trail is approximately 0.44 miles in length and would link the east side of Tri Mountain Trail and highway interchange back to the north and access the McCormick Creek trail system.

NW 31ST PATHWAY (T18)

This on-street pathway is approximately 1.26 miles in length and would parallel NW 31st Street from La Center Road and to NW 299th Street. This trail would provide a connection between Tri-Mountain Golf course and La Center road, eventually linking up with the trail system that returns to downtown.

NW 299TH PATHWAY (T19)

This on-street pathway is approximately 0.8 miles in length and would parallel NW 199th Street from the west end of the Planning Area to the Interstate-5 corridor and eventually could be extended to the Tri-Mountain Golf Course.

BRIEFLY

Approximate Proposed Trail Lengths

Paradise Point Trail – 0.2 miles

West-Side Connector – 2 miles

La Center Road Pathway – 3.75 miles

Tri-Mountain Trail – 0.44 miles

NW 31st Pathway – 1.26 miles

NW 299th Pathway – 0.8 miles

AS APPROPRIATE

BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

While the recruitment and attraction of new target businesses to the area is important, retaining and growing existing local companies, including small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures, is equally critical to economic vitality.

ESTABLISH A CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LEAD

La Center should establish an economic development “department”. Leveraging resources will be important here – the structure, for example, could be a joint effort with a neighboring community like Ridgefield or Battle Ground (which has approached La Center about this specific idea in the past).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MARKETING

As the infrastructure gets developed, the City should develop an economic development marketing program that develops a brand and leverages La Center’s strong assets and positive lifestyle image. As a first step, La Center should establish a web presence communicating community competitive advantages. It will then want to identify and determine target industry companies that best match with the unique assets that La Center offers and subsequently develop a strategy to recruit those companies to the area.

ENHANCE LA CENTER’S POSITION WITHIN THE REGION

As La Center begins to market itself and develops the capability to support this business investment, it will need to position itself to sustain its economic growth in the longer term. Industries today are increasingly looking at a community’s human capital – or pool of skilled workers – in deciding where to invest. La Center will need to ensure that its current and future workforce can be a critical asset for the community by improving educational attainment.