



Downtown Burien Master Plan – Phase II

December 2002

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(Phase II)

Public, Educational, and Cultural Facilities Component



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Table of Contents

I.	INTRODUCTION	page	5
II.	PROCESS	page	7
	1. Space and Facility Needs	page	7
	2. Community Climate Findings	page	8
	(picture, Miller Plaza Pavillion)	page	8
	(picture, Miller Plaza Pavillion, inside)	page	8
	3. Possible Downtown Program	page	10
	4. DOWNTOWN PLAN CORE GOALS	page	14
	5. DOWNTOWN DESIGN PRINCIPLES	page	15
III.	SCHEMATIC DESIGN ALTERNATIVES	page	16
	Image, Topographic Analysis	page	17
	Images, Option A and B1	page	18
	Images, Option B2 and C	page	19
	Image, Option D	page	20
	Image, Alternative A	page	22
	Image, Alternative B	page	24
	Image, Alternative C	page	26
IV.	PREFERRED CONCEPTUAL ALTERNATIVE	page	28
	Image, North/South Section	page	29
	Image, East/West Section	page	29
	Image, Conceptual Site Plan	page	31
	Image, Circulation Plan	page	33
	Image, Conceptual Plan, Perspective View	page	35
	Images, Phase One and Phase Two plans	page	37
V.	RECOMMENDATIONS	page	38



I. INTRODUCTION

Burien Comprehensive Plan policies envision a downtown that will become a town center for Southwest King County, providing distinctive shopping, hotels, art galleries, museums, entertainment areas, performing arts center, movie theater, offices, residences, parks and open spaces, and government services.

In July 2000, the Burien City Council adopted the Conceptual Framework for the Town Square and Downtown Master Plan. This concluded the first phase of the Town Square and Downtown Master Plan process.

The Conceptual Framework, together with comprehensive plan policies, provided general guidance regarding the types of uses and activities that should be located in the downtown area, including public, educational and cultural facilities that will help make downtown Burien the civic focal point of the community.

Following the City Council acceptance of the conceptual framework the City began actively pursuing purchasing property within the downtown.

In February 2002, the City Council authorized a planning process to prepare a detailed plan for the development of public, educational and cultural facilities in downtown Burien. A steering group, consisting of leaders from these three sectors, was formed to work with the City and the consulting team to arrive at a preferred plan. The steering group held six meetings between April and October 2002. Two rounds of interviews were conducted with leaders from cultural, educational and public sectors. In addition, three community forums were held to receive public input, evaluate merits of different alternatives, and select the preferred alternative.



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II. PROCESS

Phase II planning work was built upon the work documented in the *Downtown Burien Handbook* (March 28, 2000). The aim was to conduct a thoughtful and productive public process identifying future space and facility needs and further defining the downtown's character and values — values, principles and ideas that will make Burien a unique, vital, and prosperous destination.

Formation of the Steering Group

The City invited representatives from a wide assortment of community organizations and community groups to serve on a steering group. The members represented the community as a whole with particular expertise and knowledge of the local, public, educational and cultural aspects of Burien and the greater Burien area. The steering group provided valuable input into the process and served as a sounding board for ideas and concepts developed during the process. The members' local knowledge was tapped to find other groups and/or organizations to contact and interview for this process. With the help of the steering group and the community at large, a list of interviewees was developed. The group also helped formulate a list of questions to be asked during the interview project.

6. Space and Facility Needs

In April and May of 2002, consultant Erling Mork conducted interviews from the list compiled by the steering group. The City received input from 19 community leaders representing public, educational and cultural organizations concerning their space and facility desires for future development in the downtown area. The following are numbers representing current ideas; they will be fine-tuned in the future:

Two art galleries	19,700 sq. ft.	(Display, sales and workshop)
Education: Highline Community College	1,000 sq. ft.	(work place skills development/ ESL classroom space)
Highline School District	1,000 sq. ft.	(work place skills development space)
Burien Live Theatre	3,000 sq. ft.	(or approximately 250 seats)
Burien Dance Theatre	4,000 sq. ft.	
ESD	60,000 sq. ft.	
Library	20,000 + sq. ft.	
City Hall	30,000 sq. ft.	
Choir	400-450 or 1000 seats, not 800	
Dance Ballet	350 seats	
Symphony	900 seats	
Highline School District	500 seats	
After-school theatre	500 seats	

2. Community Climate Findings

The City conducted six workshops with the steering group and three community forums to fine-tune the vision for the downtown area. The process included a presentation by Erling Mork, former city manager of Tacoma, Washington, on changes taking place in Tacoma. Mr. Mork discussed projects including the Washington State Historical Museum, Glass and Contemporary Art Museum, and the Tacoma Art Museum scheduled to open in 2003. Other projects Mr. Mork discussed were: the University of Washington Campus in Tacoma, Pantages Theater, Rialto Theater and the Tacoma Actors Guild Theater. Mr. Mork stated that these projects all happened because the City Council and community as a whole stayed on course and committed to a vision for their city. Milenko Matanovic presented changes that were initiated during the last decade in Chattanooga, Tennessee.



The group especially responded to the image of the Miller Plaza Pavilion, a structure in the heart of the downtown that serves as a “community living room.” The pavilion has garage door-like glass walls, allowing it to be opened and closed depending on the weather and community functions. The space is used for a variety of events (concerts, conferences, meetings, exhibits), as well as by individuals enjoying quiet time or lunch.



The main work of the steering group meetings and community forums was to first identify needs for future public, educational and cultural facilities (see above). This process also indicated a very positive community climate with the following characteristics:

- Economic Opportunities: In addition to being a center for the Burien community, the downtown area could fulfill regional needs such as: fostering cultural activities, conference center (supply meeting spaces), hotel, quality restaurants and a generally vital downtown that can attract visitors from Sea-Tac Airport. Cultural tourism also is possible as the arts become more visible.
- Collaborative Opportunities: The community has a willingness to find mutually beneficial relationships and collaborate on a plan that mixes government, business, cultural, and educational amenities for mutual benefit, and that pursues collaborative solutions such as shared facilities, parking, training and promotional opportunities. For example, the City is eager to have its future Town Square have mixed uses and share facilities with educational and cultural organizations. The Northwest Symphony Orchestra would be willing/desirous of sharing office space. The Puget Sound Educational Service District (ESD) would be willing to share space with a gallery and help sponsor regional art exhibits. ESD also would like four large conference rooms that could be shared with others. The Highline Community College would like to participate in joint art exhibits. Entertainment facilities/activities should utilize joint promotional efforts and combine ticketing. The community college and local theater can work together to teach students about theater operations and management.
- Artistic Vitality: Burien is poised to grow culturally, with many long-standing organizations (galleries, theater, dance, symphony, choral music, preservation societies, etc.) looking for facilities and venues. There is a potential to create a rich downtown with a cultural center, galleries, public art, meeting spaces (demand for meeting space is great), art studios, and year-round programming of events. Existing institutions are Burien Live Theater, Northwest Symphony Orchestra, Cantare choral group, the Highline Historical Society, a dance group, several galleries, and more. It is not hard to imagine new organizations forming in the future. A strong first step could be a multi-purpose facility designed to adapt itself to different purposes, from theater performances, lectures and conferences, to exhibits. This “cultural greenhouse” can incubate many existing and emerging activities that can, when growth dictates, find their independent facilities.



- Shared Commitment to a Vital Downtown: The Downtown Phase II planning process reconfirmed a strong agreement for turning the downtown into a memorable and vital “heart” area — a place for people of all ages to visit for a variety of reasons (mixed-use). The community wants to create a civic “campus” where government, cultural and educational institutions, housing opportunities and businesses can combine to create a rich mix encouraging pedestrian uses throughout the day and on the weekends. Due to its proximity to Sea-Tac Airport, Downtown Burien could become a convenient point of destination for conferences, shopping, and visiting.
- Building Upon the Natural Environment: The downtown should have a Northwest character, anchored in local topography, watershed and climate (many trees, buildings facing the sun for solar gain, capturing rainwater, etc.). Burien residents desire a humane downtown that has human scale, suitable for small-scale businesses, and has pedestrian-friendly streets and gathering spaces. They also want to recognize historic roots (trolley and other history) that can be strengthened through public art. The growing cultural diversity of the community can and should be recognized.
- Cultural Richness: Burien is becoming very culturally diverse and this ethnic richness should be considered in all future plans.

3. Possible Downtown Program

The community process generated many ideas for what specific functions, organizations, and uses can be located in the downtown area, focusing on cultural, educational and public amenities.

Small Performing Theater Facility

- A multi-use cultural facility that serves as a “greenhouse” for many cultural and community activities; once a particular activity (theater or dance performances, art exhibits, lectures, dance floor, etc.) grows in strength, it can move to its own space
- A theater facility with rehearsal space, space to build sets, good concession facilities, ticket sales booth, office space, light booth, and other amenities
- Rehearsal hall
- Dance space

Visual Arts Facilities

- Art gallery with space for workshops and artist training (glass blowing, bronze sculpture and other art mediums)
- A gallery specializing in children’s art
- Active residential studios for artists



Educational Facilities

- ESD needs a large on-site meeting room for 200 people
- Highline School District needs instructional space for a work force skills development center
- Highline School District needs a center where English can be taught and where foreign-speaking people can interact and learn each other's customs and languages
- After-school ethnic dance and theatre
- English as a Second Language (ESL) — space to develop work skills (such as computer) in downtown

Community Facilities

- Community meeting rooms
- Fire district is looking for additional space
- Farmers' market
- Center for ethnic diversity/historical center
- Boys and Girls Club downtown
- Senior center
- Outdoor music venue (500-600 persons)
- Facilities for younger children (gym, family activities)
- Movie theater

Library

- To enable expanded use, the King County Library is interested in relocating into the downtown area – on or near Town Square
- A library works best on the street level
- The library needs loading and unloading area
- A library can co-exist within a mixed-use building (and/or a performance space)
- The current facility averages 50 parking spaces during the day, and 87 in the evening (all 87 spaces)
- The library desires police located nearby.



City

The City preliminarily estimates it will need to increase its overall space by approximately 30 percent in the next 10 years — from the current 20,000 sq. ft. to 30,000 sq. ft.

- City has need for larger meeting space for community meetings, preferably with kitchen/banquet facilities
- City has need for smaller meeting space for general purposes
- City has need for general storage
- City has need for storage space for maintenance of ROW and Parks (not in downtown)
- Need for space for other jurisdictions (water, sewer, fire) to implement one-stop permit center

City Hall

- The City recognizes that City Hall is to be integral with the Town Square development (Conceptual Framework No. 6). City Hall is to remain at its current location and become an integral part of the Town Square; layout of building should replicate the “open feeling” of the existing facility (to provide the feeling of welcome/warmth)
- Police, Fire and utility districts should have office space in City Hall
- City Hall design should be the benchmark for development quality in downtown
- City Hall could include additional office space for incubator to businesses or community-based organizations
- City Hall should be visible on the square and a part of the community

Desired Business Facilities

- Quality restaurants, with outdoor dining opportunities.
- Port of Seattle could be a partner and encourage airport-related activities to locate in the City (i.e. hotel, banquet, offices)
- Facility for training and certifying airport employees could be located in Burien (currently there is only one such training center and it is located in Florida)
- Shuttle/Trolley service to Sea-Tac Airport could be established
- Hotel
- The Burien area should take advantage of its proximity to the airport and could function as a unique “side door” to connect to airport
- Convention and Training Center (take advantage of proximity to the Airport) provide a more pedestrian-friendly alternative to HWY 99
- Movie theater
- Wide variety of smaller scale retailers



Town Square

- The Town Square and significant civic developments should be linked to the non-motorized circulation system
- The Town Square should be linked to the existing Transit Center
- There should be public restrooms near Town Square
- The Public Plaza space should be designed and sized to allow for a wide variety of events that attract people (Whistler Village is an example)
- Town Square design should consider the Northwest climate and accommodate for weather (covered spaces) so it may be used year round
- Programming of year-round events is critical to the success of Town Square
- King County Library should move near/on Town Square and would add to activity levels in downtown
- A higher building (perhaps a tower) can serve as a downtown icon
- Town Square should contain a mix of passive and active spaces
- Town Square should include both green and hard surface elements



4. DOWNTOWN PLAN CORE GOALS

Building upon the input received from the community, the process focused on translating the input into a list of Core Goals and Design Principles intended to guide the design:

- Integrated Uses: The downtown area should integrate parks, Town Square, and civic, educational and cultural facilities that together will serve as attractors for private housing, retail, and office developments. Human scale and humane mixed-use downtown will accommodate shops, offices, housing, galleries, conference and meeting spaces, performing arts facilities, quality restaurants, small gathering places, an outdoor gathering space, City Hall, multi-purpose “community living room,” educational facilities, civic facilities including library, and small shops.
- Environmental Excellence: The downtown should reflect Northwest character and be a model plan for the 21st century that thoughtfully integrates the topography and water movement based on that topography, is mindful of the views and the light (sun), and incorporates trees and native vegetation.
- Integrated Open Spaces – String of Pearls: Interesting public open spaces should be dispersed throughout the downtown and either formally or informally linked to one another. These spaces or “pearls” will provide opportunities for personal reflection, and small gatherings, as well as for larger civic and cultural events.
- Sustainable Principles: The design should help conserve resources, minimize waste, use water efficiently, and place street orientation and buildings to contribute to energy efficiency.
- Collaborative Uses: Create a “Downtown Campus” with smaller buildings that support each other’s activities and share certain amenities.
- Architectural Variety: The design should consider less rectangular/square shapes and more organic shapes, be more free, characterize flexible spaces for many uses and for all generations.
- Promote Activity: Uses should be mixed to encourage 16-hrs/7-day usage (rather than current 8 hrs/5 days).
- Respect for the Past: Integrate and interpret history into the design – from native trails and crafts, to early settlers, Mosquito Fleet, trolley, and more.
- Maintain Unique Character: Burien should be a place to browse through stores and explore its cultural life. Smaller shops should remain one of Burien’s unique features.
- Access and Circulation: Integrate thoughtful consideration for future transit options such as buses or other forms of mass transit, cars, bicycles, and easy pedestrian movement. Design and locations of buildings should support good pedestrian linkages to the transit center.



5. DOWNTOWN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The list of goals in turn guided the development of Design Principles to guide the development of Schematic Design Alternatives:

1. Take advantage of the views available at and above a three-story elevation — perhaps a public amenity can be located on top of a building or a private restaurant; increase building height to fit the topography, take advantage of views, and provide access to the sun and breezes.
2. Create pathways winding through downtown connecting spaces and activity areas.
3. Buildings should frame the square and provide a more open feeling (upper stories stepping back from main street).
4. Buildings should front and be near the street to activate sidewalks.
5. Consider extending a pedestrian-friendly 6th Avenue Southwest through the downtown area.
6. Solar gain: buildings should be facing south.
7. A strong landmark should visually anchor downtown.
8. Create inviting and accessible connection between the street and Town Square.
9. Aesthetically pleasing parking, with focus on collaborative uses and a variety of options: on street parking, small parking areas, parking below buildings, and integrated parking structure(s).
10. Provide accessibility to all public facilities and offices.
11. Green roof tops: combine gardens and bio-treatment.
12. Create landmarks (interesting architecture, small public artworks) to create distinct and interesting spaces.
13. Crime prevention through environmental design.
14. Plan should strengthen Southwest 152nd Street as an active pedestrian and business orientated street.
15. Use quality, long-lasting building materials.
16. 4th Avenue Southwest should serve as a pedestrian/transit promenade connecting Southwest 152nd Street and Town Square to the Burien Transit Center.



III. SCHEMATIC DESIGN ALTERNATIVES

Following the interview process and discussion on opportunities and values for the downtown, the steering group began to explore possible design alternatives that represent those core values. Carlson Architects developed preliminary concepts representing the discussions and desires of the steering group and past community forum.

TOPOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Early in the process of exploring opportunities in the downtown a rough topographic analysis was performed. This exercise discovered unique opportunities to incorporate topographic features that could influence locations and relationships of structures as well as include natural features in the conceptual plan.

This idea of using natural topography as a feature received positive response. The use of grade changes also allows an opportunity to incorporate the natural elements of the northwest such as water that could be fed by hard surfaces and roof tops. The idea of constructing buildings sensitive to the environment found solid support.

Five early conceptual alternatives were developed and the merits of each were vigorously discussed with the steering group. Images vary location of plaza space from east on 4th Avenue Southwest and Southwest 152nd Street to 6th Avenue Southwest and Southwest 152nd Street. Early labels on building forms were used exploring possible relationships between uses.



OPTION A



OPTION B1





20



DESIGN ELEMENTS COMMON TO ALL CONCEPTUAL SCHEMES

- Extensive diagonal and parallel street parking is provided to increase convenient parking — especially on Southwest 150th Street and 6th Avenue Southwest
- 6th Avenue Southwest is cut through to aid circulation
- Green schemes focusing on the drainage and topography and natural features
- A convertible street running through the civic plaza that can be closed off for events
- 4th Avenue Southwest is a green street connecting the spine from the park through the heart of downtown.





ALTERNATIVE “A”

- *A scheme featuring a diagonal greenway in combination with the civic plaza.*
- The civic plaza and a diagonal greenway are combined, allowing the open space to be more flexible for events
- There is a north and a south plaza area of different sizes
- The main cultural building sits in the park and becomes a prominent civic symbol adjacent to the plaza.





ALTERNATIVE “B”

- *A scheme featuring a multi-use community/cultural facility, the civic statement on the plaza in the heart of downtown.*
- The main mixed-use civic building is the symbolic focus of the plaza.
- The plaza is lined with mixed-use retail, office and civic uses providing for a variety of activities
- Buildings strongly frame and contribute to the intersections at 4th Avenue Southwest and Southwest 150th and 152nd streets
- A variety of interesting organic outdoor spaces, both hard and soft, are created
- Public plaza is a strong central amenity connected to Southwest 152nd Street
- Maximizes good business presence.





ALTERNATIVE “C”

- *A scheme featuring a strong formal civic square and a quiet linear greenway.*
- A linear greenway runs diagonally through the heart block creating quiet spaces for the adjacent buildings
- A prominent tall civic structure is the focus at the north end of the plaza
- The plaza is flanked by mixed-use buildings that will activate the plaza
- The main cultural building is located apart from the plaza.



The three alternatives were presented at a third community forum. Here additional feedback focused on the size of the plaza, its connection to Southwest 152nd Street, and on how to refine the scale of buildings and the linear park. Alternative “B” was recognized for its strong central focal point and adjacent public space, and because of its more organic approach. It frames the plaza space well and increases business opportunity both along Southwest 152nd Street as well as creating new opportunities along 6th Avenue Southwest. It also includes a “flexible-use” community building located adjacent to the plaza space, allowing a variety of activities and events to spill onto the plaza area and activate the space. The majority of participants endorsed Alternative “B” as the best representation of identified goals and design principles and encouraged further development of the alternative.

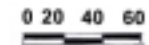
IV. PREFERRED CONCEPTUAL ALTERNATIVE

During the public process, the idea of creating an environmentally-based plan for the downtown core was discussed and endorsed. In this approach, the entire plan works with the topography of the site — rainwater is captured on rooftops and in filtration swales and open spaces between buildings, view corridors are preserved, and buildings are oriented to the south for solar gain. In short, the entire downtown area grows out of the site’s environmental characteristics while serving the community needs and goals.

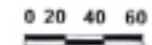
The site has a slope that drops off between 12 and 15 feet from the southeast corner of Southwest 150th Street and 6th Avenue Southwest towards the southeast corner of the Southwest 152nd Street and 4th Avenue Southwest. The proposed plan uses this natural drop as a linear park connecting the northwest corner to the southeast corner of the conceptual town square development area.



DOWNTOWN BURIED - NORTH /SOUTH SECTION LOOKING EAST



DOWNTOWN BURIED - EAST /WEST SECTION LOOKING NORTH



These section views illustrate the change in elevations on the site and how existing topography can be used to layer both the buildings and underground parking structures.



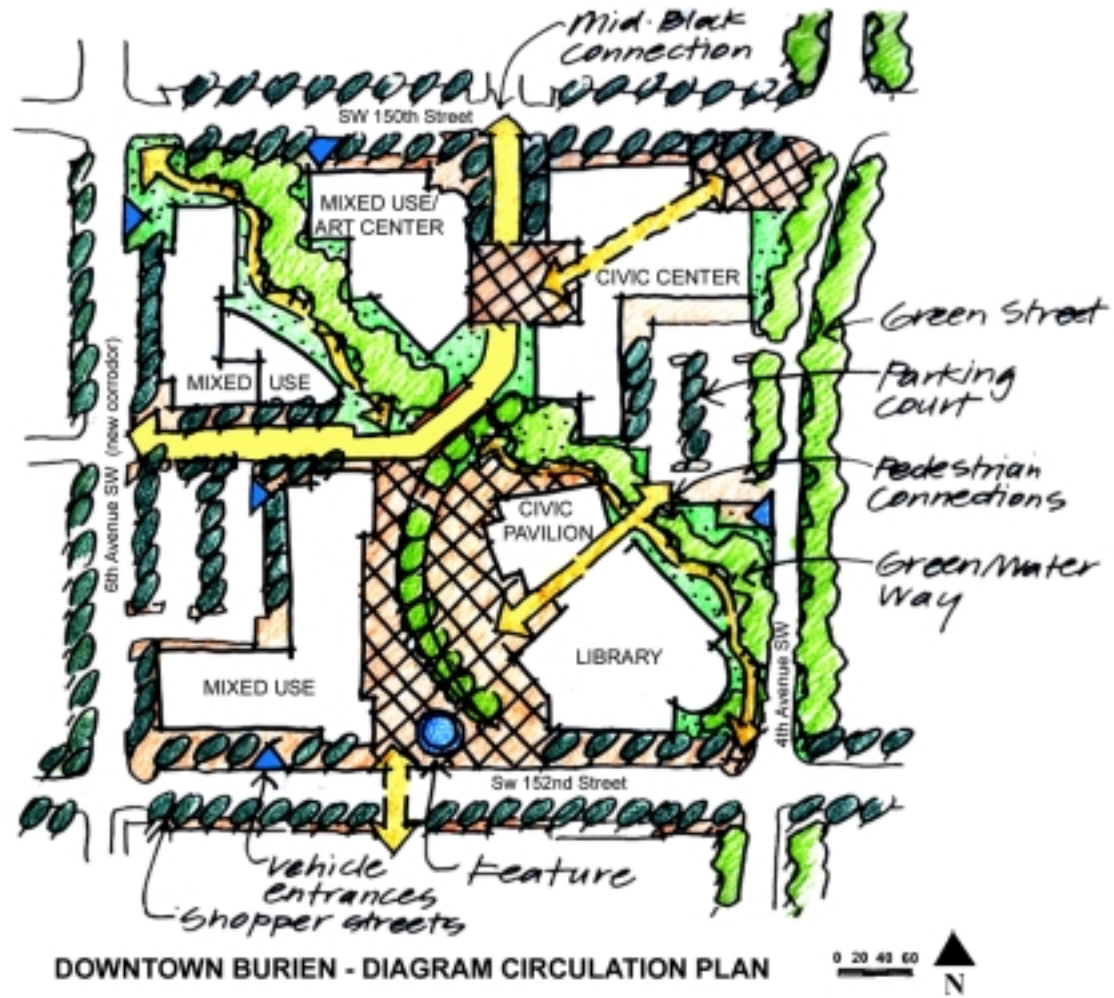
Oriented around the site's topography is a plan for a vibrant mixed-use, many-dimensional urban core serving cultural, educational, civic, housing and commercial needs of the community. This plan includes six building clusters, each with a major user and each offering more than one use, oriented along a "spine" of linear park that celebrates the site's topography, captures and filters rooftop runoffs, and provides a natural open space. This plan includes a Town Square along Southwest 152nd Street serving as a focal point for community gatherings and celebrations.





The preferred alternative builds upon the goals and design principles identified during the planning process. This plan:

- integrates civic, educational, cultural, retail, and housing uses
- has a centrally located plaza that is large enough to accommodate large community gatherings
- has integrated open spaces requested by the community
- promotes environmentally sustainable principles and practices demonstrated by its ability to blend with the land, provides green roofs, and protects and celebrates water
- fosters collaborative uses that can enhance the downtown's vitality and desire for 16-hrs/7-day usage (and possibly generate financial savings)
- expresses the community's desire for less rectangular and more organic and free design
- provides for 20-35 smaller shops that will add to Burien's current character
- promotes pedestrian access and circulation by providing many paths and passages through the project
- increases building heights to work with the topography and take advantage of views, and sunlight
- steps back upper stories of taller buildings to create more open feel
- includes a tower element to serve as a landmark that will visually anchor the downtown area
- strengthens Southwest 152nd Street as an active pedestrian- and business-oriented street, and provides a strong connection between Southwest 152nd Street and the plaza.





When complete, this plan can accommodate:

- between 70 and 100 housing units
- approximately 150,000 square feet of office space (this includes City Hall uses, ESD and general professional or non-profit offices — this space could also become residential)
- 50,000 square feet of retail space
- a 250- to 500-seat theater
- a 10,000 square feet multi-purpose civic pavilion
- 900-1,500 parking spaces.

Specifically, this plan can accommodate:

- an expanded City Hall of approximately 30,000 to 40,000 square feet of office space, with additional spaces for minor retail, an art gallery and a terrace overlooking the park
- an ESD building with approximately 60,000 square feet of office space
- a mixed-use residential unit with retail on the first floor and a spacious roof terrace
- a civic multi-purpose pavilion that serves both as an exhibit space, conference center, and a performing space
- a 30,000 square foot plaza adjacent to the pavilion designed to host large outdoor civic gatherings that can be coordinated with the events taking place inside the pavilion
- a 25,000 square foot library with 8,000 square feet for offices (perhaps for local nonprofit groups) or housing.



DOWNTOWN BURIEN - PERSPECTIVE



Phasing

It is a mixed-use plan that can be built in phases.

Possible scenario:

Phase I could include building two structures on the south side and a public plaza. In this case one level of parking garage underneath the two buildings (total footprint is 6,600 square feet) will be sufficient to accommodate all required parking for the buildings and still provide additional 12 parking spaces that can be used for the pavilion. Phase I also can build surface parking that in the future could count toward two buildings in the northwest corner of the Town Square.

Phase II could construct buildings in the northeast corner. These buildings will need approximately two levels of parking (total footprint is 55,100 square feet) or approximately one and one-half levels if we count surface parking.

Phase III could build buildings in the northwest corner that will need approximately three floors of parking (total footprint is 60,000 square feet) or about two and one-quarter floors of parking if we count the parking provided in Phase I.



DOWNTOWN BURIEN - PHASING PLANS



V. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Accept design goals and principles.
2. The City should facilitate development of the plaza and/or other associated improvements including streetscapes and new city facilities.
3. Pursue and support partnerships with both private and public organizations to develop the Town Square and facilitate development.
4. Develop a detailed phasing plan.
5. Solicit community input to determine programming strategy for the community plaza and public spaces.
6. Identify private development organizations for potential development partnerships.
7. The mix of uses in Town Square should include civic and cultural uses, and reflect existing and future market trends, including residential, retail, office and entertainment components.
8. Support efforts of the King County Library System to secure financing for a new Burien Library downtown and cooperatively develop other public uses for the existing library facility.
9. Working with the Burien business community to recruit a variety of new businesses to the downtown. Focus on professional office and/or hospitality (hotel, conference) and entertainment.
10. Continue to work with Metro/King County on the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) site and the Burien Transit Center redevelopment project, to ensure that the facility compliments, is consistent with, and connects to the Town Square and downtown Burien redevelopment efforts.

On December 16, 2002 the City of Burien City Council unanimously passed Resolution 168 accepting the recommendations listed above.



