

Attachment A

City of Stanwood Storefront Improvement Program Supporting Policies

Action Strategies

The City has spent the last 20 years planning for the future of Stanwood. From various community outreach efforts and city planning, several planning documents have been adopted, which indicate the need for the Storefront Improvement Program.

The Storefront Improvement Program is founded in the following city policy guidance:

2015 Comprehensive Plan:

Downtown Stanwood is the heart and soul of the greater Stanwood – Camano community and residents want to preserve its small-town character. Preservation of its older, historic buildings and infrastructure is a key component of sustaining its small-town character while still promoting growth and development. With downtown being in the floodplain and small business owners struggling to keep their doors open, the Storefront Improvement Program is intended to support the city's goals of preserving and promoting Stanwood as a family friendly place to live and shop.

Land Use Goal 2: Re-vitalize and reinforce the character of Stanwood's existing residential and commercial neighborhoods as infill and redevelopment occur.

LU Policy 2.3 Encourage restoration of existing deteriorated structures built before 1950.

LU Policy 2.9: Maintain commercial centers with a sufficient range of uses: a. To allow residents to meet their basic daily needs within town, b. Support a network of personal and business interactions that result in a friendly hometown.

Land Use Goal 3: Recognize Stanwood's existing character, scale, and neighborhood quality as assets that will add to the desirability of the community when incorporated into the design of new residential development.

LU Policy 3.3: Allow re-use of existing structures. When structures display a desired historic period, architectural character and scale, allow flexible interpretations of standards to encourage re-investment.

Land Use Goal 7: Develop a vital, attractively designed Downtown Center.

LU Policy 7.3: Provide incentives for property owners to facilitate the improvement of deteriorated facades, signage and general outside appearance in the downtown. Base the improvements on the design characteristics of the downtown.

LU Policy 7.6: Promote restoration of historic buildings and encourage compatibility of new developments with historic structures.

Economic
Development Goal 1:

Promote economic vitality defined as a lively growth-oriented business climate that supports a wide range of private and public investments resulting in development and business activity that diversifies the City's tax base and provides both employment and consumer shopping opportunities for city and unincorporated area residents.

ED Policy 1.1: Develop a toolkit of incentives such as property tax exemptions density bonuses or public private partnerships to attract desired uses such as mixed-use development or retail businesses that would not be viable based on current market conditions but would contribute to the economic vitality of the city.

ED Policy 1.2: Develop incentives for property owners to improve deteriorating facades, signage and the general outside appearance of buildings.

Economic
Development Goal 2:

Develop strong community partners

ED Policy 2.4: Encourage cooperative downtown improvement planning and implementation efforts between the City and private partners and other business organizations.

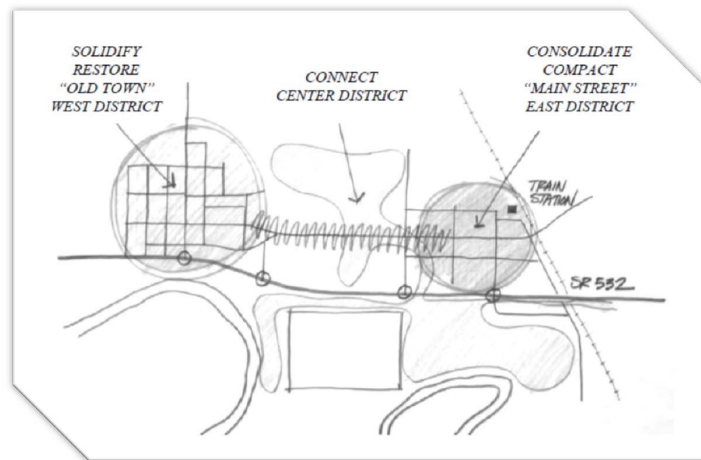
Economic
Development Goal 5:

Support economic development strategies by including amenities attractive to employees and investors into project design.

ED Policy 5.1: Encourage high quality site and building design with "curb appeal" that encourages further investment in the area.

Downtown Master Plan:

While downtown Stanwood serves as the retail center for the community, it also serves as the public center of the greater Stanwood – Camano area. The downtown is the heart of the city and provides a place where commercial and civic activities can take place, and an atmosphere and identity the community can embrace. The historic districts of downtown must be protected and preserved for a strong and unified downtown. The Storefront Improvement Program is intended to support the city's goals of protecting downtown Stanwood from further loss of business and economic vitality, recognizing the importance of the historic districts, and unifying downtown.



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East Stanwood Historic District

Emphasize the feeling of Main Street, with shopping connected to the railroad and contiguous storefronts that open onto the sidewalk.

Strategies 1A: Create continuous storefronts that open onto sidewalk for two blocks west of 88th avenue.

Strategies 2F: Encourage street level amenities such as flower boxes, outdoor displays and creative signage that provides interesting things to look at on the street.

West Stanwood Historic District

Maintain the existing feel of simplicity the West District has already. Reinforce what West Stanwood already has. West Stanwood should emphasize the character of "small town" or "old town".

Strategies 1A: Retain and restore the older houses and commercial structures in the West End.

Strategies 1B: Require infill development to be consistent with the historic characters of the West End.

Strategies 2E: Use selective infill development to reinforce nooks and crannies and maintain historical context.

Center District

Develop the Center District as the center of the downtown with a mix of retail, service, government, educational, institutional, and open space uses that connect the two historic downtown nodes.

- Strategies 5: Encourage small scale infill development and conversion of small houses to other uses.
- Strategies 12: Locate required parking inward to the development to maximize building frontage along the sidewalk.

SDAT: Destiny by Design:

The greater Stanwood – Camano area is recognized for its small-town characteristic and aesthetics. With development and growth in the community, the City of Stanwood must take action to preserve the small-town characteristics of downtown, while still encouraging sustainable initiatives that will benefit business and residents in downtown. To support existing business in downtown, the Storefront Improvement Program will support the city’s goals of creating initiatives that will positively affect businesses and residents in the area.



Retaining People Who Are Already Downtown and Creating New Anchors

East and West Stanwood already have a critical mass of customers who come downtown. Unfortunately, many, if not the majority, of those customers come for a single purpose (eat a meal, take a train, purchase a supply) and then leave. Retaining these customers and making it more desirable for them to visit multiple businesses can be very effective.

- Step 2: Adopt Local Infrastructure Project Area Financing (LIPA), authorized by Snohomish County (Chapter 318, Laws of 2011) to prioritize projects that support the downtown.
- Step 3: Redesign Main Street so that it is a true Main Street, and not a highway referred to as Main Street. This would transform the pedestrian experience and make it more desirable to walk from midtown to either downtown.

Economic
Development

As development on portions of Route 532 have taken on a sprawl character, the identity of downtown Stanwood has become even more important. Downtown represents the civic heart of Stanwood and, in order to be a vibrant civic center, it needs a strategy appropriate to its scale, buildings, and businesses.

Business Development: Stanwood can work with existing businesses to expand or adapt their product mix to align with the downtown strategies, it can recruit new businesses downtown from elsewhere in the region, or it can attract and seed entrepreneurs to open new businesses.

It is important to recognize that “business development” is one pillar of advancing these strategies. The growth will simultaneously need the support of a marketing program (advertising, social media, brochures, tourism partners), and it will need to be accompanied by physical enhancements – to both the historic buildings and to the 1960s and more recent retail development – to create the attractive setting that will attract additional customers to downtown Stanwood.

Urban Design

An effective urban design vision begins with the role of identity in structuring an Imageable community – one with strong and memorable identity.

Plan 1: Use landscape architecture to structure a common identity.

West Stanwood: Due to flooding concerns and the area’s proximity to the water in West Stanwood, new building construction is simply not feasible. However, since some of the city’s most historic and well-defined urban neighborhoods are found in West Stanwood, district features can be reinforced through clusters streetscape improvements (street trees, groundcover, curbless rights-of-ways, and continuous decorative pavement)

East Stanwood: While most commercial Main Streets traditionally are not tree lined, streetscapes marking entry ways from Highway 532 along 88 Avenue are recommended to announce the presence of the Main Street commercial district. Tree-lined streetscapes define the edge and center of the otherwise amorphous Main Street district and add value to underperforming and vacant property ripe for development.

Plan 2: Preserve important legacy structures. Signature structures in the build environment remind us of our heritage and/or harbor memories of important community happenings. Many of these structures also hold unique architectural qualities and their vernacular imagery acquire landmark status over time. Even industrial buildings from past generations, now attract affection and project significance.

Economic Development Action Plan:

The City of Stanwood is continuing to build on its historic foundations and community strengths and is creating an environment of economic opportunity and a future of prosperity in downtown. The Storefront Improvement Program will continue to retain Stanwood’s small town character and rural heritage, while strengthening the downtown as the city center, making it a better place to live for current residents and more attractive for visitors and new participants in the economy.

Part 1: Programmatic Strategies Specific actions that the City and its Community Partners can take to strengthen Stanwood’s economy.

Education Program: Cultivate a culture supportive of economic development among residents, business owners and members of the City organization.

Desired Outcomes:

- A common understanding of the desired outcomes and benefits associated with the City’s economic development efforts.

Action Strategies:

- Engaged and aligned City organization and community partners.
- Engage elected officials and city staff
- Engage the community
- Incorporate economic development as a priority for the City

Development Services Program: Establish the systems and processes needed to facilitate investment in Stanwood.

Desired Outcomes:

- A development climate that is facilitative of desirable investment in the community.
- A reputation as being a good community to invest, with clear and predictable expectations.
- Accurate information about the implications of building in the floodplain.

Action Strategies:

- Establish a development review system that incorporates economic development considerations.
- Make development services system and process improvements and solicit ongoing feedback.
- Address floodplain issues.

<p>Zoning and Development Standards Work Program:</p>	<p>Ensure City codes support development that achieves economic development objectives.</p> <p><i>Desired Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop regulations that encourage – and do not inadvertently inhibit – desirable development that achieves economic development objectives. <p><i>Action Strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and revise existing zoning regulations and design guidelines.
<p>Historic Resources Program:</p>	<p>Preserve and enhance Stanwood’s historic assets.</p> <p><i>Desired Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preservation of the character of the City’s downtown in ways that do not inhibit desirable investment. ▪ Additional tools and resources to support investment in older building by property owners. <p><i>Action Strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Replicate successful historic elements to enhance Stanwood’s small town character. ▪ Provide information and resources. ▪ Develop a better understanding of the city’s historic resources and determine appropriate preservation strategies.
<p>Economic Development Direct Support Program:</p>	<p>Encourage desired investment through City programs and investments.</p> <p><i>Desired Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public infrastructure investment that catalyzes private investment. ▪ Financial tools and incentives to encourage desirable investment. <p><i>Action Strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plan capital investments to support economic development goals. ▪ Develop policies and tools

Downtown Revitalization Program:

Develop a comprehensive program to enhance Downtown Stanwood in cooperation with community partners.

Desired Outcomes:

- An effective community-based organization that represents Downtown interests and generates strong cooperation, civic pride, and coordination among downtown businesses.
- Community-supported plans that retain and enhance the character of downtown.
- Short- and long-term improvements to the physical appearance of downtown.
- Attractive gateways and easy access to draw passersby into downtown.

Action Strategies:

- Engage and Organize Downtown Stakeholders
- Invest in Downtown Beautification
- Build on Stanwood Station as a Focal Point for Downtown Revitalization
- Connect the Eastern and Western Nodes of Downtown
- Demarcate Downtown and Make it Accessible

Tourism Program:

Enhance Stanwood's tourism draw.

Desired Outcomes:

- Enhance the infrastructure to support visitors to Stanwood.
- Increase visitation and spending by out-of-town guests, targeting those who currently pass through town on the way to Camano Island.
- Restore the community's connection to the waterfront, creating public access for residents and visitors.

Action Strategies:

- Make it easy for visitors to discover, plan for, and experience Stanwood attractions.
- Continue to seek opportunities to reconnect the community to the river.

Design Stanwood:

The City of Stanwood hosts a variety of building types, intermixing commercial and residential, specifically in the downtown area. With new developments potentially coming to Stanwood, and existing recent developments, the older buildings in the downtown area need assistance to maintain conditions and to create an inviting downtown for residents and visitors. The Storefront Improvement Program intends to support the city's mission of honoring the rich history of the city and unify the downtown.



West Stanwood Recommendations

- Promote restoration of existing buildings.
- With selected infills, reinforce the nooks and crannies, and maintain the historical context.
- Restore the existing brick road.
- Add more historical light fixtures, as well as banners and hanging baskets on streetlights.

East Stanwood Recommendations

- Recreate contiguous storefronts that open onto sidewalk.
- Existing buildings will need to upgrade rear entries of the buildings to make them attractive and functional.

Central Commons Recommendations

- Buildings face open space, sideways to street. Put parking in the rear.
- Use existing commercial buildings on Main Street. Older houses used for retail are good for small start-up businesses.
- Build a pedestrian corridor using old sloughs as an open space system. Take advantage of these remnants that are part of Stanwood's heritage.

General Recommendations

- Preserve your edges. Preserve and protect the setting of Stanwood.
- Maintain established character in parts of town.
- Support the character of East Stanwood through retail and transportation to bring customers to the front doors of the business.